

Martin Luther

Peter and Jude Explained By Luther

Translated by John Lenker

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Peter and Jude Preached and Explained By Martin Luther

The Hero of the Reformation, the Greatest of the Teuton Church Fathers, and the Father of Protestant Church Literature

Translated by John Nicholas Lenker,
D.D.

[Based On The Kaiser Chronological Edition With Reference To The Erlangen And Walch Editions, And In Connection With Leading Scholars Of All Parts Of The Church]

Both Editions (1523 And 1539) Of First Peter In One Volume With Analysis Of Each Chapter By John George Walch

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Dedication

To the Memory of personal friends, who so kindly encouraged the Author in his tour through Europe during 1881-2 in behalf of the Emigrant or Diaspora Mission; especially, to the Memory of Dr. Wangemann, of the Foreign Missionary Society, Berlin; Dr. Ealkar, Copenhagen; Pastor Storjohan, Christiania; Dean Thoren, Upsala University; Bishop Robergh, Helsingfors ; Supt. Laaland, St. Petersberg; Prof. Hoerschelmann, Dorpot University; Prof. Grau, Koenigsberg University, and Dr. Luthardt, Leipsic University, this Diaspora Mission volume is most gratefully Dedicated.

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

JOHN NICHOLAS LENKER (1858-1929) was educated at Hamma Divinity School (Ohio Synod), and served pastorates in Grand Island, Nebraska, the General Synod's Board of Christian Extension, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Before moving to Minneapolis he served as professor in the Trinity Seminary of the United Danish Ev. Luth Church. Prof. Lenker founded Luther Press which translated and published affordable, high quality editions of Luther's House and Church Postil sermons, copies of which are still used today.

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A Note about Typos [Typographical Errors]

Please have patience with us when you come across typos. Over time we are revising the books to make them better and better. If you would like to send the errors you come across to us, we'll make sure they are corrected.

Preface by Prof. Lenker

AS EARLY AS 1523, toward the close of the year, a book appeared under the title, "The Epistle of St. Peter Preached and Explained by Martin Luther," which closed with the words: "Printed at Wittenberg by Nickel Schyrlentz in 1523." Besides other editions of the First Epistle that were printed in Wittenberg, Augsburg and Tuebingen during the years 1523 and 1524, two editions were issued during the year 1524, one by Adam Petri at Basel and the other by Sylvanus Ottmar in Augsburg, which included the Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude. Martin Bucer made an excellent Latin translation of the explanation of both Epistles of Peter and of the Epistle of Jude, which was printed in 1524 at Strassburg by John Herwagen; and two editions followed in 1524.

This exposition or commentary was not written in manuscript form by Luther's own hand, but it was taken in writing from Luther's Sunday afternoon sermons by Caspar Cruciger and published by him. It is therefore also an illustration of Luther's exegetical preaching. As Luther preached on the First Epistle of Peter again in the year 1539, George Roerer, by the use of these sermons, made many changes in the first edition of 1523 and added much new material. As the first volume of the Wittenberg edition of Luther's complete works was issued in 1539, Roerer's edition of Luther on Peter was embodied in it and it therefore did not appear in a separate edition. The last sermon that was used for the improvement of the first edition was delivered July 13, 1539, on 1 Peter 5:9. The late Zwickau discovery of five sermons of Luther delivered in 1539 on the 4th and 5th chapters of First Peter, further illustrate how Luther's preaching on First Peter in the year the first volume of the first edition of his complete works appeared at Wittenberg were used to improve the edition of 1539. The improved text is found only in the Wittenberg edition, vol. I., p. 483b; Erlangen, vol. LII, p. 1, and St. Louis Walch, vol. IX., 1110. The changes and additions are mainly in the first chapter, while important additions are found in the fourth and fifth chapters. The preface we give to the edition of 1539 was not writ-

ten as a preface to Luther's Explanation of the Epistle, but as a preface to the Epistle itself, which had appeared already in the German translation of the New Testament in 1522, and was inserted in the Wittenberg edition of Luther's complete works. It appears twice in the Erlangen, vo. LIL, p. 1, and vol. LXIII, p. 151. [See St. Louis Walch, vol. IX., 058.]

While studying Luther in the British Museum Library in 1898-9. my attention was called to the English translation of the edition of this commentary on the two Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude, made by Thomas Newton in 1581 from Bueer's Latin translation, and printed in London the same year, 1581. After a long search through the best antiquarian book dealers, I finally succeeded in becoming the happy possessor of a beautiful leather bound copy of this black or Gothic letter volume. At once the thought came, why should not this volume do a work during the 20th century In the English world, like it did in the 16th century? I began immediately to retranslate and revise it for publication, but the progress was slow. Upon returning to America I secured a copy of Prof. Gillett's translation of the same from the German and spent much time and labor with it, as it is the only translation of Luther made by an American non-Lutheran; and because of this the volume was of special interest I then compared the first chapter of the editions of 1523 and 1539 and found such a great difference that I resolved to translate the edition of 1539, as it was not accessible to English readers, even in a Gothic letter edition. When the first chapter was about finished the differences grew less, likewise through the second and third chapters, so that we concluded it was not the wisest plan to circulate two editions In the English world, duplicating more than two-thirds of the same reading matter. Hence we carefully compared the two editions and translated the extra matter of the edition of 1539, and where one edition differed only slightly from the other we inserted the extra matter in brackets, with the words Ed. 1523 or 1539. At the top of the odd pages you find First Peter, 1539, to distinguish it from that of 1523. The additional matter of the edition of 1539 is valuable and has never before been translated into English in any form. By comparing the two labors ("Die erste Bearbeitung" and "Die zweite Bearbeitung") on the first chapter of First Peter, given in full except the last four verses for both editions, the difference becomes clear. In parts of First and Second Peter of the edition of 1523 some features of Prof. Gillett's style were purposely preserved.

Paul, the Apostle of faith, who appears first in the Bible in Acts 7:59, is prominent in the Acts and in the Epistles, but is not mentioned in the four Gospels; John, the Apostle of love, is prominent in the Gospels and Epistles, but does not figure much in the Acts; while Peter, the Apostle of hope, is prominent in the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles of the New Testament. To know Peter in the Epistles one must know Peter in the Gospels and in the Acts.

Any subject index of the Bible gives references for the study of the Bible biography of Simon (Hearer), who received the surname Cephas, which was changed to Peter (Rock), being by his confession united to and with the Rock of Deuteronomy and of the Psalms.

First. In the Gospels. Called, Mat. 4:18; Mark 1:10; Luke 5: John 1:35. Sent forth, Mat. 10:2; Mark 3:10; Luke 6:14. Tries to walk to Jesus on the sea, Mat. 14:29. Confesses Jesus to be the Christ, Mat. 16:10; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20. Witnesses the transfiguration, Mat. 17; Mark 9; Luke 9:28; 2 Pet. 1:10. His self-confidence reprov'd, Luke 22:31; John 13:30. Thrice denies Christ, Mat. 26:69; Mark 14:66; Luke 22:57; John 18:17. His repentance, Mat. 26:75; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:62.

Second. In the Acts. The assembled disciples addressed by Peter, Acts 1:15. Preaches to the Jews, 2:14; 3:12. Brought before the council, 4. Condemns Ananias and Sapphira, 5. Denounces Simon the Sorcerer, 8:18. Restores Aeneas and Tabitha, 9:32; 9:40. Sent for by Cornelius, 10. Instructed by a vision not to despise the Gentiles, 10:9. Imprisoned and liberated by an angel, 12. His decision about circumcision, 15:7.

Third. In the Epistles. Rebuked by Paul, Gal. 2:14. Bears witness to Paul's teaching, 2 Pet. 3:15. Comforts the church and exhorts to purity in doctrine and holiness in life by his first and second Epistles. His martyrdom foretold by Christ, John 21:18; 2 Pet 1:14.

The design, contents and characteristics of Peter's Epistles agree with the above. The design was: First, To comfort and strengthen Christians in severe trials; second, To enforce the practical and spiritual duties of their calling; third, To warn against special temptations; fourth, To remove doubt as to the efficacy and completeness of the Christian religion. This is apparent from the analysis, especially as here given by Walch, and the characteristics of the Epistles. The churches addressed were in trial, and needed hope from the apostle of hope. The ruling emotion is "the hope that is in them," 3:15. The tendencies that called for reproof, and the hortative and testifying

character of the Epistle illustrate the same (5:12). One correctly says: "There is little that is local or temporary; it is suited to the church of all lands and ages; for believers are always in the present time 'strangers and sojourners.'"

The profound emotions, earnest convictions, and zealous thoroughness of Peter are everywhere manifest. He was never languid or half-hearted in what he said or did, "though the old impulsiveness is chastened and the fire which flashed up so suddenly is more equable and tranquil in its glow." The divine command, "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," may be called Peter's motto in his writings.

From the diet of Worms in 1521, the most public act in his life, he went to Wartburg, the most private period of his career. During his absence the Reformation at Wittenberg under Carlstadt developed into the wildest extravagances among the people and the students, a desire was manifest to put an end to theological science as well as to clerical orders. Dr. Schaff says: "Protestantism had reached a very critical juncture. Luther or Carlstadt, reformation or revolution, the written Word or illusive inspiration, order or confusion; that was the question."

It is one of the grandest scenes in the Reformer's life, how, after facing Rome and the Emperor at Worms and translating the Bible on the Wartburg, he left the Wartburg March 3rd, 1522, against his Elector's express command, and hastened to save the sheep and lambs of his little flock at Wittenberg from the wolves of fanaticism and from the tyranny of radicalism. He preached eight model sermons in eight days and reformed this false reformation as he did the Roman Church, by the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. His congregation was like many congregations now in the Diaspora, but as a faithful shepherd will not forsake his sheep in time of danger neither did he. His triumph over these fanatical spirits was as brilliant and as complete as over Romanism. It was in this year that in addition to all his other duties he began to preach and explain the Epistles of Peter and Jude on Sunday afternoons.

Preface By Prof. E. H. Gillett.

The only Translator of Luther's Works from the American Reformed Churches.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, among the dusty piles of old pamphlets stored away upon the upper shelves of the Union Theological Seminary as they were issued during his lifetime from his press at Wittenberg. Among them were his Commentaries, or rather Lectures, on the Epistles of Peter and Jude. The forbidding aspect of the page, with the obsolete spelling of its words, and its somewhat coarse typography, was rather an incitement to master it; for here was Luther, presenting himself to the eye of the reader just as, more than three hundred years ago, he presented himself to the eyes of thousands of his countrymen. Upon a partial perusal of the Commentary, I became satisfied that it would repay a more attentive study; and finding, upon investigation, that it had never been translated into English, I set myself to the task which had been so long neglected. The pleasing labor was accomplished, and the manuscript laid aside for several years. The conviction, confirmed by a re-perusal of it, that others besides myself would be interested in the work, has led me to determine on its publication.

Luther's Commentary on the Galatians, excellent as it is, is too voluminous and expensive to be very extensively circulated, while the phraseology of the early translation, which has not been modified, prevents its proper appreciation by modern readers. And yet any one that would truly know the man, and the secret of his power, must study these in his writings. The Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude, presented in a literal and more modern style to the English reader, is not liable to these objections; and yet, in the variety of its themes, the clearness of its exposition, the stinging force of its rebukes, the simplicity and directness of its language, it is scarcely surpassed by any of Luther's other writings. On the great subject of justification by faith alone, he is here, as in the Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, full and emphatic. The relation of faith to works is

clearly and carefully defined, while the subjects presented in the text afford full opportunity for discussing the great questions that concern the relative duties of civil and social life. The volume thus becomes at once a manual of doctrine and of duty. On the foundation of faith is reared the superstructure of a Christian Life. Luther is seen to have fully apprehended the force of all the objections that could be urged against his teachings, and with convincing ability he vindicates them from every charge. Throughout the volume we have ever before us the earnest, devout spirit of the Reformer, for the most part unfolding in the simplest manner the great doctrines of the Gospel, but occasionally indulging in volcanic outbursts of indignation against the hierarchical corruptions of his day, and pouring out upon them the lava-tides of withering rebuke.

It may seem strange that this work of Luther's has never before been translated. (It was however translated into English by Thomas Newton as early as 1581 and printed in London the same year. — J. N. L.) But, unlike his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, which he himself translated into Latin, that it might have a wider circulation among the learned of Europe, this was published by him only in the German language, which was little known in England, and hence it was deprived of that notoriety which would have drawn special attention to it, as well as of that Latin dress which would have facilitated an English translation. (Translations of it into Latin by Bucer were printed once in 1523 and twice in 1525. — J. N. L.) It is well known, moreover, that Luther formed a most humble estimate of his own writings, and was uniformly reluctant to collect his works in volumes, or bestow upon them any editorial care. He seemed perfectly willing to have them sink to oblivion, and could not be persuaded by the most urgent representations to do anything which might rescue them from such a fate. Besides, it is to be noted that a perusal of this volume especially would soon satisfy the reader, that after the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne, it stood little chance of securing the necessary approval or imprimatur of an English bishop.

Yet the work is one of no little historical as well as antiquarian interest. It has done its part in one of the greatest intellectual and religious conflicts of the world. It is the sword that a giant wielded, and that has done execution on a broad field. In the great armory of the Reformation-writings, scarcely another deserves a more conspicuous place. It presents those views of the relative spheres of Divine and human authority which became preva-

lent wherever the cause of Reform advanced. It unmasked popular errors, rebuked ecclesiastical corruption, and vindicated most effectively the simple doctrines of faith. Here moreover we see Luther clad in the armor with which he boldly challenged the Papacy to a lifelong combat. The man is before us, girded for the battle, and we see the weapons upon which he relies. If one of those cannon balls with which the English valor won the battle of Cressy, the first in which the efficiency of the new invention was tested, could be picked up there now, and it could be ascertained that it did service in that famous battle, it would be an object of no small interest, at least to the antiquary; but in regard to this treatise of Luther, we know full well that Rome felt its visitation as something more terrible than a bombshell exploding beneath the dome of St. Peter's. Under the authority of Peter himself it demolished the very foundations of the throne upon which his pretended successors were seated, and gave a most effective impulse to the onward movement of reform.

Nor is this all. It is still capable of doing effective service. After all the rust and tarnish of three centuries, these words of Luther are remarkably fresh, and seem almost like a living utterance of today. Their critical value is not indeed great, although by no means contemptible, for the quick sagacity of the Reformer in detecting the meaning and the force of the Scriptural argument, is evident on every page, and is rarely at fault; but his clear views of the Gospel, his untrammelled freedom of thought, his strong good sense, and his most effective energy of application are everywhere conspicuous.

His language is uniformly simple and direct. The exposition contained in this volume was first delivered from the pulpit. According to the title-page, it is Scripture "preached and explained," and in addressing it to the people, Luther did not fail to keep in view the object upon which he set so high an estimate, when he said. "I preach as simply as possible. I want the common people, and children, and servants, to understand me."

The care with which he fortifies his positions with Scriptural citations is likewise obvious. He rarely presents views upon any theme from which one who acknowledges the authority of Scripture will feel forced to dissent, unless, with some, the subject of baptism should be an exception. In regard to this, he speaks as one who as yet sees "men as trees walking."

Considerable space is given to an exposure of the errors and abuses of the Papacy, but the exposure is made uniformly by the light of Scripture.

Vehement as are Luther's occasional bursts of indignation, he never wanders from the subject, and never ventures beyond where he is sustained by the clear warrant of the word of God.

In the purpose of presenting this translation to English readers. I have been encouraged by the prospect of affording to others the same opportunity of acquaintance with Luther's modes of thought and feeling which I have myself enjoyed. I believe, moreover, that his exposition has a high value, apart from the interest which attaches to it as the production of the great hero of the Reformation. Occasionally, the views presented have seemed to be such as required some explanatory note or correction, and in a few instances this has been appended, but the necessity has rarely occurred, and Luther is left throughout to speak for himself. The translation is strictly literal, and almost the only variations from the original are so marked, by being enclosed in parentheses. These will readily be distinguished from the passages or words included in parentheses of the original text, by their explanatory character.

It would have been a far easier task to have given a more liberal and polished rendering of Luther's language. But I think most readers would prefer to have me give them Luther, rather than — the translator. There are occasional roughness of expression, and some sentences which were evidently not very lucidly reported, but they are features of the book which presents Luther to us, and even the wart on the face must appear in the faithful portrait.

For assistance in the labor of revising some of the more difficult passages, I am indebted to Prof. Robinson, of the Union Theological Seminary, and to Rev. M. Bushe, pastor of a German church in this city. By their aid, which I take this occasion gratefully to acknowledge, I feel confident that nearly every passage, in which the text of the original is not at fault, has been correctly rendered.

I had hoped in this connection, to present an estimate of Luther's writings, from the pen of one of the most eminent German scholars which our country can boast. The permission to do so was kindly granted, but the limited space allowed for prefatory remark forbids it. I will only add the expression of my own conviction, that from the exceedingly voluminous works of Luther, other selections of high merit might be made, the translation and publication of which would be welcomed with grateful acknowledgment by a large class of American and English readers. I should be

highly gratified if the encouragement afforded by my words or example should induce any one more competent than myself, or who can command more leisure for it, to prosecute the work which I have only just begun.

B. H. GILLET.

Harlem, New York City, March 8th, 1859.

Third Introduction To Luther's Works In English.

NO APOLOGY IS OFFERED for the following matter under the above heading, which is naturally suggested by this third volume of Luther in English. Because the first great need is to develop a higher appreciation among Americans of the significant relation of Luther's writings to them in the past as well as in the future; and thus to awaken a greater interest in a faithful, systematic and general reading of those writings, not for Luther's sake; but for the sake of the Master and for the sake of our American people that they may thus be deepened and broadened in their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and in their convictions of their holy Protestantism. Many like introductions will be required before Luther's writings secure that place in our hearts and in our libraries, which they unquestionably hold in the cultural and historical development of the human race.

In our first introduction attention was called to the difference between Luther's writings and the sacred books of the East or the literature of the heathen cultured nations, in that they all teach salvation by works; while the classic or sacred writings of Protestantism in the West are a protest against that doctrine and defend the central teaching of the Bible. In our second introduction we considered the relation of the original historic classics of Protestantism to the literature of the fathers of the Greek and the Latin Catholic churches and gave the criticisms of the former on the latter.

In the present introduction an opportunity is suggested by the contents of the volume itself to consider the relations of Luther's writings to the Protestant church, more in a practical than a theoretical light. First, their relation to the Reformation movement among the highest civilized nations of Europe. Second, their relation to the Foreign Missionary Movement among the heathen tribes of Asia and Africa. Third, their relation to the Emigration or Diaspora Movement among the scattered Protestants, especially in North and South America and Australia. The first was the scattering of those writ-

ings themselves by the printing press; the second, the scattering of the preachers heralding the teachings of those writings, and the third, the scattering of the laity confessing the teachings of those writings. In three words, Purification, Evangelization, Colonization. From the first spring the last two, and from the first two, the last. That all Christian mission work is a unit and has the same spirit, is illustrated here by the unity in the above trinity of operations, as set forth by Peter and Luther in this volume that is now prayerfully sent into the world.

All three fields are suggested in this volume. The first, because the Pope and the Roman Catholics make so much of St. Peter, and Luther writes here in the heat of his Reformation struggle. The second, because Peter addressed his letters to the converts from the heathen, who had joined the believing Jews, and Luther explains them from this standpoint; and third, because Peter wrote to the “sojourners of the Dispersion,” who were transplanted from the Heathen to the Diaspora Mission field, while Luther had in mind his little Diaspora flock at Wittenberg gathered from Romanism and exposed to radicalism, as well as to his world-wide scattered Diaspora flock likewise exposed. As a Reformation, a Foreign Missionary and a Diaspora Mission document we know of none stronger than this volume of the joint authorship of Peter and Luther.

Peter’s Epistles are evidence from the Apostolic Church of the interest of the parent congregations and pastors in their world-scattered spiritual children and of the appreciation of the need of the very best literature being written for, and circulated among them. And Luther’s explanation of Peter’s letters is evidence from the Reformation Church of the same spirit existing there. Peter addressed more the “sojourners of the Dispersion,” gathered by the first Foreign Mission work from the heathen; Luther, more the “sojourners of the Dispersion,” gathered as the first fruits of the Protestant Reformation. And it would be difficult to find or to write better letters and tracts than this volume contains for the present and future Diaspora, whether it be the results of Heathen Missions or of the Reformation in Catholic lands. Therefore “Luther on St. Peter” will be made a companion volume to “Lutherans In All Lands,” to be circulated broadcast in all lands, as the two volumes will be sent to any address upon the receipt of \$3.35.

Literature like this volume, will be more and more in demand as the corrupters of the Word are increasing. Foreign Missions are growing, and Protestants are migrating ever in larger numbers. Yea, the converts of Hea-

then Missions at present as in Peter's day often become "sojourners of the Dispersion." This is illustrated by every successful Heathen Mission. For example, the converts of the German Lutheran Kols Mission in Bengal migrate to Calcutta and to Assam, and the parent mission is called upon to follow them and build churches for them in their own language. So the Berlin, Basel and Rhenish German Missions laboring in the vicinity of Canton, China, are called to do the same for their converts as they emigrate to North Borneo and to the Philippine Islands. So the converts of the flourishing Berlin, Hermannsburg and Rhenish Missions in South Africa migrate and new congregations must be founded for them. The Scandinavian, English and American large missions illustrate the same.

As the Reformation, the Modern Foreign Mission and the Diaspora Mission Movements are largely the results of Luther's writings; may those writings direct and strengthen this "trinity" of operations in the future, that no one of the three may be neglected.

Luther's Writings And The Reformation Movement.

To stimulate thought on this subject the inquiry may be raised, Why did the Greek form of Christianity, moving north from Constantinople, assimilate the Slavic nations in the Russian Greek Church of today; while the Roman form moving north from Rome did not assimilate the Teutonic nations? The reason is not because of any strategic advantage of the headquarters or base of operations of either, for both were metropolitan, imperial capital cities, and not because the Greek nation was the stronger or their religion the better. The advantage, if any, was in favor of the Romans, as they had conquered the Greeks, and the Latin church fathers were an advance and a development of the Greek fathers. These and other reasons make it clear that the real cause is not to be sought in the Latins and the Greeks, but rather in the difference between the two northern nations, the Teutons and the Slavs.

It should be remembered that the Roman church had spread and fortified itself with its bishops and archbishops over all Germania, and the Teutons therefore cast aside Roman Christianity, not from the first, but long after they had proved it and found it wanting in being able to satisfy the deep, mystical, philosophic, spiritual yearnings of the Teutonic head and heart.

On the other hand the Slavic peoples up to the present seem satisfied with the Greek apprehension and expression of the Christian religion. They are easier satisfied than the Teutons. The two races are quite different, the one loves liberty and independence, the other seems contented in their submission to imperialism. The strength of the Teutonic character is shown not only by conquering the Roman empire but by declaring their independence of the religious and ecclesiastic slavery of Rome. And why were they able to resist the religion and its civilization that came over the Alps? Because they had a deeper and better understanding of the Word of God, given to them by the writings of their great prophet of God, who was the true child of all their past development and the father of their subsequent blessing to humanity, as we shall see in the following under the heading of "Luther's Writings and the Diaspora Mission Movement." Their history before the Reformation, during the Reformation and after the Reformation prove that, in the words Luther wrote of Christians, "the Holy Spirit called them through the Gospel and enlightened them by his gifts." One wisely writes: "The Jews, Greeks and Romans, enervated by sensuality and vice, God chose the Germans with their pure and strong religious susceptibilities to be the vessel for the preservation of the pure Christian doctrine." Another scholar as truly says: "That at the time of the Lutheran Reformation the Germans were the most uncultured of all the nations of Western Europe. Since the REformation they have become the best educated of all." Their Christian culture is in a sense something new in the world, original with the Teutons and an honest, full expression of their spirit. Its unity, center and strength as a result of his people's development prior to and as a factor for his people's development subsequent to his day, are Luther's writings. The great Teutonic family of nations has no greater treasure or inheritance from the past than these writings. The Protestant church owes her origin as well as her success hitherto, and in the future, to the protest of these writings against the false teachings of the churches developed by the Greek and Latin fathers. And that was an intelligent, conscientious protest, drawn from no other source than from the pure Word of God alone. All Luther's writings, whether exegetical or homiletical, polemical or reformatory, exalted the one Book which the Teutons named and love to call "The Word of God." Luther had no thought of gaining renown for himself or of being a social reformer. He was indifferent about preserving his own writings, and

it is hence a great blessing of Providence, for which we are thankful, that they were rescued from oblivion by men like Dietrich, Cruciger and Roerer.

Luther said: “‘gumma summarum,’ I will preach, speak, write, but I will force no one; for faith must be voluntary. Take me as an example. I stood up against the Pope, indulgences, and all Papists, but without violence or uproar. I only urged, preached, and declared God’s Word, nothing else. And yet while I was asleep or amusing myself, the Word inflicted greater injury on popery than prince or emperor ever did. I did nothing, the Word did everything. Had I appealed to force, all Germany might have been deluged with blood; yea, I might have kindled a conflict at Worms, so that the Emperor would not have been safe. But what would have been the result? Ruin and desolation of body and soul. I therefore kept quiet, and gave the Word free course through the world. The Word is almighty, and takes captive the hearts.”

Wittenberg The Center Of Printing.

The books before the Reformation were mostly the ponderous and costly folios and quartos in Latin for limited circulation. So rare were complete Bibles that in libraries they were secured against theft by being chained. But now a change came, small and portable books and leaflets were printed in the language of the people and circulated by the millions. There was a different spirit on the subject of the infant art of printing at Wittenberg from that of Rome or Mainz. Fortunately there has come down to us reliable statistics of the book trade immediately before and after the Reformation, which clearly show the extraordinary increase. In 1513 there appeared only 90 prints in Germany, the fatherland of printing; in 1514, 106; in 1515, 145; in 1510, 105; in 1517, 81; mostly small devotional tracts, flying newspapers, stories, etc. In 1518 the number rose to 146; in 1519, 252; in 1520, 571; in 1521, 077; in 1523, the year “Luther on St. Peter and St. Jude” appeared, 944. Thus the total for the five years before the Reformation, 527; and for the six years after the Reformation, 3,113. Of all the works printed between 1518 and 1523 no less than 000 appeared at Wittenberg. In 1523 more than four-fifths of all the books published were on the side of the Reformation. Erasmus, hitherto the undisputed monarch in the realm of letters, complained that the people would read and buy no other books than

Luther's. "Here in Basel," he wrote to King Henry VIII., "nobody dares to print a word against Luther, but you may write as much as you please against the Pope." The first edition of Luther's German New Testament was issued September 22, 1522, and 5,000 copies were printed and sold before December of the same year at the high price of 25 marks, or \$0.25, per copy. Hans Luft printed 100,000 copies on his press at Wittenberg, and thus merited the title of honor universally given to him, "The Bible Printer." There being no copyright, reprints were multiplied and they went with lightning speed to all homes and individuals. The papal bull of excommunication, June 15, 1520, ordered the burning of "all the books of Luther." He laughed it to scorn and burned the Pope's bull. With the freedom of conscience was born the freedom of the press. (See Schaff's History of the Christian Church, vol. VI., pp. 500-507.)

About one-third of his writings Luther wrote in Latin, hence his teachings were circulated and read in German and Latin throughout the civilized lands in these two tongues by the educated classes, and translated into all the other tongues for the people. It is said the first printed book in the language even of the Finns was an A. B. C. book with Luther's Small Catechism. The very soul and foundation of the marvelous literary activity of the Teutonic nations are the writings of Luther, that were scattered broadcast by the newly invented printing of his countryman Gutenberg. It was not the theology of the books of the Greek and Latin fathers scattered by copyists and monks, but the theology of the Wittenberg printing press. Luther gave the Bible, Catechism and Hymn Book in their vernacular to all the people, and no books have been printed in larger quantities than these three and they were a tower of strength to the Reformation.

The German printers, scattered in all the countries of Europe, became the providential agents to circulate the teachings of their Wittenberg countryman in innumerable reprints. The following are speaking and suggestive figures: At the end of the fifteenth century Rome reported 23 German printers and Italy over 100 German printing offices. The first printers in Italy were Luther's countrymen, and they also started the art in London (1477), Oxford (1478), Denmark (1482), Stockholm (1483), Moravia (1486), Constantinople (1490), Rome (1400, through Ulrich Hahn from Ingolstadt), Paris (1470, through John Heynlln from Stein near Speyer). Thus the art of printing as well as the book trade of Europe were developed by the Germans, which took the place of the copyists and the trade in written

manuscripts. The national intellectual life of the Teutonic nations dates from Luther. "There is scarcely another instance in history, in which an individual, without secular authority or military achievement has so stamped himself upon a people and made himself to so great an extent the leader, the representative, the voice of the nation as Luther. He was in this respect what Homer was to the Greeks." In this the printers of Wittenberg and their tradesmen and countrymen in all lands contributed most liberally.

Luther's Writings And The Heathen Mission Movement.

The service of Luther's writings to Foreign Missions may not at first be as apparent as the service they did to the Reformation and to the Diaspora movements; yet, it is more significant than is generally supposed.

In the modern and narrower sense of systematized machinery and organized methods of local and general societies or boards to collect funds, to send beyond the seas missionaries and to hold annual conventions and send out annual reports, there was very little of that in Luther's writings, Wittenberg was too far from the sea border and the sea powers in those days were Spain and Portugal, where even the Reformation itself could not enter, much less could it make use of their ships. Moreover the heathenism in the Christian church claimed all the energy of young Protestantism.

Dr. Warneck says: "By the Reformation the Christianizing of a large part of Europe was first completed, and so far it may be said to have carried on a mission work at home on an extensive scale." Further he says: "The Reformation certainly did a great indirect service to the cause of missions to the heathen, as it not only restored the true substance of missionary preaching by its earnest proclamation of the Gospel, but also brought back the whole work of missions on Apostolic lines. Luther rightly combats, as Plitt insists, 'the secularizing of missionary work.'"

Plitt says: "By the heathen Luther understands the non-Jewish nations which had entered the Christian church; among them the Gospel must ever have freer course. Among them, accordingly, the disciples went out as messengers and founded mission stations. Now, too, they sought out first the chief centers of commerce,, the larger towns, and thence their preaching

broadened into ever wider circles, until there was a compact Evangelical church-domain. On such wise did Luther carry on Evangelical missions.”

Again Luther says: “There are among ourselves, Turks, Jews, heathen, non-Christians all too many, both with openly false doctrine and terribly scandalous life.” Just as Americans might say our duty is first to the Negroes, Indians and Chinamen in our midst.

Kurtz, in his Church History, Vol. I., p. 483, says: “The Christianizing of the German world was in great part accomplished without the help of Rome.” If it were so before the Reformation it was more so after the Reformation.

In explaining the 117th Psalm Luther says: “If all the heathen shall praise God, it must first be that he shall be their God. Shall he be their God? Then they must know him and believe in him, and put away all idolatry, since God can not be praised with idolatrous lips or with unbelieving hearts. Shall they believe? Then they must first hear his Word and by it receive the Holy Ghost, who cleanses and enlightens their heart through faith. Are they to hear his Word? Then preachers must be sent who shall declare to them the Word of God.” So in his familiar hymn, “Es wolle Gott uns gnaedig sein.”

“And Jesus Christ His saving strength
To Gentiles to make known,
That thee, O God, may thank and praise
The Gentiles everywhere.”

As when a stone thrown into the water makes wavelets and circles, one chasing the other, till they come to the bank; “so with the preaching of the Gospel. It was begun by the Apostles, and goes on continually, and is sped ever farther by preachers hunted and persecuted hither and thither into the world.” In the “Deutsche Messe” (German Order of Worship) he says: “I hold not at all with those who attach such great importance to one language and despises all others, for I would fain that young men and others might be raised up who in foreign lands might be of service to Christ and speak with the people.”

Among the many other references of Luther to Foreign Missions, we mention his comments on the second Psalm; Micah 4:5; Titus 2:10; his Ascension sermons on “Go ye into all the world, etc.” For a full discussion of the subject see Plitt, *Kurze Geschichte der lutherischen Mission.*”

Luther did not live in our Christian civilization and atmosphere and we are not to judge him from our standpoint. He lived in the Word of God, in the Old Testament and New Testament life, in the Apostolic and Reformation life of the Christian church, and his writings are full of deep foreign mission thoughts if studied in the light of the whole Word of God and the whole history of the church of God up to his day.

In this volume commenting on 1 Pet. 1:1, we have an illustration of Luther's way of treating missions when he says: "Sojourners are such as we call foreigners. Peter names them so because they were Gentiles; and it is a surprise to us that St. Peter, inasmuch as he was an Apostle to the Jews, should write to the Gentiles... Thus he writes to those who had previously been heathen, but were now converted to the faith, and had joined the believing Jews and he calls them elect-sojourners." They were once heathen, now converts to the Christian faith, and besides they are sojourners of the Dispersion." They had been transferred from the heathen mission to the Diaspora mission field, the field that is ever growing. Luther, like Peter, united heathen and Diaspora missions, and we blunder by not considering the two together more than we do. As Luther's writings were the best classics for laying the foundations of Protestant Foreign Missions, so they are the best the church has for the development of foreign missions in their advance stage, not only his three great missionary documents, his Bible translation, Hymn Book and Catechism, but his writings as a whole. Luther and Foreign Mission are an interesting theme for faithful study.

The present missionary theory and practice rest upon the foundation Luther laid and this is easily understood because of Luther's unparalleled loyalty to the written Word of God, the great and the only Book of the Protestant Missionary; and his literal and grammatical explanations did not leave him and his followers in doubt as to the effectiveness of the preaching of the Word among all nations.

The writings of the Wittenberg Reformer, by restoring the early Apostolic doctrine and life, became in embryo the greatest foreign missionary movement since the days of Paul. Protestant foreign missions consequently originated with Luther. Herzog's Encyclopaedia states: "Luther himself already seizes every opportunity offered by a text of the Divine Word in order to remind believers of the distress of the 'Heathen and the Turks' and earnestly urges them to pray in their behalf, and to send out missionaries to them. In accord with him all the prominent theologians and preachers of his

day, and of the succeeding period, inculcated the missionary duty of the church. Many also of the Evangelical princes cherished the work with Christian love and zeal.”

Students from distant countries, who came to Wittenberg University to hear, and those at home who read the teachings of Protestantism, could not help but desire that all mankind should possess the same. There is proof that this was the case. For example: Primus Truber, the famous reformer of Carniola, Austria, in 1555 translated and published with the first Lutheran Bible Society, in Wuerttemberg, Germany, the Gospel of St. Matthew in the Slavic language of the Croats and Wends, which was followed by other parts of the New Testament, Luther’s Catechism, The Augsburg Confession, The Apology, Melancthon’s Loci, The Wuerttemberg Church Discipline, and a book of Spiritual Songs. This was all in the Slavic tongue and was excellent foreign mission work. It is an illustration of how the very earliest Lutherans in foreign countries were moved with compassion to give the Gospel to the heathen. So it has been even to the present day.

Eusebius, Jerome, Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Grotius Bengel, Hug and Pott held the “sojourners of the Dispersion,” to whom Peter wrote, to be the Jews living outside of Palestine. This extreme view was modified by Gerhard, Wolf and Weiss, who taught that the Jewish converts in the mass of the Gentiles were chiefly in view. Augsburg Confession, The Apology, Melancthon’s Loci, The Wuert-Wiesinger, Neander, Reuss, Schaff and Huther held that Peter wrote neither solely nor principally for Jewish believers, but for the heathen converts; because the history of the origin of these churches in Asia Minor, founded by Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, proves that they were composed largely of Gentile believers. Many things in the Epistles also argue the same, as when he tells his readers: “The time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revelings, carousings and abominable idolatries,” (4:3), all of which sins, and especially the last, characterized the heathen world. Similarly he writes (1:14), “not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance;” and (3:0) of Sarah, “whose children ye now are” or have become. In 2:9-10 they are said to be “called out of darkness,” “who In time past were no people, but now are the people of God.” These lust words originally applied to Israel, had already been applied by Paul to the Gentile believers in Rom. 9:25. The Greek word, Diaspora, may be used in a spiritual sense as, 1 Pet.

1:17, “the time of your sojourning;” and 2:11, “strangers and pilgrims.” Peter, the Apostle of the Circumcision, lived in and was prepossessed of Jewish ideas, instinctively employs such national terms. In the new and enlarged spiritual meaning, which they received from being connected with Christianity. As Luther advocates, Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, ministered to the Jews, and Peter, the Apostle to the Jews, ministered to the Gentiles.

Luther’s Writings And The Diaspora Movement.

This subject is worthy of more extensive treatment than our space allows. While the words “Diaspora” and “Diaspora Missions” are almost unknown in American churches, they are familiar, tender and instructive terms in the German and Scandinavian fatherlands, and are becoming more so. The organizations, literature and contributions devoted to this branch of practical Christian work are increasing. This is proper because as the heathen mission field is growing less, the Diaspora Mission field is constantly expanding by reason of the change of country and of language. Even the converts of heathen missions emigrate and become material for the Diaspora as they were once of the Heathen mission. The fruits of the Reformation work in Catholic lands likewise increase the Diaspora missionary opportunities and responsibilities. The “Ecclesia Pressa” is ever growing, and the Diaspora Mission is becoming the most important practical work of the Protestant church. It has already attained a world-wide character. In the broadest sense this has been caused by the leaven-like development of the Kingdom of God and by the omnivagant character of the Teutonic nationalities who most heartily and fully accepted the teachings of Luther’s writings.

These are two important thoughts. The first is important because of the relation Luther and his writings hold to the true teachings of both the Old and the New Testaments, and the people who confessed those teachings. The children of God were a migratory people and the Diaspora thought is prominent in the Old Testament: (Levit. 25:23; Ps. 39:12; Is. 56:8; Is. 43:5, etc.); so also in the New Testament when the believers were persecuted and scattered abroad (Gal. 6:10; John 17:18; 20:21; Jas. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1-2.)

While there is a Diaspora in the Word of God and of the Word, prepared to conserve and minister the Word, to all the nations, first in the Jewish, and

then in the early Christian church; there is also a Diaspora outside of the Word and independent of the Jewish and of the early Christian churches, who were prepared by their migration to receive, defend, confess and spread that glorious Word, of whom Luther has been thus far the highest and the most representative character. Luther and, if you please, Luther's writings, (for no nation is greater than its greatest men, and those men are not greater than their best thoughts or writings), were the outcome of the historic development of the migrating uncultured nations of the North. Luther was not the child of the Jews, nor of the Greeks, nor of the Romans. He belonged to an entirely different branch of the human race. The Latin culture of the Roman Catholic Church dominated the world when Luther arose, so that time is required until the Teutonic Protestant culture shall supplant the Latin entirely. That great patience and a hard struggle will be required is evident. In our American schools, for example, very un-American like, we study the origin of nearly every people except that of ourselves, and yet, we make so much of the noble motto: "Know Thyself." Thus the children miss what, to them, would naturally be the most interesting and profitable chapter in history. It is well to be acquainted with the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Indians, and the Mound-builders, but we are not their descendants. We must, however, study thoroughly another people from their cradle, if we would know ourselves. I mean the Germans and the Scandinavians, not during their last few centuries, but, as said, from their cradle, during more than two thousand years. Three hundred years before Christ was born our Teutonic forefathers were paddling on the water along the eastern shores of the Baltic sea; 114 B. C. they scaled the Alps, and about the same time they were thrifty colonists in the valley of the lower Danube. Thus when the angels sang of the Saviour's birth on Bethlehem's plains in Asia the wandering Teutons, disciplined by emigration, were permanently located in the three strategic centers of Europe. They and their descendants have an unbroken glorious history on land and sea. It was these Hanseatic Germans and Viking Scandinavians, who colonized and made England, where the early Roman soldiers were Roman only in name, but Teuton in blood; it was also these two Teuton nations who discovered and settled America, the New Englanders being Scandinavians, who tarried a few centuries or less in old England en route westward.

The genesis and philosophy of the English and American Protestant civilization are suggested in the noble poetical tribute of Tennyson to the

Princess of Wales, the present Queen of England and the daughter of the present King of Denmark, at the time of her marriage:

“Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee, Alexandra.”

In a word, therefore, these two nationalities, the Germans and Scandinavians, laid the foundation of our modern civilization and in doing this there was no more powerful agency than the literary labors of the great prophet raised up in their midst, unto whom they hearkened, — Martin Luther, — the Teuton of the Teutons, the Goth of the Goths, the greatest contribution the Gentile world has made to the Church of Jesus Christ. Too busy to travel, going to Rome and Worms driven only by conscience, he spent his life at home in the little university village of Wittenberg, where his teaching, preaching, writing and publishing made little rural Wittenberg to the Protestants what the metropolitan cities of Rome and Constantinople are to the Roman and Greek Catholics. However, while ministering faithfully to his little flock at Wittenberg he founded a Diaspora Church to minister to the deep spiritual wants of his countrymen, migrating to the ends of the earth, and this he did through the library of books he wrote, which was so providentially preserved and handed down even to the present. While the Germans did their greatest service to Protestantism on land in the heart of the continent of Europe because of Luther and his writings, the Viking Scandinavians did their best service on the water with their ships by preparing the foreign nations on the Baltic and German seas for the reception of Luther’s writings and then by introducing those writings to all ports and countries, through their sailors, merchants and emigrants.

What Wittenberg was in those days to the religious life of the Teutons, that Copenhagen was to the commercial world. As the ships of Tarshish prepared the way for and spread the Jewish teachings of Jerusalem, and the ships of Spain the Catholic religion of Rome on the Mediterranean (and later even to South America); so the ships of the Scandinavians cultivated the soil for, and scattered the seed and fruit of, the Protestant religion of Wittenberg on the Baltic and German seas (and later even to North America). Look at the map; study the water as well as the land of Scandinavia, neither Paul nor any other Apostle ever sailed on this northern water highway; yet it developed a people to welcome the Apostolic teachings after

they had been corrupted in the countries of the Mediterranean. Luther's writings, so heartily welcomed by all the Scandinavians, meant that the religion of those writings from its very birth should be a, world-leavening influence. This was also Scriptural, for the Gospel, not a corrupted Gospel, but the Gospel. — that is, the whole, pure, simple Gospel, shall be preached in all the world, Mat. 24:14. The Germans developed Protestantism intensively in the center of Catholic Europe, while the Scandinavians developed it extensively on the water.

Imagine the joy of our brave Asiatic forefathers as they first discovered water after a long journey by foot over Asiatic plains. The Baltic did not check their westward course. Brave and venture some, they learned to love it. The Isles of Denmark in the water high-way east and west of the North became to the northern empire moving west what the Isles of Greece were in the Mediterranean of the south. Danish civilization, an original Teutonic product, became a pattern to England, and other lands. Copenhagen, the harbor of merchants, was its pride. The Hanseatic free spirit became a potent factor in the development of Hamburg, Luebeck, Bremen, Riga, Reval, Bergen, Stockholm, Amsterdam and London. In the center of all was Copenhagen, the Athens of the north. Its spirit extended also to the commercial centers of the Continent; Nuremburg, Augsburg, Frankfurt and Strassburg; and all these cities became centers of Protestantism largely because the seafaring Scandinavians prepared the soil. Scandinavian proper names, as Erickson, Washington, York, Norfolk, Derby, Bering Strait, etc., reveal Scandinavian influence in making the Protestant Teuton the leader of modern culture instead of the Catholic Latin.

No nation, not even the German, so universally welcomed Luther's writings as the Scandinavians, and none did more to circulate them.

As God used the world sea-power of Denmark to prepare the soil, so he used it to spread the first fruits of the Reformation to Sweden. Norway, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, which are today the most Protestant and Lutheran lands in the world. Lutheran Denmark was the first country to plant Protestantism in the East Indies and in the West Indies. In 1C.19 Hudson Bay was taken for the Danish crown, and called New Denmark, where Pastor Rasmus Jensen died February 20, 1620, "eight months before the IUIgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock." On the gold coast of Africa, Luther's disciples preached in 1059 at the Danish fort of Christiansborg, a station of the Basel Mission today. "Th*, China Pastors" on Danish ships

preached the doctrines of Luther's writings in China one hundred and fifty years before Morrison arrived. Danish Lutheran Embassy pastors were stationed in London, 1000; Dublin, 1698; Vienna, 1645; Paris, 1000; Madrid, 1753; St. Petersburg, 1743; Algiers. 1763; and, at an early date, in Naples, Warsaw, Lisbon and Smyrna. Brunnholtz, one of the Danes who became "Pennsylvania German," was the first assistant sent by Halle to H. M. Muhlenberg to whom he was an Aaron in organizing the first Lutheran Synod in America. In 1620, six years before the Dutch bought the site of New York city, the ships of Denmark developed colonial possessions in the East Indies and in 1705 carried Luther's writings with Ziegenbalg, the first Protestant missionary in India, from the university Luther made famous, being later removed from Wittenberg to Halle. Thus In the Diaspora Mission as in the Reformation and Foreign Mission movements we find the Germans and Scandinavians moving together. Why, because they are united by Luther's writings.

Luther's Writings And Our New Immigrant Problems.

Our new and greater "Immigrant Problems" as a nation bring to the American church new and greater opportunities and responsibilities. Is it possible that we should neglect our own brethren? Yes, that is possible, and hence this earnest divine exhortation, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith." Gal. 6:10.

"Let us," etc. Not we alone nor God alone, "For we are God's fellow-workers." 1 Cor. 3:9. The same Holy Spirit, who wrote here "toward all men," immediately adds, "and especially toward them who are of the household of faith." Neither blood nor language makes this family, but faith and faith alone. It Is a "household of faith." God's Word contains many like Immigrant or Diaspora Mission texts, which are a consolation and an inspiration to the Church, when the secular and religious press of the land calls attention, as with trumpet sound, to our new immigrant dangers and perils. Just recently the headlines on the first page of a "Minneapolis Daily" ran thus: "All Immigrant Records Broken. More Immigrants at New York This Year Than Ever Before. The Scandinavian Countries Show a Big Increase.

An Increase Over Last Year at New York of 74,783.” A missionary magazine for January, 1904, makes prominent the figures for all ports thus: “Immigration Record for 1903. Report of Commissioner General Frank P. Sargent, of the Bureau of Immigration, gives the aggregate of steerage immigration, 857,046. an excess over last year of 208,303 — 32 per cent. From Europe, 814,507; from Asia, 29,966; from other lands, 12,573. From Italy, 230,022, an increase of 52,247 over last year; from Austria-Hungary, 206,011, an increase of 34,022; from Russia, 136,093, an increase of 28,740; from Germany, 40,080, an increase of 11,782; from Sweden, 40,028, an increase of 15,134; from Ireland, 35,310, an increase of 6,132; from England, 20,219, an increase of 12,644. Many thought the high-water mark of 788,992 in 1882 would never be reached again. But the nation is startled by the news that the figures of 857,046 in 1903 surpassed it by 68,054. The July “Review of Reviews” in an excellent article says: “There are seventeen states of this Union and nineteen states of the German Empire and six American Republics, each of which has fewer people than the number of our immigrants last year.” The steamer “Pennsylvania” in April brought 2,731, and “Batavia” in June, 2,854. Quite respectable towns. “Not only is the volume of immigration impressive, almost appalling, but its character is arousing grave anxiety.” The changes in our immigration since 1880 is characterized thus: 1. Western to South and Eastern Europe. 2. Protestant to Catholic Europe. 3. Popular governments to absolute governments. 4. Educated to illiterate nationalities. 5. Progressive industry to primitive industry. 6. Teutonic to Latin, Slav and Semitic. 7. The Baltic nations to the Mediterranean nations. There have been several great migrations of nations in history, but that of the present excels all as to the number of nations taking part. Hebrew, Greek, Latin, as well as Teuton — the extent of territory from which it comes and over which it spreads and the transmarine distance it travels. But the practical question arises,

What Is The Relation Of The American Protestant Church To These New Problems?

A more significant one than the church or state either in America or in Europe realizes. Of the 100,000,000 Protestants on the continent of Europe, 58,000,000 are Lutherans and 8,000,000 Reformed. Gradually Americans

are learning that the British Isles are not Europe, but only one-tenth of the 400,000,000 Europeans. In earlier years, while immigration from Great Britain was in the lead, the various Churches of England, Scotland and Ireland had a special opportunity to establish themselves in North America, and they improved the opportunity nobly. Ireland has reduced its population about half by emigration and is exhausted. The Scotch and English are interested more to migrate to the British possessions. The Latin emigrants go to South America. Italy is the only Romance country that figures prominently in our immigration. Its sudden and startling increase will be temporary, being from Southern Italy, 54.26 per cent of whom are illiterates, while Northern Italy is being drained by n like movement to South America. Hence, it is said, "The source of Italian immigration must soon be reduced, like a lake drained by a bursting dam." France, Spain and Portugal are not apt to send us many of their young people. Therefore we conclude that the Teutons, Finns, Magyars and Slavs of the Continent of Europe will furnish the great bulk of our immigrants in the future, for their dam is not likely to burst.

Among these nations of the Continent Luther's writings in the original German and in translations have been working since the Reformation like leaven and seasoning the whole lump. Hence, about ten times more leave the Catholic church for the Lutheran than the Lutheran for the Catholic. These nations are drifting from the Pope toward Luther. For all the Teutons will in time philosophize them selves out of Romanism into infidelity, if they are not evangelized into Protestantism. They will not remain with Rome, anti-Teuton as it is from center to circumference. It is most natural for them to lean toward Luther, as is proved by the "Emancipation from Rome movement" in Austria. Ninety-eight per cent of the 10,000,000 people in Scandinavia and two-thirds of the German Empire, in all 40.000,000 Germans, or 50,000,000 disciples of Luther's writings. Among the Magyar-arian or Finnish races, who are like a wall north and south, dividing the Teutons from the Slavs, there are 4,500,000 disciples of Luther, 98 per cent of Finland and Esthonia, and 400,000 Magyars. Among the Finns and Esthonians neither the Reformed nor the Catholic churches are represented. Likewise among the Slavic nations the Lutheran church has n much larger following than the Reformed. In Hungary the census of 1S90 gave among the Germans 415,190 Lutherans and 27.272 Reformed; and among the Slov-
vakians 452,439 Lutherans and 10,998 Reformed.

That Luther is growing in favor among the non-Teutons of Europe is proved by a new edition of his works being printed in the Hungarian or Magyar language. The Magyar seldom emigrates, hence it is the Germans and Slavs in Hungary who come to us. In Austria the census for 1900 gave 3(15.454 Lutherans and 128,557 Reformed. Among the Poles there are 300,000 Lutherans, but few Reformed. The Slavic Protestants are as a rule faithful renders of Luther.

Just as the Reformed church had a special mission among the English and Scotch immigrants, so the Lutheran church has and will have a special work among the Germans, Scandinavians, Finns and Slavs of the continent of Europe that no other church can do, and if the followers of Luther do not do it, it will not be done. Can all branches of the Church in America and in continental Europe be made to realize this, and then brought to co-operate in response to the divine call, to do it in a manner worthy of the cause? To be sure they can, if they are only willing. Neither the Church there alone, nor here alone, can do it. Hy working together they can. Both new elements, the Finnish and Slavic, are firm in their faith and faithful readers of Luther's writings and are less likely to be influenced from their faith than the Scandinavians and Germans were, if faithful, educated, godly pastors are sent to them at once.

When the new editions of Luther's complete works appeared in German (the Walch-Halle edition, 1740-5.), and the Erlangen edition, 1826-57), they caused the preceding editions to be sold at greatly reduced prices and they became a blessing to the German Diaspora. Thus when the Walch and Erlangen editions were issued the four earlier editions, the Wittenberg (1539-59), Jena (1555-58), Altenburg (1661-64), and Leipsic (1729-40), were shipped to the German Diaspora of Russia, Austria and other lands at a nominal cost. So now the new Kaiser and the new St. Louis Walch editions have brought the old Walch and Erlangen editions within the reach of the Germans in foreign countries, so that the Germans of the World are amply supplied with Luther's complete works, and they are the only nation that is. What a blessing it would be if the Scandinavians would possess even one complete edition of Luther's writings. May God grant that it may be so soon. Here, however, in the United States, where the Germans and Scandinavians are so numerous and prosperous and their children are learning English so rapidly is a providential opportunity to make Luther's writings

serve not only the children of the German and Scandinavian Dispersion, but all English Protestants. It is the Diaspora Mission that prompts us.

The First Epistle of St. Peter Preached and Explained by Martin Luther

Introduction

BEFORE WE ENTER upon the explanation of the Epistle of St. Peter, it is necessary that we give a brief introduction or a few words of instruction in order that we may know in what esteem this Epistle is to be held and that we may grasp the right understanding of it.

In the first place we must remember that all the Apostles advocated one and the same doctrine; and it is not correct that we count or speak of four Evangelists and four Gospels, for all that the Apostles have written is one Gospel. But Gospel means nothing more nor less than a sermon or proclamation of the grace and mercy of God, merited and acquired through our Lord Jesus Christ by his death. And properly speaking it is not that which is contained in books and comprehended in the letter, but rather an oral sermon, a living word, a voice which sounds and resounds through the whole world and is proclaimed publicly so that it is heard everywhere. Hence it is furthermore not a law book that contains many good doctrines, which have hitherto been held. For it does not bid us to do certain works by which we become pious, but it makes known to us the grace of God, bestowed gratuitously and without any merit on our part; and it tells how Christ has taken our place and made satisfaction for our sins and canceled them and through his own works justifies and saves us.

Now, whoever proclaims this by preaching or writing teaches the pure Gospel, as all the Apostles did, especially St. Paul and St. Peter in their Epistles. Therefore it is all one and the same Gospel that we preach concerning Christ, although one pursues a different method and speaks in dif-

ferent words than another. For it may indeed be a short or a long discourse, and a brief or an extensive writing. But whenever it touches the point that Christ is our Saviour and we are justified and saved through faith in him without our works, then it is the same Word and the one Gospel; just as there is also only one faith and one baptism in universal Christendom, Eph. 4:5.

Thus one Apostle has written precisely what is found in the Epistles of other Apostles; but those who have advocated the most frequently and the most intensively how faith in Christ alone justifies, they are the best Evangelists. Therefore the Epistles of St. Paul are more a Gospel than Matthew, Mark and Luke. For these latter set forth more the history of the works and miracles of Christ; but the grace we have through Christ none paints forth so valiantly and so fully as St. Paul, especially in his Epistle to the Romans. And now since far more depends upon the words of Christ than upon his works and deeds, if we must be deprived of one, it were better for us to be deprived of his works and history than of his words and doctrines; and those books are justly praised the highest which treat most of the doctrines and words of our Lord Jesus Christ. For if the miracles of Christ had never been performed, and we had no knowledge of them, we would still have sufficient in his word, without which we could not have life.

Consequently this Epistle of St. Peter is one of the grandest books of the New Testament, and it is the true, pure Gospel. For Peter does also the very same thing as Paul and all the Evangelists do in that he inculcates the true doctrine of faith, how Christ has been given to us, who takes away our sins and saves us, as we shall hear.

From this you can now judge of all books and doctrines, what is Gospel and what is not. For whatever is not proclaimed in sermons and writings in harmony with the above, you may freely pass judgment upon it, that it is false, how ever good it may appear to be. This ability and power to judge all Christians have, not the Pope and Councils, who boast how they alone possess the power to pass judgment on doctrine. This is sufficient for an introduction and a preface. We will now hear the Epistle.

Chapter 1.

Analysis Of Contents By J. G. Walch.

The Superscription, Subscription and Greeting of St. Peter: the Doctrine of Faith, and the Twofold Exhortation.

I. The Superscription, Subscription And Greeting Of Peter, vs. 1-2.

A. The Superscription Includes:

1. The character of those to whom the Epistle is written. Teachers of work righteousness are no Apostles of Christ.
2. The character of those to whom this letter is addressed.
 - a. Their outward character, v. 1.
 - b. Their inner character, v. 2. In what true sanctification consists. Of the spiritual and of the Levitical cleansing and sprinkling.

B. The Subscription. 1. Its nature. 2. All doctrines not in harmony with this subscription must be suppressed.

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II. The Doctrine Of Faith, vs. 3-12.

1. The author, origin and foundation of faith, v. 3. In the work of salvation the mercy of God alone is to be praised. All believers have the same treasure and blessing.

2. What faith is and with what it has to do. Comparison of the eternal and temporal blessings, v. 4.

3. Faith, the work and power of God, v. 5.

4. Faith is accompanied by good works.

5. Faith gives the right and clear understanding of things pertaining to salvation. Of the source of work righteousness. Of the heavenly inheritance of believers.

6. Of the trial or proof of faith, vs. 6-9. a. The ground and cause of this proof, v. 6. b. To what the Christian should give heed in this trial, c. The nature of this trial, v. 7. Of the true character of the Christian life. Comparison of the joy of the world and of believers, vs. 8-9.

7. The conception and the promise of faith as set forth in the holy Scriptures, vs. 10-12.

A. In General. Of the Books of the Old Testament. a. If the books of the Old Testament are necessary for Christians, b. Of the difference in the writings of the Old Testament, c. In how far the books of the Old Testament are no longer in force and in how far they are in force.

B. In Particular, v. 10. How and why we should not believe the Pope and Councils, when they deal with us without the word of God. Of the sufferings of Christ and of his believers, v. 11b. Of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. How and why the Gospel must be apprehended by faith.

III. A Double Exhortation, vs. 13-25.

A. The first exhortation pertains to faith, vs. 13-16.

1. The true sense and understanding of this exhortation. The nature of the hypocrite. The character of true faith.

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1. The true sense and understanding of this admonition.
2. The objection to the exhortation, and the answer. The character of the true fear of God. The life of the Christian is only a sojourning for the night.
3. The motives attached to this exhortation, vs. 18-25.
 - a. The first motive, vs. 18-20. (1.) Its nature. (2.) Its use. Human righteousness is the greatest sin. (3.) How and why Peter in this motive leads us into the Scriptures. "The last time" and "the last hour."
 - b. The second motive, vs. 21-22. Of chastity. (1.) How it is a fruit of faith. (2.) How it must be constituted. (3.) In what way it is to be promoted. (4.) To what should it serve. Of the brotherhood of Christians.
 - c. The third motive, vs. 23-25. (1.) The foundation of this. (2.) The explanation of this foundation. Of the power of the divine word. Conclusion of the exposition of the first chapter.

Part 1. The Superscription, Subscription And Greeting.

vs. 1, 2. Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

This is the superscription and the subscription of the Epistle. Here at once you perceive the theme is the Gospel. The writer says he is an Apostle, which means, one sent to declare a message (Mundbote). Therefore it is correctly translated into German, a messenger, or a twelfth-messenger (Zwoelfbote), being one of twelve messengers. But since it is now understood what the Greek word Apostle means, I have not rendered it in German. But its real meaning is, one who bears a message by word of mouth; not one who delivers letters, but a more capable person who presents and advocates a cause by the word of his mouth, who in Latin is called an “Orator.”

Observe here how all who preach the doctrines of men are at once excluded. For he only is a messenger of Jesus Christ, who advocates what Christ commanded him. Does he preach anything different, then he is no messenger of Christ, and therefore he is not worthy to be heard. But if he does as Christ commissioned him to do, then it is just as if you heard Christ himself in person.

[1a.] To the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion.

This Epistle Peter wrote to the countries mentioned, formerly Christian, but now subject to the Turk; yet it may be Christians are found there today. Pontus is a large, broad country bordering on the sea. Cappadocia is near and borders on it. Galatia lies this side of them. Asia and Bithynia lie on the sea, and all are located in the East and are large countries. Paul preached in Galatia and in Asia; whether in Bithynia I do not know. In the first two countries he did not preach. Sojourners are those we call foreigners. He gives them this name because they were Gentiles or heathen. And it is mar-

velous that Peter, although known as the Apostle of the Jews, should nevertheless write here to the Gentiles. The Jews called them Proselytes, that is, associated Jews who adopted their law, but were not of a Jewish family nor of the blood of Abraham. Hence he writes to those who formerly were heathen, but now are converted to faith, and have joined the believing Jews, and he calls them “the elect sojourners,” who are surely Christians; and to these alone he writes. This is an important point, as we shall hear.

[2a.] According to the foreknowledge of God the Father.

Peter says, they are elected. How? Not by themselves, but according to the order or purpose of God. For we will not be able to raise ourselves to heaven nor create faith in ourselves. God will not permit all persons to enter heaven; he will very definitely identify his own. Here the human doctrine of free will and of our own ability avails nothing any longer. It does not depend upon our will but upon the will and election of God.

[2b.] In sanctification of the Spirit.

God has foreknown us, that we should be holy, and moreover that we should become spiritually holy. The precious words “holy” and “spiritual” have also been perverted by the gluttonous preachers, in that they have called their state, that is, the state of priests and monks holy and spiritual, and have thus scandalously robbed us of these noble, precious words, as also of the word “Church,” since with them the Pope and the bishops are the Church; while they do whatever they please, saying the Church has commanded it. Holiness does not consist in being monks, priests and nuns, and in wearing the tonsure and cowl. It is a spiritual word meaning that we are inwardly from the heart holy in our spirit before God. And this he has said for the purpose to show that nothing is holy, except the holiness God works in us. For the Jews had in their day much outward or ceremonial holiness; it was, however, no genuine holiness. Peter will now say: God has foreknown you to the end that you should be truly holy; as Paul also says in Eph. 4:24: “In righteousness and holiness of truth,” that is, in genuine and well-founded holiness, for the outward holiness as the Jews had, avails nothing before God.

The Scriptures thus call us holy, while we still live here on the earth, if we believe. But the Papists have robbed Protestants of this name, and say: We are not to be holy, the saints in heaven only are holy. Hence we are compelled to reclaim this noble name. You must be holy; but you are to so govern yourself that you do not think you are holy of yourself or through your own merit; but because you have the word of God, because heaven is yours and because you are truly righteous and have become holy through Christ. This you must confess if you would be a Christian. For it would be the greatest dishonor and blasphemy of the name of Christ, if we took from the honor due to Christ's blood, in that it is this that washes away our sins, or from the faith that this blood sanctifies us. Therefore you must believe and confess that you are holy; but through this blood, not through your own excellence, to the extent that for it you would be willing to give up life and all you possess, and be ready for whatever may meet you.

[2c.] Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

By this, he says, we are made holy, if we are obedient, and believe the word of Christ, and are sprinkled with his blood. And here Peter speaks in a different manner from Paul. But it is in substance the same as when Paul says that we are saved through faith in Christ; for faith makes us obedient and submissive to Christ and his word. For to obey the word of God and the word of Christ is the same thing, and to be "sprinkled by his blood" is the same as to believe. For it is hard for human nature, hostile to it and exceedingly humiliating, to submit to Christ, give up all its own possessions, and account them contemptible and sinful. But yet it must be brought into subjection.

Of sprinkling, Psalm "Miserere Domine," 51:7, also speaks: "Lord, sprinkle (or purify) me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." It refers to the law of Moses, from which Peter has taken it, and he discloses Moses to our view, 2 Cor. 3:14, and leads us into the Scriptures. When Moses built the tabernacle, he took the blood of bullocks and sprinkled the tent and all the people, Ex. 24:5f. [Heb. 9:19.] But this sprinkling sanctifies not in the spirit, but only outwardly; therefore there must be a spiritual purification. [Heb. 9:13-14.] That was an outward holiness, one that pertains to the flesh, and is of no avail before God. And so God, by this sprinkling, has typified the spiritual sprinkling. Hence Peter said, the Jews in their holiness that was

outward were held by the people as righteous, and persons of a pure life. But you are reputed base, being Gentiles, yet you have a better sprinkling; you are sprinkled in the Spirit, that you may be pure from within. The Jews were sprinkled outwardly with the blood of bullocks, but we are sprinkled inwardly in the conscience, so that the heart is made pure and joyful.

Thus the Gentiles are Gentiles no longer, the righteous Jews with their sprinkling are no more righteous, but all is reversed. There must be a sprinkling which converts us and makes us spiritually minded. But this sprinkling is to preach that Christ has shed his blood, and has ascended to his Father, and intercedes, saying, "Beloved Father; behold my blood which I have shed for these sinners." If you believe this, you are sprinkled. Thus you see the right method of preaching. If all the Popes, monks and priests were to fuse all the material of their preaching into one mass, they would not even then teach and present as much as Peter does in these few words.

Thus you have the subscription of the Epistle, in which he indicates his office and what he preaches, as you have now heard. For this alone is the Gospel, and all else that does not accord with it is to be trodden under foot, and all other books are to be avoided in which you find some fine pretense of works and prayers and indulgence that does not teach the same doctrine, and is not confessedly grounded on it. All Papal books have not a letter of this obedience, of this blood and sprinkling. Now follows the greeting to those to whom he writes.

[2d.] Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

Peter adopts here the mode of greeting of the Apostle Paul, although not fully, and it is as much as though he had said, ye have now peace and grace, but yet not in perfection; therefore ye must continue to increase in them till the old Adam die. "Grace" is God's favor, which now begins in us, but which must continue to work and grow even till death. Whoever confesses and believes that he has a gracious God, possesses him, while his heart gains peace also, and he fears neither the world nor the devil; for he knows that God, who controls all things, is his friend, and will deliver him from death, hell and all evil; therefore his conscience has peace and joy. Such is the desire of Peter for those that believed, and it is a true Christian greeting with which all Christians might well greet one another.

Thus we have the superscription, with the greeting; now he begins the Epistle, and says:

Part 2. The Doctrine Of Faith.

[3-9.] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

In this preface you perceive a truly apostolic address and introduction to the matter in hand, and as I have said already [in the introduction, 33-35 pp.], this is the model of a noble Epistle. For he has already exhibited and made manifest what Christ is, and what we have attained through him, when he says, that God hath begotten us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Christ. Also that all good things are bestowed upon us by the Father, not for any desert of ours, but from pure mercy. These are true gospel words which are to be preached. But how little, God save us, of this kind of preaching is to be met with in all sorts of books, even those that must be considered the best. As those written by St. Jerome and St. Augustine. How little agreement is there with this passage! We must preach Jesus Christ, that he died and rose again, and why he died and rose again, that through such preaching men might believe on him and be saved. That is preaching the true Gospel. Whatever is not preached in this manner is not the Gospel, and it matters not who does it.

This is now the grand summary of these words: Christ, through his resurrection, has brought us to the Father; and so also Peter would with them bring us to the Father by the Lord Christ, and he sets him forth as Mediator between God and us. Hitherto we have been taught to call upon the saints; that they are our intercessors with God, while moreover we have had recourse to our dear Virgin, and have set her up as Mediatress, and have let Christ go as an angry judge. This the Scripture does not do; it goes further and exalts Christ; teaching that he is our Mediator, by whom we come to the Father. Oh! it is a blessing infinitely vast, bestowed upon us through

Christ, that we may go into the presence of the Father and claim the inheritance of which Peter here speaks.

These words also well exhibit the feelings the Apostle had, as he began with the deepest reverence to praise the Father, and would have us adore and bless him for the sake of the infinite riches he has bestowed upon us, in that he has begotten us again, and this too, before we had desired or sought it; so nothing is to be praised but pure mercy. Hence we cannot make our boast of any works, but confess that we hold all that we have of God's compassion. There is no longer the law and vengeance before us, as heretofore, when he terrified the Jews so that they were forced to flee, but dared not go toward the mount, Gen. 19:16f. He vexes and chastises us no more, but shows us the greatest friendship, creates us anew, and appoints us, not to do some work or works, but produces within us an entirely new birth and new being, that we should be something different from what we were before, when we were Adam's children, namely, such as are transplanted from Adam's heritage into the heritage of God; so that God is our Father, we are his children, and thus also heirs of all the good he possesses.

Observe how valiantly the Scriptures present this matter; it is all a living, not a vain, matter in which we are concerned. Since we are thus begotten again, the children and heirs of God, we are equal in honor and dignity with St. Paul, St. Peter, our blessed Virgin, and all the saints. For we have the treasure and all good things from God just as richly as they; for it was just as necessary for them to be begotten again as for us, therefore they have nothing more than all other Christians.

[3.] Unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

That we continue to live on earth is only to the end that we may be of service to others. Otherwise, it were better that God should have taken away our breath and let us die as soon as we were baptized and had begun to believe. But he suffers us to live here in order that we may bring others also to believe, doing to them as he has done to us. But while we remain on earth, we must live in hope. For although we are assured that through faith we have all the good things of God, since faith surely brings with it the new birth, the adoption, the inheritance, and makes them ours, still you do not as yet behold them; but the matter exists in hope, while it is removed as it were so that we may not see it with our eyes. This he calls "the hope of

life;” that is, by a Hebrew phrase, as though for sinful man we should say, “man of sin,” 2 Thess. 2:3. We call it “a living hope;” that is, one in which we certainly expect, and may be assured of, eternal life. But it is concealed, and a veil is drawn over it, that we see it not. It can only be apprehended in the heart and by faith, as John writes in his Epistle, 1 John, 3:2: “Now are we the children 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 behold him as he is.”

For this life, and the life to come, cannot be commingled, cannot consist with one another, so that we should eat, drink, sleep, watch, and do other works of the flesh which this life renders necessary, and at the same time enjoy our full salvation. Therefore we can never arrive at eternal life unless we die, and this present life passes away. Thus, as long as we are here we must stand in hope, until it be God’s pleasure that we should behold the blessings that are ours.

But how do we attain to this living hope? “By the resurrection of Christ from the dead,” he says. I have often asserted that no one can believe on God except through a mediation, since none of us can plead for ourselves before God, inasmuch as we are all children of wrath [Eph. 2:3]; but we must have another through whom we may come before God, who shall intercede for us and reconcile us to God. But there is no other mediator than the Lord Christ, who is the Son of God. Therefore that is not a true faith which is held by the Turks and Jews, namely, “I believe that God created heaven and earth.” Just so do also the devils believe, but it does not help them, James 2:19. For they venture to present themselves before God without having Christ as their mediator.

So Paul speaks in the fifth chapter of Romans, “We have access to God by faith,” not through ourselves, but “through Christ,” Rom. 5:1-2. Therefore we must bring Christ with us, must come with him, must satisfy God with him, and do all we have to transact with God through him, and in his name. That is the thought implied here by Peter, and he would also say, we surely expect this life, although we are still on earth. But all comes in no other way than through the resurrection of Christ, since he has arisen and ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God. For this purpose he ascended, namely, in order to bestow upon us his Spirit, that we might be born again and now through him come to the Father and say, “Behold, I come before thee and pray, not because I rely on my own request, but be-

cause my Lord Christ has gone before me and is become my intercessor.” These are all glowing words wherever there is a heart to believe them; where there is not, all is cold and unimpressive.

But by this one may judge what is truly Christian doctrine or Christian preaching. For if we wish to preach the Gospel, then in short the preaching must be about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Whoever does not preach that is no true Apostle. For that is the chief article of our faith. Hence one can indeed feel that the Epistle of James is no true apostolic Epistle, for it contains scarcely a letter on these things. [See Luther’s Preface to the Epistle of St. Peter in this volume of our Standard Edition of Luther’s Works in English. Also St. Louis Walch, vol. 12, 581.] The greatest force or importance lies in this article of faith. For were there no resurrection, then we would have no consolation and no hope, and all the rest that Christ did and suffered would have been in vain. [1 Cor. 15:17.]

Therefore one should teach after this manner: You perceive that Christ has died for you, has taken upon himself sin, death and hell, humbled himself under them, and in no respect were they able to crush him, for he was too strong for them; but he has risen from beneath them, and has vanquished all, and brought them in subjection to himself; and to this end, that you might be made free from them, and made to triumph over them. If you believe this, then you possess it. All these things we could not effect by our own power; hence it was necessary that Christ should do it, otherwise there would never have been any need for him to come down from heaven. Therefore it cannot be otherwise, if one preaches human works, than that his preaching will find no entrance and it cannot be understood. Oh, so thoroughly as we Christians should know this, so clear should this Epistle be to us!

[4a.] Unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

That is, we hope not for a blessing or an inheritance that is far off. But we live in the hope of an inheritance that is just at hand, and that is imperishable as well as undefiled and unfading. This blessing is ours henceforth and forever, although we do not now behold it. These are powerful and excellent words; into whosever mind they enter, he will, I imagine, not be greatly anxious about worldly goods and pleasures. How can it be possible that one

who assuredly believes this, should yet cleave to perishable possessions and lusts?

For if worldly good is presented in contrast with this, it is at once seen how all passes away and endures but for a time; but this alone lasts forever and will never change. Besides, that is all impure, and defiles us, for there is no man so devout that worldly prosperity will not soil him. But this inheritance alone is pure; whoever has it is ever undefined; it will not fade; it will not wither and rot. All that is on earth, be it as hard as stone and iron, is yet changeable and has no permanence. As soon as man grows old, he becomes deformed and ugly. But this does not change, it abides forever, fresh and green. On earth there is no pleasure that will not at length become irksome, as we see men grow weary of all things; but with this blessing such is not the case. All this we possess only in Christ, through the mercy of God, if we believe, and it is freely bestowed upon us. For how is it possible that we poor wretches should be able to deserve through our own works such good which no human reason or sense can grasp?

[4b.] Reserved in heaven for you.

It is certain that this imperishable, undefiled and unfading inheritance is ours. It is only for a little while concealed from us, until we close our eyes and are buried, when we shall surely find and behold it if we believe.

[5a.] Who by the power of God are guarded (kept) through faith unto a salvation.

We wait for this priceless inheritance, he says, in the hope to which we have attained through faith. For this is their order of succession: From the word follows faith, from faith the new birth, from the new birth we pass to hope, so that we certainly expect and are assured of the blessing. Therefore Peter has here asserted in a truly Christian manner, that it must take place by faith, not by our own works.

Moreover Peter significantly says here, “Ye are guarded by the power of God, unto salvation.” But there are many people who, if they hear the Gospel, namely, that faith alone, irrespective of works, justifies, rush plump forward at once and say, “Yes! I believe, too!” They think the thoughts they themselves conceive, is faith. Yet we have also been taught from Scripture

that we cannot do the least without God's Spirit; how then should we be able by our own power to do the highest work, namely, believe? Wherefore such thoughts are nothing else but a dream and a fiction. God's power must be present and work in us, in order that we may believe; as Paul also says, Eph. 1:17f., "God give unto you a spirit of wisdom to know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of his mighty power," etc. Not only is it God's will, but a power of God, so that he lets it cost him much. For if God produces faith in men, it is certainly as great a work as though he recreated heaven and earth.

Therefore those fools know not what they say, who ask, How can faith alone do it, seeing many believe who yet perform no good work? For they imagine their own vain dream is faith, and that faith may exist without good works. But we say, just as Peter says, faith is a divine power; when God produces faith, man must be born in another way and become a new creature; good works flowing from a purified nature must follow faith. So that we dare not say to a Christian who has faith, Do this or that work, for he performs of himself and unbidden nothing but good works. But this must be said to him, that he is not to deceive himself with a false, imaginary faith. Wherefore away with those rag-tag babblers (*Lumpenwaescher*), who say a great deal on the subject that is nothing after all but mere froth and vain prating. Of them Paul also speaks, 1 Cor. 4:10-20, "I will come to you shortly and will know not the word of them that are puffed up, but the power; for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Wherever this power of God is wanting, there is neither genuine faith nor good works. So they are mere liars, who pride themselves on their Christian name and faith and yet lead a wicked life. For if it were God's power, they would certainly be otherwise.

But what does Peter mean when he says, "Ye are guarded by the power of God unto salvation?" This is his meaning: So tender and precious is that which pertains to the faith which the power of God, that is with us and fills us, produces in us, that he gives us a correct, clear understanding of all things that pertain unto salvation; so that we can judge all that is on the earth, and say, this doctrine is true, that is false; this conduct is right, that is not; this work is good and acceptable, that is evil. And whatever such a person resolves, is just and true, for he cannot be deceived; for he will be guarded, and preserved, and will remain a judge of everything that is taught and preached.

Again wherever faith and this power of God are wanting, there is nothing but error and blindness; there reason suffers itself to be led hither and thither, from one work to another, for it would gladly reach heaven by its own works, and is ever imagining thus, “Yes! this work will bring you to heaven: do it and you shall be saved.” Hence there are so many chapters, cloisters, altars, priests, monks and nuns in the world. Into such blindness does God permit the unbelieving to fall. But he keeps us, who believe, in a sound mind and in the true knowledge, so that we fall not into condemnation, but attain unto salvation.

[5b.] Ready to be revealed in the last time.

That is, the inheritance appointed for them was long ago acquired, and prepared from the foundation of the world, but now is hidden, as yet covered, reserved and sealed. But this is only for a little while, when in a moment it shall be opened and revealed, so that we shall behold it.

[6.] Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials (temptations).

Are you a Christian, and do you look for this inheritance or this salvation? then you must cleave to this alone, and despise all that is upon earth, and confess that all worldly reason, wisdom and righteousness are nothing. This the world will not be able to bear; therefore you are to expect that men shall condemn you and persecute you. Thus Peter joins faith, hope and the holy cross together, for one follows upon the other.

And here the Apostle gives us a source of consolation in case we suffer and are persecuted. This grief shall last but a little while; afterward ye shall be exceeding glad, for this salvation is already prepared for you; wherefore be patient under your sufferings. This is moreover a truly Christian consolation, not such comfort as human doctrines give, which attempt nothing more than to find relief from outward ill. I speak not of bodily comfort, he seems to say; it is no real injury that ye have to endure outward ill, only go forward vigorously and be steadfast; inquire not how you may be free from the trouble, but think with yourself; ‘My inheritance is prepared and held out to me; it is only a short time before my suffering must cease.’ Thus we

should lay aside temporal consolations, and over against them place the eternal consolation we have in God.

Moreover it is also well to observe here that the Apostle adds “If need be.” Just as he will also say later in 1 Pet. 3:17: “If the will of God should so will.” There are many people who would storm heaven and enter at once, hence they impose a cross upon themselves for their own fancied good; for reason will do nothing but propose forever its own works. It is not God’s pleasure that we should select our own works, but wait for whatever God imposes upon us and ordains for us, that we may go and follow wherever he leads us; hence you are not to run after your own pleasure. In case it should be by God’s appointment that you are to suffer, accept it and comfort yourself with the salvation that is not temporal but eternal.

[7-8a.] That the proof (trial) of your faith being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation, of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

To this end should the cross and all kinds of reverses serve, namely, to distinguish between false and true faith. God lays his hand upon us therefore, to try our faith and reveal it to the world, that others may be induced to believe, and we also be praised and honored. For just as we exalt God, so will he in return exalt, esteem and honor us, insomuch that the false hypocrites, who do not go to heaven in the right way, shall be put to shame.

All Scripture likens temptation to fire. Thus Peter here compares the gold that is tried by fire to the trial of faith by temptation and suffering. The fire does not take from the gold, but it makes it pure and bright, so all dross is removed. Hence God has imposed the cross upon all Christians, that they might thereby be purified. And it has been well said, let faith remain pure as the word is pure, so that we depend on the word alone, and trust to nothing else. For we need such a fire and cross as this daily, because of the old corrupt Adam.

This is done for the good of the Christian life that it may continually grow and become more holy; for if we are led to faith through the preaching of the Gospel, then shall we be justified and grow in holiness; but while we remain in the flesh we can never be fully purified. Therefore God throws us into the midst of the fire, that is, into suffering, shame and calamity, so that we may become more and more purified until we die. To this we cannot at-

tain by any works of our own. For how can an outward work make the heart inwardly clean? Moreover if faith is to be tried or purified, all that is additional and false must be separated and removed. Thence will follow glorious honors, praise and thanksgiving when Christ shall be revealed. Therefore it follows:

[8b-9.] Yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

An unspeakably glorious joy shall it be, says Peter, and in addition to the joy we have honor and praise. The world has a kind of joy from which it receives nothing but disgrace, and of which we are compelled to be ashamed. Here Peter has evidently spoken of future joy, and there is scarcely so clear a passage of Scripture on the subject of the future joy as this one, and still he finds himself unable to express it. This is one point of the introduction, in which the Apostle has shown what faith in Christ is, and how it must be tried and purified by reverses and sufferings when God appoints them for us. Now follows further how this faith is constituted and promised in the Scriptures.

[10-12.] Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into.

Peter here leads us back into the holy Scriptures that we may see in them how God keeps what he has promised to us, not because of any human merit, but out of pure grace. For the aim of all Scripture is to tear us away from our own works and bring us to faith. And it is necessary for us to study faithfully in the Scriptures, in order that we may be well assured of our faith. In the same way Paul also leads us into the Scriptures, when in Rom. 1:2 he says: That God promised the Gospel afore through his prophets in the holy Scriptures; also in Rom. 3:21, that faith by which man is justified was witnessed by the law and the prophets. Likewise we read in Acts 17:2f. how Paul preached faith to the Thessalonians, led them into the

Scriptures and explained them, and how they daily referred to the Scriptures and searched whether they contained the truth as Paul had preached it. [Acts 17:11.] Therefore we should do the same, go backward and learn to establish the New Testament out of the Old. Then we will see in them the promise of Christ, as Christ himself also says in John 5:39: “Ye search the Scriptures for these are they which bear witness of me.” Also, verse 46: “If ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me.”

Therefore we should let vain babblers go, who despise the Old Testament and say it is no longer needed, since from it alone we must derive the foundation of our faith. For God sent the prophets to the Jews to the end, that they should bear witness of the Christ that was to come. Therefore the Apostles also everywhere convinced and convicted the Jews out of their own Scriptures that this was the Christ.

Thus the books of Moses and the prophets are also the Gospel, since they first preached and wrote of Christ the things the Apostles afterward preached and wrote. Yet there is a distinction between them. For although both, as to the letter, have been written on paper, yet the Gospel, or the New Testament, cannot, properly speaking, be said to have been written, but to have been embodied in the living voice which published it, and was heard generally through out the world. But that it was also written, took place later from the abundant living testimony and preaching. But the Old Testament was composed only in writing, and is therefore called the letter; and the Apostles give Scripture the same name, as it only pointed to the Christ that was to come. But the Gospel is a living proclamation of Christ who has already come.

Further, there is also a distinction among the books of the Old Testament. In the first place there are the five books of Moses, the chief part of the Scriptures, which are especially called the Old Testament. Then come the books of narration and of history, where examples of all kinds are recorded, whether of those who held or rejected the law of Moses. In the third place, there are the prophets that are based on Moses, and what he has written they have in clearer language and more fully painted forth and explained. But the thought of all the prophets and of Moses is one and the same.

What men say as to the Old Testament being abolished and laid aside is to be understood in this manner. In the first place, there is the distinction between the Old and New Testaments, as we have said, the Old prefigured

Christ, but the New gives us now what was promised first in the Old and pointed out to us in types. But these types have now ceased, because that which they were to serve has now come to an end, and that which was promised by them has been accomplished and fulfilled. So now there should be no further distinctions of food, clothing, place and time. All are alike in Christ, in whom all has been fulfilled. The Jews have not been saved by this, for it was not given them to the end that it should make them holy, but to foreshadow to them the Christ who was to come.

Moreover God introduced a twofold government in the Old Testament; an external and an internal. There he himself undertook to rule his people, both inwardly in the heart, and outwardly in their person and in their property. Therefore he gave them such a variety of laws, commingled one kind with another. Hence it was under the government that pertained to the person, that a man might give his wife a bill of divorce and put her away, Deut. 24:1. But to the spiritual government belonged the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Lev. 19:18. But now he rules in us only spiritually, through Christ; while the government that pertains to the body and the outward state, he maintains through the agency of civil ordinances. Therefore when Christ came the external ceased, and God gives us direction no more as to the outward person, time and place; but he rules us only spiritually through the word, so that we may direct all that is outward, and be bound in nothing that pertains to the body. But what pertains to his spiritual government has not been abolished, but stands forever, now as then; the law of love to God and our neighbor, contained in the books of Moses, which God will still have maintained, and by which he will condemn all the unbelieving.

Moreover the figures as to their spiritual import remain; that is, whatever is signified by the outward figures, although the outward part has been done away. Thus that a man should separate from his wife and send her away, because of adultery, is a figure and type which even now is spiritually fulfilled. For thus also God rejected the Jews when they would not believe on Christ, and chose the Gentiles. So also he does still; if any one will not walk in the faith, he suffers him to be excommunicated from the Christian Church, that he may be led to reform.

Similar to this also it is, that a woman after her husband's death must take her husband's brother, and bear him children, and he must suffer himself to be called by his name, and must take charge of his possessions, Deut.

25:5f. Although this has now ceased, or rather become invalid, so that it may be done or neglected without sin, it is a figure which even now has a significance in respect to Christ. For he is our brother, for us he has died and ascended to heaven, and has commanded us that we, through the Gospel, should plant the seed in our souls and make it fruitful, be named after him, and manage his possessions. Therefore I dare not boast that I convert men, but it must all be ascribed to the Lord Christ. It is the same with all the other figures of the Old Testament, which it would be too tedious to specify.

But all in the Old Testament that is not external, is still in force; so all passages in the prophets concerning faith and love. Wherefore Christ also confirms it in Matt. 7:12: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets." Besides, Moses and the prophets testify of the future Christ. As, when I preach of Christ that he is the only Saviour by whom all must be saved, I may quote to sustain my assertion the passage in Gen. 22:18: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Thence I draw a living voice and language. Through Christ, who is Abraham's seed, must all men be blessed. From that it follows, we were all cursed and condemned in Adam; wherefore it is necessary for us to believe on the Seed, if we would escape condemnation. Out of such passages may we lay the foundation of our faith, and let it rest there and there see how they bear witness of Christ, so that our faith may thus be strengthened. That is what Peter intends now by the words, when he says:

[10.] Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.

In like manner Paul also speaks, toward the close of the Epistle to the Romans, of the revelation of the mystery which was hidden from all ages of the world, but is now revealed and made known through the writings of the prophets, Rom. 16:25-26. And so you find in the New Testament many passages quoted from the prophets, by which the Apostles show that all has come to pass just as the prophets foretold. This Christ himself proves from the prophet Isaiah, Is. 35:5, in Matt. 11:5: "The blind see, the lame walk," etc. As though he had said, just as it was written there it is taking place now. So also we read in Acts 9:22, of Paul, and in Acts 18:28, of Apollos, how

they confounded the Jews and convinced them out of the Scriptures that this was the Christ. For whatever the prophets had foretold had now all come to pass in Christ. So Acts 15:14f. the Apostles show how the Gospel must be preached to the heathen that they might believe. This all has likewise come to pass, and been put in motion, so that the Jews might be convinced and compelled to confess, that all had taken place just as the Scriptures long before had foretold.

[11a.] Searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto.

Thus Peter would say, although the prophets have not particularly known of a set and definite time, yet they have in general testified to all the circumstances of the time and place; as, how Christ should suffer, and what death he should die, and that the Gentiles should believe on him; so that one might certainly know by these signs when the time had come. The prophet Daniel has approached still nearer, but yet he speaks somewhat obscurely, as to when Christ should suffer and die, when this or that should take place. So also, they had a sure prophecy that the kingdom of the Jews should cease before Christ came. But the day and exact time this should come to pass was not fixed. For it was enough when this time came, that they should there by know for a surety that Christ was not far off. The prophet Joel also prophesied of the time when the Holy Spirit should come, when he says, 'I will in the last days pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,' etc., Joel 2:28, which passage Peter quotes in Acts 2:17, and shows that he speaks of that very time and of the particular persons.

From all this you perceive how with great diligence the Apostles exhibit everywhere the ground and confirmation of their preaching and doctrine. The Councils and the Popes now reverse this order, and would deal with us apart from the Scripture, commanding us by obedience to the Church and by the terrors of excommunication, that we should believe them. The Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and were certain they were sent by Christ and preached the true Gospel; yet they humbled themselves and did not ask men to believe them, unless they conclusively proved from Scripture that it was just as they said, so that the mouth of the unbelieving was stopped so completely that they could not raise any further objections. And should we believe those grossly unlearned heads who do not preach God's

word at all, and can do nothing else but cry continually, ‘Surely the fathers cannot have been in error, and this has been decided now long ago, so that it must no more be a question?’ But we can clearly prove from the Scriptures that no one can be saved but he who believes on Christ, and against this they can say nothing. But on their side they will never be able to prove to us from Scripture that he is to be condemned who does not fast on this or that day. Therefore we ought not and shall not believe them. Now Peter says further:

[11b.] When it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them.

This may be understood of both kinds of suffering, that which Christ suffers and that which we suffer. Paul calls the sufferings of all Christians the sufferings of Christ. [Col. 1:24.] For just as the faith, the name, the word and the work of Christ are mine, by virtue of my believing on him, so his suffering is also mine, for the reason that I suffer also for his sake. Thus will the sufferings of Christ be daily fulfilled in Christians, until the end of the world.

Now our consolation in all sufferings is that we know all we suffer is in fellowship with Christ, also that he accounts it all as his own suffering; and that we are assured, that speedily after suffering glory shall follow. But we must also understand how Christ was not glorified before he suffered, so that we are to bear our cross with him first, that afterward we may share his joy.

All we now preach, he says, the prophets previously foretold and described in the most explicit manner, because the Holy Spirit revealed it to them. That we so imperfectly understand the prophets is, because we do not understand their language, since they have otherwise spoken clearly enough. Therefore they who are acquainted with the language, and have the Spirit of God, which all believers have, to them it is not difficult of apprehension since they know the scope of all Scripture. But if any one does not understand their language, and has not the spirit, or a Christian apprehension, it might seem to him as though the prophets were drunken and full of new wine. If however we must be wanting in one, the spirit without the language is better than the language without the spirit. The prophets have a peculiar phraseology, but the sentiment is the same the Apostles preach, for

both have spoken extensively of the suffering and of the glory of Christ, as well as of those who believe in him. As when David speaks of Christ, Ps. 22:6, “I am a worm and no man,” he shows how deeply he is cast down and humiliated in his suffering. Likewise also, he writes of his people and of the affliction of Christians, in Ps. 44:22: “We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

[12a.] To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven.

That is, the prophets possessed enough to know in that they left it behind them on record, they did it out of love to us, became our servants, and thus ministered to us, that we might go to their school and be taught the same lesson. There we now have an argument to show that our faith should grow stronger, and we be enabled to arm and fortify ourselves against all false doctrine.

[12b.] Which things angels desire to look into.

Such great things have the Apostles declared unto us through the Holy Spirit, who descended upon them from heaven, that even the angels would gladly look into them. When this Spirit opens our eyes and makes us see what the Gospel is, we shall have an appetite for it and a joy in it. We cannot behold it with our bodily eyes, but must believe that we are partakers and fellow-heirs of the righteousness, truth, salvation and all the blessings God has to bestow. For since he has given us Christ his only Son, the highest good, he will also through him give us all good things, riches and treasures, in which the angels of heaven have all joy and delight. All this is offered to us through the Gospel, and if we believe we shall also have a like pleasure in them. But our delight in them cannot be as perfect as that of the angels, so long as we live on earth; but it is a good beginning in us, if we experience through faith something of it. In heaven it is so great that no human heart can conceive it; but if we reach that place we shall ourselves experience it.

Thus you see how Peter teaches us to arm and equip ourselves with the Scriptures. For hitherto he has described what it is to preach the Gospel, and

has shown how it has heretofore been preached by the prophets; and so it should be today, and it should still be preached in like manner. Now he proceeds, and admonishes us in this chapter to cleave to the same preaching of the Gospel by faith, and follow after it by love, and hence he says:

Part 3. A Double Exhortation.

A. An Exhortation To Christian Faith.

[13-16.] Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance: but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, ye shall be holy; for I am holy.

Here is an exhortation to faith, and the sense is this: While such things are preached to you and bestowed upon you through the Gospel as the angels would rejoice and be delighted to behold, rely on them, and fix your confidence in them with all firmness, so that it shall be a real faith, and not a painted or fictitious fancy or dream.

[13a.] Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind.

Peter speaks here of a spiritual girding of the mind, just as one girds his sword to the loins of his body. This girding Christ also enforced, Luke 12:35, where he says, "Let your loins be girded about." In some places the Scriptures speak of the "loins" with reference to bodily lust; but here Peter speaks of the loins of the spirit. As to the body, Scripture speaks of the loins with reference to natural generation from the father; as we read, Gen. 49:10, that from the loins of Judah Christ should come. Likewise the bodily girding of the loins is the same as chastity, for Isaiah 11:5 says, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faith the girdle of his reins." That is, only by faith is wicked lust subdued and restrained.

But this spiritual girding, of which the Apostle speaks, proceeds thus: As a virgin is pure and inviolate in body, so is the soul spiritually inviolate through faith, by which it becomes Christ's bride. But if it falls from faith into false doctrine, it must be brought to shame. Hence Scripture uniformly calls idolatry and unbelief, adultery and whoredom; that is, when the soul relies on human doctrines, and thus lets go its hold on faith and Christ. This Peter here forbids, in that he calls on us to gird up the loins of our mind; as

though he would say, ye have now heard the Gospel and have come to believe, therefore see to it that ye abide in it, and do not suffer yourselves to be drawn away by false doctrine, so that ye waver not nor run hither and thither with your works.

And here he adopts a peculiar mode of speech, different from that of Paul, where he speaks of “the loins of your mind.” He calls that “mind” which we speak of as “disposition”; like when I say, “This seems to me right,” and as Paul speaks in Rom. 3:28, “We reckon therefore, so we are disposed.” In this he refers especially to faith, and would say: ye have attained unto a correct apprehension that we are justified by faith; abide now in that mind; gird it up well, hold fast to it and suffer not yourselves to be torn from it; then it will be well with thee. For many false teachers shall arise and set up human doctrines that they may pervert your mind and loose the girdle of your faith; wherefore be warned and take it well to heart. The hypocrites who rest on their own works, and hence lead an honorable, exemplary life, are thus minded, that God must bring them to heaven for their works’ sake; they are puffed up, become proud, abiding in their own opinion and blindness, like the Pharisees, Luke 15:10f. Of them also Mary speaks in the Magnificat, where she uses the same word that stands here in Peter, “He hath scattered the proud in the imagination or disposition of their heart.” Luke 1:51. That is, in their own mind.

[13b.] Be sober.

To be sober is of service to the outward body, and is the chief work of faith. For though a man has been justified, he is still not entirely free from evil lusts; faith has indeed begun to subdue the flesh, but this is ever bestirring itself, and likewise running riot in all sorts of lusts, which would gladly break forth again and act after their own will. Therefore the spirit has a daily task to restrain and subdue it, and must charge itself with this work incessantly, and take care of the flesh that it does not destroy faith. Therefore persons deceive themselves, who indeed say they have faith, and imagining this is enough live thenceforth according to their own caprice. Where the faith is genuine it must control the body and hold it in check, so that it does not do what it lusts after. Hence Peter says we should be sober.

Yet he would not have us destroy the body or weaken it too much, as we find many do who have fasted to madness and tortured themselves to death.

St. Bernard, even, continued for a long time in this folly, although he was otherwise a holy man, for he mortified his body to such an extent that his breath was offensive and he could not be tolerated in company. Yet he afterwards forsook his folly, and charged his brethren not to inflict injury upon the body; for he saw very well he had rendered himself unfit to be of service to his brethren. Therefore Peter requires nothing more than that we be sober; that is, mortify the body as long as we feel it is too wanton; for he fixes no definite time how long we should fast, as the Pope has done, but leaves it to each individually to fast, so that he remain sober and burden not the body with gluttony; to the end that he remain in possession of his reason and senses, and mortify the body as it may be necessary. For it is utterly useless to impose one and the same command upon a whole congregation and community since we are so unlike one another; one strong, another weak in body; so that one must mortify it more, another less, provided the body is to remain sound and in the best state for action.

But that another multitude of persons here fall into the mistake and rush along, determined that they will not fast and that they can eat flesh, is also not right. For these persons reject the Gospel also, and are unprofitable as well as the others; doing no more than condemn the Pope's command, unwilling to gird up their mind and spirit, as Peter says, leaving the body to its own caprice, that it may remain corrupt and wanton. It is well to fast; but that only can be called true fasting, when we give the body no more food than is needful for it, that it may retain its health and endure labor and watchfulness; that the old ass does not become too obstinate, and going on the ice to dance break a bone; but continuing to be subject to control, following the spirit; not after the manner of those who, when they fast, fill themselves so full of fish and the best wine that their bellies are puffed out. Thus Peter directs us to be sober, and now says further:

[13c.] And set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you.

The Christian faith is of such a nature that it plants itself freely on the word of God with entire confidence, ventures freely upon it and goes joyfully forward. Therefore Peter says: The loins of your mind are girt about, and your faith is genuine, when you risk all thus on the Word, let it cost what it will; property, honor, limb or life. Thus has he truly with these words beautifully described a genuine and unfeigned faith. It must not be a corrupt and sleepy

faith, and be only a dream; but a living, active reality, that we may with all deliberation devote ourselves to it and cleave to the Word; so that, let God permit it to go with us as it may, we will yet press onward through good and ill. Thus when I shall come to die I must be prompt and fresh in exercising my faith in Christ, lift up my head boldly, and rely upon the word of God which cannot deceive me. Then must faith immediately push its way through, permit itself to be led astray in nothing, and subject to scrutiny all that it sees, hears and feels. Such faith Peter requires as consists, not in thought or word, but in such power as this.

Again, Peter says: "Set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you." That is, ye have not deserved this great grace, but yet it is freely offered you; for the Gospel, which reveals this grace, is no invention or discovery of our own, but the Holy Spirit has sent it down from heaven into the world. But what is it that is offered to us? This, that we have already heard [under verse 5], that whosoever believes on Christ and cleaves to the Word possesses him, with all the blessings he has to give, so that: he is Lord over sin, death, the devil and hell, and is assured of eternal life. This treasure is brought to our doors and laid in our bosom without our help or desert, yes, beyond our expectation and without our knowledge or thought. Therefore the Apostle would have us reflect upon it cheerfully, for God, who offers us such grace, will surely not lie to us.

[13d.] At the revelation of Jesus Christ.

God permits none to make the offer of his grace except through Christ. Therefore no man should attempt to approach him apart from this mediator, as we have already heard sufficiently [verse 3]. For he will hear no one but him who brings Christ his dear Son with him, whom he alone regards, and for his sake those who cleave to him. Therefore he would have us confess the Son, that we are reconciled through his blood to the Father, so that we may approach before him. For to this end did Christ come into the world, assume flesh and blood, and united himself with us, that he might obtain such grace for us with the Father. All the prophets and patriarchs likewise have been kept and saved through such faith in Christ. For they all have exercised faith in the promise which God made to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. Therefore, as we have said [verse 3] to the Jews and to the Turk faith is of no avail, neither to any

that rest upon their own works and would thereby enter heaven. So Peter says, “The grace that is to be brought unto you,” but “At the revelation of Jesus Christ,” or to render it more clearly in our language, because Jesus Christ has been revealed to you.

Through the Gospel is made known to us what Christ is, and that we may learn to know him, that he is our Saviour, that he rescues us from sin and death, and helps us out of every evil, reconciles us to the Father, and apart from our own works justifies and saves us. Whoever then does not thus know Christ must fail. For although you may know that he is the Son of God, that he died and has risen, and sits at the right hand of the Father; still you have not yet truly known Christ, it is all of no avail to you; but you must know and believe that he has done it all for your sake, if your faith is to help you. Therefore all is vain and useless that has hitherto been preached and taught in the great schools, which have had no experience of this knowledge, and have not advanced further than to imagine how the curse afflicted Christ our Lord, and he sits above in heaven unemployed, and possesses joy with himself; and thus their hearts remain barren, so that faith cannot become alive in them. However, Christ does not stand there for himself, but he is to be preached that he is ours. For what necessity could there then have been that he should have come down to earth and have shed his blood? But since he has been sent into the world, as he says, John 3:17, “that the world should be saved through him”; he certainly must have fulfilled this mission, because he was sent from the Father. For this sending and proceeding from the Father is to be understood not only of the divine nature, but also of the human nature and of his ministry. As soon as he was baptized this began, and he has fulfilled it, for which end he was sent and came into the world, to wit, that he might preach the truth and apply it to us, that all who believe on him should be saved. Thus has he revealed himself, and presented himself to our knowledge, and offered us grace.

[14a.] As children of obedience.

That is, conduct yourselves as obedient children. Obedience in Scripture means faith. But the Pope, with his high schools and cloisters, has even wrested the Word from us, and what stood in the Scriptures about obedience, as the passage 1 Sam. 15:22, “To obey is better than sacrifice,” they applied to their offices and orders of lies (Luegenstand). For while they per-

ceive that obedience is highly praised in Scripture, they have usurped the claim of it to themselves, so that they might blind the people, and that men should think it was obedience to them and to their institutions of which the Scriptures speak. Thus they would bring us away from God's word to their lies and to the obedience of the devil. Whoever hears the word of God and believes it is an obedient child of God. Therefore, whatever is not the word of God, tread it under your feet and pay no attention to it.

[14b.] Not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance.

This signifies that you should not make such a show and lead such a life as before, and that you be not found in the same condition in which you formerly were. Once you were godless, and lived in lewdness, gluttony, drunkenness, avarice, pride, anger, envy and hatred, which was an evil, heathen-like state, and one of unbelief, and when you walked in that state like the blind, you knew not what you did. Avoid now those evil lusts. Here you perceive how he makes the charge against ignorance, that it is the cause of all evil. For where faith and the knowledge of Christ are wanting, there mere error and blindness abide, so that men are ignorant of what is right and wrong, insomuch that the people fall into every kind of vice.

Thus has it been hitherto: where Christ was kept out of sight and eclipsed, there error began to prevail; and throughout the world the burning question has been, how could man be saved? This question is at once a sign of blindness or ignorance, that the true apprehension of faith is lost, and that no one knows anything about it. Hence the world is so full of various sects, and all are divided, for every one will devise for himself a way to heaven of his own. In our misfortune we must continually fall deeper in our blindness, since we cannot help ourselves. Therefore Peter says: Ye have already befooled yourselves enough: now desist from it, since ye have been instructed and have attained to a correct understanding.

[15, 16.] But like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, ye shall be holy; for I am holy.

Here Peter quotes a passage from the Old Testament, Lev. 19:2, where God says: "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy"; that is, since I am your Lord and

God, and ye are my people, ye too must be as I am. For a faithful master sees to it that his people shall be like himself, and walk in obedience, and be conformed to the master's will. As then God our master is holy, so are his people holy also, and we are all holy if we walk in faith. Scripture says not much of the saints who have died, but of those who live on the earth. So David puts forth his claim in Ps. 86:2: "Lord, preserve my soul, for I am holy (godly)."

But here our learned men have again perverted the passage, and say: The prophet had a particular revelation, in that he called himself holy. By this they themselves confess that they lack faith, and have not the revelation of Jesus Christ, otherwise they would surely be sensible of it. For whoever is a Christian experiences within himself such a revelation; but they who do not experience it are not Christians. For whoever is a Christian enters into fellowship with Christ our Lord of all his treasures. Since then Christ is holy, the Christian must also be holy, or deny that Christ is holy. Art thou baptized? then thou hast put on the holy garment, which is Christ, as Paul says [Gal. 3:27].

The word "holy" means that which is God's own, and which belongs to him alone, or as we render it in German (*geweiht*), consecrated. Thus, Peter here says: You are merely required to give yourselves to God as his own; therefore beware that ye suffer not yourselves to be led back again to worldly lusts, but let God alone rule, live and work in you; then shall ye be holy, even as he is holy."

Thus he has hitherto described the grace brought to us through the Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, and! has taught us how we should therefore conduct ourselves, namely: that we abide in a pure, inviolate mind of faith, since we know no work, we can do or imagine, can at all help us. When such doctrine is preached, reason objects, and says, Ah! if that be true, then I need not do any good works. And thus the blockhead leaders fall upon it and change the very essence of Christianity into liberty or license of the flesh, imagining they may do whatever they will. These Peter here meets and anticipates, and teaches how we are to use our Christian liberty only toward God. For nothing more is needed than faith, to the end that I should give God the honor due him, and embrace him as my God, confessing that he is just, true and merciful. Such faith sets us free from sin and all evil. If now I have thus honored God, the rest of my days I am to live for my neighbor, so as to serve and help him. The greatest work that follows

faith is, that with my mouth I confess Christ, sealing that confession with my blood and laying down my life for it if necessary. Yet God does not need this work; but I am to perform it, that my faith may thereby be tried and known, that others also might be brought to believe. Then follow also other works, which must all be directed to the end, that I may thereby serve my neighbor; all of which God must work in us; for it is of no profit for us to lead a carnal life and do whatever we please. Therefore Peter now says:

B. An Exhortation To Christian Life.

[17-21.] And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear: knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God.

Thus Peter says: You have through faith attained even to this, that ye are the children of God and he is your Father, and ye have obtained an incorruptible inheritance in heaven, as has been said in verse 4; so nothing more now remains, except for the veil to be taken away, and that to be uncovered which is now concealed; for which ye are still to wait until ye behold it. Though ye have now arrived at that state in which ye may joyfully call God your Father, yet he is so righteous that he will reward every man according to his works, and respect not persons. Wherefore thou art not to imagine, although thou hast already that great name that thou art called a Christian or a child of God, that he will therefore continue thine if thou livest without fear, and thinkest it is enough if thou dost glory in that name. The world indeed judges according to the person, since it does not punish all alike, and respects those who are friendly, rich, reputable, learned, wise, and powerful; but God regards nothing of this kind; it is all alike to him, be the person as great as he may. Thus in Egypt he struck the son of King Pharaoh dead, as well as the son of the poor miller. Ex. 12:29.

Therefore the Apostle would have us expect such judgment from God, and stand in fear, so that we do not glory in our title that we are Christians, and rely upon that, as though he would for this reason be more lenient to us

than to others. For in this the Jews were formerly deceived, who boasted they were Abraham's seed and God's people. Scripture makes no difference in respect to the flesh, but in respect to the spirit. It is true Christ was to be born of Abraham's seed and that a holy people should spring from him, but it does not therefore follow that all who are born of Abraham are the children of God. He also promised that the Gentiles should be saved, but he has not said that he would save all the Gentiles.

But here now a question arises: When we say God saves us alone by faith, without regard to works, why does Peter say he judges not according to the person, but according to works? Answer: What we have taught as to faith alone justifying before God, is true beyond doubt, since it is so clear from Scripture it cannot be denied. That God judges according to the works, as the Apostle here says, is also true; but we must certainly hold therefore, that where no faith is, there can be no good works; and on the other hand, there is no faith where there are no good works. Consequently join together faith and good works, since it is in both that the sum of the whole Christian life consists. As you now live, so will it be with you, for according to your life God will judge you. Therefore, although God judges us according to our works, still it remains true that works are only the fruits of faith, by which we perceive when there is belief or unbelief; hence God will judge and convict you according to your works whether you have or have not believed. So it is that one can not well convict and judge a liar, except from his words. Yet it is evident that he is not made a liar by his word, but became a liar before he spoke the lie, for the lie must come from the heart into the mouth. Therefore, understand this passage thus, in the plainest way: that works are fruits and signs of faith, and that God judges men according to such fruits which must certainly follow, so that it shall be openly seen whether there is faith or unbelief in the heart. God will not judge according to this, whether you are called a Christian, or have been baptized, but will ask you: "Art thou a Christian? then tell me where are the fruits by which you can evidence your faith."

Therefore Peter goes on to say: Since ye have such a Father, who judges not according to the person, pass the time of your sojourning in fear; that is, stand in fear before the Father, not of pain and punishment, as the Christless, and even the devil, fear; but in the fear lest he forsake you and withdraw his hand; just as a dutiful child is afraid lest he provoke his father and do something that might not please him. Such a fear would God have within

us, that we guard ourselves against sin and serve our neighbor, while we live here upon the earth.

A Christian, if he truly believes, possesses all the good things of God and is God's child, as we have heard. But the time which he has yet to live is only a pilgrimage; for the spirit is already in heaven by faith, through which he is Lord over all things. The reason God permits him still to live in the flesh, and his body to remain on the earth, is that he may help others and bring them also to heaven. Therefore we are to use all things on earth in no other way than as a guest, who travels over the country and arrives at an inn where he must tarry overnight, and can receive nothing from the host but food and lodging; yet does not say that because of his sojourning there the property of his host belongs to him. So must we also proceed in regard to our temporal possessions, as though they were not ours, and we enjoy only so much of them as is needful to sustain the body, and with the rest help our neighbor. Thus the Christian life is only a night's sojourning. For we have here no abiding city, but seek one, where our Father is, in heaven [Heb. 13:14]. Therefore we should not live here in wantonness, but stand in fear, as Peter teaches.

[18, 19a.] Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood.

This should draw you, he would say, to the fear of God, wherein ye should stand, namely, that ye remember how much it has cost that ye might be redeemed. Before, ye were citizens of the world, and were held in subjection to the devil; but now God has rescued you from that state, and placed you in another state, so that your citizenship is in heaven; but ye are strangers and guests upon the earth. And see at what great cost God has reclaimed you, and how great the treasure is, with which ye are purchased and brought into this state to become the children of God. Wherefore pass your sojourning in fear, and see to it that ye do not despise such redemption and lose the noble precious treasure.

What now is the treasure with which ye are ransomed? Not corruptible gold or silver, but the precious blood of Christ the Son of God. The treasure is so costly and noble that no human sense or reason can conceive it, so costly that only one drop of this innocent blood were more than enough for the sin of all the world. Yet the Father has been willing to dispense his grace

so richly upon us, and denied himself so much as to suffer Christ his Son to shed all his blood for us and to bestow upon us the treasure wholly as a gift. Therefore it is not pleasing to him that we cast such great grace to the wind and lightly esteem it; but let it move us to live in fear, that this treasure be not taken from us.

And here it is well to note that Peter says, ye are redeemed from your vain manner of life in the traditions of your fathers; for he thereby strikes to the ground all human commandments on which we stand, when we imagine our cause must be right because it has thus been preserved from of old, and all our forefathers have so held it, among whom were certainly wise and pious people. It is as much as to say, all that our fathers have ordained and done was evil; what has been taught you from them of the worship of God, is also evil; for it has cost the Son of God his blood to redeem the people from their traditions. Whatever therefore has not been washed in this blood, is all poisoned and cursed by reason of the flesh. Thence it follows, the more a man undertakes to make himself righteous and has not Christ, the more he only confounds himself, and sinks deeper in blindness and wickedness, and condemns himself by virtue of this precious blood.

External coarse sins are insignificant compared with the sin that man should teach how we may be justified by works and devise a worship of God according to our reason. For by this the innocent blood is dishonored and blasphemed in the highest degree. The heathen committed much greater sin, in that they prayed to the sun and moon, which they held to be the true worship of God, than they did in any way with other sins. But human justification, justification by human works, is mere blasphemy of God and the greatest of all sins that man commits. So is also the essence of the life and thought with which the world is engaged at present; and what it holds to be the worship of God and righteousness, is before God worse than any other sin, as the priestly and monkish order, whatever appears good before the world, and is yet without faith. Therefore whoever will not obtain grace before God through this blood, it is better for him that he never comes into God's presence, for he thereby only the more and more kindles the wrath of his Majesty.

[19a.] As of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.

Here Peter again explained the Scriptures; for this is a powerful, a rich Epistle, although it is short. As now, while speaking of their vain manner of life handed down from their fathers, he meets many passages in the prophets as Jer. 16:19: “Unto thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Our fathers have inherited nought but lies,” as though Peter had said, there the prophets foretold that ye should be redeemed from the traditions of your fathers.

So will he here again lead us into the Scriptures when he says, “Ye are redeemed by the blood of Christ, as of an innocent and unspotted lamb,” and explains that which is contained in the prophets and Moses, as Is. 53:7, ‘Like a lamb he is led to the slaughter.’ So as to the type, Ex. 12:3f., of the Paschal Lamb, all this he here explains and says, this lamb is Christ; and as the lamb of old was to be without spot, so must this one also be without spot and innocent, whose blood is shed for our sins.

[20.] Who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times (in these last times) for your sake.

That is, we have not deserved or even asked it of God, that the precious blood of Christ should be shed for us, therefore we can not glory in the least. The glory belongs to no one but to God alone. God has promised without any merit on our part, and revealed or made known to us, that which he from all eternity had foreknown and ordained, before the world was created. In the prophets it is indeed promised, yet dimly and not publicly; but now, since Christ’s resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit, it is publicly preached and resounds throughout the whole world.

This is now the latter age, the last times, as Peter says, in which we live; now, from the ascension of Christ until the last day. So the Apostles and prophets, and Christ himself also, call it the last hour; not that the last day was to come immediately after Christ’s ascension, but because after the preaching of the Gospel of Christ no other should ever come; and it will not be better revealed and explained than it is explained and revealed. For to this end one revelation after another has continuously gone forth. Therefore God says, Ex. 6:3: “By my name Jehovah I was not known to them.” For the patriarchs, although they knew God, yet they at that time had not such public preaching of God as afterwards went forth from Moses and the prophets. But now there has no more glorious or public preaching of him

come into the world than the Gospel. Therefore it is the last; all dispensations have run their course, but now at last, it is revealed to us.

Again, according to the time it is not long to the end of the world, as Peter shows, 2 Pet. 3:8, where he says: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And so he would lead us by this reckoning of time to conclude, after God's method, that it is the last time, and that the end approaches, but the time which still remains is nothing in the sight of God. The salvation is already revealed and completed: God permits the world to stand yet longer, merely that his name may be more widely honored and praised, although he for himself is now revealed in the most perfect manner.

[21.] Who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God.

For our sakes, he says, is the Gospel revealed; for God and the Lord Christ have not needed it, but have done it for our benefit, that we might believe on him. And that, not through ourselves, but through Christ, who intercedes for us with the Father, whom he has raised from the dead that he might be Lord over all things; so whoever believes on him shares all his possessions, and through him ascends to the Father. Thus we have faith in God, and a hope through the same faith; faith alone must save us, but it must be a faith in God; for if God does not help us, then we are not helped. Therefore it is not enough, although you had the friendship of all men; but, you must have the friendship of God, so that you may boast that he is your Father, and that you are his child and confide in him even more than in your beloved father and mother, that he will help you in all your troubles, and this only through the one Mediator and Saviour, the Lord Christ. Such faith comes not, he says, from human power, but God creates it in us, because Christ has merited it by his blood; to whom he has therefore given glory, and whom he has seated at his right hand, that he by God's power should produce faith in us.

Thus far we have heard how Peter admonishes us to gird up the loins of our mind, to remain undented and live in faith; then also, that which in the meanwhile is so important, namely, to walk in fear and never forget we are called Christians, since God is a judge who respects none, but judges one like the other, without distinction of per sons. Now he says further and concludes the first chapter:

[22-25.] Purify your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. For, all flesh is as grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: but the word of the Lord abideth forever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.

The fruit that now follows from faith Paul relates in Gal. 5:22, saying: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. So Peter speaks here of the fruit of faith; to wit, that we should purify our souls through obedience to the truth in the Spirit. For where there is real faith it brings the body in subjection to itself, and controls the fleshly lust; and although faith does not entirely destroy lust, yet it makes it subject and obedient to the Spirit, and holds it in check. Paul implies the same when he speaks of the fruits of the Spirit. It is a great achievement that the Spirit should become lord over the flesh, and restrain the evil lust which descends to us from our parents; for without grace it is not possible to succeed in leading a chaste life in the married state, to say nothing of the unmarried.

But why does he say then, “purify your souls?” He is well aware that the desires of the flesh remain with us after baptism, even to the grave. Therefore it is not enough that a person should refrain from work and remain a virgin outwardly, while he permits evil lusts to cleave to his heart, but must beware that the soul be pure, as well as whatever proceeds out of the heart, and that the soul be at enmity with these wicked lusts and desires, and continually contend against them until it is free from their power.

And here he adds an excellent clause: that we purify (make chaste) our souls, “through obedience to the truth in the Spirit.” There has been much preaching on chastity, and many books written on the subject, in which they said, we should fast for a certain time, we should not eat flesh, we should not drink wine, etc., that we may be free from temptation. These things may perhaps have aided some to that end, but they have not been enough, they have not subdued lust. So St. Jerome writes of himself, that he had mortified his body to such an extent that he had become like an African; still it was of no avail, and he dreamed of being in Rome at a revelry (*singetanz*, a dance accompanied with singing) among harlots. St. Bernard also subjected himself to such austerities, and so mortified his body that it became offensive, as I said above. They had severe temptations, and tried thus to subdue

lust by external methods. But since they are external, they are only an outward plaster, with no inward application. So they do not suffice to subdue lust.

But here Peter has prescribed an appropriate remedy, namely, obedience to the truth in the Spirit, like the Scriptures also have done in other places; as Isaiah 11:5: “Faith shall be the girdle of his reins.” This is the true plaster that girds the reins, for it must proceed from within outward, not from without inward. For it has penetrated into the flesh and the blood, the marrow and the veins; it is not outward in the dress or clothing. Therefore it is not to be expected that we should subdue lust with outward means; we may weaken the body and destroy it with fastings and labors, but the evil lusts are not in this way banished; yet faith can subdue them, and guard them, that they be compelled to give the Spirit place.

So likewise the prophet Zechariah speaks, 9:17, of the wine Christ has, from which virgins grow, and of which he gives them to drink. Other wine usually invites to wicked lust, but this wine, the Gospel, subdues it and makes the heart chaste. This is what Peter speaks of when any one heartily embraces the truth, and is obedient to it in spirit; this is the true help and the most powerful remedy for it, aside from that you will find none that can still all evil thoughts like it. For if this enters our hearts, evil inclinations quickly leave. Let whoever will try it, he shall find it true, and whoever has tried it, knows it well. The devil lets no one attain it in an easy way, and comprehend the word of God so as to delight in it; for he well knows how powerful it is to subdue evil lusts and thoughts.

Peter therefore would say here, if you wish to remain chaste, then you must lay hold on obedience to the truth in the Spirit, that is, you must not only read and hear the word of God, but lay hold on it in your heart. Therefore it is not enough for a man to preach or hear the Gospel once, but he must ever persevere and advance in it. For such grace the Word possesses, that the more we taste it the sweeter it is; although there is continually one and the same doctrine of faith, yet it cannot be heard too much where hearts are not too impudent and barbarous. Now the Apostle adds further:

[22b.] Unto unfeigned love of the brethren.

To what end then are we to live a chaste life? In order that we may be saved thereby? No! but in order that we may serve our neighbor. What am I to do

that I may restrain my sin? I am to lay hold on obedience to the truth in the Spirit. But why am I to restrain it? In order to be of service to others, for I must first control my body and the flesh by the Spirit, and then I can be of service later to others. It follows further:

[22c.] Love one another from the heart fervently.

The Apostles Peter and Paul distinguish brotherly love from love in general. Brotherhood means that Christians should all be as brethren, and make no distinctions among themselves. For since we all have one Saviour, one baptism, one faith, one treasure, I am no better than thou; that which thou hast, I have also, and I am just as rich as thou. The treasure is the same, except that I may have it in a better chest than thou, since I may have it lying in gold, but thou in a poor garment. Therefore as we have the grace of Christ and all spiritual blessings in common, so should we also hold body and life, property and honor, in common, that one may be of service to another in all things.

Now he speaks plainly: “Unto unfeigned love of the brethren.” The Apostles love to use these words, but they clearly perceived that were we called Christians and brethren universally one with another, it would be false, a feigned or imagined thing, and would be only hypocrisy. We have many brotherhoods set up in the world, but they are vain, misleading and a defense of falsehood, the devil has devised and brought them into the world, and they are only antagonistic to the true faith and to genuine brotherly love. Christ is mine as well as St. Bernard’s; thine as well as St. Francis’. If one therefore should come to you and say, I shall go to heaven if I belong to this or that brotherhood, then tell him he is deceived; for Christ cannot suffer it, and will not have any other than the common brotherhood, we all have one with another; yet you come here, you fool, and will set up one of your own. This I will readily permit that they be set up, not to help the soul, but as some one’s endowment, and thus serve as a fund from which they who are in need shall be helped.

Thus we all, as Christians, have acquired a brotherhood in baptism, of which no saint possesses more than I or you. For at the costly price that one was purchased, at the same price was I also purchased. God has devoted as much to me as to the greatest saint, except that he may have laid hold on the treasure better, and may have a stronger faith than I.

But love is greater than a brotherhood, for it extends even to our enemies, and especially to those who are not worthy of love. For as faith performs its work where it sees nothing, so also should love see nothing, and there especially exercise its office where there appears nothing lovely, but only disaffection and hostility. Where there is nothing that pleases me I should the more seek to be pleased. And this spirit should go forth fervently, says Peter, from the whole heart, just as God loved us when we were not worthy of love. Now follows further:

[23a.] Having been begotten again.

In the third place we should do this, because we are not what we were before, he says, but have become new creatures. This has not come to pass through works, but is a consequence of the new birth. For thou canst not make the new man, but he must grow, or be born; as a carpenter cannot make a tree, but it must grow of itself out of the earth, and as we all are not made the children of Adam at the same time, but are born so and have derived sin from our parents; just so here it cannot come to pass through works that we become the children of God, but we must also be born anew. This therefore is what the Apostle would say; since ye then have become new creatures, ye should conduct yourselves otherwise than ye did, and lead a new life. As ye before lived in hate, ye are now to walk in love; in all respects the reverse. But how has the new birth taken place? Thus, as follows:

[23b.] Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.

Through a seed are we born again, for nothing grows as we see except from seed. Did the old birth spring from a seed? then must the new birth also spring from a seed. But what is this seed? Not flesh and blood! What then? It is not a corruptible, but an eternal Word. It is moreover that on which we live; our food and nourishment. But especially is it the seed from which we are born again, as he here says.

But how does this take place? After this manner: God lets the word, the Gospel, be scattered abroad, and the seed falls in the hearts of men, and now wherever it sticks in the heart, the Holy Spirit is present, and makes a

new man; then there will indeed be another man, of other thoughts, of other words and works. Thus you are entirely changed. All that you before avoided you now seek, and what you before sought that you now avoid. In respect to the birth of the body, it is a fact that when conception takes place the seed is changed, so that it is seed no longer. But this is a seed which cannot be changed; it remains forever. It changes me, so that I am transformed in it, and whatever is evil in me from my nature passes away. Therefore it is indeed a wonderful birth, and of extraordinary seed. Now Peter says further:

[24-25a.] For, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory there of as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: but the word of the Lord abideth forever.

This passage is taken from the prophet Isaiah, 40:6-8, where the prophet speaks in this manner: "Cry! what shall I cry? Cry all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth and the flower falleth, but the word of the Lord abideth forever." These words Peter introduces here; for this is, as I have said, a rich Epistle and well spiced with Scripture quotations.

Thus the Scripture now says that the word of God abides forever. What is flesh and blood is corruptible like the grass, while it is yet green, hence it blooms. So whatever is rich, strong, wise and fair, and thus is flourishing, all which belongs to the bloom, yet you observe its bloom withers; what is young and beautiful will become old and ugly; what is rich will become poor, and so on, and all must fall by the word of God. But this seed cannot perish. Now Peter concludes:

[25b.] And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.

As though he would say, ye need not look far in order to meet the word of God; ye have it before your eyes; the word is that which we preach; with it you may subdue all evil lusts. You are not to seek it far away; you have nothing more to do than to lay hold on it when it is preached. For it is so near us that we can hear it, as Moses also says, in Deut. 30:11-14: 'The word that I command you is not far from thee, that thou must go far away for it; either ascend into heaven or go beyond the sea; but it is near thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.' It is indeed soon spoken and soon

heard. But if it enters the hearts it cannot die or perish, and will not suffer you to perish; as long as you cleave to it, it will cleave to you. As, when I hear that Jesus Christ died to take away my sins, and has purchased heaven for me, and bestows upon me all he has, then I hear the Gospel. The word is quickly gone when one preaches it, but if it falls into the heart and is apprehended by faith, it can never pass away. This truth no creature can overthrow; the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, and if I were already fast in the jaws of the devil and could yet only grasp the word, I would still have to be rescued and abide, where the word abides. Therefore he well says, you need look for no other Gospel than that which we have preached to you.

So Paul says, in Romans 1:16: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The word is a divine and eternal power; for although the voice or speech is soon gone, yet the substance remains; that is, the sense, the truth, which is conveyed by the voice. As when I put to my mouth a cup containing wine, I swallow the wine, although I do not thrust the cup down my throat.

So likewise is the word which the voice conveys; it falls into our hearts and lives, while the voice remains without and passes away. Therefore it is indeed a divine power; yea, it is God himself. For thus he speaks to Moses, Ex. 4:12: "I will be with thy mouth;" and Ps. 81:10: 'Open thy mouth wide, proclaim glad tidings; say thou art hungry, I will satisfy thee, I will presently speak to thee comforting things.'

So also, in John 14:6, Christ says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Whoever confides in this is born of God; so that his seed is our Lord God himself, 1 John 4:7; 5:1. All this goes to teach us that we cannot be helped by works. Although the word is a small thing, and seems as nothing while it proceeds out of the mouth, yet there is such an immense power in it that it makes those who con fide in it the children of God. John 1:12. Thus does our salvation raise us to exalted blessedness.

This is the first chapter of our Epistle, and you perceive in what a masterly manner Peter preaches and discusses faith, and here we readily see that this Epistle is the true Gospel. Now comes the second chapter, that will instruct us how we should conduct ourselves in our good works to our neighbor.

Chapter 2.

Analysis Of Contents By J. G. Walch.

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Part 1. The Works And Fruits Of Christian Character In General, Of All Christians.

[1-5.] Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Here he begins to teach what the characteristics and fruits of a Christian life should be. For we have said often enough that a Christian life consists in two things; faith toward God and love toward our neighbor. Also, that Christian faith has been given us, yet as long as we live many evil lusts constantly remain in the flesh, since there is no saint who is not in the flesh. But what is in the flesh cannot be entirely pure. Therefore Peter says, be ye armed, that ye may guard yourselves against the sins which still cleave to you, watch and strive continually against them. For the worst enemies we have hide themselves in our bosoms, and in our very flesh and blood, wake, sleep and live with us, like a wicked spirit which we have brought home with us and we cannot get rid of. Wherefore, since through faith Jesus Christ is entirely yours, and ye have obtained salvation and all his blessings, let it be your office henceforth to put away all wickedness, all that is evil, and all guile, so that no one may act toward another deceitfully or falsely; as with the world it has become a common expression to say, ‘the world is full of unfaithfulness,’ which is indeed true. But we Christians should not act with such deceit, but uprightly and with pure hearts toward men as toward God, fairly and justly, so that no one take the advantage of another in selling, in buying or in our solemn vows, and the like.

Likewise also Paul says to the Ephesians, 4:25, “Put away lying, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor.” Truth is, that yea be yea, and nay, nay. But hypocrisy, when one represents himself by his outward manner different than he means it; for solemn is the obligation that we appear just as we are in heart. A Christian should so act as to permit all men to see and know what he thinks in his heart; also, in all his walk and conduct, be anxious only to praise God, and serve his neighbor, and be afraid of no one, and let

every one be in the depth of his heart what he is in appearance, and not fight a sham battle so as to make others gape with wonder.

Furthermore, Peter says we should put away envies and evil speakings. Here he fitly takes up the common vices among men, in their intercourse with one another. This evil speaking is exceedingly common and injurious; is soon done, so soon that none of us is aware of it. Therefore he says, be on your guard, if ye already have a Christian spirit, that ye may know what are the fruits of this spirit.

[2a.] As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile.

Here he institutes a comparison and would say, Ye are newly born by the word of God, therefore be ye like newborn babes who seek nothing but milk. As therefore they strive for the breasts and milk, so be ye also eager for the word; long for it, have a craving for it, that ye may suck in the intelligible, unadulterated milk.

These words are indeed figurative; for he did not mean literal milk, or literal sucking, as he does not speak of a literal birth. But he speaks of another milk that is intelligible or spiritual, which is produced by the soul, which the heart must imbibe. It must be moreover sincere, or unadulterated, not as the custom is to sell false wares. There is indeed strong obligation and great need, that to the newborn and young Christian the milk should be given pure and not adulterated. But this milk is nothing but the Gospel, which is also even the seed whereby we are conceived and born, as we have heard above. [1 Pet. 1:23.] Moreover it is also the food which nourishes us when we arrive at maturity; it is also the armor wherewith we equip and clothed ourselves; yea, it is all these in common. But whatever is appended to it is human doctrine, whereby the word of God is falsified. Therefore the Holy Spirit requires that every Christian shall see to it, what he sucks for milk, and shall himself learn to decide in regard to all doctrines.

But the breasts which yield this milk and which the babes suck are the teachers and preachers in the Christian Church. As the bridegroom says to the bride, in Cant. 4:5, "Thou hast two breasts like two young roes;" they are as though they were hung with a bundle of myrrh, as the bride says, Cant. 1:13, "My beloved is unto me as a bundle of myrrh that lies continually between my breasts." That is, we should ever preach Christ. The bride-

groom must resort to the breasts; otherwise it is unjust, and the milk will be adulterated, if we do not preach Christ in his purity.

Now this is accomplished, if we preach that Christ died for us, and rescued us from sin, death and hell; this is delightful and sweet like milk; but later, the cross also must be preached, that we are to suffer as Christ did; and this is strong drink, it is strong wine. Therefore, Christians should first be given the weakest drink; and that is milk. For we cannot preach to them anything better than preach to them Christ alone; which is not bitter, but is mere sweet, rich grace, from which you receive no harm whatever. This is the true, intelligible, unadulterated milk.

But here Peter has well supported himself by Scripture, as he is throughout rich in passages from the Scriptures. In the Old Testament it is written, both in Ex. 23:19, and Deut. 14:21, "Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk." Beloved, why did God permit that to be written? Of what concern to him was it that no suckling should be killed while as yet it was imbibing its mother's milk? Because he would thereby help us to understand that which Peter here teaches; and it is as if he had said, preach gently to the young and weak Christians; let them be carefully fed, and grow fat in the knowledge of Christ. Burden them not with strong doctrine, for they are as yet too young, but after they have become strong, let them then be slaughtered and sacrificed on the cross.

So also we read in Deut. 24:5, "When a man taketh a new wife, he shall not go out to war the first year, lest he be slain; but abide at home and cheer his wife." All this tends to the point, that we should bear for a time with young Christians, and proceed tenderly with them. But when they have grown, God brings them to the holy cross, lets them even die like other Christians, so then the kid will be sacrificed. Now follows further:

[2b-3.] That ye may grow thereby unto salvation, if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

It is not enough to hear the Gospel once; we must ever make use of it, that we may grow. After faith has become strong we must provide for and feed each individual Christian according to their growth. But to those who have not heard the Gospel, this is not said; they know neither what is milk or what is wine. Therefore he adds, if ye have been sides tasted that the Lord is gracious; as though he had said, whoever has not tasted it, to him it is not a thing of the heart, to him it is not sweet; but they who have tried it, nourish

themselves with this food and with the word constantly, to them it tastes pleasant and is sweet.

But it is said to be tasted, when I believe with my heart that Christ gave himself for me, and has become my own, and my sin and misery are his, and his life also is mine. When this reaches my heart, then it tastes. For how can I but receive joy and gladness from it? I am heartily glad, as though some good friend had given me a hundred florins. But he whose heart it does not reach cannot rejoice over it. But they taste it best who lie in the straits of death, or whom an evil conscience oppresses; for in that case hunger is a good cook, as we say, that makes the food have a good relish; for the heart and conscience can bear nothing more soothing. When they feel their misery; for this they are anxious, they smell the provision afar off and cannot be satisfied. So also Mary says in the Magnificat: "The hungry he hath filled with good things," Luk. 1-53. But that hardened class who live in their own holiness, build on their own works, and feel not their sin and misery, they taste this not. Whoever sits at the table and is hungry relishes everything heartily; but he who has previously been satisfied, relishes nothing, but he can only murmur at the most excellent food. Therefore the Apostle says: "If ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." But it is as though he had said, If ye have not tasted it, then I preach to you in vain. He further says:

[4a.] Unto whom coming (as to) a living stone.

Here he falls back again upon the Scriptures, and quotes the prophet Isaiah, 28:14f.: 'Hear the word of Jehovah, ye scoffers; ye say, We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol are we at agreement; we have made lies our refuge. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I lay in the foundation of Zion an elect, precious corner stone, or foundation stone,' etc. This passage Paul has also quoted, Rom. 9:33, and it is an important passage of Scripture, for Christ is the precious head-stone which God has laid, on which we must be built.

And observe how Peter quotes the expression, and shows the stone signifies Christ. Hence as Isaiah says, "Trust in him" is the same as Peter says, "Build upon him." That is called explaining the Scriptures rightly. The builders lay the foundation stone where it may stand sure and firm, that it may bear up the whole building; so Christ, the living stone, bears up the

whole building. Therefore it is called “building,” in order that we all may place our confidence and security in one another and in him.

[4b.] Rejected indeed of men but with God elect, precious.

Here he cites a passage of the prophet David in Ps. 118:22-23: ‘The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’ Which passage Christ, also refers to in Matt. 21:42. So Peter in Acts 4:11, where he says: “He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders.” Ye are builders, he says: for they taught the people, went about with great speeches, laid down many laws, but built up mere worksaints and hypocrites. Then Christ comes and tells them, ye are hypocrites and broods of vipers, Mat. 23:33; pronounces upon them many terrible judgments; considers them as sinners, and not as great saints. And as they could not endure this, they even reject him, and say to him, “You are a heretic; and do you caution we should not do good works? Ay! you must die.” Therefore Peter says, here, this is the corner stone which was indeed rejected of men, upon which ye must be built by faith. This is now marvelous in our eyes, as the prophet says, Ps. 118:23; it seems strange to us, and where the Spirit does not teach, it is utterly incomprehensible. Therefore he says, in God’s eyes the stone is elect, and an extremely precious stone; it is of great importance also that it takes away death, satisfies for sin, and rescues from hell, besides it freely gives us heaven.

[5a.] Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.

How can we build ourselves up? With the Gospel and that which is preached. The builders are the preachers; the Christians who hear the Gospel are they who are built, and the stones which are to be fitted on this corner stone; so that we are to repose our confidence on him, and let our hearts stand and rest upon him. I must therefore take heed to myself that I have the form which this stone has, for if I am laid upon him by faith, then I must also bear such marks and polish as he had, and every one else with me. It grows out of faith and is a work of love, that we all be fitted one to another, and all thus become one building. To the same end also Paul speaks on this subject, although in a different manner, 1 Cor. 3:16: “Ye are

the temple of God.” The house of stone or wood is not his house; he will have a spiritual house, that is, the Christian congregation, where we are all alike in one faith, one resembling the other, and all laid and fitted one to the other, and locked into one another by love, without any wickedness, deceit, hypocrisy, hatred and slander, as he has said.

[5b.] To be a holy priesthood,

Here he casts down the outward and temporal priesthood, which had existed before under the old dispensation, as also the outward Church, which he takes entirely away; as though to say: That outward institution of the priesthood has all ceased, wherefore another priesthood now begins, and another sacrifice is offered, even one that is entirely spiritual. We have had much discussion on this point, maintaining that those who are now called the clergy are not priests in the sight of God; and it is founded upon this passage of Peter. Therefore apprehend it well, and if one should meet you with the objection, and attempt to show, as some have done, that he speaks of a twofold priesthood; of outward and spiritual priests, then bid him lay aside his spectacles that he may see clearly, and take niesenwort, or aromatic snuff (Bucer in his Latin translation, *Nasturtium*), that he may clear his brains. Peter says also, “Ye are to build yourselves up into a spiritual or holy priesthood.” Ask now those priests whether they are holy: their life clearly shows, as we see, that this wretched set of men is plunged into avarice, fornication and all manner of vice. Whoever fills the office of this priesthood must certainly be holy. Whoever is not holy does not possess it. Therefore Peter speaks here only of one kind of priesthood.

We ask further, whether he makes a distinction between spiritual and worldly or secular persons, since the clergy are now called spiritual, and other Christians worldly? Then they must confess, and no thanks to them for it, that Peter here speaks to all who are Christians, even to those who lay aside all wickedness, deceit, hypocrisy and malice, etc., and are like newborn children, and drink the pure milk. So that their lie must bite itself in their mouth. Because it stands forth not to be gainsaid, that Peter speaks to all Christians, whence it is clear that they lie, and that Peter says nothing of their priesthood, which they have fancied and arrogate to themselves alone. Therefore our bishops are nothing but Nicholas-bishops [which Bucer renders in his Latin translation, idols or vain persons, boys set up as their bish-

ops on the festival of D. Nicholas. See St. Louis Walch, vol. 19, 675, 1358]. And as is their priest hood so are also their laws, sacrifices and works. It might be an excellent play to act out on Shrove-Tuesday, the carnival period of the year, except that under the mask the divine name is reviled.

Therefore those alone are the holy and spiritual priest hood, who are true Christians and are built upon this stone. For since Christ is the bridegroom, and we all are the bride, the bride has all that the bridegroom has, even his own body. For if he gives himself to the bride, he gives himself for all he is, and on the other hand the bride gives herself to him. Now Christ has been anointed the high and most exalted priest by God himself; he also sacrificed his own body for us, which is the office of the high priest; besides, he prayed on the cross for us; and in the third place he also preached the Gospel and taught all men to know God and himself. These three offices he has also given to all of us. Therefore, since he is a priest and we are his brethren, so all Christians have it in their power and charge, and the obligation rests upon them, to preach and to come before God, and one to pray for another, and offer himself up to God. And in spite of the fact that one does not raise his voice to preach or to speak he is nevertheless a priest.

[5c.] To offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

As to spiritual offerings, they are not money, that we must present them to the Pope; neither is the sacrifice as in the Old Testament, when men were required to sacrifice the tenth of all they had. Such outward sacrifices and priesthood have all now ceased, and all has become new and spiritual. The priest is Christ; and we all, since he has sacrificed his own body, must offer up ourselves. Here is now fulfilled all that was typified by outward sacrifices in the Old Testament, since they have all passed away, and in short all of them may be said to preach the Gospel. Whoever preaches this, exercises and carries out all the rest, “he sticks the calf dead”; that is, kills the carnal mind and strangles the old Adam. For this stubborn nature in the flesh and blood must be slain by the Gospel; hence let us permit ourselves to be offered upon the cross and to be slain. In this is exercised the true office of the priest, in that we sacrifice to God that wicked rogue, the corrupt, old dolt, of our nature. If the world does it not, we must do it ourselves; for in the end, all that we have of the old Adam must be removed, as we heard in the first chapter [verses 22-23]. This is the only sacrifice that is pleasing and accept-

able to God. From this you may perceive where our foolish and blind leaders have brought us, and how this text has been kept under the bench.

Now you may say, If it be true that we are all priests and ought to preach, what sort of an institution is it? Must there then be no distinction among the people, and are the women also to be priests? Answer: Under the New Testament no priest should conscientiously wear the tonsure. Not that it is wrong in itself; a person might very well suffer himself to be shorn if he chose, but for the reason that none may make a distinction between those who were called priests and common Christians; a thing which faith will not permit; also, that those who are now called priests may all become laymen like other people, and only some of them be selected out of the congregation to the office of the ministry. Thus there is only an outward distinction for the office' sake, inasmuch as one is called of the congregation. But before God there is no difference, and certain individuals are selected from the multitude, in order to bear and fill the office which they all have; not that one is more elect than another. Therefore no one should rise up of himself and preach in the congregation, but one is to be selected and installed out of the congregation, who may be removed when it be desirable.

Now these men have set up their own office and rank; as though directed by God they have arrogated to themselves such license, that in the heart of Christendom there is a greater distinction than exists between us and the Turks. If you wish to see Christians you must observe no distinction, and you are not to say, this is a man or a woman, a servant or a master, old or young; as Paul tells us, Gal. 3:28: They are all one, a purely spiritual people. Hence all alike are priests, all alike may proclaim God's word, except that a woman is not to speak in the Church, but let the men preach, because of the command that they are to be subject to their husbands, as Paul teaches us, 1 Cor. 14:34. Such order God permits to remain, but makes no distinction of the selection. But where there are no men, but women only, as in the Nun's Cloisters, there a woman may be selected to preach.

This is now the true priesthood, which consists in those three points as we have just heard [verse 5]; namely, that we sacrifice spiritually; that we pray for the Church; and that we preach. Whoever can do this is a priest, as all are bound to be, inasmuch as they should preach tire word, pray for the Church, and offer themselves up before God. Let those fools then go who call the institution of the priests spiritual, who yet bear no other office than just to wear the tonsure and to be anointed. If being shorn and anointed

makes a priest, then might indeed smear the paws of a donkey and anoint him to be a priest also.

Finally, Peter says, we are to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ. Since Christ is the corner stone whereon we are laid, whatever we wish to transact with God must be done only through him, as we have heard sufficiently above [1 Fet. 1:13]. For God does not look upon my cross even though I torture myself to death, but he looks upon Christ through whom my works are acceptable before God, which otherwise would not be worth a straw. Therefore the Scriptures properly call Christ a precious corner stone which imparts its virtue to all who through faith are built upon it. So also Peter teaches us in this passage how Christ is the living stone, what Christ is; and the figure is beautiful, since it is easy to understand by it how we are to believe on Christ. It follows now further:

[6-10.] Because it is contained in scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame. For you therefore that believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner; and, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

I have before said, that Peter has enriched and fortified his Epistle well with Scripture, just as all preachers should do, in order that their foundation may rest entirely on the word of God. Here also he introduces four or five texts, one after another. The first he has taken from the prophet Isaiah, 28:16, word for word, that Christ is a precious corner stone or foundation, and is the very passage we have just treated and in part explained. It is truly an eminent proof text of the doctrine of faith, which is to be laid down as a foundation when we preach in a place where Christ has not been preached before. For it must be confessed that Christ is the stone on which faith should be built and should stand.

But that the prophet does not here speak of a material stone is evident as it follows, "Whoever believes on him shall not be put to shame." If I am to believe on him, it must be a stone in a spiritual sense. For how am I to believe on stone and wood? Besides he must be truly God, since in the first

commandment God has forbidden us to believe on anything else, but on himself only. Since then this stone is laid as a foundation in which we are to trust, it must be God himself. On the other hand, he cannot be God alone, but must also in addition be man, because he must be a part of the building, and not merely a part, but the head. If a man then erects a building, one stone must be like the other, that each have the complexion, nature and form of the other. Therefore, since we are built on Christ, he also must be like us, and of the same nature with the other stones that rest upon him, even a real human person as we all are. Thus do the Scriptures, in simple and few words, express so great a theme, even the entire summary of our faith, and in such brief words comprises more than any man can express.

Now what the building is, I have already said; namely, faith, whereby we are laid on Christ and repose our trust upon this stone, and thus become like him; and then it also must follow, that the building must be fitted one part to the other. For the other stones must all be laid and placed upon this stone. That is of course love, a fruit of faith.

But why does the prophet call him a foundation stone? Because no man can build a house except he lay one stone first as a foundation; for the other stones in the building cannot stand except on the foundation stone.

So all of us must rest on Christ, and confess him as our foundation stone. Therefore we are not to pride ourselves that the stone must receive something from us, but we must receive blessing from it alone; for we do not bear it up, but it bears us up, and upon him lies sin, death, hell, and all we have to bear. So that all this, and whatever jars against us, cannot injure us if we have been placed on this foundation. For if we remain resting on him, and rely upon him, we must then remain where he is; just as natural stones must be left on their foundation stone.

Besides, the prophet calls him a “corner stone.” The Holy Spirit has a way of his own to say much in few words. Christ is a corner stone because he has brought Gentiles and Jews together who were at dead enmity one with the other, and thus the Christian Church has been gathered from both classes, of which the Apostle Paul writes extensively, Eph. 2:14-22. The Jews gloried in the law of God, and that they were God’s people, and thus despised the heathen. But now Christ has come, has taken away boasting from the Jews, and called us who were Gentiles, and thus he has made us both one, by one faith, and he has so dealt with us that we both must confess we have nothing of ourselves, but are all sinners, and must expect

righteousness and heaven only from him, and we Gentiles may as justly claim Christ has come to help us, as he did to help the Jews. Therefore he is the corner stone that joins together in one, both walls, the Jews and the Gentiles, so that it becomes one building and one house. [Of this Paul writes, Eph. 2;20£ Ed. 1539.]

Now the prophet closes thus: “Whoever believes on him shall not be put to shame.” When the Holy Spirit says, they shall not be put to shame who believe on Christ, he gives us to understand what he has in view; to-wit, that he has already published and confirmed the sentence, that, the whole world must be confounded and put to shame. Yet he would rescue some out of the multitude, so that no one may escape the shame but he who believes on Christ.. So Christ explains himself in the last of Mark, 16:16: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” In which words he also refers to the prophets. Therefore Peter well said in 1 Pet. 1:10, the prophets sought out the time, and diligently inquired after the salvation and concerning the future grace that was previously promised. So now we are to preach Christ, that he it is who has rescued us from this shame into which we all were plunged.

Now let any one come forward who may, and exalt free will, and defend human ability. If you should wish to overthrow with one stroke all human works and doctrines, and whatever springs from man, you have enough in this single passage to do it, so that all must fall like dry leaves from the tree. For it is ordained that whoever does not rest upon this stone is already lost. God does not suffer you to accomplish anything by works. Of such simplicity the Spirit and the Divine Majesty speak, that no one esteems it, yet of such power that it overthrows all things. Who then will set himself against it, or who will not be terrified by it? Therefore God would have us entirely despair as regards ourselves, and appropriate to ourselves only the blessings he has, and build on the foundation which no creature can overthrow; so that no one should trust in his own righteousness, but in Christ’s righteousness, and in all that Christ has. But what is it to rest upon his righteousness? Nothing else but to despair in regard to myself, and think my righteousness, my truth, must go to pieces; and build upon this, namely, that his righteousness, his truth, his life, and all the blessings he has, are eternal. There lies the foundation on which I stand; whatever rests not on this foundation will all necessarily fall. But whoever falls back on this foundation, he alone shall not be put to shame and shall rest safely, so that no violence shall ever

injure him in the least. Therefore Christ shall not only be a stone, but God will lay also him as a foundation on which we should confide. God has said this, he can not lie.

Now this stone does not serve itself, but suffers to be trodden on, and buried in the earth so that it cannot be seen, and the other stones lie upon it and are seen. Wherefore, it is given to us to partake of him, and rest upon him, and believe what he has shall all be ours, since he has procured it for our benefit; so that I may say, this is my own property and treasure, over which my conscience can exult. But Peter says further:

[7-8a.] For you therefore that believe is (he precious) the preciousness (honor): but for such as disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner; and, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.

This good, precious stone, says Peter, is indeed to some precious and honorable; but on the other hand, to many it is not precious, but despised, and a stone of stumbling, Is. 8:14. How is this? The Scriptures ascribe to it a twofold aspect, inasmuch as there are some who believe in it, and on the other hand there are many who do not thus believe. To them who believe is he precious; so that my heart must be glad if I repose my confidence and trust in him. Therefore he says, “To you that believe he is precious”; that is, ye are greatly dependent on him. For although he in himself is precious and excellent, yet this may be of no service or help to me; therefore he must be precious to us for the reason he gives us so many precious blessings; as an exceedingly precious stone, which does not retain its virtue in itself, but breaks forth and imparts all its powers, so that I have all that he is and has.

Unbelievers however do not esteem him as such a precious stone, but reject him, and stumble upon him; therefore he is not pleasing to them, but obnoxious and hateful; although he is delightful in himself. These are not only the great, public avowed sinners, but much more those great saints who rest on their free-will, on their own works and righteousness, who must stumble at this stone and be dashed upon it. Now God pronounces the sentence, that they who rest thereon without works, are justified through faith alone; but others do not attain to justification because they wish to be justified by their own righteousness, as Paul says, Rom. 9:31; 10:3.

Therefore this has become the stone, says Peter, which the builders rejected. And here he dovetails the Scriptures into one another, but explains

the passage he quoted above from Ps. 118:22, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." Who the builders are, I have sufficiently shown [verse 5]; even those who taught and preached the law, and would justify men by their works; who agree with Christ, as summer and winter with each other. Therefore ministers who preach work righteousness, reject this stone.

Besides this he quotes another passage from the prophet Isaiah, 8:13, 14. The prophet has there described that which was to take place, as Peter here does, and speaks thus: 'Jehovah shall be your dread, who shall be to you for a sanctuary (holiness), but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense shall he be to both the houses of Israel.' The sense of the prophet is this: Jehovah shall be to you for holiness; that is, he shall be hallowed in your hearts; ye are to have no other sanctification, neither this nor that, except as ye believe. To the others, he shall be a stone on which they shall stumble and be offended.

But what now is this offense and this running or stumbling? It is this: When we preach Christ, and say, See why this stone is laid for a foundation, namely, that you wholly desponding and despairing in yourself might hold your works and your own righteousness as condemned, and might place your confidence in him alone, and believe that Christ's righteousness becomes your righteousness. When men hear this, they revolt at it, stumble and are offended, and say, How? do you mean to say that virginity, and masses, and the like good works, amount to nothing? It is the devil that bids you say that! For they cannot reconcile themselves to the thought that their claims are no good; they think they have done well in the sight of God; quote passages to prove it from the Scriptures, and say, God has commanded that we should perform good works. If we dispute this, they begin and cry out, "Heretic! Heretic!" "Fire! Fire!" So they cannot endure this stone, and they stumble against it. They then bounce against one another, so that they cannot help being crushed by this stone, as Christ says, Mat. 21:42, "Have ye never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?" And it follows, "And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust," Mat. 21:44. Therefore, do as ye will, ye cannot dishonor the stone; it is laid, and it will continue to lay where it was placed. Whoever then will rush upon it and dash himself on it, must necessarily be scattered as dust.

This is the stumbling and the offense of which Scripture speaks so much. Thus the Jews stumble to this day against this stone, and this stumbling will not cease until the last day shall come; then shall this stone fall upon all the unbelieving and grind them to powder. Therefore, although Christ is such an elect, precious stone, he must yet be called a stone of offense and stumbling, by no fault of his. And just as the Jews did, we continue to do at the present day; for as they gloried in the name of God, that they were God's people, so it is the case now, men under the name of Christ and the Christian Church, deny Christ and reject the precious stone. [The reason is, they are required to renounce their own wisdom, righteousness, holiness, etc., and that they will not and cannot do, they rather reject this chosen, precious stone. Nevertheless he remains indeed unrejected, but they must on its account go to the bottom and descend to the devil, and nothing can prevent it. Ed. 1539.] He has come that they might reject their own works; but this is a thing they cannot suffer, and they reject him. Therefore it follows:

[8b.] For they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

If they are told their works are not good and are of no avail before God, they cannot and will not hear it. Now God has laid Christ as a foundation, whereon they should have been placed, and through him have obtained complete salvation; and he has caused him to be preached throughout the whole world, that they through the proclamation of the Gospel might be grounded on him. Yet they would not accept him, but rejected him, and remained in their own nature and works. For if they suffered themselves to rest upon him, then would their own honor, riches and power fall, so that they could never be raised again. Peter says further:

[9a.] But ye are an elect race (a chosen generation) a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.

There he gives Christians a true title, and has quoted this passage from Moses, Deut. 7:6, where he says to the Jews, "For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God; Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth." Thus in Ex. 19:5, 6, he says: "Ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples, and shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."

There you see where Peter's words are from. As I have said before [verse 5], so I say again, that it should be understood how Scripture is wont to speak of priests. Let no one be troubled as to those whom the people call priests; let every one call them as he pleases, but abide thou by the pure word of God, and whom this calls priests call thou priests also. We can well endure that they call themselves priests whom the bishops and the Pope consecrate, and let them call themselves as they will, only see to it that they do not call themselves "priests of God," for they cannot quote a word from Scripture in support of their claim.

But should they claim that in this passage he speaks of them, answer them as I have instructed you under verse 5, and ask them to whom Peter is here speaking, and then of necessity they shall be made ashamed. For it is certainly clear and plain enough that he speaks to the whole congregation, to all Christians, in that he says: Ye are a chosen generation and a holy people, since he has hitherto spoken of none but of those who are built upon this stone and believe. Therefore it must follow, that whoever does not believe is no priest. If they say, then: Ah! we must explain the passage just as the holy fathers have interpreted it; then reply: Let the fathers and teachers, whoever they may be, explain as they will, yet Peter, who has received greater testimony from God than they, besides being more ancient, tells me so and so, therefore I will hold with him. The passage moreover needs no comment, for he speaks in express words of those that believe. Now they are not the only believers who are anointed and wear the tonsure. Therefore we will readily allow that they call themselves by this name; for the question is not what they permit themselves to do; but the dispute is, whether they are styled priests in the Scriptures, and whether God calls them by this name. There may be some selected out of the congregation as its officers and ministers, and appointed to preach in the Church and administer the sacraments; but we all are priests before God if we are Christians. For since we are built upon this stone, which is our high priest before God, we must also possess all that he has.

Therefore I would be glad to find this word "priests" be as I would suffer that those who are anointed and shorn For it is all one thing, priest, baptized, Christian. As little coming as common as it is for us to be called Christians, should be called Christians and the baptized, so little would I endure that they only should be regarded as priests. Yet they have arrogated the name entirely to themselves. So too they have named that the church

which the Pope and his cardinals rule. But Scripture refutes this. Therefore mark well, that you may know how to establish the distinction as to how God names us priests, and how men call themselves such. For we must yet again state this word "priest" should become as common as the word Christian. For to be a priest belongs not to an office that is external, it is only such an office that is administered before God.

So we conclude that we are all kings. "Priests" and "kings" are all spiritual names, as Christians, saints, the Church. And just as you are not called a Christian because you have much gold or wealth, but because you are built upon this stone and believe on Christ, so you are not called a priest because you wear a tonsure or long robe, but for the reason, that you dare come into God's presence. Like wise you are not a king because you wear a gold crown, and have many lands and people subject to you, but because you are lord over all things, death, sin and hell. For you are as really a king as Christ is a king, if you believe on him. Still he is not a king as the kings of this world are, he wears no crown of gold, rides forth with no great pomp and large equipage. But he is a king over all kings, one who has authority over all things and at whose feet all must bow. As he is a lord, so also am I a lord; for what he possesses that have I also. [For through him are we children and heirs of God, his brethren and joint heirs, Rom. 8:17. Ed. 1539.]

But perhaps some one may reply. Peter says here that Christians are also kings, while we have before our eyes the fact that we are not all kings, so that this passage is not to be understood as though he spoke of all in general. For whoever is a Christian, is certainly not a king in France or" a priest at Rome. But when I ask whether the King of France is also a king in the sight of God, this he passes over, for God will not judge by the crown. On earth and before the world he is indeed a king, but when death comes then his kingdom is at an end; for then he must lie at the feet of those that believe. We are speaking of an eternal kingdom and priesthood, inasmuch as every one who believes is in truth a king before God; but who does not know that we are not all shorn and anointed priests? Because some men have been anointed, they are not therefore priests in the sight of God; just as they are not kings before God because they have been crowned. Crowned kings and anointed priests are of the world, and are made by men. The Pope may make as many such priests as he chooses, but far be it that he should make one a priest before God, for these God himself will make.

Therefore, when Peter says here, “Ye are a royal priesthood,” it is as much as if he had said, “Ye are Christians.” Would you now know what sort of a title, and authority, and glory Christians have; you learn it here that they are kings and priests, and a chosen people. [Why they are consecrated to be priests and how they are to fill their office, follows. Ed. 1539.] What the priest’s office is, follows:

[9b.] That ye may show forth the excellencies (German *tugend*, virtue) of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

It belongs to the office of a priest to be a messenger of God and receive from God himself the command to preach his word. The excellencies or praises, says Peter, that is, the wonderful work that God has performed in you, in bringing you out of darkness into light, you are to proclaim, which is the highest office of a priest. And the way you are to preach is by one brother proclaiming to another the powerful work of God; how ye have been ransomed from sin, death, hell, and all evil by him, and have been called to eternal life. Thus shall you also instruct others how to come to the same light. For your whole duty is discharged in this, that you confess what God has done for you; and then let it be your chief aim, to make this known publicly, and to call every one to the light, to which ye have been called. Where you see people who are ignorant, you are to direct and teach them as you have been taught, namely, how a man may be saved through the virtue and power of God, and pass from darkness to light.

And here you observe Peter plainly says, there is only one single light, and concludes that all our reason, however sharp-sighted it is, is mere darkness. For although reason may count one, two, three, and also discern what is black or white, great or small, and judge outwardly of other matters, still it cannot understand what faith is. Here it is stark blind, and if all men should put their wits together, they could not understand a letter of this divine wisdom. Therefore Peter speaks here of another light, that is truly wonderful; and tells us earnestly, that we are all alike in darkness and blindness if God hath not called us to his true light.

Experience teaches us this also. For when we preach that we cannot come before God by our works, but must have a mediator, who may come into God’s presence and reconcile us to him, reason must confess she never could have known such a thing; so if she would understand it she must have

another light and knowledge. Therefore all that is not of God's word and faith is darkness. For here reason gropes like a blind man; is ever changing from this to that, and knows not what it does. But if we speak in this manner to the worldly, learned, or wise, they begin to cry out and rage against it. Therefore Peter is a bold Apostle in deed, in that he dares make that darkness that all the world calls light.

So we see that the first and most eminent office we as Christians are to discharge is, that we make known the praise of God. What then are the praiseworthy things and the noble deeds God has wrought? They are, as we, have often said [I Pet. 1:3, 13], that Christ, through the power of God has wounded death, chained hell, subdued sin and brought us to eternal life. These are excellencies or virtues so great that it is impossible for any man to comprehend them, and as to doing them, that is out of the question. Therefore it is of no avail that human doctrines be preached to us Christians. For we are taught of a power that subdues the devil, sin and death.

And here Peter has once more brought together many proof-texts, and it is throughout common with him thus to heap passage upon passage. For all the prophets declare, that God's name and honor, and his arm or power should be honored and extolled, and that he would perform a work of which the whole world would sing and speak. Of this the prophets in all places are full; to all these Peter here refers. Beside, they have spoken much of light and darkness, that we must be enlightened with God's light, thereby showing that all human reason is darkness. Peter says further:

[10.] Who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

This passage is written in the prophet Hosea, 2:23, and Paul has also quoted it in Rom. 9:25: "I will call that my people, which was not my people." The import of all is this: Almighty God chose his people Israel as a peculiar people, and manifested his great power in their behalf, and gave them many prophets, and performed many wonderful works among them, that he might from that people permit Christ to become man; and for the children's sake has it all taken place. Therefore they are called in Scripture the people of God. But the prophets extended this further, and said that this election should be more comprehensive, and should even include the Gentiles.

Therefore Peter says here: "Ye are now the people of God, who once were not the people of God." Hence it is evident he wrote the epistle to the Gentiles and not to the Jews. By this he shows that the passage out of the prophet has been now fulfilled; that they are now a holy people; that they have the property, priesthood, kingdom, and all that Christ has, if they believe. It follows now further:

[11, 12.] Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Peter here uses a different mode of speech from that of Paul, who would not speak in this manner, as we shall hear; for every Apostle has his own characteristic way of speaking, just as each prophet has. He has hitherto been firmly laying the foundation of the Christian faith, which may serve as his text. Now he proceeds and teaches how we should conduct ourselves toward all men. This is the true method of preaching, first to set forth faith, what it does, and what its power and nature are, even that it gives to us enough of everything that is necessary to holiness and salvation; that we can do nothing except by faith, and through this we have all that God possesses. God has thus proceeded with us and given us all that is his, and has himself become our own, so that we have through faith all things that are good and needful for us. What then are we to do? Are we to live in indolence? Then it would be the best that we should die, so that we might have it all. But while we live here we should act in our neighbor's behalf, and give ourselves to his welfare, as God hath given himself to us. Thus faith saves us, but love leads us to give to our neighbor whenever we have enough to give. That is, faith receives from God; love gives to our neighbor. This theme is mentioned in few words, yet much may easily be preached on it, and it may be extended further than has been done by Peter.

This is now the sense of the Apostle, when he says, "Dear brethren, I admonish, beseech, you as sojourners and as pilgrims." Since you are one with Christ, form one household, and his goods are yours, your injury is his injury, and he takes as his own all that you possess; therefore you are to follow him, and conduct yourselves as those who are no longer citizens of the world; for your possessions lie not upon the earth, but in heaven; and though you have already lost all temporal good, you still have Christ who is

more than all else. The devil is the prince of this world and rules it; his citizens are the people of this world; therefore, since you are not of the world, act as a stranger in an inn, who has not his possessions with him, but procures food and gives his gold for it. For here it is only a sojourning, where we cannot tarry, but must travel farther. Therefore we should use worldly blessings no more than is needful for health and appetite, and then leave them and go to another land. We are citizens of heaven; on earth we are pilgrims and guests, Heb. 13:14.

[11b.] Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

I will not determine here whether Peter speaks of outward impurity, or like Paul does of all that is called carnal, that is, whatever man does without faith, while he is in the body and in a carnal life. I hold however that Peter had a different mode of expression, yet I do not think he uses the word "soul," as Paul does, for spirit; but Peter has held more to the common Greek word than Paul. Yet much stress is not to be laid upon this; let it be understood of all kinds of lusts, or all kinds of carnal desire or impurity. But this at least he would teach us, that no saint on earth can be fully perfect and pure. The high schools have even trodden this passage under their feet, and they do not understand it; they think it is said only of sinners, as though the saints had no wicked lust remaining in them. But whoever will study carefully the Scriptures must note a distinction, because the prophets sometimes speak of the saints in a manner, as though they were indeed perfectly holy in every respect; while on the other hand they speak also of them as having evil lusts and being troubled with sins. In regard to these two distinctions those persons cannot judge. Therefore understand it thus: That Christians are divided into two parts; into an inward nature which is faith, and an outward nature which is the flesh. If we look upon a Christian as respects faith, then he is pure and entirely holy; for the word of God has nothing impure in it, and wherever it enters the heart that depends upon it, it will make that also pure; because, in respect to faith all things are perfect. According to that, we are kings and priests and the people of God, as was said above, 1 Pet. 2:9. But since faith exists in the flesh, and we still live on the earth we feel at times evil dispositions, as impatience and fear of death, etc. These are all the fault of the old man, for faith is not yet mature, has not attained full control over the flesh.

This you can understand from the parable in the Gospel, Luke 10:30f., of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, who beat him and left him lying half dead, whom the Samaritan afterward took up, and bound his wounds, and cared for him, and saw to it that he should be nursed. There you perceive that this man, since he is to be nursed, is not sick unto death, his life is safe; all that is wanting is that he should be restored to health. Life is there, but he is not completely restored, for he lies yet in the hands of the physicians and must yet give himself up to be healed. So we have also the Lord Jesus Christ in his completeness; we are assured of eternal life, yet we have not perfect health; some of the old Adam still remains in the flesh.

Similar also is the parable in Mat. 13:33, where Christ says: 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman takes and mingles in the meal until it is leavened throughout.' When meal is made into dough, the leaven is all in it, but it has not penetrated and worked through it, but the meal lies working, until it is leavened through out, and no more leaven need be added. Thus through faith you have all that you need to apprehend the word of God, yet it has not penetrated throughout, wherefore it must continue to work till you are entirely renewed. In this way you are to discriminate in regard to the Scriptures, and not martyr them as the Papists do.

Therefore I say, when you read in the Scriptures of the saints, that they were perfect, understand, that as to faith they were entirely pure and without sin, but the flesh still remained and that could not have been entirely holy. Therefore Christians desire and pray that the body or the flesh be mortified, that they may be entirely pure. This those who teach otherwise have neither experienced nor relished, which leads them to speak just as they imagine and conceive with their reason; wherefore they must err. In regard to this, those great saints who have written and taught much, have greatly stumbled. Origen has not a word of it in his books. Jerome never understood it. Augustine, had he not been driven to contend with the Pelagians, would have understood it no better. When they speak of the saints, they extol them so highly as if they were something different from, and better than, other Christians; just as though they had not felt the power of the flesh and complained of it as well as we do.

Therefore Peter says here, as ye would be pure and have complete sanctification, continue to contend with your evil lusts. So also Christ says in the Gospel of John 13:10: 'Whoever is washed, must also wash his feet;' it is

not enough that his head and hands be clean, therefore he would yet have them wash their feet.

But what does Peter mean in that he says, abstain from the lusts that war against the soul? This is what he would say: You are not to imagine that you can succeed by sports and sleep. Sin is indeed taken away by faith, but you have still the flesh which is impulsive and inconsiderate; therefore take good care, that ye overcome it. By strong effort it must be done; you are to restrain and subdue lust, and the greater your faith is, the greater will the conflict be. Therefore you should be prepared and armed, and should contend with it incessantly. For they will assault you in multitudes, and would take you captive.

Hence Paul also says, Rom. 7:22f: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity," so that I do what I would not. As though he had said, I fight indeed against it, but it will not finally yield. Therefore I would gladly be free, but in spite of my good will it cannot come to pass. What then am I to do? "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death," Rom. 7:24. In this same manner all the saints cry out. But people without faith the devil leads in such a way that he permits them only to enter on a sinful course, and he follows them, but does not destroy them entirely by sin. But as to the others, he thinks, I have already taken them captive by unbelief. I will permit them to go so far only, as to do no great sin and have no great assault, and be kept from swearing and knavery. But believers have always opposition enough; they must ever stand in the attitude of struggle. Those who are without faith and have not the Spirit, do not feel this nor do they have such an experience; they break away and follow their wicked lusts; but as soon as the Spirit and faith enter our hearts, we become so weak that we think we cannot beat down the least imaginations and sparks of temptation, and see nothing but sin in ourselves from the crown of the head even to the foot. For before we believed, we walked according to our own lusts, but now the Spirit has come and would purify us, and a conflict arises; when the devil, the flesh and the world oppose faith. Of this all the prophets complain here and there in the Scriptures.

Therefore Peter now means that the strife does not take place in sinners, but in believers, and gives us the consolation that we may check evil lusts thus, namely, by barking against them. If thou then hast wicked thoughts,

thou shouldst not on this account despair; only be on thy guard, that thou be not taken prisoner by them. Our teachers have proposed to relieve the matter by directing men to torture themselves until they had no more evil thoughts, that they at last became frantic and insane. But learn, if you are a Christian, that you must experience all kinds of opposition and wicked dispositions in the flesh. For wherever faith exists, there come a hundred evil thoughts, a hundred struggles more than before. Only see to it that you act the man, and not suffer yourself to be taken captive; and continue to resist and say, I will not, I will not. [Lord Christ then hast said: "Ask and ye shall receive," etc. Help, dear Lord, against all temptations. Ed. 1539.] For we must here confess that the case is much like an ill-matched couple who are continually complaining of one another, and what one will do the other will not.

That may still be called a truly Christian life which is never at perfect rest, and has not advanced so far that we feel no sin, but that we indeed feel sin, only we do not allow it admittance. Thus we are to fast, pray and labor to weaken and suppress lust. So you are not to imagine you are to become a saint like these fools speak of. Since flesh and blood continue as long as sin remains; therefore we are to constantly war against it. Whoever has not learned this by his own experience, must not boast that he is a Christian.

Hitherto we have been taught, when we made confession, or joined some spiritual institution, we were at once pure and needed no longer to contend with sin. They have said moreover, baptism purifies and makes holy, so that nothing evil remains in the person. Hence they thought, now I will have a pleasing rest; then the devil came and assaulted them worse than before. Therefore understand this well, though you confess and receive absolution, you must do even as the soldier, who in battle runs upon the points of the javelins, when the critical moment approaches, and the conflict rages, compelling him to strike for the right, as if to repel outrage; then he must draw out his sword and strike right and left. But now while the strife threatens only, there must be untiring vigilance. So, if you have been baptized, be on your guard, inasmuch as you are not safe for an hour from the devil and from sin, even though you think you will have no more attacks. Therefore a Christian life is nothing else than a conflict and encampment, as the Scriptures say [Job 7:1]; and therefore the Lord our God is called the Lord of Sabaoth, "*Dominus Sabaoth*" [Ps. 24:10], that is Lord over hosts. So also, "*Dominus potens in prselio*," the Lord mighty in battle [Ps. 24:8]. [By these

words God shows that he is almighty for he triumphs in a wonderful way through us against the prince and God of this world, the devil and the gates of hell, yet we are very weak, hardly to be counted a feeble fly compared to Satan. Hence Paul says in 2 Cor. 4:7: “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God” and not from ourselves. Ed. 1539.]

And thus he shows how powerful he is, that he permits his people to be exposed in the conflict and rush upon the points of the javelins; yet while the trumpets are ever sounding he is ever observant, saying, beware here, beware there; thrust here, strike there. Besides, it is a lasting conflict, in which you are to do all you can to strike down the devil by the word of God. We must therefore ever offer resistance, and call on God for help, and despond of all human powers. Now follows further:

[12.] Having your behavior seemly (an honest life) among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Note here what excellent order Peter observes. He has already taught us what we should do in order to subdue the flesh with all its lusts. Now he teaches us again why this should be. Why I should subdue my flesh? That I may be saved? No, but that I may lead an honest life before the world. For this honest life does not justify us, but we must first be justified and believe before we attempt to lead an honest or pious life. But as to outward conduct, this I am not to direct to my own profit, but that the unbelieving may thereby be reformed and attracted, that they may through us come to Christ; which is a true mark of love. They slander and abuse us, and hold us to be the worst wretches; therefore we should exhibit such an excellent course of behavior, that men shall be compelled to say, “Ah! We can not find them guilty of any wrong.”

We read when the emperors reigned and persecuted the Christians, no fault could be found with the believers, except that they called on Christ and considered him as God. So Pliny writes in his letter to Trajan, the Emperor, that he knew of no wrong that the Christians did, except that they came together every morning, early, and sang songs of praise in order to honor their Christ and receive the sacrament; besides this, none could bring any charge against them. Therefore Peter says: Ye must endure to have men

reproach and abuse you as evildoers, and for this reason you are to lead such a life that you shall do no one any injury, and in this manner you shall bring about their reformation. “Till that day arrive”; that is, ye must endure it as long as men reproach you, till once all shall break forth and be revealed, so that it shall be seen how unjust they have been toward you, and that they be compelled to glorify God on your account. Thus Peter now continues:

Part 2. Fruit And Work Of The Christian Life In Particular.

A. Subjects Of Civil Government.

[13-17.] Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bond servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king.

In this beautiful order Peter proceeds and teaches us how we should conduct ourselves in all things. Hitherto he has spoken in a general manner of the conduct that be comes every condition in life. Now he begins to teach us our duties to the civil government. For since he had said enough on the first theme, our duty to God and ourselves, he now adds how we are to behave toward all men. And he would say in the first place and before all else, since ye have done all that was necessary to attain to true faith and you hold your body in subjection, let this now be your first business, to obey the civil authorities.

This, which I have here rendered in the German, every "ordinance" (*ordnung*) of man, is the Greek "*ktisis*," and in Latin "*creatura*." This has not been understood by our learned men. The German language well expresses what the word means, where it is said, we are to obey what the ruler enacts, creates. So he uses the word here as though he said, yield obedience to what the public government enacts or creates. For to enact is to lay down a command and ordinance, and it is a human creation. But they have hence inferred that *creatura* means a creature, an *oxor* an ass, as the Pope also speaks of it. If this were Peter's meaning, then we should need to become subject even to a slave. But he here means a human ordinance, law or command, and what they enact we are to do. What God makes, authorizes and requires as his ordinance we should believe. So also, that is a human and secular creation which is constituted by commands, as external government must be. To this we are to be subject. Therefore understand the expression,

“*creatura humana*,” as meaning “*quod creat et condit homo*,” what man makes and constructs.

[13b.] For the Lord’s sake.

We are not bound to obey the sovereign power for its own sake, he says, but for God’s sake, whose children we are. We should be moved to obey, not that we may thereby acquire merit; for what I do for God’s sake, I must freely do as an act of service, moreover I should do from pure cheerfulness whatever his heart desires. But why should we be obedient to the civil powers for God’s sake? Because it is God’s will that evildoers should be punished, and those who do well protected, that there may be concord in the world. So we should demand that there be public peace, which God requires. For since we are not all believers, but the majority unbelievers, he has enacted and ordained so as to save the world from anarchy that the civil power should bear the sword and restrain the wicked, in case they are not disposed to observe the peace, they may be compelled to do so. This he executes through the civil powers, so that the world may be ruled for the good of all. Whence you see if none were wicked, there would be no need of civil government; wherefore he says “for vengeance on evildoers, and for praise to them that do well” (verse 14). The just should have honor when they do right, since they exalt and crown the worldly authorities, insomuch that others may take example from them, not however that any one may thereby merit anything before God. Such is Paul’s language also, in Rom 13:3: “For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldst thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good.”

[15.] For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

With these words Peter silences vain babblers who glory in their Christian name and rank, and prevents them from alleging and saying, “Since faith is sufficient for a Christian, and works do not justify, what is then the need of being subject to the civil power, and paying tribute and taxes?” And he tells them thus, although we have no benefit from it, we ought readily to do it to please God, so that the mouth of those enemies of God who revile us may be stopped, and that they be not able to bring anything against us, but be

compelled to say we are honest, obedient people. So we read of many saints, that they were summoned to war under heathen rulers and slew the enemy, yet were as subject and obedient to those that summoned them as we Christians are bound to be to the civil rulers, although at present it is maintained we could not be Christians if we lived among the Turks.

Now you may perhaps say, But still Christ has commanded [Mat. 5:39] that we should not resist evil, but if any one strike us on one cheek we are to turn the other also. [Mat. 5:39.] How then can we strike and execute others? Answer: The heathen formerly objected in like manner to the Christians, and said, if such and such should come to pass, your government must be suppressed. But we reply: It is true Christians for themselves should not resist evil, neither should they revenge themselves when injured, but endure injustice and violence. Therefore they cannot be severe even toward those who do not believe. But the civil power of the sword is not thereby forbidden. For although pious Christians have no need of the sword and the law, since they live so that none can complain of them, do no man any wrong, but treat every one kindly and cheerfully endure all that is done to them; yet the sword must be borne on account of the un-Christian people, that they when they injure others may be punished; so that the general peace be preserved and the godly be protected. Thus God has provided another government, that they who would not of themselves be restrained from evil might be compelled by the civil power to do no one any injury.

Therefore God has established the civil authorities for the sake of the unbelieving, so that even Christian men might exercise the power of the sword, and come under obligation thereby to serve their neighbor and restrain the wicked so that the good people might remain in peace among them. And still the command of Christ abides in force that we are not to resist evil; also, that a Christian, although he bears the sword, does not use it for his own sake nor to revenge himself, but only for others. And moreover this is a work of Christian love, that with the sword we support and defend the whole community and not suffer it to be injured. Christ teaches only those who, since they believe and love, are also obedient. But the greater multitude in the world, as it does not believe, obeys not the command. Therefore they must be ruled as un-Christian people, and their caprice be put under restraint; for if their power were allowed to obtain the upper hand, no one could stand before them.

Thus there are two kinds of government in the world, as there are also two kinds of people, namely, believers and unbelievers. Christians yield themselves to the control of God's word; they have no need of civil government for their own sake; but the un-Christian portion require another government, even the civil sword, since they will not be controlled by the word of God. Yet if all were Christians and followed the Gospel, there would be no more need or use of the civil sword and the exercising of authority; for if there were no evildoers there certainly could be no punishment. But since it is impossible for us all to be righteous, Christ has ordained the civil government for the wicked, that they may rule as they must be ruled. But the righteous he keeps for himself, and rules them by his mere word.

Therefore Christian government is not opposed to the civil, nor is civil government opposed to Christ. Civil government does not in any way belong to Christ's ministry; but it is an outward thing, like all other offices and institutions. And as these exist distinct from Christ's office, unbelievers may fill them just as well as Christians, so it is also with the office of the civil sword, since it neither makes men Christian nor un-Christian. But of this I have spoken often enough elsewhere (especially in "The Civil Authority. To what Extent we are Obligated to Obey it." 1523.) It follows further:

[16.] As free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, out as bond-servants of God.

This is said especially to us who have heard of Christian liberty, that we may not go on and abuse this freedom; that is to say, under the name and show of Christian freedom do all we lust after so that from this liberty shall spring a shamelessness and carnal recklessness; as we see even now takes place, and had begun even in the Apostle's times, as is evident from the Epistles of Peter and Paul, when men did what the great multitude do at present. We have now again, through the grace of God, come to the knowledge of the truth, and know that to be mere deception which popes, bishops, priests and monks have hitherto taught, enacted and enforced; and our conscience is enlightened and has become free from human ordinances and from all control which they had over us, so that we are no longer obliged to do what they have commanded under peril of our salvation. To this, freedom we must now hold fast, and never allow ourselves to be robbed of it.

But at the same time we should be carefully on our guard not to make this freedom a cloak of our shame.

The Pope has here proceeded unrighteously in aiming to force and oppress men by his laws. For among a Christian people there should and can be no compulsion, and if the attempt is made to bind the conscience by outward laws, faith and the Christian life are soon suppressed. For Christ's followers are to be led and ruled only in the spirit, since they know that they through faith already have everything necessary to be saved, and stand in need of nothing more to this end, and henceforth are under obligation to do nothing but good to their neighbor, helping him with all they have, as Christ has helped them; and moreover that all the works they do should be done freely and without constraint, and flow forth from willing and happy hearts, which thank, honor and praise God for the blessings received from him. So Paul writes, 1 Tim. 1:9: That for the righteous no law is made, for they do freely of themselves and unsummoned, all that God requires.

Since now such enforcement of human doctrines is abolished and Christian liberty is preached, the reckless spirits that are without faith coincide with it, and thereby would become good Christians, inasmuch as they keep not the law of the Pope, claiming this freedom which relieves them from obligation to it; and yet they observe not that which true Christian freedom requires, namely, to do good to their neighbor with cheerfulness and irrespective of its being commended, as real Christians do. Thus they make Christian freedom a mere cloak, under which to work only their shame, and disgrace the noble name and title of that freedom which Christians have.

This Peter here forbids, for what he would say is: Although ye are free in all external matters, if ye are, Christians, and should not be forced by laws to subject yourselves to the control of worldly rule, since for the righteous no law is given, as we have said [1 Tim. 1:9], yet ye should do it of yourselves, voluntarily and without compulsion, not that ye must be held in obedience by necessity, but in order to please God, and for the advantage of your neighbor. This also Christ did himself, as we read in Mat. 17:24f, in that he paid tribute when he did not need to do it, but was free, and Lord over all things. So likewise he subjected himself to Pilate and permitted himself to be judged, while as yet he said to him, "Thou wouldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above," [John 19:11], in which words he gave confirmation to the authority to which he meanwhile subjected himself, that he might please his Father.

From this you see that the multitude has no claim to Christian freedom who will do nothing, neither what the world nor what God requires, but abide in their old insubordinate disposition, although they make their boast of the Gospel. Though we be free from all laws, we must yet have respect to weak and ignorant Christians, since this is a work of love. Hence Paul says, Rom. 13:8: "Owe no man anything, save to love one another." Therefore let him who would glory in his freedom, do first what a Christian should do: let him first do good to his neighbor, and after that thus make use of his freedom; when the Pope or any other person imposes his authority upon him, and would force him to obey it, let him say, "My good fellow, Mr. Pope, I will not do it for this reason, because you choose to make a command of it, and invade my liberty"; for we are to live in freedom as the servants of God, like Peter here says, not as bond-servants of man. Yet in case any one desires any thing of me in which I could be of service to him, I will cheerfully do it out of good will, not being scrupulous whether it has been commanded or not, but for the sake of brotherly love, and because God also requires that I should do good to my neighbor. Thus I will not be forced to be come subject to worldly princes and lords, but what I do I will do of my own free will; not because they command me, but in order to do a service to my neighbor. Thus should all our works be, springing from affection and love, and all having respect to our neighbor, since we have no need on our own account to do good works. It further follows:

[17a.] Honor all men.

This is not a command, but a faithful admonition. We are assuredly under obligation to honor everybody, although we are free; for this freedom does not extend to evil-doing, but merely to well-doing. Now we have repeatedly said, that every Christian through faith attains to all that Christ has himself, and is moreover his brother. Therefore as I give all honor to the Lord Christ, so also should I do toward my neighbor. This consists not merely in outward behavior; that I should bow to him, and the like, but much more: that inwardly in my heart I should highly regard him, as I also highly regard Christ. We are the temple of God, as Paul says, 1 Cor. 3:16; for the spirit of God dwelleth in us. If now we bend the knee before a temple of worship or a picture of the holy cross, should we not do it far more before a living temple of God?

Thus Paul teaches us also in Rom. 12:10, in honor to prefer one another, so that each may place himself below the other, and raise the other above himself. The gifts of God are manifold and various, so that one is in a more exalted position than another; but no one knows who is most exalted in the sight of God, for he may easily raise hereafter to the highest place one who now occupies the meanest position. Therefore should every one, however high he be exalted, humble himself and honor his neighbor.

[17b.] Love the brotherhood.

I have spoken under 1 Pet. 1:22 of the distinction the Apostles make between love in general and brotherly love. We are required even to love our enemies; this is common Christian love. But brotherly love is, that we Christians love one another as brethren, and communicate one to another, since we all alike have our blessings from God. This is the love Peter here particularly requires.

[17c.] Fear God. Honor the King.

He says not that we are to have great regard for lords and kings, but that we are to honor them, although they are heathen, as Christ also did, and those prophets who fell at the feet of the King of Babylon. But here perhaps you will say: Hence, you perceive, that we are to be obedient to the Pope and are to fall at his feet. Answer: Certainly, if the Pope attains to temporal power and conducts himself like another sovereign, we are to be obedient even to him, as when he speaks after this manner: I forbid you wearing the cowl or tonsure; besides, on this day you are to fast, not that it is of any avail before God or necessary to salvation, but because I, as a temporal ruler, require it. But in case he goes further and says, This I, in the place of God, forbid you doing, this you are also to receive as though it came from God himself, and to observe it under pain of being excommunicated and of committing a deadly sin, then you are to say, Pardon, my master, I will not do it.

To every ordinance of man we are to be subject, and are to do what it requires, so long as it does not bind the conscience and only forbids in respect to outward things, even though it should proceed tyrannically toward us; for

“if any man would take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” Mat. 5:40. But if it invade the spiritual domain and constrain the conscience, over which God only must preside and rule, we certainly should not obey it, but rather slip our neck from under it. Temporal authority and government extend no further than to matters external and temporal; but the Pope not only arrogates this to himself, but would seize upon the spiritual authority also; and yet he has none of it, for his commands have respect to nothing but clothing, food, canonries and prebends; matters which belong neither to civil nor spiritual control. For how is the world benefited by these things? Besides, it is contrary to God’s will to make sin and good works to consist in such matters, where they do not; hence Christ cannot suffer it. But he can well tolerate civil government, since it does not encumber itself with the matters of sin and good works, and spiritual affairs, but has to do with other things, as protecting and fortifying cities, building bridges, imposing taxes, gathering tribute, extending protection, guarding the land and the people, and punishing the evildoers. Therefore to such a prince, while he imposes no ordinance upon the conscience, a Christian may readily render obedience, and he does it unconstrainedly [for conscience sake, Rom. 13:5, Ed. 1539], since he is free in all things.

Therefore when an emperor or prince asks me what my faith is, I shall tell him, not because he commands it, but because I am under obligation to confess my faith publicly before every man. But in case he should go further, and command me to believe thus or so, then I shall tell him: My good sir, attend to your civil government; you have no authority to intrude on God’s domain, wherefore I certainly shall not obey you. You cannot yourself tolerate invasion into your sovereignty: if any one against your will passes the limits, you shoot him down with rifles. Do you imagine then that God will tolerate that you should thrust him from his throne and seat yourself in his place? Peter calls the civil power only a human ordinance; so they, the officers, have no power to step into God’s ordinances and to make laws against faith, verse 13. But of this we have said enough. It follows now further in the Epistle:

Part 3. Fruit And Work Of The Christian Life In Particular.

B. Servants.

[18-20.] Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but to the froward. For this is acceptable (thankworthy), if for conscience toward God, a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently. This is acceptable with God.

Peter has thus far taught us how we should be subject to the civil power, and give it honor; wherefore we have stated how far its authority extends, that it may not arrogate to itself matters which pertain to faith. This is said of the civil ordinances in general, and is a doctrine for every one to receive. But now he proceeds and speaks of such power as does not extend over a community, but only over individuals. Here he first teaches how domestics should conduct themselves toward their masters, and the meaning of it is as follows:

Household servants and day laborers are just as really Christians as any other class, if like others they have the word, faith, baptism and all such blessings. Therefore before God they are just as great and high as others. But, as to their outward state and before the world, there is a difference, since they occupy a lower station and must serve others. Wherefore, since they are called into this state by God, they should make it their business to be subject to their masters, and have respect and esteem for them. Of this the prophet David gives a fine illustration, and shows how they are to serve, Ps. 123:2: "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look unto Jehovah our God." That is, servants and maidens should perform with humility and care what the master or the mistress requires. This is the will of God, and therefore it should cheerfully be done. Of this you may be certain and assured, that it pleases God and is acceptable to him, when you do this in faith. Wherefore, since these are the best works you can do, you are not to run far after others. What your master or mistress commands you, that God

himself has commanded you. This is not a human command, although it is made by man. Therefore you are not to scruple as to the master you have, be he good or bad, kind or irritable and froward, but think thus; let the master be as he may, I will serve him, and do it to honor God, since he requires it of me, and since my master, Christ, became a servant for my sake.

This is the true doctrine that is always to be advocated, which now, alas! is buried in silence and is lost. But no one regards it except those who are Christians, for the Gospel appeals only to those who receive it. Therefore, if you will be a child of God, purpose in your heart to render such service as Christ himself bids you. As also Paul teaches, in Eph. 6:5f, "Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters as unto the Lord Christ; not with eye-service only, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, that ye obey from the heart, for God's sake, with cheerfulness." Consider that ye serve the Lord, and not man. So also, he says in Col. 3:24, "Ye serve the Lord Christ."

Ah! if the popes, monks and nuns were now in such a state as this, how they would thank God and rejoice! For none of them can say, God has commanded me to celebrate mass, sing matins, pray the seven times, and the like; for Scripture does not contain a word on these subjects. Therefore if they are asked whether they are confident and assured that their state pleases God, they say, No! But if you ask a little maid-servant why she scours the key or milks the cow, she can say, I know that the thing I do pleases God, for I have God's word and commandment. This is a great blessing, and a precious treasure of which no one is worthy. A prince should thank God, if he might do the same. It is true, he can do in his state what God requires, namely, punish the wicked. But when and how rarely does it happen that he can discharge such a duty aright? But in this sphere all is so ordered, that you may know when you do what you are bidden that it pleases God. God does not look to the smallness of the work, but to the heart that serves him in such little things. However, in this it is as in other matters; what God has commanded, no one performs; what men enact and God does not ordain, every one runs after. But, you say, Ah! how is this? What if I have such a strange and irritable master whom no one can thankfully serve, for many such may be found? To this Peter answers: Are you a Christian and desirous to please God, you are not to inquire as to that matter how strange and froward your master is, but ever direct your eyes to observe what God bids you. There you are to reason thus: I will in this way

serve my master, Christ, who requires of me that I be subject to this froward master. If God should command you to wash the devil's feet, or those of the worst wretch, you are to do it; and this work would be just as much a good work as the highest of all, when God calls you to it. Therefore you are to have no regard to the person, but only to what God requires; and in this case the humblest work is more to be preferred in God's sight, when rightly performed, than all the popes' and monks' works gathered together on one heap. But whomsoever this does not incite, that it is God's will and acceptable to him, then nothing will avail to incite him. Any thing better than this you can not do, anything that is worse you can not omit to do. And therefore this is to be done "with all fear," as Peter says, that it may be rightly pursued, since it is not the command of men, but of God.

And here Peter speaks particularly of servants according to the circumstances of those times, when they were held as property, such as are to be found still in some places, and are bought and sold like cattle, who are ill-treated and beaten by their masters; and the masters had such license that they were not punished although they beat their servants to death. Therefore it became necessary that the Apostles should carefully admonish and comfort such servants, that they might serve their hard masters, and endure the service, though suffering and injustice were imposed upon them.

Whoever is a Christian must also bear the cross; and the more you suffer wrongfully, the better it is for you; wherefore you should receive your cross from God cheerfully and thank him for it. This is the right kind of suffering that is well-pleasing to God. For what would it be if you should be cruelly beaten and had well deserved it, yet would glory in your cross? Therefore Peter says: "When ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God"; that is to say, a pleasing and a great thank offering before God and real divine worship. Observe here those truly precious good works are described, which we are to do; and we like fools have trodden this doctrine under foot, and have invented and set up other works. Hence we should lift up our hands, thank God, and rejoice that we at length have such knowledge. Now it follows further:

[21-25.] For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you leaving you 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, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Thus we have said, that the servant should resolve in his heart and be induced cheerfully to do and suffer what is required of him, since his master, Christ, has done so much for him; that they reason thus: inasmuch as my dear Master has become my servant, a thing which he was not obliged to do, and has given his body and life for me, why should not I serve him in return? He was perfectly holy and without sin, yet he so greatly humbled himself, and shed his blood for me, and died to take away my sin. Ah! shall not I also suffer some if it please him? Whoever reflects on this must be a stone if it does not move him; for when the master goes forward and steps in the mire, the servant should cheerfully follow him.

Therefore Peter says, “for hereunto were ye called.” Whereunto? That ye should suffer wrongfully like Christ. As though he would say, If you would follow Christ you must not dispute and complain much, although you are unjustly treated, but endure the same and count it for the best,*since Christ has suffered all without any guilt on his part. He did not even defend his integrity when he stood before the judges. So you are to tread this right under foot, and only say, “*Deo gratias*, thanks to God”; to this end am I called that I should suffer injustice; for why should I complain when my Master did not?

And here Peter has quoted some passages from the prophet Isiah; as Is. 53:9: “Who had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth,” also, “With his stripes we are healed,” Is. 53:5. Christ was so pure that not an evil word was ever on his tongue. He deserved that all should fall at his feet, and bear him in their hands; and he had the power and the right to avenge himself, yet he allowed himself to be derided, insulted, reviled, and besides all, put to death, and in it all he never opened his mouth. Why then should you not suffer also, since you are nothing but sin? Yea, you ought to praise and thank God that you are counted worthy to be like Christ; and not murmur nor be impatient though you have to suffer, since the Master did not revile nor threaten in return, but even prayed for his enemies.

But perhaps you say: How? Am I then to say that they are right who treat me unjustly, and say of them, they have done well? Answer: No! But this is what you ought to say: Although I have not deserved it, and you do me in justice, I will from my heart cheerfully suffer it for my Master's sake, who also has endured injustice for me.

You are to commit all to God, who is a righteous judge and will richly reward, just as Christ committed his suffering to his heavenly Father. "Who his own self bore our sins in his body," says Peter; that is, he has not suffered for himself, but for our welfare, who crucified him by our sins; for we are far from doing this. Therefore, if you are a pious Christian, you are to follow your Master, and pity those who cause you suffering, and even pray for them, that God may not punish them; for they do far more injury to their own souls than to your body. If you take this to heart, you shall easily forget your suffering, and suffer cheerfully. For we are to consider that we were once in such a Christless state as they, but have now through Christ been converted, as Peter concludes and says:

[25.] For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls.

This however is a passage from the prophet Isaiah, who speaks in this manner: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." (Is. 53:6.) But now have we obtained a Shepherd, says Peter. The Son of God has come for our sake, that he might be our Shepherd and Bishop; he gives us his spirit, feeds us, and leads us by his word, so that we now know how we are helped. Therefore, when you confess that through him your sins have been taken away, then you become his sheep, and he becomes your herdsman. Just as he is thy bishop, so art thou his soul. This is then the comfort which all Christians have.

Thus we have considered two chapters in this Epistle, in which Peter has in the first place taught the true faith, then the true works of love, and has spoken of two kinds of works. First, how we all in common should act toward the civil government, then how domestics should conduct themselves toward their masters. And what Peter says here of servants, extends also to other persons; namely, mechanics, day-laborers, and all kinds of hired help. Now he goes on to teach us further, how husband and wife should conduct themselves toward one another in a Christian manner.

Chapter 3.

Analysis Of Contents By J. G. Walch.

The duties of Christians in the Married State and the Duties of all Christians; also of Christ.

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2. The reason and cause of this duty, (a) The first reason, v. 7b. (b) The second reason, v. 7c

II. THE DUTIES OF ALL CHRISTIANS, vs. 8-17.

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1. The nature of this duty, v. 8f.
2. How and by what this duty is hindered.

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B. The Second Duty, v. 8b.

C. The Third Duty, v. 8c.

D. The Fourth Duty, v. 8d.

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2. What should move to consider this duty.

3. How and why Satan seeks to prevent the performance of this duty.

4. How the self-chosen state of the Papists is overthrown by this duty.

F. The Sixth Duty, vs. 9-14a.

1. Its nature.

2. The motives to urge us to do this duty, (a) First motive, v. 9. (b) Second motive, v. 10. (c) Third motive, v. 11. (d) Fourth motive, v. 12. (e) Fifth motive, v. 13. (f) Sixth motive, v. 14a.

G. The Seventh Duty, v. 14b.

H. The Eighth Duty, v. 15a.

1. Its nature.

2. Precaution to be observed.

3. How the duty is illustrated by two examples.

I. The Ninth Duty, v. 15b-15c.

1. Of whom this duty is required.
2. How to perform this duty against the Papists.
3. The necessity of this duty.
4. How the Sophists have perverted it.
5. A precaution to be observed.

K. The Tenth Duty.

1. Its nature, v. 16.
2. The motive that should urge us to do this duty, (a) The first motive, v. 17. No one should lay a cross upon himself, (b) The second motive, v. 18.

III. CONCERNING CHRIST, vs. 18-22.

1. Of Christ's Sufferings, (a) How Christ in his sufferings is an example for Christians, v. 18a. (b) The chief attribute in the suffering of Christ, v. 18b. (c) The nature of Christ's suffering, v. 18c. The condition of Christians at the resurrection.
2. Sermon of Christ to the Spirits in Prison, vs. 19-21a. (a) How and why this sermon is difficult to understand, v. 19a. (b) Characteristics of this sermon, v. 19b. The efficacy of baptism, vs. 20-21a. How men are preserved and saved, v. 21a.
3. The Resurrection of Christ, v. 21b.
4. Christ at the Right Hand of God, v. 22.

Part I. The Duties Of Christian Wives And Husbands.

[1-6.] In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives; be holding your chaste behavior coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror.

Peter speaks here especially of wives, who in those days had heathen and unbelieving husbands; and on the other hand, he speaks of believing husbands who had heathen wives. For it often occurred while the Apostles preached the Gospel among the heathen, that one hearer was a Christian and another was not. If it then was commanded that the wife should be in subjection to the husband, how much more must it be so ordered now. Therefore it is the woman's duty, Peter would say, to be subject to her husband, although he is a heathen and an unbeliever. And he gives the reason why this should be so.

[1b-2.] That, even if any obey not the word, they may with out the word be gained by the behavior of their wives; beholding your chaste behavior coupled with fear.

That is, when a man sees that his wife maintains and conducts herself with propriety, then he is drawn toward faith, and holds the state of a Christian to be truly blessed. And although women are not commanded to preach, yet they should so conduct themselves in their demeanor and conversation that they may thereby encourage their husbands to believe. As we read of the mother of Augustine being the means of the conversion of her husband, before his death, who had been a heathen, and then afterward of her son Augustine. This is now only an external matter, which one should not do to the end that he thereby becomes pious, for obedience does not save one; for you may perhaps find an obedient wife who is unbelieving; but you should do it for this reason, that you may thereby benefit your husband. For thus

has God ordained, Gen. 3:16, when he says to the woman, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee,” which is also the punishment he has imposed on the woman. However this is, I say, the outward conduct, that belongs to the body and not to the spirit.

But it is a great thing to know what works we should do in order to please God; since we should have run far to secure it, just as we see that the world has run far to secure that which it has falsely devised. It is a high, noble blessing a wife may have when she so conducts herself as to be subject to her husband, in that she is sure that her works please God. What can be a happier experience for her? Therefore whoever wishes to be a Christian wife is to reason in this manner: I will not have regard as to what sort of a husband I have, whether he be a heathen or a Jew, righteous or wicked; but I will have regard to the fact that God has placed me in the marriage state, and I will be subject and obedient to my husband. Then all her works are golden if she stands in such obedience.

But for those, who will not permit this to move them, nothing else will avail. For you will never succeed by blows in making a wife pious and submissive. If you knock one devil out you will knock two devils in, as they say. Oh! if people in the marriage state knew this, how uprightly would they walk. However no one does cheerfully what God has commanded, but all run after that which men have invented. This command God wished to be so carefully observed, that he authorized husbands to make void the vows which their wives made if they were displeasing to them, as we read in Num. 30:7f, so that all might go on peacefully and quietly at home. This is one point. Now the Apostle directs further how a woman should conduct herself toward other people.

[3, 4.] Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

This treasure, which is within us, should be possessed not only by the wife, but also by the husband. Possibly one may ask whether that which Peter here says of ornaments is commanded or not. We read of Esther, Esther 2:12, that she wore a golden crown and precious ornaments, decking herself as a queen. So also of Judith, Judith 10:3f. But in the context it is recorded, that she despised the ornament and wore it from necessity, Esther 14:16,

Vulgate or Esther 3:11. Hence we say a wife should be so disposed as not to care for this adorning; yet, inasmuch as people convinced on the subject of ornaments, cease not to use them, because of their habit and nature; therefore a Christian wife should despise them. But if the husband require them, or there is a reasonable cause for her to adorn her self, it may be done. But she should be adorned, as Peter here says, be inwardly attired in a meek and quiet spirit. You are beautifully enough adorned when you are adorned for your husband. Christ will not allow you should adorn yourself to please others, to be called a handsome prostitute (Bucer: "*bella domina*," a pretty mistress). Therefore you are to see to it, that you wear in your heart the hidden treasure and the precious adorning, which is incorruptible, as Peter says, and lead a pure, merciful, temperate life.

It is good evidence that there is little of the spirit, where so much is expended on ornaments; but this will be trodden under foot where faith and the spirit are present, and these will say, like Queen Esther, Lord, thou knowest that I regard with aversion the crown which I wear on my head, and that I am compelled thus to adorn myself. If this were not required to be done of me out of love to my king, I would much rather trample it under foot, Esther 14:16, Vulgate or Esther 3:11. Where the wife is of such a disposition, she will so much the more please her husband. Therefore they are to take this into consideration, says Peter, that they adorn the inward man, where a quiet spirit reigns, one that cannot be ruffled; not only that they run not to excess, so as to be kept from confusion and shame, but his meaning is, that they should beware that the soul remain unruffled and in the true faith, and that this be not forsaken.

Thus is developed a heart that does not break forth and busy itself as to how it shall appear before the world. Such a heart is a precious thing in the sight of God. If a woman were to adorn herself with pure gold, precious stones and pearls, even to her feet, it would be grand beyond measure. But you cannot put enough on a woman that it shall be preferable to the superior ornament of the soul which is precious in God's sight. Gold and fine stones are precious in the world's esteem, but before God they are an ill-savor. But she is truly and beautifully adorned in the sight of God, who goes forth with a meek and quiet spirit; and since God himself accounts it precious, it must be something glorious.

[The adornment of a Christian wife, as was said, is the inner man of the heart, cleansed from all error and stains of the soul. A woman so adorned,

who has a pure faith and a quiet, meek spirit, so that she can obey her husband and be to him in word and deed friendly and loving, has all that Christ has. Ed. 1539.]

A Christian soul has all that Christ has, for faith, as we have said, 1 Pet. 1:3, brings us at once all the blessings of Christ. This is a great and precious treasure, and such an ornament as none can sufficiently prize. God himself values it very highly. Hence the husband should draw and dissuade the wife from ornaments, so long as she is inclined to them. When a Christian wife hears that and reflects, she thinks thus: I will not care for bodily adornments, since God does not regard them, but if I must wear them, I will do it to please my husband; then is she truly adorned and attired in spirit. In this connection Peter now gives us an example of holy women, that he may draw wives to Christian conduct, and says:

[5-6a.] For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

[As these same women adorn themselves, he will say, so do you, follow their example. How then did they adorn themselves? First, by placing their hope in God. Secondly, by being obedient to their husbands, not of necessity or of constraint, but willingly from the heart, because it was the command and ordinance of God; as Sarah, etc. Ed. 1539.]

As these women adorn themselves, he would say, so do ye also, just as Sarah was obedient to her husband Abraham and called him her lord. So Scripture speaks, Gen. 18:10-12, where the angel came to Abraham and said: Within a year shall Sarah have a son; then she laughed within herself, saying, "After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" This passage Peter has justly noticed and cited here; for she would not have thus called Abraham her lord if she had not been subject to him and had him before her eyes. Therefore he says further:

[6b.] Whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror.

What does he mean by that? This is what he means. It is usually the nature of women to be troubled and frightened about everything, therefore they are so much occupied with charms and superstitions, which one teaches the other, so that it is indescribable what illusions they have. This should not be the case with a Christian woman, but she should go forward freely and se-

curely and not be superstitious, nor run about here and there and charm one man here and another there, inasmuch as it becomes her to let God direct and to remember it cannot go ill with her; for as long as she knows her condition, and that her state is pleasing to God, what then has she to fear? Though your child die, though you are sick, it is well if it pleases God. If you are in a state which pleases God, what better can you desire? This, then, is what Peter preaches to wives. Now follows the duty of the husbands:

[7a.] Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered.

The woman is also God's instrument or vessel, he says, for God uses her to the end, that she may bear children, give them birth and nourishment, and watch over them, and rule the home. Such work the wife is to do. So she is God's instrument and vessel, created and instructed by God to this end. For this reason is the husband to respect his wife. Therefore, Peter says, Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, not that ye are to rule them with a headstrong will. They are indeed to live, as the husband rules, that what he says and does may be done; but he is also to see to it that he walks soberly and according to knowledge with his wife, so as to give her that respect and honor due her as God's weaker vessel.

The husband is also God's instrument, but he is stronger, while the wife is weaker bodily, as well as more timid and more easily dispirited. Therefore, you are to treat her and live with her, so that she may be able to bear it. You must proceed here just as with other instruments with which you labor. For example, if you wish to have a good sickle, you must not hack upon the stone with it. On this subject no rule can be laid down. God leaves the matter to each individually, to treat his wife according to knowledge, according to the circumstances of each woman. For you are to use the authority you have, not according to your own will, because you are her husband for this very purpose, that you may help her, conserve and support her, and not be her ruin. Hence none can lay down a rule for you with exact limitations; you must understand yourself how you are to proceed according to knowledge.

Thus we have now heard in regard to husbands also, what good works those who please God are to perform; namely, to dwell with their wives, en-

dear themselves to them, and walk soberly with them. Things cannot always go as you would wish. Therefore see to it that you act like a husband, and have the more discretion, when it is lacking in the wife, and while you are to connive at some matters, tolerate and pardon others, and give to the wife also her honor.

This “honor” has been explained, I hardly know how. Some have interpreted it, that the husband should procure food, drink and clothing for the wife, and should nourish her. Others have referred it to marriage duties. I hold the meaning to be, as I have said, that the husband should treat the wife as is consistent with her being a Christian, and a vessel or instrument of God. And thus they are both to conduct themselves: the wife is to hold the husband in honor, and on the other hand also the husband is to give to the wife her honor. If matters were thus directed, they would go on harmoniously in peace and love. Yet where this art is wanting, there will be mere disgust in the marriage state. Hence it comes to pass when man and wife marry one another, moved only by lust, and imagine they will have happiness and the gratification of appetite, they experience mere heart-anguish. But if you have regard to God’s work and will, then may you live Christianly in marriage; not like the heathen, who know not what God requires.

[7b.] As being also joint-heirs of the grace of life.

The husband is not to dwell on the thought that the wife is weak and frail, but on this, that she also is baptized, and has the same that he has, namely, all blessings in Christ. For inwardly we are all alike, and there is no difference between man and woman, but as to the outward condition, it is God’s pleasure that the husband rule, and the wife be in subjection to him.

[7c.] That your prayers be not hindered.

What does Peter mean by that? This is his meaning: if you do not act according to knowledge, but find fault, and murmur, and proceed arbitrarily, and in this give occasion for mistakes and blunders, so that neither can overlook the other’s fault and take all for the best, then will you be unable to pray, “Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive.” By prayer we are to strive against the devil, therefore we must be subject one to another.

These are the truly precious good works which we are to perform. If this is preached and understood, all our homes will be full, yes, full of good deeds. Thus we have now heard how a Christian should conduct himself in all conditions of life, but especially in his relations to others. It follows now further, how we all in common one with another should lead a Christian life as to our outward conduct.

Part II. The Duties Of All Christians.

[8a-12.] Finally, be ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humble-minded (courteous): not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For, He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile: and let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: out the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.

This all is said for no other purpose than that we should have mutual love one to another. For here that which the Scriptures sometimes express in few words, is more fully developed. Peter would say, the summary of all, as to how you are to treat one another in your outward conduct is, that ye be all like-minded. The Apostles Peter and Paul often use this word, and it means nothing less than that we all should have one mind, one spirit, one thought; what seems to one right and good, let this also seem to another right and good. It is an important, note-worthy theme, that should be well understood. Paul particularly has written much upon it.

All of us cannot do the same kind of work, but every one must labor for himself; a husband in a different sphere from that of the wife, a servant in a different sphere from that of the master, and so throughout. And it is foolish to preach we should all do one work, as those senseless preachers have done who preached the legends of the saints; that these saints have done one work, those, another, and then insist and say we all should do the same. It is doubt less true that Abraham did a good work, highly to be esteemed, when he offered up his son, since this was particularly commanded him of God. When the heathen introduced the same and would likewise sacrifice their children, this was an act of cruelty in the sight of God. So also, King Solomon did well in building the temple, and God justly rewarded him for it. And our blind fools now would also do the same, and preach that we must build churches and temples for God (as St. Peter's at Home. Trans.), while God has given us no command on that subject. Now it is just the reverse, so that men busy themselves with a single kind of employment, and have many views on it directly contrary to the Gospel [to the doctrine of St. Peter. Ed. 1539].

But it should be, that there be a single aim and many employments, one heart and many hands: all should not follow one business, but every one should attend to his own; otherwise unity of mind and heart will not continue. As to external affairs, they must be permitted to remain of a manifold character, so that every one sticks to that which has been committed to him, and to the work he has in hand. This is a true doctrine, and it is exceedingly necessary that it be well understood; for the devil gives particular care to it, and has brought things to such a state, that judgment is passed on the employment, and every one thinks that his own should be counted better than another's. Hence it has come to pass, that men are so disunited one with another, monks against priests, one order against another, for each one has wished to do the best work. Thus they must satisfy themselves, and they have given themselves up to the order, and think this order is better than that. There is the order of the Augustinians against that of the Dominicans or the Preaching Monks, that of the Carthusians against the Bare footed Friars or the Franciscans, and nowhere is there greater want of unanimity than among the orders.

But if it had been taught that in the sight of God no one employment is better than another, but that through faith all are alike, then all hearts would have remained united, and we all alike would be mutually disposed, and also say: the order or the mode of life which the bishop leads, is no greater in God's sight than that which a poor man leads; the mode of life the nun leads is no better than a married woman leads; and the same in respect to all the various stations in life. However, this they will not hear, but every one maintains his own rank or calling is the best, and says, Ah! how much better and more important is my state in the order than the state of a common man.

Therefore to "be of one mind" is, that every one should regard his own employment like that of others, and that the condition of the married woman is just as good as that of the virgin. As all are then indeed alike in the sight of God, who judges according to the heart and faith, and not according to the person or his employment. Therefore we also are to judge as God judges, and then are we of one mind, and unanimity continues in the world, and hearts remain unestranged, so that there is no division on account of external conditions. All this I hold to be excellent, and I am well satisfied with every man's employment, whatever it be, if it only be not sinful in itself.

Of this Paul also speaks, 2 Cor. 11:3, “I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ”; that is, lest the devil beguile you, and pervert and divide the simplicity of aim you have. So, Phil. 4:7, “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard (keep) your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” Why does the Apostle lay so much stress on the aim of the mind? Ay, all depends upon that. For when I am led to cherish a false aim, everything is already lost. As in case I am a monk, and have adopted the view that my works are worth more in the sight of God than those of others, and I say: God be thanked that I have become a monk; my state is now far preferable to the common one of marriage; then from such a view must spring a proud spirit, and it cannot fail that I should count myself more righteous than another, and should despise other people, and thus deceive myself. For a married woman, if she abides in the faith, is better in the sight of God than I am with the order I belong to. Therefore, if it is understood that faith brings with it all that a Christian ought to have, all of us have one mind and aim, and there is no difference in our works. Therefore we are so to understand this passage of Peter, that he means here the spiritual, not the outward mind, and the inner thought and the mystical feeling, to which belong the things that avail before God; so both the doctrine and the life be one, and I hold that to be excellent which you hold as excellent; and again, that is well-pleasing to you which is well-pleasing to me, as I have said. This sense of things is possessed by Christians, and to this sense we should hold firmly, that it may not be perverted, as Paul, 2 Cor. 11:3, says; for when the devil has corrupted it, he has forced the castle of virgin purity, and all then is lost.

[8b.] Be ye compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded (courteous).

To be compassionate means to share with and have a heart to feel for our neighbor in his need, when misfortune overtakes him and you do not think, Ah! it is right; Ah! it is not too much, he has well deserved it. Where there is love, it identifies itself with its neighbor; and when it goes ill with him, the heart feels as though it were its own experience.

[8c.] Be loving as brethren.

But “to be brotherly,” affectionate as brethren, is to regard each other as his own brother. This certainly may be easily understood, for nature itself teaches it; where you see what true brothers are, in that they are united more heartily together than any other friends. So ought we as Christians to act; for we are all brethren by baptism; and after baptism even father and mother are brother and sister, for I have the same blessing and inheritance they have from Christ, through faith.

[8d.] Be tenderhearted (pitiful), Yiscerosi.

This word I cannot explain except by giving an illustration. Observe how a mother or a father acts toward their child; for example, when a mother sees her child enduring anguish, her whole inward being is moved, and her heart within her body. From this is derived the mode of speech that occurs in many places of Scripture, of which we have an example in 1 Kings 3:16f., where two women contended before King Solomon for a child, each claiming the child. And when the king wished to discover which was the real mother of the child, he had to appeal to nature, when he detects it; and he said to the two women, You say that the child is yours, while you say also that it is yours: well, then, bring hither a sword and divide the child into two parts, and give one part to this woman, and another to that. Thus he learned which was the real mother; and the text, 1 Kings 3:26, tells us she was inwardly affected with anxiety for the child, and said: “No! no! rather give the child whole to this woman, and let it live.” Then the king pronounced his decision and said, That is the true mother; take the child and give it to her. Hence you may understand what this word “tenderhearted” means.

Now Peter will teach by this, that we should conduct ourselves toward one another like those who are truly friends by blood, as with them the whole heart is moved, the life, the pulse, and all the powers; so here also, we should be heartily kind and motherly, and the heart should be thoroughly penetrated. Such a disposition should one Christian bear toward another. But the standard is indeed set high; few will be found who have such a hearty love to their neighbor, when they see there is need to have an affection like a mother has for a child, that it presses through the heart and through every vein. Hence you see what the monks’ and nuns’ state and life are; how far they are from such hearty love. If they all were smelted together in one heap, not one drop of such Christian love as this would be

found. Therefore let us look to ourselves and consider whether we can find in ourselves such love. This is a short sermon and quickly spoken, but it goes deep and reaches far.

[8e.] Be courteous.

“Courteous” means to lead outwardly a gentle, pleasing, lovely manner of life; not merely to sympathize one with another, as a father and mother for their child, but also to walk in love and gentleness one with another. There are some men rough and knotty, like a tree full of knots; so uncivil, that no one likes to have anything to do with them. Hence they are usually full of suspicion, and become soon angry; with whom none of their own choice love to associate. But there are gentle people, who interpret all for the best, and are not suspicious; do not permit themselves to be easily irritated; can at least understand some things are well meant; such persons are called in Latin “*Candidos*,” candid, [from which candidate comes, one clothed in white]. This virtue Paul names in Greek “*Chrastotas*,” [goodness, Rom. 2:4], and it is often praised by him.

Now consider the Gospel, which portrays the Lord Christ so distinctly, that we may trace this virtue especially in him. At present the Pharisees assault him, and then again, others, that they might take him; yet he does not suffer himself to become enraged. And although the Apostles often stumble, and act a foolish part here and there, he nowhere assails them with angry words, but is ever courteous, and attracts them toward himself, so that they remained gladly with him, and walked with him. This likewise we see among good friends and associates on earth, where there are two or three good friends, who thoroughly understand one another: though one acts foolishly, the others can readily pardon him. There is represented in some measure that which Peter here intends, although it is not perfectly set forth; for this courteousness is to be considered obligatory upon every one individually. Hence you see the true nature of love, and what excellent people Christians are. The angels in heaven live with one another thus, and so should it indeed also be on earth; but rarely does it take place [but weaknesses and imperfections reign here. Ed. 1539].

As Peter has already said, the man servant and the maid servant, the husband and the wife, should so conduct them selves that each may attend to their own business, so would he have us all do generally, one with another.

Therefore, if you will be certain and assured that you are doing an excellent work that is pleasing to God, then set your self in God's name in opposition to whatever has been preached in the devil's name, whereby the world walks and seeks to merit heaven. For how can you be better assured that you are acceptable to God than when you observe, as he here says, the works which a man should do, the conduct which every one should lead, so that you be compassionate, brotherly affectionate, heartily kind, courteous? In this he says nothing of those fool-works which we have been taught; says not, Build churches, found masses, be priests, wear a cowl, vow chastity, etc.; but this is his language: See to it that you be courteous. These are truly precious, golden deeds, precious stones and pearls, well pleasing to God.

But this the devil cannot tolerate, for he knows that thus his interests are thrown to the ground; Therefore he devises what he can in order to suppress such doctrine, and to incite monks and priests to cry out, Do you, say: We and our work amount to nothing? that is for you to talk like Satan. But reply to them then: Do you not know that these must be good works, of which Peter here speaks, to wit, that we be brotherly affectionate, heartily kind, and courteous? If these are the best, as must be confessed, you must indeed be deceived in regard to your works, if you think they are better. I am really greatly astonished that such blindness could come upon us; for Thomas, the preaching monk, has written and says shamelessly, that monks and priests are in a better state than ordinary Christians. This the high schools have confirmed, and men have been Doctorated for doing so. After them the Pope and his multitude have gone ahead and exalted those to be saints, who taught such doctrine.

Therefore understand this now, for as I said, Christ himself and all his Apostles have taught, if you would do the best works, and be in the best state in life, you will find them nowhere else than in faith and love; that is the high est state of all. Therefore it must be a falsehood, when they say their state is better than that of faith and love. For if it be better than faith, it is better than God's word, but if it be better than God's word, it is better than God himself. Therefore Paul has correctly said, in 2 Thess. 2:4, that Antichrist should exalt himself against God. So know now therefore how to judge concerning these things; where love and friendship are wanting, there certainly all works are condemned and trodden under foot. Thus we see how Peter has so bravely expatiated on the external character of a truly Christian life, as he taught us above, in a masterly manner, how the inner or

spiritual life should be ordered toward God. Therefore this is to be regarded as a truly golden Epistle. Upon this it now follows:

[9.] Not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

This is a still further illustration of love, showing how we should act toward those that injure and persecute us. If any one does you evil, his meaning is, do him good; if any one rails at and curses you, then bless him and wish him well. This is an important part of love. O Lord God! how few such Christians there are! But why should we return good for evil? Because, he says, ye are called thereunto that ye should inherit a blessing, and that stirs you to do it.

In the Scriptures we Christians are called a people of blessing, or a blessed people. For thus said God to Abraham, Gen. 12:3: "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Since God has now so richly poured this blessing upon us, in that he takes from us all the malediction and the curse which we have brought with us from our first parents, as well as that which Moses suffered to pass upon the disobedient, so that we are now filled with blessing, we ought so to conduct ourselves that it shall be said of us, Yes, that is a blessed people. This then is what the Apostle here means: See, God has shown you his favor, and has taken from you the curse, and reviling wherewith you have dishonored him; he neither imputes nor punishes, but has bestowed upon you such rich grace and blessing, when we were only worthy of all malediction, inasmuch as ye reviled God without intermission, for where there is unbelief the heart must ever curse God: do ye also as has been done to you; curse not, rail not, do well, speak well, even though you are treated ill, and endure it where injustice is done you. Here then he quotes a passage from Ps. 34:12f where the prophet David speaks thus:

[10.] For, he that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.

That is, whoever would have pleasure and joy in life, and would not die the death, but see good days, so that it may go well with him, let him keep his tongue from speaking evil, not only in respect to his friends, for that is a

small virtue and a thing even the most wicked persons may do, yea, even snakes and vipers, but he says, maintain a kind spirit and keep your tongue silent even against your enemies, though you are incited thereto, though you have cause to rail and speak evil.

Besides, he says, keep your lips that they do not deceive. There are probably many who utter good words, and say “good morning” to their neighbor, but they think in their heart, “The devil take you.” These are people who have not inherited the blessing; they are the evil fruit of an evil tree. Therefore Peter has introduced a passage which refers to works, even to their root, that which springs from within out of the heart. Furthermore, the passage in the prophet says:

[11-12a.] And let him 'turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.

The world considers it to be peace, when one person does another injustice, to pound his head real well for it. But in this way we never come nearer to peace, for no king has ever been able to attain peace before his enemies. The Roman empire became so powerful that it struck down all that set itself against it; still for all that it could not be preserved. Therefore this method is of no avail in securing peace. For though a man should prostrate and silence one foe, ten and twenty rise up again, till at length he is compelled to yield. But he who seeks true peace, and moreover would also find it, let him restrain his tongue; let him turn from evil and do good: this course is different from that the world pursues. To turn from evil and do good means, that when a man hears evil words, he be able to overlook the wickedness and injustice. Seek thus after peace, so shall you find it; when your enemy has lost his courage and done all he can, if you hear him, rail and rant not back, he has to subdue himself by his own violence. For thus Christ also on the cross subdued his enemies, not by the sword or by violence.

Therefore it is a proverb (Bucer's translation adds “among Germans”) which should be written with gold, “Striking back again produces hatred,” and “whoever strikes back again is unjust.” Hence it must follow that not to strike back again produces peace. But how can this be? Is it then something not human? Certainly it does not accord with human nature; but if you in this way suffer unjustly and do not strike back again, but let the matter go, it shall come to pass as follows:

[12.] For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication; but the face of the Lord is upon (against) those that do evil.

If you do not revenge yourself nor render evil for evil, there is the Lord in heaven above who cannot tolerate wrong; hence he that does not strike back must have his right. These persons God beholds; their prayer reaches his ear; he is our protector and will not forget us; we cannot escape his eye, and this should comfort us. It is this that should induce a Christian to endure all injustice with patience, and not return evil. If I properly reflect, I see the soul that does me wrong must suffer forever in hell. Therefore a Christian heart should speak on this wise: Dear Father, since this man falls so sadly under thy wrath and so miserably throws himself into perdition, I pray thou wouldst forgive him, and do to him even as thou hast done to me, in that thou hast rescued me from condemnation. But how does this take place? Thus: while he graciously looks down upon the righteous, He also looks angrily at the wicked, wrinkles his brow and turns it in indignation upon them. Since we know then that he looks upon us graciously and upon them with disfavor, we ought to pity and mourn for them, and pray for them. Further more, Peter says:

[13-16.] And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, Messed are ye: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ.

If we follow that which is good, namely, do not reward evil with evil, but be heartily kind and courteous, etc., then there is none that can injure us. For though our honor, life and property be taken away, we are still uninjured, since we have a blessing incomparable, one that none can take from us. Those who persecute us have nothing but prosperity on earth, but afterwards, eternal condemnation, while we have an eternal, incorruptible treasure, although we lose a small temporal blessing.

[14a.] But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye.

Not only, he says, can no one injure you if ye suffer for God's sake, but blessed are ye, and ye should rejoice that ye are to suffer, as Christ also says in Mat. 5:11, 12: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad." Whoever then realizes that it is the Lord who speaks such things, and so tenderly speaks comfort to his heart, he stands well; but to whom this does not bring strength, comfort, and courage, he will indeed remain unstrengthened.

[14b-15a.] And fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord.

Here Peter quotes a passage from Isaiah 8:12, 13, where he says: "Neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof. Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." There we have a great support and refuge, in which we may trust, assured that no one can injure us. Let the world terrify, defy and threaten as long as it will, it must have an end, but our confidence and joy shall never end. Thus we shall have no fear of the world, but shall be courageous, while before God we shall humble ourselves and be in dread.

But how does Peter mean that we should sanctify God; how can we sanctify him; must he not sanctify us? Answer: Thus we pray, even in the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father, hallowed be thy name," that we may sanctify His name, as he himself also sanctifies his name. Therefore it amounts to this: In your hearts, says Peter, ye are to sanctify him; that means, if the Lord our God appoints anything for us, be it good or evil, bring it weal or woe, be it shame or honor, prosperity or adversity, I am not only to consider it as good, but even as holy, and say, this is nothing but a precious blessing, of which I am unworthy, that it should come to me. So the prophet says, Ps. 145:17, "Jehovah is righteous in all his ways, and gracious in all his works." If I give God praise for such things, and consider them good, holy and excellent, then I sanctify him in my heart. But they, who resort to books of justice, and complain they are treated unjustly, and say, God sleeps and will not help the just and restrain the unjust, dishonor him and account him neither just nor holy. But whoever is a Christian should attribute righteousness to God and unrighteousness to himself; should account God holy and himself unholy, and say, he in all his deeds and works is holy and just. This

is what he requires. So also the prophet speaks, Daniel, 3:27f.; 9:5, 7, 14: O Lord, in all that thou hast done toward us, hast thou done in accordance with right and true judgment. For we have sinned; therefore be the shame ours, but the honor and praise thine. If we sing, "*Deo gratias*," "Thanks be to God," and "*Te Deum laudamus*," "We Praise Thee, O God," and say, God be praised and blessed, when misfortune overtakes us, that is called by Peter and Isaiah a true hallowing the Lord.

But he does not by this require you to say he did right and well who has injured you, for it is an entirely different judgment between God and me, and between me and thee. I may have in my heart anger, hatred and wicked lusts, whereby I intend to damage you, while you are yet still uninjured, and have nothing against me; but in God's sight I am unjust; therefore he does right if he punishes me; I have well deserved it. If he does not punish me in that case, he shows me favor, and thus he is right in every way. But it does not therefore follow, that he does right who persecutes me. For I have not done injustice to him as I have done in the sight of God. If God sends the devil or wicked people upon you to punish you, he uses them to the end, that they may execute his righteousness; so wicked wretches and injustice itself become a blessing.

Thus we read in Ezekiel, 29:18f , of King Nebuchadnezzar, where God says by the prophet, Knowest thou not that he is my servant, and has served me? Now, says he, I must give him his wages, I have not paid him as yet; well, then, I will give him Egypt, and that shall be his wages. The king had no right to the land, but God had, so that he might punish it through him. For, in order that even wicked wretches might serve him, and eat not their bread in vain, he gives them enough, lets them serve him even to this end, that they persecute his saints. Here reason is at fault, and thinks God does well and right when he remunerates them only here; gives them plenty of land, and does it simply for the purpose to make them his executioners and persecutors of pious Christians. But when you endure and sanctify God, and say, "Just, Lord," then you do well, while he casts them into hell and punishes them because they have done wickedly; but takes you into his favor and gives you eternal salvation. Therefore let him manage them; he will reward justly.

Of this we have an example in holy Job, when all his cattle and all his sons were slain, and his property taken away, he said, Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; as it was well pleasing to God, so has it been or-

dered, therefore blessed be his name, Job 1:21. And when his wife came, deriding him, and railed at him, and said, Job 2:9, 10: "See! what hast thou now in thine integrity? Curse God and die." Then he answered her, "Thou hast spoken like a foolish woman: are we to receive good at God's hands, why should we not also receive evil from him, for he hath done as it hath pleased him? God hath given, and God hath taken away," he does not say: God has given, the devil has taken away, and yet it was the devil that did it. This man truly sanctified the Lord; therefore is he so highly praised and exalted of God. It follows further:

[15b.] Being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you.

We must here acknowledge that Peter addressed these words to all Christians, clergy and laity, male and female, young and old, of whatever state or condition they may be. Hence it follows that every Christian should know the ground and reason of his faith, and be able to maintain and defend it where it is necessary. But up to this time, the idea that the laity should read the Scriptures has been treated with derision. For in this the devil has hit on a fine trick to tear the Bible out of the hands of the laity; and he has thought thus: If I can keep the laity from reading the Scriptures, I will then turn the priests from the Bible to Aristotle, and so let them gossip as they will, the laity must hear just what they preach; while if the laity should read the Scriptures, the priests would have to study them too, in order that they might not be detected and overcome. But look now at what Peter tells us all, that we should give answer and show reason for our faith. When you come to die I shall not be with you, neither will the Pope; and if you know but this one reason of your hope, and say: I will believe as the Councils, the Pope and the Fathers believed, then the devil will answer: Yes! but how if they were in error? Then will he have won, and will drag you down to hell. Therefore we must know what we believed, namely, what God's word is, not what the Pope and the holy Fathers believe or say. For you must not put your faith at all in persons, but in the word of God.

So when any one assaults you, and like a heretic asks why you believe you shall be saved through faith, here is your answer: Because I have God's word and the clear declarations of Scripture for it. As Paul says, Rom. 1:17, "The just shall live by faith," and Peter, where he speaks of Christ, the liv-

ing stone, quotes from the prophet Isaiah, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be confounded; there on do I build, and I know that the word will not deceive me, Is. 28:16. But if you speak like other fools, Yes, we will hear how the Council decides, and with that we will abide, then you are lost. Therefore you should say, Why do I then ask what this one or that one believes or decides; if they speak not the word of God, I will not hear it.

Do you say then, It is so confusing, that no one knows what to believe, and so one must wait till it is determined what we should hold? Answer: Then you will go to the devil in the meantime. For if it comes to the pinch, and you should die and not know what to believe, neither I nor any one else could help you. Therefore you must know for yourself, and turn to no one else, and cling fast to the word of God, if you would escape hell. And for such as cannot read it is necessary that they should learn and retain some clear texts of Scripture, one or two at least, and on this foundation abide firmly, as for instance that of Gen. 12:3; 22:18, where God says to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." If you have grasped that, you may stand on it and say: Though pope, bishop, and all the councils stood yonder and said otherwise, yet do I declare this is God's word, that I can depend on, and that does not deceive me. Whoever will be blessed, must be blessed through "the seed," and whoever is blessed is ransomed from the curse, from sin, death and hell. Therefore it follows from the text, whoever will not be blessed through "the seed" must be lost. So my works or good deeds can avail nothing in securing my salvation.

To the same end also is the passage of Peter, "Whoever believeth on this stone shall not be put to shame," 1 Pet. 2:6. If any one should now attack you and demand a reason for your faith, reply, There stands the foundation which cannot fail me, and so I ask nothing besides, what popes or bishops teach or decide. Were they true bishops, they would teach the fundamentals of faith that they knew were common to all Christians. Yet they rush on and cry out: The laity dare not be allowed to read the Scriptures.

So if any one asks you whether you will have the Pope for a head? say at once, I will hold him for a head, a head of wickedness and profligacy. And for this I have a passage of Paul, 1 Tim. 4:1-3: "Then shall come the devil's teachers forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God has created." That too the Pope has for bidden, as is the case now. Therefore is he Antichrist. For what Christ commands and teaches, he trans-

gresses. What Christ makes free, the Pope binds; Christ says it is not sin, while the Pope rejoins, it is sin.

Thus should one now learn to give a reason and answer for his faith; since it must come to that. If not now, then at death it will come to pass, that the devil will come forward and say: Why have you charged the Pope of being Antichrist? If you are not prepared and ready to give a reason, then has he won. It is as much as though Peter had said, If ye will now be faithful, ye must henceforth endure much persecution. But in this persecution you must have hope, and must look for eternal life. If one asks why you hope for it, then you must have the word of God on which to build.

But the sophists also have perverted the text, as though one were to convince heretics with reason, and out of the natural light of Aristotle; therefore they say, It is here rendered in Latin, "*Rationem reddere*," as if Peter meant it should be done with human reason. Because, they say the Scriptures are far too weak, that we should silence heretics with them. The method by which, according to them, it must be shown that the faith is a right one, must agree with reason, and come forth from the brain; whereas our faith is above all reason, and it alone is the power of God. Therefore, if the people will not believe, then be silent; for you are not responsible for compelling them to hold the Scriptures as the word or book of God. It is enough that you give your reason from the Scriptures. But if they take exceptions, and say: You preach that one should not hold to man's doctrine, and yet Peter and Paul, and even Christ, were men. When you hear people of this stamp, who are so blind and obtuse as to deny this is God's word, or doubt it, then be silent, speak no more with them, and let them go, only say: I will give you reasons enough out of Scripture. If you will believe them, it is well; if not, I will give you no others. But do you say, Must God's word be treated with such shame? Leave that to God. Therefore it is necessary that we thoroughly apprehend this and know how to meet those who now rise up and present such objections. It follows:

[15c.] Yet with meekness and fear.

That is, if you are examined and questioned as to your faith, you should not answer with haughty words, and proceed in the matter with contempt and violence, as if you would tear up a tree by the roots; but with such fear and humility as if you stood before God's tribunal, and were there to give an-

swer. For if it were now to come to pass that you should be examined before king and princes, and had well prepared yourself a long time for the occasion with replies, and thus thought with yourself, “Deliberate, I will answer them correctly,” then it shall be a happy experience for you; though the devil take the sword out of your hand, and give you a blow, so that you stand in shame and have put on your armor in vain, and he takes out of your mouth the reply you carefully prepared, so that it fails you though you had it fairly well in your mind. For he has beforehand tracked out your thoughts. Even this God suffers to take place, that he may subdue your pride and make you humble.

Therefore if you would avoid such an experience, you must stand in fear, and not rely on your own strength, but on the word and promise of Christ, Mat. 10:19, 20. “But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour when ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaketh in you.” It is right, when you are to answer, that you arm yourself well with passages of Scripture; but beware you do not insist on that with a proud spirit, since God will even take the most forcible reply out of your mouth and memory, though you were previously fortified with all your replies. Therefore, fear is proper. And so, if you are summoned, then may you answer for yourself before princes and lords, and even the devil himself. Only beware that it be not the vanity of men, but the word of God.

[16.] Having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ.

Of this Peter has already spoken above, 1 Pet. 2:12. We cannot disregard it. If we follow the Gospel, then we must be despised and condemned by the world, so that men shall hold us as contemptible rabble. Therefore we shall let nothing disturb us and fear only before God and have a good conscience. So let the devil and all the world rave and rage, let them abuse as they will, they shall at last be made to understand with shame, that they have injured and defamed us, when that day shall arrive; as Peter has said, 1 Pet. 2:12, in which we shall be secure, and stand with a good conscience. These are in every respect suitable and forcible replies, which can comfort us and make us courageous, and yet we go on circumspectly with fear.

[17, 18.] For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

It will not be the case that they who reach heaven shall enjoy prosperity on earth, while even those who do not enter heaven may not be prosperous. For that which God said to Adam, Gen. 3:19, 16, is imposed on all men, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread”; and to the women: “In pain thou shalt bring forth children.” Since now adversity is imposed in common upon us all, how much more must we bear the cross if we would obtain eternal life. Therefore he says, since God will have it so, it is better that ye suffer for well-doing. They who suffer for evil-doing have an evil conscience, and have double punishment. But Christians have only the half of it. Outwardly, they have suffering; but inwardly, comfort. [As Christ says, in John 10:33, In the world ye have tribulation, but in me peace, etc. Ed. 1539.]

Yet he has here set a limit, as he has said in 1 Pet. 1:6, “If need be,” by which those were restrained as the Donatists, of whom Augustine writes, who took such passages as spoke of suffering and committed suicide, and threw them selves into the sea. [See August, de corr. Donatist (ep. 185) 3; Contra Gaudentium I. 28.37.] It is not the will of God that we seek, and even invite calamity. Go thou on in faith and love. If the cross comes, take it up; if it comes not, seek not for it. Therefore these modern spirits commit sin, in that they lash and beat themselves, or subject them selves to torture, and would thus storm heaven.

This Paul has also forbidden, in Col. 2:23, where he speaks of such saints as walk in a self-chosen spirituality and humility, and spare not their body. We should also restrain the body that it become not too wanton, Rom. 13:14, yet not so as to destroy it; and we should submit to suffer if another sends suffering upon us, but not of our own choice fall into it. That will be the question: “if it be God’s will,” if he has appointed it, then it is better; while you are also more happy and fortunate in that you suffer for well-doing.

Part III. Of Christ.

[18a.] Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous.

There Peter presents to us again the example of our Lord, and points us always to Christ's sufferings, that all of us should follow his example, so that he need not present a particular exemplar for the condition of every individual. For just as Christ is held forth as an example to every one in the whole Church, so it is the duty of every individual in the Church, each for himself, of whatever calling he is, to copy it in his whole life, as occasion may be given. And he will speak after this manner:

Christ was righteous; and for well-doing he has suffered on our account, who were unjust; yet he sought not the cross, but waited till it was God's will for him to drink the cup; and he is our pattern, whom we are to imitate. And Peter here cites this one example in particular, to the end that he may thus conclude how every condition in life is to be instructed; and now he will continue to declare more fully the suffering of Christ.

But he says here, in particular, Christ has suffered once for us; that is, Christ has borne much sin, but he has not done it in such a way as to die for every individual sin; but at one time has done enough for all. By this he has removed the sins of all who come to him and believe on him, who are now freed from death, even as he is free.

"The righteous for the unrighteous," he says. As though he had said, much rather should we suffer, since we die for the righteous who had no sin. But he has died for the unrighteous, and for the sake of our sins.

[18b.] That he might bring us to God.

This is all said to teach the peculiar nature and end of Christ's sufferings; namely, that he died, not for his own sake, but that he might present us to God. How is that consistent; has he not offered up himself? Answer: It is true he has offered up himself upon the cross for us all who believe in him, but at the same time he offers up us with himself, since all who believe on him must suffer with him, and be put to death after the flesh" as he was. However God has taught us, that they are alive in the spirit and yet dead in

the flesh, as he afterwards says, 1 Pet. 4:6: But we are a sacrifice with him. As he dies, so we are to die according to the flesh; as he lives spiritually, so do we also live in the spirit.

[18c.] Being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

The word “flesh” is common in Scripture, as is also the word “spirit,” and the Apostles usually present the two in contrast. The sense now is: Christ through his sufferings is taken out of this life, which consists of flesh and blood, as a man on earth who lives by flesh and blood, walks and stands, eats, drinks, sleeps, wakes, sees, hears, grasps, and feels, and in brief whatever the body does while it is sensible; to all this Christ has died. This is what Paul calls a natural body, that is, the animal life, 1 Cor. 15:44; that is, as an animal lives, in the flesh, not after the flesh, that is, in the natural functions which the body exercises, to such a life is he dead: so this life has now ceased with him, and he is now removed to another life and quickened after the spirit, passed into a spiritual and supernatural life, that comprises in itself the whole life that Christ now has in his soul and body; so that he has no more a fleshly body, but a spiritual body. In this manner Paul explains it.

Thus shall it be with us at the last day, when spiritual life shall succeed flesh and blood, so that my body and yours will live without food and drink, will not procreate, nor digest, nor vomit, and the like, but we shall inwardly live after the spirit, and the body shall be purified even as the sun, and yet far brighter, while there probably will be no natural flesh and blood, no natural or corporal labor, like the brutes.

The language of Paul on this point, 1 Cor. 15:45, is: “The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” And it follows, “As we have borne the image of the earthy or the natural man, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly or the spiritual man.” 1 Cor. 15:49. From Adam we derive all our natural functions like the unreasoning animal as to the five senses. But Christ is spiritual flesh and blood, not according to the outward senses; he neither sleeps nor wakes, and yet knows all things, and is present in all the ends of the earth. Like him shall we be also, for he is the first fruits, the earnest and first born, as Paul says, 1 Cor. 15:20-23; Col. 1:18, of the spiritual life; that is, he is the first who has risen again and entered upon a spiritual life. Thus Christ lives now after the

spirit; that is, he is really man, but has a spiritual body. Therefore we should not here question how we may distinguish flesh and spirit from one another, but understand that the body and flesh are spiritual, and the spirit is in the body and with the body. For Peter does not say here that the Holy Spirit has raised up Christ, but he speaks more generally; as when I say the spirit, the flesh, I do not mean the Holy Spirit, but that which is in us, that which the spirit impels, and that which proceeds from the spirit. It follows now:

[19-22.] In which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

A wonderful text is this, and a more obscure passage perhaps than any other in the New Testament, so that I do not know for a certainty just what Peter means. At first sight, the words read as though Christ had preached to the spirits, that is, the souls who were formerly unbelieving at the time Noah was building the ark; but that I cannot understand and I cannot explain it. And there has been no one who has explained it. Yet if any one is disposed to maintain that Christ, after he had suffered on the cross, descended to these souls and preached to them, I will not dispute it. It might bear such a rendering. But I am not confident that Peter meant to say this. Yet the words may well be understood in the sense; that our Lord, after his ascension to heaven, came and preached in spirit, yet so that his preaching was not in the body. For he speaks not with a natural voice; he no longer does what pertains to the natural functions of the body. Therefore it must also follow, as it seems, that inasmuch as he preached to the spirits in that same spiritual body, such preaching must also be a spiritual preaching, so that he did not go there in the body and with oral preaching. The text does not require us to understand that he went down to the spirits and preached to them at the time of his death. For this is his language, "in which"; namely, when he had been put to death in the flesh and made alive in the spirit; that is, when he had unclothed himself of his fleshly existence and had passed into a spiritual being and life, just as he now is in heaven; thus he went and preached. Now he certainly could not have descended to hell, after he had taken to himself

such a new existence; wherefore we must understand that he has done it after his resurrection.

While the words only require that he be considered as speaking here of spiritual preaching, we may rest in the view, that Peter speaks of the office that Christ performs by means of external preaching. For he commanded the Apostles personally to preach the Gospel. But with the word preached he comes himself, and is spiritually present there, and speaks and preaches to the people in their hearts; just as the Apostles speak the word orally and in body to the ears, so he preaches to the spirits that lie captive in the prison-house of the devil. Therefore this also should be understood spiritually, like the preaching.

But here the expression follows, “Unto the spirits in prison that aforetime were disobedient (unbelieving), etc.” We should observe, according to the divine account, that in the inner state of Christ’s existence at present, those who have lived aforetime and those living now, are alike to him, for his sovereignty extends alike over the dead and the living: and in that life, the beginning, middle and end of the world are all one. But here on earth it is properly measured, so that one age passes on after another, the son succeeds the father, and thus it continues. As, to give an illustration: If a high forest lies before you, or you look upon it as it stretches in its length before you, you can not well see over it; but if it lies near before you, and you stand above it and look down directly upon it, then you have it in full view. So it is here on earth we can form no conception of this life I speak of now, for it passes on, piece meal as it were, foot by foot, to the last day; but before God it all stands in a moment. For with him a thousand years are as one day, as Peter says, in the next Epistle, 2 Pet. 3:8. Thus the first man is just as near to him as the last that shall be born, and he sees all at once, just as the human eye can bring together two things widely separated at a single glance. So the sense here is that Christ preaches no more in person, but is present with the word and preaches to spirits spiritually in their hearts. Yet you are not to understand that he preaches in this manner to all spirits.

But to what spirits has he preached? To those who aforetime were unbelieving. This is the figure of speech which is called Synecdoche, “from a part the whole,” “*ex parte totum*,” that is to say, not to these very spirits, but to those who are like them, and are just as unbelieving as they. Thus must we look away from the outward, to the inner life.

That is the best rendering, as I think, of those words of Peter; still I will not insist too strenuously upon it. This at least I can scarcely believe, that Christ descended to those souls and preached to them; while the Scripture is against it, and declares that every one, when he arrives there, must receive according as he has believed and lived. Besides, while it is uncertain what is the state of the dead, we cannot easily explain this passage as one that refers to the dead. But this is certain, Christ is present and preaches in the heart wherever a preacher of God's word speaks to the ear. Therefore may we safely draw this conclusion: Let him to whom a better understanding is revealed follow the same. The summary of the sense I have given is: Christ has ascended to heaven and preached to the spirits; that is, to human souls; and among these human souls have been the unbelieving, in the times of Noah. Now it further follows:

[20.] When the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

Thus does Peter lead us into the Scriptures, that we may study them; and gives us an illustration from them, of the ark of Noah, and interprets this figure. For it is pleasing to have one bring forward illustrations of such figures, as Paul also does when speaking, in Gal. 4:22f of the two sons of Abraham and of the two women; and Christ, in John 3:14, of the serpent which Moses erected in the wilderness. Such comparisons, when well drawn, are delightful; therefore Peter introduces this one here, that we may be able to comprehend faith in a natural picture.

But he would also tell us, that as it happened when Noah was preparing the ark, so it takes place at present. As he had regard to himself and was saved in the ark which swam upon the waters, so, it is to be observed, must you also be saved in baptism. Just as that water swallowed up all that was then living, of man and beast, so baptism also swallows up all that is of the flesh and of the corrupt nature, and makes us spiritual. But we sail in the ark, which means the Lord Christ, or the Christian Church, or the Gospel that Christ preached, or the body of Christ to which we cling by faith, and are saved as Noah was in the ark. You also perceive how the figure comprises in brief what belongs to faith and to the cross, to life and to death. Where there are now those who cling to Christ, there is surely a Christian

Church, where all that springs from Adam and whatever is evil are drowned.

[21a.] Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation (answer or covenant) of a good conscience toward God.

You are not kept and saved by washing away the filth of the flesh, so that the body may be clean, as was the practice of the Jews; such purification has no further value. But “the covenant of a good conscience toward God”; that is, that you feel your conscience to be rightfully at peace within you, that it stands in covenant with God, and can say: He has promised to me that which he will fulfill, for he cannot lie. If you shall rely upon and cleave to his word, then shall you be preserved. Faith alone is “the covenant” by which we shall be kept; no outward work which you can do will suffice.

[216.] Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter adds this in order to explain the faith which rests on the fact that Christ died, descended to hell, and arose again from the dead. Had he continued subject to death, we would not have been helped; but since he arose and sits at the right hand of God, and suffers this to be proclaimed to us that we may believe on him, we have a covenant with God, and a sure promise, whereby we shall be saved as Noah was in the ark. Thus has Peter given to the ark an entirely spiritual significance in which is neither flesh nor blood, but a good conscience toward God, and that is faith.

[22.] Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

This he says to enlighten and strengthen our faith. For it was necessary that Christ should ascend to heaven and become Lord over all creatures and wherever there is a power, that he may bring us thither and make us conquerors. This is now said for our consolation, that we may know all powers, whether they be in heaven or on earth, must serve and aid us, even death and the devil, since all must become subservient to and lie at the feet of the Lord Christ. This closes the third chapter. The fourth follows.

Chapter 4.

Analysis Of Contents By J. G. Walch.

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Part I. The First Duty Of A Christian.

[1-3.] Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, wine-bibbings, revelings, carousings and abominable idolatries.

Peter continues ever in the same strain. Just as he hitherto has admonished in general that we should suffer, if it be the will of God, and has set Christ before us as an example, so he now confirms it more extensively and repeats it again, saying, Since Christ our captain and head has suffered in the flesh and presented us an example, be sides that he has ransomed us from our sins, we also should imitate him, and equip ourselves, and put on the same armor. For in the Scriptures the life of the Lord Christ, and especially his suffering, is presented before us in a two fold manner. Sometimes as a gift, as Peter has already exhibited in the third chapter; and first, to those who are built upon and instructed in the faith that we are ransomed and our sins are taken away by the blood of Christ; and thus he is given to us and bestowed gratuitously upon us, which none can receive except by faith. Of this he speaks when he says, "Christ also suffered for our sins once," 1 Pet. 3:18. That is certainly the chief doctrine, and the most precious one of the Gospel.

In the second place, Christ is set before us and offered to us as an example and pattern for us to follow. For if we now have Christ, through faith, as a free gift, we shall go farther and also do as he has done for us, and imitate him in his whole life and sufferings. In this manner Peter presents it here. But he does not speak here particularly of those works of love which lead us to befriend our neighbor and do good, which are called specifically good works, for he had said enough on this before, but of such works as concern our bodies and are of service to us in strengthening our faith, that sin may be put to death in the flesh, and we thereby serve our neighbor better. For if I control my body that it be not lustful, then can I leave my neighbor, his wife or child at peace. So, if I subdue hate and envy, I shall then be better prepared to be kind and friendly toward my neighbor.

We have now repeated often enough that we are justified through faith, and have the Lord Christ as our own; still we must also do good works and show kindness to our neighbor. For we are never entirely purified while we live on the earth, and every one still finds in his body evil lusts. Faith indeed begins at once to crucify sin and to give us heaven, but it is not yet become perfect and entirely strong; as Christ speaking of the Samaritan says, he, who was not yet healed, was laid under restrictions and directions that he might become healed, Luk. 10:33f. So it is also with us; if we believe, then is our sin or wounds bound up, that is, the disease which we have inherited from Adam, and it begins to heal; but it takes place in one more, in an other less, the more one mortifies self and subdues the flesh, and the more his faith increases. Therefore if we have these two attributes, faith and love, then it shall continually be our occupation to cleanse ourselves wholly of sin until our dying breath.

Therefore Peter says, “arm ye yourselves also with the same mind”; that is, be of a firm purpose, and strengthen yourselves with the mind you received from Christ; for, if we are Christians, then we must also say my Master has suffered and spilt his blood for me, and has died for my sake: should I then be so base as not to suffer for him? Since my Master runs upon the spears’ points in the conflict, how much more should the servant advance with joy? Thus do we awaken courage to press onward, and arm ourselves in our own minds so as joyfully to persevere.

The word “flesh” refers in Scripture not only outwardly to the body composed of flesh and blood, bone and skin, but includes all that is derived from Adam. As Jehovah said in Gen. 6:3: “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for that he also is flesh;” and Isaiah, 40:5, “All flesh shall see the salvation of God;” that is, it shall be revealed to all men. So we also make confession in our own form of faith, “I believe in the resurrection of the flesh (body);” that is, that men shall rise again. So the whole man through and through is called flesh, as he lives here in this state of being.

The works of the flesh are carefully named, one after another, in Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, 5:19f, not only the gross carnal works, as lasciviousness, but also the high est and most reckless blasphemies, as idolatry and heresy, which belong not only to the flesh, but to the reason. We must understand, therefore, that man with his intellectual nature and in respect both to that which is inward and that which is outward, both to the body and the spirit, is called “flesh”; and this, because with all his faculties, internal

and external, he seeks only that which is carnal and serves to gratify the flesh. Peter says here too that Christ suffered “in the flesh,” while it is certain that his suffering extended further than merely to the body, for his soul suffered the greatest anguish, as is said by the prophet Isaiah, Is. 53:11.

In the same way also you are to understand that which follows in the passage before us: “For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.” This implies not only such things as beheading one and the torture of the body, but all that can work misery to man, whatever he endures through calamity and necessity. For there are many people who are sound in body, and yet inwardly experience much heart-sorrow and anguish. If it come upon us for Christ’s sake, it is useful and good. “For whoever suffers in the flesh,” says he, “ceases from sin.” Therefore the holy cross is profitable, that sin may thereby be subdued; if it appeals to you thus, then lust, envy and hate and other wickedness vanish. Therefore God has imposed the holy Cross upon us that he might urge and constrain us to believe, and extend the hand of kindness one to the other. Therefore it follows:

[2.] That ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, out to the will of God.

We should henceforth, as long as we live, hold the flesh captive through the Cross and by mortifying the flesh so as to do that which pleases God, and not with the idea that we should or could deserve anything by it. “Not in the flesh to the lusts of men,” says he; namely, we should not do that to which others tempted us; for we are not to be conformed to this world, as Paul says, Rom. 12:2. What the world demands of us we must avoid.

[3.] For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revelings, carousings, and abominable idolatries.

We have already gone altogether too far, that before believing we so shamefully spent our life in accordance with “the will of the Gentiles,” which is the same as with the lusts of men. Therefore as long as life continues we should see to it that our actions are well pleasing to God For we have our enemy in our flesh, the one that is the real knave, not gross and coarse ones merely, but more particularly blindness of mind, which Paul calls “carnal

wisdom,” namely, “the policy or wisdom of the flesh,” Rom. 8:6. If we subdue this depravity, that other is indeed easy to tame. This does our neighbor injury in so secret a manner as not to be observed.

Peter calls that lasciviousness that is accompanied with outward gestures or words, by which evil intentions are expressed, though the deed itself be not performed, and it is that which is unchaste to the eye and ear, upon which afterward lust and the act also follow. Then follows such idolatry as is abominable. Therefore we may easily apply all this to ourselves, for when we have lost faith we have certainly lost God also, and may fall into more abominable idolatries than the heathen, if we view the matter aright.

[4, 5.] Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you; who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead.

That is, ye have hitherto lived after the manner of the heathen, but since you have now forsaken that life, it appears strange to men, and seems shameful and foolish, and they say: What great fools they are to withdraw themselves from all worldly good and gratification. But let it seem strange to them; let them also libel you; they shall indeed yet be compelled to give an account; therefore leave it to him who judges righteously.

[6-7a.] For unto this end was the Gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged indeed according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand.

Here we have however, a rare and remarkable text. The words clearly declare that the Gospel is preached not only to the living, but also to the dead, and adds besides, “in order that they might be judged according to men in the flesh.” Now they certainly have not flesh, hence it cannot be understood except of the living only. It is a wonderful passage whichever way it be understood. Whether the text has come to us in its integrity or whether a part has been lost, I do not know, yet my understanding of it is as follows: We are not to be anxious how God will condemn the heathen who died many centuries ago, but only how he will judge those now living; so that the passage should be considered as spoken of men on earth.

But as to the word “flesh,” you are to understand, as I said above, that the entire man is called flesh, according as he lives; just as he is also called in respect to his whole nature, spiritual, if he follow after that which is spiritual. Still there is also a commingling of the two with one another, just as I say of a man who is wounded, that he is whole and yet is wounded. And so too, though the sound part is greater than the wounded part; still he is spoken of only with reference to the injured part as wounded. And such also, is the method of the Spirit here. Therefore he says, that they as to their outward being are condemned, but inwardly, as respects the spirit, they are saved and live.

But how does it come that he says they live, and yet adds that they are dead? I will explain it as I understand it, yet not so as to limit the Holy Ghost in that he calls the unbelieving “the dead.” For I cannot accept the sense that “to those who are dead and have perished, the Gospel has been preached; unless Peter meant this, namely, that the Gospel has been freely published and universally spread abroad, concealed neither from the dead nor the living, neither from angels nor yet from devils, and preached not secretly in a corner, but so publicly that all creatures might hear it who have ears to hear, as Christ gave command at the close of Mark:”Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation,” Mar. 16:15. If therefore, it is preached in such a manner, there will be found those who are condemned after the flesh, but live after the spirit.

[7a.] But the end of all things is at hand.

This is also a remarkable passage. Already nearly 1500 years are passed since then. Peter preached; that the time is indeed neither near nor brief, yet he says, “but the end of all things is at hand;” as John also declares in his first Epistle, 1 John 2:18, “It is the last hour.” If it were not the Apostle’s language, we might say it was contradictory; but by this we must firmly hold that the Apostle has the truth on his side. Yet what he means here he shall explain himself in his second Epistle, where he tells us why the time is said to be near, and says: “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” 2 Pet. 3:8, of which I have spoken above. So we must explain it in this manner, that it shall not be as long hereafter to the end of the world as it has been from the beginning to the present time.

And it is not to be expected that one should live two or three thousand years after the birth of Christ before we expect the end. Therefore he further adds:

Part II. The Second Duty Of The Christian.

[7b-8.] Be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer: above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins.

Here you perceive the reason we are to be of sound mind and be sober; namely, that we may be prepared to pray for ourselves and our neighbors. Moreover, love cannot be fervent unless you keep the body in subjection, so that love may have place within you. Here Peter has quoted a passage from the book of Proverbs, 10:12. "Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all transgressions." And this is what Peter means: Subdue your flesh and lusts: unless you do it, you will easily offend one another, and not be able freely to forgive one another. Take care therefore, that you subdue the wicked lusts, so that you shall be able to have love one for another and to forgive, for love covereth a multitude of sins.

This passage has been explained to contradict faith, inasmuch as they tell us: You say that faith alone makes us righteous, and that no one through works may be free from sin. Why then do Solomon and Peter, as in this passage, say "love covers sin?" Answer thus: Whoever has hatred toward another, says Solomon, ceases not to stir up strife and bitterness; but where there is love, it covers sins and cheerfully forgives. Where there is wrath, or in other words, where there is an intractable man, reconciliation is not possible; he remains full of wrath and hatred. On the other hand, a man who is full of love is one whom you can not enrage, however much injury may be done him; he covers it all, but does as though he saw it not. So the "covering" is spoken of as it pertains to our neighbor, and not as it respects God. Nothing shall cover sin before God for you, except faith. But my love covers the sins of my neighbor; and just as God with his love covers my sins, if I believe, so too should I cover my neighbor's sins. Therefore he says: Ye should have love one to another, that one may cover the other's' sins. And love covers not only one, two or three sins, but all transgressions; it cannot suffer and do too much; it covers up all. Paul also speaks and teaches in harmony with this passage, 1 Cor. 13:7, "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." It does the very best to all

men, can suffer all, and judge all for the best that is imposed upon it. Then follows further:

Part III. The Third Duty Of A Christian.

[9-10a.] Using hospitality one to another without murmuring: according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves.

He is said to be “hospitable” who cheerfully acts the part of the host. When the Apostles went abroad one with an other and preached, and sent their younger brethren here and there, it was necessary that one should entertain the* other. It would be well even now, if men preached from one place to another, from city to city, from house to house; and without remaining too long in one place might see to it that where one was weak he should be helped, and where one had fallen he should be lifted up, and things of that kind. Peter directs that this should take place without murmuring; that no one should suffer it to seem too much for him. This is also a work of love, as it follows immediately afterward that we should minister to one another. Wherewith? With the gifts of God which every one has received. The Gospel directs that every one be the servant of the other, and beside, see to it that he abide in the gift which he has received, which God has bestowed upon him; that is, the state or vocation, whatever it be, whereunto he has been called.

God’s will is not that a lord should serve his servant, that the maid be as the mistress, and a prince serve the beggar; for he will not overthrow civil and domestic ordinances. But his meaning is that men should serve one another spiritually, with their hearts: although you are a high and great lord, yet should you employ your power to the end that you may serve your neighbor, Thus should every one consider himself a servant. The lord can still remain lord, and yet hold himself in his own esteem no better than the servant: so that he would even cheerfully become a servant if it were God’s will; and the same is applicable to other conditions.

[10b.] As good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

God has not bestowed upon us all like grace; therefore should every one inquire to what he has been appointed, and what kind of gifts has been be-

stowed upon him. When he discovers this, let him use them for the service of his neighbor, as Peter further explains and says:

Part IV. The Fourth Duty Of A Christian.

[11a.] any man speaketh, speaking (let him speak) as it were oracles (the word) of God.

That is, if any one has the grace that enables him to preach and teach, let him teach and preach. As St. Paul says in Rom. 12:3-6: "To every man, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think: but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us." And then follows, Rom. 12:6-7. "Has any one a prophecy, let it be according to the proportion of his faith; has any one a ministry, let him give himself to his ministry: does any one teach, let him give himself to his teaching." He enforces the same doctrine also elsewhere, in his Epistles to the Corinthians and Ephesians, 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7.

For this reason has God distributed various gifts among men to be employed to the intent alone that with them one should minister to another, especially those who are in authority, be it in preaching or in some other public office.

Now Peter says here, "If any man speaketh. let him speak the word of God." This point is worthy of special remark, that no one is to preach anything but what he is sure is the word of God. Here St. Peter has closed the Pope's mouth; and lo! he will be St. Peter's successor. And what a fine successor he is! Further:

Part V. The Fifth Duty Of A Christian.

[11b.] If any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth.

That is, whoever rules in the Christian Church and has an office or ministry for the care of souls, he is not to proceed as he may choose, and say: I am sovereign lord, I must be obeyed; what I do shall stand and be established. God requires that we do nothing differently than he directs; also, that it be God's work and order. Therefore a bishop should do nothing unless he is sure that God does it, that it is either God's word or God's work. And besides, inasmuch as God will not permit that we should regard as a game of jugglery what we do with the Christian Church, we must stand in the assurance that God speaks and works through us, and that our faith may also say: That which I have spoken and done, God has spoken and done; and on this I will even risk my life. Otherwise if I have not this assurance, then my faith will rest upon the sand when the devil assails me. Thus here it is emphatically forbidden us to receive the command of any bishop, unless he is certain that he does what God does, and can say I have God's word and command for it. Where that is wanting, we must consider him as a liar. For God has prescribed that our conscience must rest only on the bare rock. This is said now of governments in general, that no one might follow his own darkness, and that nothing might be done of which he was not sure God sanctions it. In this you perceive how St. Peter long ago thrust to the ground the government of Popes and bishops, as we have it at the present day. It follows:

[11e.] That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Therefore he means you are to be confident that God speaks and does all that you speak and do. For if you perform a work of which you are not sure that God has done it, you cannot praise and give thanks. But where a man is certain of that, then he may praise and thank God for his word and works' sake, though he should be belied and held up to derision. Therefore it is shameful and ruinous that in Christendom any one should govern without

the word and the works of God. Hence of necessity has Peter subjoined the instruction how governments should be constituted among Christian people. It follows further:

Part VI. The Sixth Duty Of A Christian.

[12.] Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you.

That is a mode of speech not common in our language. But Peter uses this very phraseology, in order to remind us of that concerning which the holy Scriptures speak. For Scripture is accustomed to speak of suffering as though it were a furnace full of fire and heat. Peter has spoken in the same manner above in 1 Pet. 1:7, "That the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire." We may also read in the prophet Isaiah, 48:10, where God says: "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;" and Ps. 17:3, "With fire hast thou tried me;" and Ps. 26:2, "Examine me, O Jehovah, and prove me; try my heart and my mind;" also, Ps. 66:12, "We went through fire and through water." Thus the Scriptures are accustomed to call suffering "going through fire," or "a testing by fire." Peter's conclusion is that we should not allow ourselves to be surprised, or to think it strange and wonderful that the heat or fire should meet us, by which we are tried just as gold is when melted in the fire.

When faith begins, God does not neglect it; he lays the holy Cross upon our back in order to strengthen us and make our faith mighty. The holy Gospel is a powerful word, therefore it cannot enter upon its work without opposition, and no one can be sure that it possesses such power, but he who has experienced it, Where suffering and the Cross are, there its power may be shown and exercised. It is a living Word, and therefore it must exercise all its energy in the time of death. But if there is no such thing as death and corruption, there is nothing for the living word to do, and no one can be certain that it possesses such virtue, and that it is stronger than sin and death. Therefore he says, that "You will be proved;" that is, God appoints for you no flame or heat, in other words, no cross nor suffering, which make you glow as in a furnace, except to test you, whether you rely upon his word. Thus it is written, Wisdom 10:12, of Jacob, "God appointed for him a severe conflict, that he might learn by experience that divine wisdom is the strongest of all things." Hence the reason God imposes the cross on all be-

lievers is, that they may taste and prove the power of God which they possess through faith.

[13a.] But insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.

Peter does not say we should experience the sufferings of Christ in order thereby to be partakers with him through faith, but he would say: just as Christ has suffered, so are you to expect to suffer and to be tried. If you do thus suffer, then you have thus fellowship with the Lord Christ. If we would live with him, we must also die with him. If I wish to sit with him in his kingdom, I must also suffer with him, as Paul also says repeatedly. Rom. 6:5; 2 Tim. 2:11.

Part VII. The Seventh Duty Of A Christian.

[13b.] Rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy.

Though you should be brought to the torture and the flames of a martyr, you would still be happy. For though there be pain as to the body, there shall yet be a spiritual joy, inasmuch as you are to be happy forever. For this joy springs here from suffering, and is everlasting. Yet whoever cannot bear his sufferings cheerfully, and is dissatisfied, and chooses to contend with God, he shall endure both here and hereafter eternal torment and suffering. Thus we read of holy martyrs, that they submitted cheerfully to torture, thus opening the way to eternal joy; as for in stance of St. Agatha that she went as joyfully to prison as though it had been to a dance. And the Apostles went also with joy, and thanked God “that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ’s sake.” Acts 5:41.

[13c.] At the revelation of his glory.

Christ does not permit himself as yet to be seen as a Lord, but is still a sharer with us in our labors. So far as he is himself concerned, he is truly such, but we who are his members are not Lords as yet. Still we shall be Lords when his glory at the last day shall be revealed before all men, brighter than the sun.

[14a.] If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye.

Christ is a hateful name in the eyes of the world; whoever preaches him must endure to have the most esteemed on earth slander and revile his name. But in our times it is worse and more dangerous in that they who persecute us bear also the name of Christ; they say they are Christians and are baptized, yet in fact they renounce and persecute Christ. This is indeed a sad strife. They hold the same name as tenaciously as we do against us. For this reason we greatly need consolation, although the most discreet and pi-

ous people follow us, that we may stand firmly and remain cheerful. Why that?

[14b.] Because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. (On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.)

Ye have, he says, within you a Spirit, that is, the Spirit of God and of glory, such as makes you glorious. But he does not do this here on earth, but he will do it when the glory of Christ shall be revealed at the last day. Besides, he is not only a Spirit that makes us glorious, but one whom we also regard as glorious in himself. For it belongs peculiarly to the Holy Spirit to purify and glorify, even as he has made Christ pure and glorious. Now the same Spirit, he says, rests upon you; and inasmuch as ye bear the name of Christ, he is slandered by them. For he must endure to be reviled and slandered, to the highest degree. Therefore it is not you who receive the reviling; it is the Spirit, who is the Spirit of glory: be not anxious; he will regard it and raise you to honor. This is the consolation we as Christians have, that we may say, That word is not mine, this faith is not mine, they are all the work of God: whoever reviles me reviles God, as Christ says in Mat. 10:40, "Whoever receiveth you receiveth me," and on the other hand, "whoever rejecteth you rejecteth me," Luk. 10:16. Peter therefore would say, Know that the Spirit which you have is strong enough to fully punish his enemies; as God says also in Ex. 23:22, "If thou wilt indeed hearken to my commandments, I will be an enemy unto thine enemies." And the Scripture often repeats that the enemies of the saints are the enemies of God. If we are now reviled because we are Christians and believe, we shall not be ashamed, but the reviling is directed more especially against God himself. Therefore he says, be ye cheerful and happy, for that opposition is to the Spirit, who is not yours, but God's. Now he adds an admonition:

Part VIII. The Eighth Duty Of A Christian.

[15.] For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a meddler in other men's matters; but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.

He would thus say, You have heard how you are to suffer and to conduct yourselves under it, but beware that it comes not upon you because you have deserved it on account of your evil deeds, but for Christ's sake. Yet this is not now the case with us, for we must suffer, notwithstanding the fact that those who persecute us bear also the name of Christ; and no one can die because he is a Christian, but only as an enemy of Christ, and even they who persecute him say they are real Christians, and say also that he is blessed who dies for Christ's sake. Here the Spirit alone must decide, since you must know whether you are a Christian in the sight of God. God's tribunal is a secret one, for he reverses now the order and will judge no more according to the name, as at the time the name Christian originated.

Now Peter says, If ye suffer in this manner, do not blush with shame, but praise God. Here he makes the suffering and anguish the more welcome, because it is so great that we praise God for it, and because we are not worthy of it. However now all wish to shrink from suffering. Of what advantage is it to embrace the cross in monasteries? The cross of Christ does not save me. I must indeed believe in his cross, but I must myself also bear my own cross. His suffering I must experience inwardly, then I possess the true treasure. Let Peter's bones be holy, yet how does that help you? You and your bones should be holy too, which can take place only when you suffer for Christ's sake.

[17.] For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?

He here cites two passages from the prophets together in one. As to the first, Jeremiah says, 25:29, "Lo, I begin to work evil at the city which is called by my name; and if first of all I afflict my dearly beloved children who believe on me, who first of all must suffer and pass through the fire, do

ye who are my enemies, ye who do not believe, suppose that ye shall utterly be unpunished?" So in Jer. 49:12, he says: "They to whom it pertained not to drink of the cup, shall assuredly drink, and thinkest thou that thou art he that shall not drink?" That is, I strike my beloved, that you may see how I shall treat my enemies. Observe here the force of the words: if God holds his saints in such esteem, yet has been willing to have them judged and exposed with such severity, what will then be done with the others?

So also Ezekiel in 9:6 saw armed men with their swords, who were to slay all, to whom God said, "Begin at my sanctuary." That is what Peter means in this verse. Therefore he says, the time is come, as the prophets have foretold, when judgment must begin with us. When the Gospel is preached God arrests and punishes sin, so that he kills and makes alive. The pious he gently strokes (with a *Fuchsschwanz*, a fox tail), and first of all is the mother rod of kind correction: but what then will become of those who do not believe? As though he had said, if he proceeds with such severity toward his own children, you may infer what must be the punishment of those who do not believe.

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

This passage is also taken from the book of Proverbs, 11:31, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner?" The same thing also is said here by Peter. The righteous can hardly be saved and only barely escapes. The righteous is he who believes, yet in his faith even he has trouble and labor in order to persevere and be saved, for he must pass through the fire. Where then will he be found who has not faith? If God gives thus to faith a shock that makes it tremble, how can he abide steadfast who is without faith? Therefore he concludes from this:

Part IX. The Ninth Duty Of A Christian.

[19.] Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.

That is, they to whom God appoints suffering which they have not themselves sought and invited, should commit their souls to his keeping. These persons do good, continue in good works, fall not away because of suffering, and commit themselves to their Creator, who is faithful. This is to us great consolation. God created thy soul without thy care or cooperation, while as yet thou wast not; so is he also able to preserve it. Therefore trust thou in God, yet in such a way that thy trust be joined with good works. Not that you are to think, now I will not be afraid to die. You must see to it that you are a true Christian and prove your faith by your works. But if you go on so venturously, it will be wise to examine what will become of you. This is the last admonition Peter gives to those suffering for Christ's sake. We pass now to:

Chapter 5.

Analysis Of Contents By J. G. Walch.

An Exhortation and an Admonition. Conclusion of the Epistle

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Part I. The Exhortation.

[1-4.] The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Here Peter gives instruction for the conduct of those who are to preside over the people in the spiritual government. He said in the last chapter, 1 Pet. 4:11, that no one should teach or preach anything, unless he be sure that it is the word of God, so that our conscience may stand on the firm rock. For this is imperative on us as Christians, that we must be assured as to what is well pleasing to God, or not. Where this is wanting no one can be a Christian. Afterward he taught us, 1 Pet. 4:11, that whatever work or office any one might have, he should discharge it as though God wrought in it. But the present passage refers particularly to the bishops or pastors as to what their fitness and conduct should be.

But here you must be accustomed to the language and learn the meaning of the words. The expression presbyter or priest is a Greek word, rendered in German an elder, just as in Latin they were called senators; that is, a number of aged, wise men of much experience. So Christ also has called his officers and his council, who bear spiritual rule and are to preach and serve a Christian congregation. Therefore you must not be misled, though they are called at the present day by a different title, priests. For of those who are now called priests the Scriptures know nothing. And the real state of things, as it now is, the Scriptures do not notice. Apprehend the matter thus: Peter and the other Apostles, when they arrived at a city where there were believing people or Christians selected there an aged man or two of honorable standing, having wife and children, and being well grounded in the Scriptures; and these were called presbyters. After this Peter and Paul call them Episcopos, that is, bishop. So that priest and bishop are one and the same thing.

Of this we have a fine example in the legend of St. Martin, where an individual, with several companions, arrives in Africa at a certain place and

perceives a man lying there in a hovel, whom they took for a husbandman, though they knew not who he was. Afterwards, when the people had come together at that place, this very man arose and preached, when they perceived that he was their pastor or bishop; for at that time bishops were not distinguished from other people by their manner, dress and bearing.

Those elders, says Peter, who are to care for and oversee the people, do I admonish, who am also an elder. Hence you clearly perceive that he calls them elders, who have been in the ministry and have preached, since he speaks of himself also as an elder. And here Peter humbles himself, does not say that he was a Lord over them, although he might have had authority for it, since he was an Apostle of Christ, and speaks of himself not only as a fellow-elder, but also as a witness of the sufferings that were in Christ — as though he should say, I do not merely preach, but am a partaker with Christians, even suffering Christians. By this he shows that wherever there are Christians they must suffer and be persecuted. Such is a genuine Apostle. If such a Pope or a bishop were to be found among those bearing the title at the present day, we would gladly kiss his feet.

[1a.] A partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

This is something still more exalted and evidently a bishop must not speak it lightly; for here Peter claims to be a saint. He was certain that he should be saved, for he had strong assurance, as when Christ said, “I have chosen you,” John 15:16, 19. However it cost much pain ere the Apostles attained it. They had to be first humbled and wickedly derided. Now he knew that he was a partaker of salvation, still he is not proud, neither does he exalt himself, although he is a saint. Now what shall the elders then do? It follows:

[2a.] Tend the flock of God which is among you.

Christ is the chief shepherd, and has many shepherds under him, as also many herds of sheep which he has committed to his shepherds here and there in many lands, as Peter writes in this passage. What are these shepherds to do? They are to tend the flock of Christ. This the Pope has arrogated to himself, and thus claims that he is sovereign lord, and may dispose of the sheep as he chooses. We know very well what tending is, namely,

that the shepherd should lead the sheep to the pasture and set food before them, that they may be fruitful. Besides they are to guard lest the wolves come and rend the sheep, that is, that they may not assault and destroy them.

Now Peter says particularly, “the flock of Christ,” as though he would say: Do not imagine the flock is yours, ye are only servants. But our bishops speak with all confidence the reverse. They say, you are my sheep. But we are Christ’s sheep; for so he said before, 1 Pet. 2:25, “Ye are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” The bishops are Christ’s servants, and their business is to guard Christ’s sheep and feed them. Therefore to tend them is nothing else than to preach the Gospel, by which souls are nourished, made fat and fruitful; since the sheep thrive upon the Gospel and the word of God. This only is the office of a bishop. So Christ says also to Peter, John 21:16, 17, “Feed my sheep,” that is, the sheep which you are to feed are not yours, but mine. Yet from this they have inferred the doctrine that the Pope has external power over all Christendom, and yet none of them preaches to you one word of the Gospel. And I fear that since Peter’s day there has been no Pope that has preached the Gospel. There has certainly been none who has written and left any writings behind him in which there was any Gospel. Saint Gregory, the Pope, was certainly a holy man, but his sermons are not worth a farthing; so that it would seem the See of Rome has been under the special curse of God. It is very possible that some Popes have endured martyrdom for the Gospel’s sake; but nothing has been written of them to show that it was the Gospel. And yet they go on and preach that they must feed the flock; and yet they do nothing but bind and destroy the conscience by laws of their own, while they preach not a word of Christ.

It is also probable that among all Christians many might be found, both men and women, as able to preach as those who are thus employed. But certainly among all these multitudes there are many people who have not this ability. And therefore some one must be selected to strengthen them, so that the wolves shall not come and tear the sheep. For a preacher must not only feed the sheep, so as to instruct them how to be good Christians, but, besides this, must guard against the wolves, lest they attack the sheep and lead them astray with false doctrine, and introduce error with which the devil would not find fault. But there are many people to be found at the

present day quite ready to tolerate our preaching of the Gospel, if we would not cry out against the wolves and preach against the prelates.

But though I were to preach the simple truth, and feed the sheep and give them good instructions, still it is not enough unless the sheep be guarded and protected, so that the wolves do not come and carry them off. For what is built, if I throw out one stone and see another thrown into its place? The wolf can very readily endure to have the sheep well fed; he had rather have it so, that they may be fat. But he cannot endure the hostile bark of the dogs. Therefore is it a most important matter, if well considered, that we should truly tend the flock, as God has commanded it.

[2b.] “The flock,” he says, “which is among you.”

There he has expressed, in a single word, what the prophet Ezekiel writes, 34:1f., of shepherds or bishops. And this is the meaning: you are not only to feed them, but also pay attention and be very faithful where it is called for and there is need. And here he uses a Greek word, “Episcopountes,” that is, being bishops, and it comes from the word Episcopos, rendered in German, an overseer, a guardian, who is on the watch or look-out, and takes notice of what every one around him wants. Observe, then, how a bishop and an elder are one and the same person. So it is false, as they now say, that the bishop’s office is a dignity, and that he is a bishop who wears a pointed hat on his head. It is not a dignity, but a ministry; so that he who has it should oversee and provide for us and be our guardian, so as to know what is generally needed; that when one is weak and has a troubled conscience he should then give help and comfort; when one falls that he should raise him up, and things of this sort; so that the people of Christ may sufficiently be cared for, both in soul and body, etc. For this reason, I have often said, that if a proper form of government were to be now established, there must be in one city as many as three or four bishops, who should have the oversight and care of the Church, providing for the general wants.

And here Peter touches on two points which might well appall any one from taking the charge over a people. In the first place, there are some to be found who are truly devoted, yet yield reluctantly to becoming preachers; for it is a wearisome office for any one to have the general oversight as to how the sheep live, so as to direct and help them; since there must be oversight and watchfulness night and day, that the wolves do not break in; so

that body and life must also be devoted to it. Therefore he says, “you are not to do it of constraint.” True it is that no one should force himself uncalled into the ministry; but if he is called and required for it, he should enter it willingly, and discharge the duties his office demands. For they who do it of constraint, and who have no appetite and love for it, will not properly discharge the duties of the ministry.

But the others are worse than these, who stand up before the people and thereby seek their own gain, so as to feed their own stomachs. These men are anxious for the wool and milk of the sheep; they ask no questions about the pasture, just as our bishops at present do, a thing that has become almost everywhere a scandal and a shame, since in a bishop it is especially scandalous. For this reason both the Apostles Peter and Paul, Acts 20:33, as well as the prophets also, have repeatedly spoken of it. So Moses says, “You know that I have coveted no man’s cattle,” Num. 16:15. The prophet Samuel also, “You know that I have taken of you no man’s ass or ox,” 1 Sam. 12:3. For if he whose duty it is to feed the flock is anxious merely for wealth and gain, he will in a short time become a wolf himself.

[2c.] But of a ready mind.

That is, a bishop should have an appetite and inclination for his calling. This is the character of those who willingly minister, and do not seek the wool of the sheep. Thus we have two kinds of false shepherds: the one, those who serve unwillingly; the other, those who do it gladly, but for the sake of avarice. Further he says:

[3a.] Neither as lording it over the charge.

This is the character of those who rule willingly enough for the sake of honor, in order to rise high and become powerful tyrants. Therefore he admonishes them not to act as though the people were subject to them, so that they might be gentlemen and do as they chose. For we have a master, who is Christ, who rules over our spirits. The bishops are to do no more than tend the sheep. Here Peter has broken down and condemned by one word all that rule which the Pope now maintains, and clearly concludes that they have no power to give one word of additional command, but that they are to

be only servants, and say, Thus saith Christ thy master, therefore you are to do it. So Christ also speaks, Luk. 22:25f: “The Kings of the Gentiles have lordships over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so.” Now the Pope speaks the very reverse, “Ye shall rule and have authority.”

[3b-4.] But making yourselves ensamples to the flock; and when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

That is, see to it that you go before them as their leader and conduct yourself so that your life may be an example to the people, and that they may follow you. But our bishops say to the people, Go there and do so and so, and they sit on cushions and play the gentleman, imposing burdens on us which they will not bear themselves [Mat. 23:4], while they will not preach a word, and call others to account if they have not done it for them. But if it should be required of them, they would soon be weary of their dignity.

Therefore Peter does not appoint any temporal reward for bishops. As though he would say: Your office is so great that it never can be rewarded here, but ye shall receive an eternal crown, which shall follow it, if ye truly tend the sheep of Christ. This is the admonition Peter gives to those who are to care for souls. From it you may confidently infer and clearly prove that the Pope, along with his bishops, is Antichrist, or an enemy of Christ, since he does nothing of that which Peter here requires, and neither teaches nor practices it himself; but even acts the counterpart, and will not only not feed the sheep or let them be fed; but is himself a wolf and tears them, and yet makes it his boast that he is the vicar of the Lord Christ. He certainly is that, for since Christ is not there, he like the devil sits and rules in Christ's place.

Hence it is necessary to grasp well these plain texts and others like them, and to hold them up against the Pope's government, so that when any one asks or questions you, you may be able to answer and say: Christ said and practiced so and so; the Pope teaches and practices directly the opposite; Christ says yes, then the Pope says no. Since they are opposed to one another, one of them must be false; but certainly Christ is not. Whence I conclude that the Pope is a liar and the real Antichrist.

In this way must you be armed with Scripture, so that you cannot only challenge the Pope as Antichrist, but know how to prove it clearly, so that

you could die secure of it, and withstand the devil even in death. It follows further:

[5a.] Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder.

This is now the last admonition of the chapter. Peter wishes to establish such order in the Christian Church that the younger should follow the older, so that all may go on harmoniously; those beneath submissive to those above them. If this were now to be enforced we should not need many laws. He would strictly have it so that the younger shall be directed according to the understanding of the older, as they know best what shall be for the praise of God. But Peter presumes that such elders are to be instructed and established in the Holy Ghost. For should it happen that they are themselves fools, and without understanding, no good government could originate with them; but if they are persons of good understanding, then it is well that they should rule the youth. But Peter is not speaking here of civil, but of church government, that the elders should rule those that are spiritually younger, whether they be priests or even aged men.

[5b.] Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another.

Here he turns and modifies his command, directing each to be subject one to another. But how is it consistent, that the elders should rule, and yet all should be subject one to the other? Are we then to overturn what has been said? Whoever will may explain it that Peter spoke above of the elders, here he speaks of the younger. But we shall let the words stand, granting that they are spoken generally; as Paul also says in Rom. 12:10, "In honor preferring one another." The younger should be subject to the older, yet in such a way that the latter shall not regard themselves as masters, but even should submit and follow, where a younger is more judicious and learned; just as God in the Old Testament often selected young men, provided they were wiser than the old.

So Christ teaches, Luk. 14:8-10: "When thou art bidden to a feast, sit not down in the chief seat, lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place.

But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher;” and then he introduces the passage that is found in many places: “Everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted,” Luk. 14:11; 18:14; Mat. 23:12.

Therefore should the younger be subject to the elder, and yet the elder on the other hand should be so disposed that each one in his heart shall consider himself as the least. Were this done we should have delightful peace, and all would go well on the earth. This therefore, says he, should we do, exhibit humility.

[5c.] For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

That is, those who will not give place to humility God casts down; and on the other hand, he exalts those who humble themselves. This is a common expression, and I would to God that it might become common in our daily lives!

[6a.] Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God.

Since God requires each to be subject to the other; if it be done willingly and cheerfully, he shall exalt you. But if you do it not willingly, then you must do it of constraint, nevertheless he will humiliate you.

[6b.] That he may exalt you in due time.

It seems, when God suffers his own children to be cast down, as though he would at length desert them. Therefore he says: Do not make a mistake on this point, and suffer yourself to be blinded, but be confident, since you have a sure promise that it is God’s hand and that it is his will. Therefore regard not the time, however long it be, that you are brought low; for though he has cast you down, he will yet lift you up. Hence it follows:

[7.] Casting all your anxiety upon him because he careth for you.

You have a promise by which you may rest secure that God doth not forsake you, but careth for you. Therefore let all your anxiety go, and cast your burden on him. These words are beyond measure precious; how could he have made them sweeter or more tender? Why does he employ such very alluring words? It is in order that no one might easily despond and give up his purpose. Therefore he gives us the consolation that God not only looks upon us, but cares also for us, and has a heartfelt regard for our lot. He further says:

Part II. The Admonition.

[8.] Be sober, be watchful; your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

Here he gives us a warning, and opens our eyes, and the text is well worthy to be written in golden letters. You perceive here what this life is, and how it is described, so that really we might ever wish we were dead. We are here in the devil's kingdom, just as a pilgrim arrives at an inn, where he knew all in the house were robbers; and if he must enter he will not fail to arm himself in the best way he can devise, and will sleep but little. So are we now on the earth, where the prince is an evil spirit, and has the hearts of men in his power, doing with them what he will. It is a fearful thought if we properly consider it. Therefore Peter warns us to take heed to ourselves, and act the part of a faithful servant, who knows the state of things here. For this reason he says: "be sober," for they who indulge in eating and drinking and are like fat swine, can be prepared for nothing useful. Therefore we must have ever with us such a talisman as this.

"And be watchful," he says, not only as to the spirit, but also as to the body. For a sluggish body, prone to sleep when it eats and drinks to excess, will not resist the devil, since it is bitter to do so even for those, who have faith and the spirit.

Why should we then be sober and vigilant? "Because your adversary the devil walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." The evil spirit sleeps not, is cunning and wicked. He has purposed with himself to assault us, and he knows the right trick to do it; he goes about like a lion that is hungry and roars as though he would gladly devour all. Here Peter gives us a precious admonition, and forewarns us of our enemy, that we may protect ourselves against him; as Paul also says, 2 Cor. 2:11, "we are not ignorant of Satan's devices." That "walketh about" tends to make us heedless, and thereupon follow wrath, hatred, pride, lust, contempt of God, etc.

And here observe especially that he says "the devil walketh about." He does not pass before your eyes when you are armed against him, but looks out before and behind you, within and without, where he may attack you. If

he now meets you here, he will quickly return there, and attack you in another place; he changes from one side to the other, and employs every kind of cunning and art that he may cause you to fall; and if you are well prepared in one place, he will quickly fall upon another. And if he cannot overthrow you there, then he assaults you somewhere else, and so never gives up, but goes around and around, and never leaves any one rest in peace. If we then are fools and regard him not, but go on and take no heed, then has he as good as seized us.

Let every one now look well to this; surely each shall trace something of it in his own experience. He who has tried it knows it well. Therefore it is so sad for us that we go about so heedlessly. If we rightly considered it, we should cry out, death rather than life. Job says: "Man's life on earth is nothing but an encampment, a mere conflict and strife," Job 7:1. Why then does God thus leave us in life and misery? In order that faith may be exercised and grow, and that hastening out of this life, we may have a desire to die and be anxious to depart.

[9a.] Whom withstand steadfast in your faith.

Sober you should be, and vigilant, but to the end that the body be kept in a proper frame. Yet with all this the devil is not routed; this only suffices to afford the body less occasion to sin. The true sword is that ye be strong and firm in the faith. If you in heart lay hold on the word of God and maintain your grasp by faith, then the devil cannot gain the advantage, but will be compelled to flee. If you can say: This has my God said, on this I stand, then shall ye see that he will quickly depart, and ill-humor, evil lusts, wrath, avarice, melancholy and doubt will all vanish. But the devil is artful and does not readily permit you to understand this, and so assaults you in order to take the sword out of your hand; if he can make you lazy, so that your body is unguarded and inclined to wantonness, then will he quickly wrench the sword from your grasp. Thus he served Eve: she had God's word; had she continued to depend on it she would not have fallen, but when the devil saw that she held the word so indifferently, he tore it from her heart, so that she let it go and he triumphed. [2 Cor. 11:3; Gen. 3:4, 13].

Thus Peter has sufficiently instructed us to contend with the devil. It requires not much running hither and thither; it is besides a work that you can do, yet no longer than you depend by faith on the word of God. If he comes

and would drive you into despondency because of sin, only seize hold of the word of God that speaks of the forgiveness of sin, and exercise yourself in that; then will he be compelled quickly to let you alone. Peter says moreover:

[9b.] Knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world.

That is, be not surprised that you must meet opposition from the devil; but comfort yourselves, inasmuch as ye are not alone, but there are others besides you who must endure such suffering, and reflect that you have brethren who share with you in the strife.

This is now the Epistle in which you have sufficiently heard the true Christian doctrine; in what a masterly manner he has described faith, love and the holy Cross; and how he instructs and warns us as to how we should contend with the devil. Whoever comprehends this Epistle has doubtless enough, so that he needs nothing more; except that God may teach him from the abundance of the same truth that overflows in the other books of the Bible. But that is in no way different from this; for here the Apostle has forgotten nothing necessary for a Christian to know.

Finally, he does what every faithful preacher should do, in that he not only takes heed to feed the sheep, but also cares and prays for them; and concludes with a prayer that God may give them grace and strength to understand and retain the word.

Part III. The Conclusion.

[10.] And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you.

That is the wish with which he commits them to God. God, who alone bestows grace, and not a single part of grace, but all grace richly in one, who has called you through Christ that ye might have eternal glory, not through any worthiness of your own, but through Christ. If ye have him, ye have through faith, without merit of yours, eternal glory and salvation, which will prepare you, that you may be strong, grow and stand, and that ye may be able to accomplish much; and to this end he will strengthen and establish you, that ye may be able to bear and suffer all things.

[11.] To him be the dominion for ever and ever, Amen.

Praise is the sacrifice that we as Christians should offer to God. Now he adds in conclusion:

[12.] By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him, I have written unto you briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein.

Although I well know, he would say, that you have heard this before and know it well, so that you do not need that I should teach it to you, yet have I written this to you, as true Apostles should do, that I might also admonish you to abide therein, since you are tried and exercised; and you are not to imagine that I preach in any way different than you have already heard.

[13a.] The Church that is in Babylon saluteth you.

Such was the custom of writing in the Epistles the fare well. “The Church at Babylon,” says he, “greet you.” I suppose, but am not fully confident, that he here meant Rome, for it has been generally supposed that the Epistle was written from Rome. Still, there were two Babylons; one in Chaldea, the other in Egypt, which is now Al Cair. But Rome is not called Babylon, ex-

cept figuratively; in the sense, as was said before under 1 Pet. 4:4, of “excess of rioting” or “disorderly life.” Thus Babel means in the Hebrew confusion. So perhaps he has called Rome confusion, or Babel, since in it there was also such disorderly conduct and a confused multitude of all kinds of shameful practices and vices; and whatever in the whole world was scandalous had drifted together there. In this same city, he says, a congregation is gathered of such as are Christians, who greet you. But I will readily leave every one to hold it as he may, for no importance is attached to it.

[13b.] And so doth Mark, my son.

Some say that he here means Mark, the Evangelist, and calls him his son, not literally, but spiritually, as Paul calls Timothy and Titus his sons, 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4, and says to the Corinthians that he has begotten them in Christ, 1 Cor. 4:14, 15; 2 Cor. 6:13.

[14a.] Salute one another with a kiss of love.

This custom has now passed away. In the Gospel we read distinctly that Christ received his disciples with a kiss, Mat. 26:49, and such was then a practice in those lands. Of this kiss Paul also often speaks [Rom. 16:16; 2 Cor. 13:12].

[14b.] Peace be unto you all that are in Christ Jesus.

That is, who believe in Christ. This is the adieu with which he commits them to God. Thus we have explained this first Epistle. God grant his grace, that we may grasp it and keep it. Amen.

Supplementary Part of the Edition of 1539 to that of 1523. The First Epistle of Peter Explained.

The Supplementary Matter Of The Edition Of 1539, Edited By George Roerer, To The Edition Of 1523, Edited By Caspar Cruciger

Now First Translated Into English And Edited By Prof. John Nicholas Lenker, D. D., Author Of "Lutherans In All Lands" And President Of The National Lutheran Library Association

Preface to the First Epistle of St. Peter.

St. Peter wrote this his First Epistle to the converted heathen and exhorted them to continue steadfast in their faith and grow in the same under all kinds of suffering and in every good work.

In the first chapter he strengthens their faith by the divine promise and power of their future salvation, and shows that it was not merited by us; but that it was first proclaimed through the prophets. And therefore they should now live righteously in the new man and forget the old, as those who are born anew through the living, eternal word of God.

In the second chapter he teaches them to know Christ the head and cornerstone, and as true priests to offer themselves unto God, as Christ offered himself; and then he begins to instruct men in all the various callings of life.

In the first place, he teaches them in general to be subject to the civil government, and then in particular the servants to be obedient to their masters and if necessary suffer unjustly from them for the sake of Christ, who also suffered unjustly for us.

In the third chapter the Apostle teaches wives to be in subjection to their husbands, even if they are unbelievers, and adorn themselves in holiness of character; likewise the husbands to be patient and forbearing toward their wives; and then in general to be humble, forbearing and kind in their relations to one another, as Christ was to us sinners.

In the fourth chapter he teaches us to bring the flesh into subjection by fasting, watchfulness, temperance and prayer, and then comforts and strengthens us with the sufferings of Christ. He then instructs the spiritual government, how it should confine itself to the administration of the word and work of God alone, and each to help the other with their gifts, and not to be surprised, but be joyful, if compelled to suffer for the sake of the name of Christ.

In the fifth chapter the Apostle Peter admonishes the bishops and priests how to live and shepherd the people, and warns us that Satan is seeking our destruction everywhere without tiring.

Chapter 1.

[1a.] Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

This is the subscription, the signature, of the Epistle before us. In it Peter highly extols and praises his office. He says he is an Apostle, an ambassador not of an earthly king or emperor, but of Jesus Christ, who is Lord over all. Acts 10.

He does not however bear this glorious title for the sake of his own person, but first of all because he will show by it that he has not been inducted into this high office by his own choice or presumption nor by human counsel, but that he has been promoted and called to it, without using any means on his part, by Christ, the Lord himself; secondly, that we might be assured that his preaching and teaching, like the preaching and teaching of other Apostles, was the Word of God, and whoever hears him and believes his testimony, hears the one whose messenger and ambassador he is, and will be saved; and whoever despises him, despises the one who sent him, etc. Mat. 10.

Thus now with these few words, “Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ,” he testifies that he has been commissioned to fill an office in order that there might be preached to all the world the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death, righteousness, life and salvation; not through the law of Moses, much less through human laws, works, righteousness, merit, etc.; but alone through Jesus Christ, who was ordained thereto from eternity, and preached by all the prophets in order that he might bruise the head of the serpent and release all generations from the curse. He thus also at once in this subscription condemns all doctrines, which lead one astray from this Saviour and point to an other way to become righteous before God and be saved. He also intimates that all who teach thus are not Christians, but the Apostles of Satan, be they who they may.

[1b.] To the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia.

This is the superscription designating the people to whom Peter wrote this Epistle, namely, to the heathen who lived in the countries he here mentions by name, who had been converted to the Christian faith by the preaching of the Gospel. Otherwise he would not have written to them, nor admonished them to continue in their faith and grow. To-day these lands are in the possession of the Turks and instead of Christ the cursed Mohammed is preached and worshiped; yet, there may be some Christians still there. Pontus is a great and broad country by the sea; Cappadocia is near and borders on it. Galatia lies on this side of them, and Asia and Bithynia join them on the west, Bithynia bordering on the sea. They all are in the East and are large countries. Paul preached in Galatia and Asia, but whether he preached also in Bithynia I do not know. In the other two countries he never preached.

Here we observe that the Apostles were sent especially to the heathen, just as the prophets were to the Jews. This is proved by the fact that the Apostles wrote all their Epistles to the heathen except the Epistle to the Hebrews and that of St. James. Yes, you say, but Paul teaches, Gal. 2:7, that he had been entrusted with the Gospel to the heathen, but Peter with the Gospel to the Jews. However that argues nothing; for Peter preached also among the heathen or Gentiles, Acts 10, and also wrote to them, as this superscription and the whole Epistle prove; and therefore he is the Apostle of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, etc.; just as also Paul is called the Apostle of the Gentiles, and yet he preached to the Jews. Indeed when he found here and there Jews among the Gentiles he visited them first and preached Christ unto them. But where they would not hear him nor accept his testimony, he turned to the Gentiles, as we see in the Acts. Hence even Christ calls him his chosen vessel, who should bear his name not only unto the Gentiles, but also unto the children of Israel, Acts 9:15.

Therefore Paul speaks in Gal. 2 of the condition of things at that time, when Peter was preaching to the Jews and he to the Gentiles. For St. Paul soon had a call and commission to go among the Gentiles and preach the Gospel unto them, and yet he preached, as I said, also to the Jews. However Peter along with others had a commission to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to whom Christ had been promised. After they visited them

and had converted to the faith the little company, as Paul was accustomed to call the remnant, and the great mass remained hardened, and even persecuted the Apostles in the severest manner and ensnared them, they received the commission from Christ: “Go ye in all the world,” etc., and they turned to the Gentiles.

Therefore the Apostles are really the fathers and teachers of the heathen, and it matters not that certain leading Apostles remained for a time among the Jews. For if they all at times through their entire lives had preached only to the Jewish people in their own land, which was not the case, what would that argue over against the fact that their Epistles were written to and had been delivered to, not only one people in a little corner of the world, as the Jews were, but to all the Gentiles, or heathen in the whole wide world, through whom they preached to the believers among them from that time until the present and will continue thus to preach to the end of the world? The Evangelists also serve us heathen with their writings, for they teach and bear witness of him who has come as the Saviour of the whole world and fulfilled what was proclaimed concerning him in the Scriptures, namely, that he should redeem the human race, etc., likewise that the Jews should be rejected and that the heathen would be received as the people of God, just as has come to pass, etc.

“Sojourners” are those whom we call foreigners. He calls them sojourners however for the reason they had been heathen. But since they had been converted to faith he does not call them common sojourners, but elect sojourners; just as if he should say: You, while you were heathen and strangers who did not know God and had no hope, have never been but are now citizens with the saints and members of the family of God, etc., Eph. 2; or as he here says, the elect who are sojourners, partakers of all the heavenly riches in Christ; just as he will explain in the following suggestive and glorious words:

[2a.] According to the foreknowledge of God the Father.

This means that you are chosen, you have not obtained it through your own strength, work or merit, for the treasure is too great, and all the holiness and righteousness of man kind far too worthless to obtain it; moreover you were heathen, knew nothing of God, had no hope and served dumb idols. Therefore, without any assistance on your part, out of pure grace you have come

to such inexpressible glory, namely, only in the way that God the Father appointed you to it from eternity. Thus he presents the foreknowledge of God in a very beautiful and comforting light, as if he should have said: You are chosen and you will indeed remain so, for God who foreknew you is sufficiently strong and certain that his foreknowledge cannot fail him, nevertheless so far as you believe his promise and esteem him as the true God.

From this we can in brief draw the teaching that this foreknowledge does not rest upon our worthiness and merit, as the sophists hold, for then Satan could every moment make it doubtful and overthrow it; but it rests in the hand of God, and is founded upon his mercy, which is unchangeable and eternal; consequently it is called the fore knowledge of God, and therefore it is certain and cannot fail. Hence if your sins and unworthiness trouble you, and you begin to think you were not included in the foreknowledge of God, also that the number of the elect is small, and the company of the godless large, and you are terrified by the awful examples of divine wrath and judgment, etc.; dispute not long why God made this or that so, and not differently, when he could have easily done so, etc. Be not so bold as to try to explore the depths of the divine fore knowledge with the human reason, for thus you will certainly go astray, you will either begin to doubt or be thrown overboard to take your chances; but hold firmly to the promises of the Gospel which teach you that Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to bless all people upon the earth, that is, that he might redeem them from sin and death, make them righteous and happy; and that he did this according to the command and gracious will of God, the heavenly Father, who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life, John 3:16. Dost thou follow this counsel, namely, dost thou acknowledge that thou by nature art a child of wrath, worthy of eternal death and condemnation, from which no creature, neither human nor angelic, can save you, and dost thou accordingly grasp the promise of God and believest thou that he is the merciful, true God, who faithfully keeps, moved by pure grace without our work and merit, what he has spoken, and has therefore sent Christ, his only Son, in order to make satisfaction for thy sins and impute unto thee his innocence and righteousness, to redeem you finally from all need and from death; then doubt not, thou dost belong to the company of the elect, etc. If we consider the fore knowledge of God in the manner Paul is accustomed to do, then it

is comforting beyond measure. Whoever considers it differently, to him it is something horrible.

[2b.] In sanctification of the Spirit.

God, the Father, the Apostle says, ordained you that you should be his chosen children and be sanctified, not by the outward, bodily sanctification of the law, which has never yet with all its sanctity been able to make a single person perfect in his conscience, Heb. 7:19; 9:13-14; Phil. 3:9. Much less however through your heathen customs and idolatrous worship. Through what means then? Through the sanctification of the Spirit, for your hearts are sanctified and cleansed through faith from the filthiness of idolatry. Unto what?

[2c.] Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

You are chosen of God and now sanctified. Peter says, not to the end that you should continue and remain in the sins of your former heathen and vain ways, but that hence forth you should be obedient to and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is preached to you, and that you be sprinkled not with the blood of calves and rams, Ex. 24:6-8, Heb. 9:19, nor with the sprinkling water of the ashes of the red heifer, Num. 19:9, as the Jewish people were sprinkled according to the law of Moses, by which they were sanctified only to an outward and bodily holiness, Heb. 9:13; but by a far, far better and more costly sprinkling water, namely, with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the innocent and spotless Lamb of God, through whom you are inwardly cleansed and sanctified in your spirit and conscience from all sin, so that now you are true servants of God, and pure and holy both in your soul and in your body. And this sprinkling is accomplished, when the Gospel of Christ is preached, that he is the true Easter Lamb, who has offered himself for the sins of the whole world, gave and sacrificed his body and blood for us all. Whoever is obedient to his preaching and believes, is sprinkled by the true high priest so that the destroyer can cause him neither suffering nor harm. Psalm 51:7 speaks also of a sprinkling “purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow;” as if he had said: sprinkling and washing, commanded in the law will never

make my heart clean and snow white, so that I may be delivered from my sin, have a good and a joyful conscience before thee, and become righteous on earth and saved in heaven. Lord then thyself must here become the washer and the bather, and wash and sprinkle me with another water and another blood than that used by the Levitical high priest, otherwise I will remain forever black, leprous and filthy, although I now sprinkle and wash all my sins.

Here you see that not only Peter, the Apostle, but also the holy prophet David, enlightened by the Holy Ghost long before and at the very time the reign of the law had reached its height and was the most glorious, shows that the law with all its beautiful and glorious worship and ceremonies, which were many, as sacrifices, offerings, incense, washing and sprinkling, were not able to make the heart and soul of the sinner clean; but all that was only a type and figure of the true offering and sprinkling of blood, which the true high priest himself had to accomplish.

[2d.] Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

That is the greeting. You are now, he will say, obedient to Christ, with whose blood you are sprinkled and through him you are cleansed from your sins, and you believe on him, for whose sake you are righteous and holy before your heavenly Father by grace; and since you know and believe this you have a joyful and peaceful conscience. But Satan and the world will inflict upon you all kinds of suffering because of this knowledge and faith, the latter by fear and the former by persecution. Therefore I wish from the depth of my heart that God, the merciful Father, would give you abundant grace and peace, so that, although Satan may attack thee hard with his fiery darts and make bold to overthrow your faith, for he sleeps not, but goes about like a roaring lion, and the world persecutes, reviles and condemns you as a heretic, that you let not such things trouble you. But comfort yourselves always in the face of these horrible experiences and trials with the thought that God in heaven is gracious unto you for the sake of Christ, in which you have a good conscience and constant peace. Is he only gracious to me, then let Satan and the world terrify, rage and persecute as much as they wish.

Now Peter begins his Epistle with beautiful, and well chosen words, treats of the highest and greatest theme, as it becomes an Apostle to do, and

says:

[3.] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begot us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Satan has through the fall of Adam brought the human race into such awful ruin and misery that all men are conceived and born in sin, and consequently they must be subject to the power of Satan. Therefore the physical birth from their father and mother can bring them and give them nothing more than this temporal and transient life, which is not only full of toil and trouble, but is moreover very short and uncertain, in which we are not insured against death for a single moment; and if it would at once destroy us, there would still be no end to the misery; indeed our real distress and torment would then truly first begin. For since we all by nature are the children of wrath and the enemies of God, we have merited, besides temporal death, also eternal death and condemnation. Into this dreadful and inexpressible misfortune all the children of Adam have sunk and there they stick. All, there is no one excepted.

The question arises, what can we do to free ourselves from this misery, find the right path, become pious and be saved? Here every one wishes to be an expert and thinks he knows best how to put all in order again. Ask the Jew, and he gives you this answer; if he is circumcised and keeps the law, then he will become righteous and be saved. A monk says: if he conducts himself according to the rules of his order, etc. A Turk: if he does what stands written in the Koran. The sum of the whole matter is, every person, even if he be of a different"opinion, cherishes by nature the thought that he will and can, through his own strength, free will, good works and merit, or indeed especially through the laws of Moses, not only atone for his sins and still the wrath of God, but also merit the grace of God and acquire eternal salvation, and thus heal and abolish this deadly disease. Higher the human reason cannot rise, and therefore neither can it think, speak, and teach otherwise than has been said, as we have indeed sorely experienced in the Papacy.

The holy Scriptures speak quite differently of this subject, viz., that we can never by what we do nor by what we do not do be free from sin, escape death, obtain righteousness and salvation, that is, come to the first original innocence and righteousness, which Adam lost through the fall, and we all

in him, unless we become really new creatures, are born again and in another way, not of father and mother, but of water and of the spirit; John 3:5, Tit. 3:5.

This is what Peter also teaches here, when he says: You are elected according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, sanctified and sprinkled with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. To this you have come, not by your doing or not doing, but out of pure love and grace has God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ begotten you unto a living hope, who were without faith and hope in him, according to his great mercy, not because of your work or merit, much less for the sake of your sins. In that living hope you can surely expect the eternal, heavenly inheritance, which neither moth nor rust can devour and no thief can steal, for it is reserved for you in heaven, etc. Now he who did the work, has also the glory and the praise, and to him be honor and blessing through eternity, Amen.

But how or by what means does this new birth take place? “By the resurrection,” Peter says, “of Jesus Christ from the dead”; as if he should say, God, the Father, has begotten us, not of corruptible, as he himself will explain later, but of incorruptible seed, namely, of the word of truth, which is the power of God. It begets new life, and makes all alive and blessed who believe in it. Rom. 1:16. What kind of a word then is that? Even that which is preached among you concerning Jesus Christ, that he died for your sins and the sins of the whole world, and arose again on the third day, that he might make satisfaction by his death for the sins of the whole world and by his resurrection bring us righteousness, life and salvation. Whoever now believes this preaching, namely, that Christ died and rose again for his benefit, upon him the resurrection of Christ has proved its power, he is born again, that is, created anew after the image of God, receives the Holy Ghost, knows God’s gracious will, has a heart, mind, courage, will and thoughts, which no work righteous person or hypocrite has, namely, that not through the works of the law, much less through his own righteousness, but through the suffering and resurrection of Christ, he is a righteous and a saved person.

This is what may be called true apostolic preaching. For the office of a true Apostle is that he preaches not of the righteousness of man nor of the sanctity, but of the unspeakable grace and mercy of God, who spared not his only Son, but offered him for us all, that he might die the ignominious death of the cross, and arise again for our righteousness. The Apostles faith-

fully and powerfully advocated this doctrine. Whoever reads through their Epistles, especially those of Paul, and reads their sermons in the Acts from beginning to end, will find that their discourses and words tend to show, that Christ the Lord was rejected and crucified by his own people, to whom he was promised, although indeed he gave strong proof by deeds, miracles and signs that he was the true Lord and Messiah; that God raised him again from the dead and made him to be Lord and Christ, that all who believe on him should in his name receive the forgiveness of their sins, which they could not secure through the works of the law, Acts 13:38; that there is salvation in no other, as there is no other name given among men by which we shall be saved, etc.; and likewise that all we lost in Adam has been restored better than we enjoyed in Paradise, etc. In brief, that all who believe on him will not only become righteous and be saved through him, but also become the children and heirs of God, will be brothers of Christ and co-heirs with him, and like him will be raised again and placed in our heavenly state. Eph. 2:6.

This is the blessed, comforting preaching Christ commissioned his Apostles to herald forth in all the world for the consolation of poor and troubled consciences; for the Gospel, he himself says, Mat. 11:5, is preached to the poor, that is, to those who feel their sins, are terrified by death, earnestly fear the wrath and judgment of God and sigh for help and comfort. Such persons can hear nothing more lovely and comforting than that Jesus Christ, the innocent and spotless Lamb of God, has taken upon himself our sins, death and all the misfortunes which distress and oppress us here in this life, and torment and torture us forever in the life to come; he suffered the law to condemn him as an evildoer and death to take his life. But since he himself was the eternal righteousness and the life, sin and death with all their power could not hold him. Therefore he is the almighty Lord and God, who had to lay down his life; but who had power to take it again, John 10:18, arose again from the dead, and triumphed over all these adversaries and led them captive, not for the sake of his own person, for he never had any need of that, but for the benefit of us poor, condemned sinners, who believe on him, in order that they could not henceforth through all eternity do us any harm or condemn us, although they at times while we still live here terrify and torment us.

[3b.] Unto a living hope.

The reason we Christians continue to live on the earth is, that we, after becoming believers, should proclaim abroad the virtue of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, that others might through us come to the same knowledge and faith, just as we received it through brethren; otherwise it would be best if God would permit us to die as soon as we are baptized and commence to believe. But as long as we are upon the earth we must live in hope. For although we are indeed assured that through faith we possess all the treasures of God (for faith certainly brings with it a new birth, adoption as a child of the heavenly family and the inheritance), we do not yet possess them according to the senses, but we expect them through hope, which Peter, according to a Hebrew idiom, calls the hope of life. According to our manner of speaking we call it a living hope, or that in which we confidently hope and have the assurance of eternal life. The treasure, however, is still hidden and a curtain drawn before it, so that we can not see it, it can now be apprehended only by the heart and through faith. Therefore we must in the meanwhile comfort ourselves with the hope, which is certain and will not let us be put to shame, until that day when we shall see what we now hope for.

By this sermon Peter will first of all forcibly dash to the ground all the glory of human power, of free will, of good works, of your own righteousness, yea, also of the righteousness of the law of Moses. For if it were possible for us to prepare ourselves for grace and secure eternal life through our own work and merit, as the Pope and his sophists and canonists have shamelessly taught and written and wish still to defend the same as right; what need was there that God should have mercy upon us out of pure grace, permit his only son to become man to die on the cross for our sins, and to preach in his name repentance and the forgiveness of sins among all nations? Then, do I indeed hear that we dare do nothing that is good? Yea, we are born again in Christ Jesus just to that end, that we shall not only do good and are now for the first time able to do good, but must also suffer evil for all our good works, of which I will say more later.

Secondly, Peter here further shows, that we come to grace and are reconciled to God the Father through Christ alone as our only Mediator between God and man; for he says in plain words God has begotten us again through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Hence what has heretofore been taught in Christendom concerning praying to the" saints, as if they were our mediators and intercessors, who represent us before God and intercede in our be-

half, and could make us partakers of their merits, that is all false and a mere human invention, for we have no authority for that in the Scriptures; moreover the honor would thus be given to the saints, which belongs to Christ alone, which cannot under any circumstances be tolerated.

The same doctrine Paul also here and there teaches in his Epistles.

In Rom. 5:1 he says, “Now being justified through faith, we have peace with God,” not through our own selves, but “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Hence we must bring Christ with us, come with him, pay our debts with him, and do all through him and in his name that we wish to transact with God. Likewise does Peter here now say, we certainly are waiting for the eternal life, although we are still upon the earth; but in no other way than that Christ arose from the dead, ascended to heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God. For he ascended on high to the end that he might give us his Spirit, in order that we may be born again and now through him appear before the Father with a thirsting desire and say: I come and pray before thee, heavenly Father, not that I depend upon my prayer for merit; but I come and pray in the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord, who arose from the dead and now sits at thy right hand and is my advocate.

Now whoever is not placed in a contented frame of mind by this comforting doctrine of the Gospel, and has not gained through Christ a joyful conscience and a strong refuge in God the Father through it, he will not certainly secure them through the law of Moses, much less through the commandments of men. For if he can not be comforted by the facts that he came into the world for the sake of sinners, died for them, shed his blood for them, etc.; a thou sand times less can he be comforted by his orders, his own righteousness and the like; for what is the holiness of all the angels and the suffering and merit of all the saints compared to the precious blood of God’s Lamb? Hence the work-righteous people almost deserve that they permit their hearts through their entire lives to become as we say soured. They do great and heavy work, and yet have nothing from it except in time mere worry and labor and never a cheerful conscience, and in eternity condemnation and the torments of hell. If they would believe the Gospel and permit Christ to become the Saviour of the world, they would not dare to do so. But the world will not take any counsel; it is and will remain the devil’s own possession; therefore it hates the light and loves the darkness, John 3:20.

[4a.] Unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

The Apostle will thus say: God has begotten us again through the resurrection of Christ; not that we should here upon the earth be rich, powerful and great lords, which natural birth brings with it unto those whom God favors, but he has begotten us to a heavenly inheritance compared with which all the riches, honor and power of the whole world is merely nothing. For what the world offers, be it so costly, firm, beautiful and lovely as it possibly can be, it is only transient and very uncertain, so that one is not secure for a single moment, and it is moreover corrupt, for people misuse it to their own ruin and condemnation; and besides one is also soon weary and tired of it. But our inheritance which the new birth brings us is first in corruptible and eternal; therefore we need not be concerned about any danger that it be injured or that it will have an end.

In the second place it is undefiled, that is, very fair and beautiful and it can never defile us or make us unclean, like our temporal possessions are so apt to do. In the third place it fadeth not away, that is, it will neither wither nor decay, it does not decrease, as all kinds of worldly treasures do, but it continues fresh and green for ever; and consequently we will never become satiated and tired of it. We do not yet actually possess such an inheritance, but we have a sure hope of it.

These are indeed admirable and comforting words, which rightly cheer our hearts. However since this our inheritance and treasure, of which Peter here speaks, are still hidden, and cannot be apprehended by any of the senses, there are hence no poorer and more unworthy people up on the earth than just those, who wait for this inheritance in hope and must experience the terror of Satan in their hearts and suffer that the world is their bitter enemy, hates them, persecutes and condemns them as the worst villains who are the cause of all evil. This makes them appear and feel as if they were not only forsaken by the whole world, but also by God himself, and it does not seem that they are the children of God who are waiting for a better and more glorious inheritance in heaven than the riches and glory of all the kings of the world; yea, the world considers them mere beggars and fools. This horrible and terrifying view is a hindrance also to their faith and joy, and is the cause that they of course often experience the opposite and think that God is angry at them and wishes to cast them to the abyss of hell and condemn them. However let all that disappear from your view and cling

firmly to the words of Peter when he says: God, the Father, hath by the resurrection of Jesus Christ begotten us to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away; who do not yet possess it visibly, but with a sure hope expect it in due time. Although Satan will not now grant you this honor and therefore makes this life bitter and the world attacks you, do not let that worry you, it will not continue forever. We tarry here in his realm for but a short time and since he receives and holds us only for evil, we ought to consider it for the best, be patient and remain steadfast. We shall be repaid indeed and that richly for the small damage he can do us. After this little poverty, this small contempt and this short-lived sorrow shall follow the eternal heavenly riches, glory and unspeakable joy and blessedness, compared with which all the suffering and evil which oppress us are not worthy to be mentioned. As the children of the world endure great perils and necessities with the hope of acquiring something temporal, why should we not much more have such a glorious, divine promise concerning this heavenly and eternal inheritance?

[4b.] Reserved in heaven for you.

Your heavenly inheritance, the Apostle Peter says, is most certain, although you do not see it with the eye and do not at present possess it, yet it will be reserved and kept for you, where it is safe and where it will remain so, namely, in heaven, where no one can rob or steal it; there is left only a short time yet, and then you will not only see it, but also secure it as your own and possess it forever in glorious and unspeakable joy. When will this take place? At the last time, namely, when Christ shall appear in his glory and raise us from the dead. We think that is a long time yet in the future, but with God a thousand years are as one day, yea, as a watch in the night; and so will it be with us when we are raised from the dead and have been a thousand years or more under the ground, we will think it is a short time that we slept in the grave. Moreover our present life passes so rapidly as if it fairly flies, Ps. 90:10, and death overtakes us before we prepare for it.

[5.] Who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

That is to say, it is impossible for you to endure the fierce wrath, poison and cunning of Satan, and bear the bitter enmity, calumny and persecution of the world, but you have a strong rear-guard and helper, whose name is God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, as he has begun a good work in you must also complete it or all is lost, will guard you through his divine almighty strength and power that you may continue steadfast in the faith of his word and await the salvation in the living hope through patience prepared for you from the foundation of the world, lying yet hidden and mantled, reserved and sealed, so that it remains indeed invulnerable and sure. However in due time it will in the twinkling of an eye be opened and uncovered, so that you may view it forever and possess it as your joy.

The Papists scoff at us because we so faithfully propagate the doctrine of faith, exalt it so highly and make it so important that no one can readily apprehend and retain it. They say we can do nothing but teach about faith. Christians know beforehand what to believe and faith should be preached to the Turks and heathen and the like. Also among us there are many who when they hear that faith alone justifies without any works form the delusion: Behold, what you hear and read in and out of the Scriptures, that you hold to be right and true, therefore you have faith. They think the delusion or dream, which they themselves create in their hearts, is faith.

But Peter constantly teaches here that faith is not an opinion or a simple illusion, which man creates for himself, but God's power must be there and work in us faith, and through faith we must be guarded and kept unto eternal salvation. In the same manner St. Paul speaks in Eph. 1:17-20 concerning faith: "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation," etc., "that you may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, (not out of our own power or free will, but) according to that working of the strength of his might, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." Thus he would say, that we who believe in Christ and through him have an affectionate refuge to God as to our loving Father, which is accomplished through his exceedingly great power and mighty strength, by which he raised Christ from the dead; and by the same he creates and works in us such faith. From this one readily sees that the Apostle did not esteem faith as a small and mean art to be acquired by human power and to be learned so easily and quickly as the work righteous persons imagine. Paul constantly prayed for the Christian congregations to whom he wrote, that God would

strengthen and keep them in the faith, and wished that they might increase in the knowledge and faith of Christ, that they might have a perfect hope and the like. As for himself he confesses that he counts all things as loss compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and yet he says soon afterward, he has not yet apprehended, is also not yet perfect; he strives for it, presses toward the mark and treasure, Phil. 3. Peter also does the same, he expresses to the believer his desire that God would richly give and increase his grace and peace unto them; also, that, they might grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ; and he prays that the God of all grace, who called them to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, would prepare, strengthen, confirm and establish them.

Consequently when the poor Papists represent that every Christian knows very well how or what he is to believe, they give sufficient evidence that they neither understand nor have experienced what faith is. Also the secure and false Christians, who are always more than the true believers, have no correct information concerning faith, for they think if they straightway fall into and continue in sin, and they only believe, then there is no danger, for faith alone justifies without any good works. In that they rest, do nothing good, yea, only evil, and for all that they wish to be Christians, but they are worse than the heathen, etc. However we heard above that faith begets new men and makes all things new in the heart, mind and senses, who then as a good tree bear good fruit, lead a holy life; where this is not the case, there is no true faith.

In brief the doctrine concerning faith is unknown to the world, and hence its judgment cannot be different, for the world thinks it is either a mere inferior art or an error and heresy; and those who confess and accept it are corrupters and enemies of the Church. But Peter teaches here that faith is a precious and noble treasure with which nothing can be compared, for he gives a true, clear understanding, so as to judge rightly and firmly in all things. For whoever is informed and persuaded concerning faith from the Scriptures, and through faith has laid hold of the fact that Christ is the only Saviour of the world, without whom and outside of whom no one will be redeemed from sin and death nor obtain salvation, he can readily pass judgment as to which doctrines are divine and wholesome and which are misleading and satanic, which is the true and which the false faith, which works are good and which are hypocritical, and which vocations are holy and spiritual, and which are sinful and damnable. And he makes no mistake, for

God's word, according to which he judges, does not permit him to err. Again, where such knowledge and faith are not, there is nothing but blindness and error. Therefore the natural man cannot rightly judge of spiritual matters, he calls black white, darkness light, and again white black, Is. 5:20. Hence it happens that man accepts now this and then another good work to atone for his sins and obtain God's grace. Therefore we have so many institutions, monasteries and false modes of worship. That is all in vain, for Christ alone is the way, the truth and the life; whom he does not enlighten through his word must go astray, accept lies for the truth, die in their sins and be condemned.

[6.] Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials.

Here the Apostle sets forth how the Christians fare in the world. Before God in heaven they are the beloved children of the eternal, heavenly inheritance, and assured of their salvation, as has been said; but upon earth they are not only sorrowful, cast down and forsaken, but they must also suffer many temptations from the devil and from the wicked world. How have they merited this? Their great est sin was that they believed in Christ, and published, commended and praised before all the world the unspeakable goodness of God in him; namely, that he alone can deliver us from sin and death, and justify and save us; that human reason through their free will, power and good works can not prepare them for grace, much less merit eternal life. But with all their planning and doing, and it may sound and glitter as beautifully as it may, it will not reconcile God, but only kindle his wrath the more, because they undertake all such things without, yea, even against his word and precept, ignore and despise what he has promised and commanded, and choose out of their own meditations and imaginations something special instead. Then the fire begins to blaze, for the world will not and cannot suffer its good intentions, meditations, holiness and costly works to be rebuked and condemned, in that they will avail nothing before God, and it then rushes ahead, persecutes and destroys those who speak thus as the greatest blasphemers of God and even revolutionists; and in all this they think they do God a service. Hence faith is not a sleepy thought in the heart, but whoever has faith speaks and testifies as one who really experiences it in his heart. Moreover when he then meets misfortune he laments

like the prophet in Ps. 116:10: "I believe, for I will speak: I was greatly afflicted." But prophet-like we also will be greatly afflicted in this life. Hence Peter says those of you who are sorrowful now for a short time lay hold of faith, hope and the holy Cross all together, for the one naturally follows from the other.

The Apostle however does not stop here, he does not only say how they will become sad and sorrowful, and will have to suffer various opposition, but at the same time he comforts them by saying it will last only a short time here on the earth, and then these sorrows and tribulations will most surely be followed by their eternal salvation, in which they will rejoice forever. That is real, true consolation; the very consolation the Apostle is anxious to impart. He says nothing of the temporal peace, rest and favor of the world, but the contrary, namely, that the Christians should ponder it well and freely, that they will not have it better than all the saints that ever lived, and the Lord himself had, the head of all the saints. What shall they then have? Tribulations, unrest, sorrow, anxiety, trouble and the like. So then the consolation of the Christians does not consist in visible, present things, which however costly and glorious they may be, are nevertheless perishable and uncertain; but it consists in the invisible and future things, which are certain and eternal treasures.

Moreover it is to be observed that the Apostle does not add in vain where it shall be, as he does in the seventeenth verse of the third chapter, when he says: "It is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." For there are many people who lay crosses upon themselves without any need of doing so, as the manner of work-righteous persons is. They go along, as Paul says, according to their own choice, in humility and in the spirituality of angels, have the appearance of possessing great wisdom and sanctity through their own self-chosen spirituality and humility, and in that they do not take care of their body nor give the flesh its honor by providing for its needs, Col. 2:23. The Papacy has developed a great army of such. It should not be so, for it is not the will of God that you should select out of your own contemplations and mystical speculations your suffering and cross. If however you do, then you are the martyrs of the devil and not of Christ, and it will be harder for you thus to merit hell than for one, who suffers for the sake of God, to merit heaven. But whenever it shall be, that is, if God so orders, that you must submit to such things for the sake of confessing your faith, then accept it and comfort

yourself with what Peter here says, that your sorrow shall last only a short time, but the salvation and blessedness, in which you should rejoice, shall last forever.

[7.] That the proof (trial) of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Peter cites in clear words the use of the Cross and the fruits of such persecution, which overtake believers both from tyrants and from the rabble, when he says: they serve to the end that faith thereby may be preserved and be found approved and more precious than perishable gold purified and tried by fire. For just as the fire does no harm to the gold, devours it not, neither diminishes it, but only serves it, for it takes from it all dross, so that it becomes indeed pure and genuine, just so does the fire and heat of persecution and of all opposition indeed grieve us and cause the old Adam pain beyond measure, so that those exercised thereby become sad and for a time impatient; yet their faith will thereby become pure and genuine, like refined gold or silver.

The very nature of the Christian life is that it constantly increases and becomes holier and purer. We come to faith first through the preaching of the Gospel, and through faith moreover we are justified and sanctified before God. But as long as we still live in the flesh, which is not without sin, it bestirs itself continually and pulls us back and hinders us from becoming as perfectly holy and pure as we indeed should become. Therefore God casts us into the very midst of the fire of opposition, suffering and tribulation, by which to be cleansed and proved until the end of our lives; so that also in us not only is sin the more crucified the longer we live, but our faith also is preserved and increased, so that from day to day we become more asured of our calling, grow in the understanding of the divine wisdom and knowledge, and the Scriptures become ever easier and clearer in order to admonish more powerfully with wholesome doctrines those committed to us, and to punish the gainsayer. Had not the devil here of late years both with force and cunning attacked us so strongly, we would never have come to this certainty in our doctrine; neither would the articles of faith on the righteousness of the Christian and the doctrine of faith be developed as fully as they are. Hence Paul says in 1 Cor. 11:19: "There must be also factions among

you, that they that are ap proved may be made manifest among you”; and Christ says, Mat. 18:7: “It must needs be that occasions of stumbling or offences come, etc.”

May we not also rejoice and even laugh when we see that the enemies of the divine truth have their will and desire realized in everything; that they have here every pleasure and joy, are wealthy, esteemed and influential, and there is no limit or end to their daring and boasting; while we on the other hand are poor, miserable and despised. But Peter says: When things go thus, then is it well with us, for our faith must be proved to be genuine through various temptations, and we be strengthened and comforted in the face of such offenses, so that we be not provoked because of the godless; but pity them, and think what would it all amount to if they were even twice as rich and merry and had in addition the glory and power of the whole world? How long could they retain it? They are not assured of it for a single moment. Yea, before they expect it there is a change, so that with the rich man they perish forever, and cannot have a drop of water, and in place of their short pleasure they must receive eternal suffering and sorrow.

Again, although we now suffer anxiety and tribulation here for a brief period, yet we have still peace in Christ since we possess the true treasure, which is better and more precious than the glory and riches of the whole world, namely, his beloved word which preaches to us concerning the eternal, heavenly treasures, which Peter says are reserved in heaven for us. Here we and all the elect may suffer for a short time, nevertheless take up your Cross and follow Christ, and in company with him endure abuse and in patience wait for his blessed and comforting revelation and appearance, since he is to appear gloriously with his saints, and wonderfully with all believers. Then our honor, praise and glory will begin and continue forever. Such then is our comfort and glory, not only the hope of the approaching glory, which God will give, but also the tribulations, since we know that tribulation worketh patience, etc., Rom. 5:3.

[8a.] Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, etc.

Here he praises them and bears them the grand testimony that they love Christ and believe on him, although they had never seen him, but had only heard of him; and their redemption stands ready and complete. For whoever

believes in earnest that he is justified of his sins through the death and resurrection of Christ, and is delivered from death, will surely love Christ. Does he love him, then the Father also will love him, John 16:27. It must however not be a false, painted love as the hypocrites have, who serve Christ in a different way than he taught and commanded, namely, according to their own good opinion and devotion, and pose as if they did it in honor of Christ out of the pure love they have to him. Such love however he does not desire, yea, he considers it the greatest ignominy and dishonor. Therefore the Apostle adds: you believe on him, and this is the true honor, by which one knows that he loves him, namely, by believing his word. Therefore all is in vain that is done to the honor of Christ aside from believing on him.

And Peter briefly shows by these words that the righteousness of the Christian is to believe on him, though he has never seen him, as he himself said, John 16:10: "The Holy Ghost will convict the world in respect of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more"; further that Christ is true God, because this believing and trusting are becoming God alone. Now we believe on Christ; that he can comfort and help us, he can rescue us from emergency, and justify and sanctify us, etc.; also, although we do not now see him, yet we know for a certainty and believe he is with us and in us, Mat. 28:20, and worketh all things in us. Finally, what kind of faith is it by which we are justified before God and sanctified, namely, the faith in Christ, that he is our Saviour and Mediator. By this all the innumerable kinds of unbelief are excluded.

[8b, 9.] Ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Peter speaks here so plainly of the approaching joy in the life beyond that I scarcely know if anywhere in the Scriptures it is treated with such plain and clear words, and yet it cannot then be fully expressed. Though he says your glory, joy and salvation are wrested from you for a time, and you now still live here upon the earth in disgrace, sorrow and tribulation, because of the envy and malice of Satan and of the world, that will not harm you; have patience, it will soon be different. When you now fall asleep in Christ and are buried it will be only an hour or a very little time, as you will experience on that day, and then your joy will begin, which will be so great and glorious,

he says, that no heart can reflect upon it sufficiently, much less will any mouth be able to express it. Therefore compared with it all the joy that has ever been on the earth and yet may be is to be reckoned as mere child's play. For there is as yet no earthly joy so great and glorious that is not impure and mingled with suffering, or where suffering does not soon follow; and therefore Solomon says, Prov. 14:13: "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of mirth is heaviness." Hence it cannot have any continuance; for it is not only obstructed without intermission by all kinds of misery and torture, but bodily death finally comes and ends it, and where there is no faith in Christ this short, miserable, beggarly joy is followed by eternal death and condemnation.

However here it is the reverse. Sorrow and suffering are changed to joy, which is not only glorious and inexpressible, but in it we will also live forever and be saved. Therefore remain steadfast in the love and faith of Christ, whom you have not yet seen here in time, and suffer for his name's sake, just as the devil and the wicked world may mete it out to you, since you will be richly repaid and rewarded, for the end of your faith will be eternal salvation. That can not be expressed in words, but it must and will be believed by the heart. Moreover should we now multiply words, it would still be useless. It cannot be expressed.

[10a.] Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, etc.

The salvation, of which I speak and you will receive, is sure, because the holy prophets have born witness to it.

Peter refers us here back into the holy Scriptures, there to see how God keeps what he has promised, not because of any merit on our part, but out of pure grace alone. For the whole Scriptures aim at this one thing, namely, to tear us away from our own works and bring us to faith. Therefore it is necessary that we study the Scriptures in order to be certain and clear as to faith. Likewise Paul also leads us into the Scriptures when he says, Rom. 1:2: God promised afore the Gospel through his prophets in the holy Scriptures; and, Rom. 3:21, "The righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus Christ and avails before God, hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."

Thus also in Acts 17:2f we read that Paul preached faith in Christ to the Jews at Thessalonica and later at Berea; that he reasoned with them from

the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, etc. And when they had heard this they examined the Scriptures daily, to see if they held the same doctrine, in which they were taught by Paul. We also therefore should search the Scriptures, for it is they that testify of Christ, as he himself says, John 5:39. It is also written in verse 46: "If ye believed Moses, ye would believe me, for he wrote of me." And thus we learn to confirm and establish the New Testament out of the Old Testament, and never give our confidence to the useless babblers, who despise the Old Testament and say it is no longer necessary. Thus we must establish the foundation of our faith out of the Old Testament and from no other source, for God sent the prophets for the purpose to the Jews, that they should bear witness of the future Christ. Hence the Apostles everywhere convinced and overwhelmed the Jews with proofs from their own writings, that this Jesus whom they preached unto them was Christ.

Thus the books of Moses and of the prophets are also Gospel, since they afore proclaimed and described Christ, whom the Apostles later preached and described. Yet there is a difference between them. For, although both according to the letter are written on paper, yet the Gospel or the New Testament was not, properly speaking, written, but was formed from the living voice which sounded forth then and was heard in all the world; that it was however also written, was the result from the superabundance or overflow of the preaching. On the other hand the Old Testament was formed or composed only in writing. Hence it is also called "the Letter," and the Apostles designate it the Scripture or the writing, for it only pointed to the future Christ. The Gospel however is the living sermon or preaching about Christ, who has now come.

Further there is a difference in the books of the Old Testament. First, the five books of Moses are the principal part of the Scripture, and are properly called the Old Testament; after them come narratives and historical books, in which are described various examples of those who kept and of those who did not keep the law of Moses. In the third place come the prophets who are grounded upon Moses; and what he had written they picture forth and explain more fully and in clearer words. But the consensus of the prophets and of Moses is the same.

The saying that the Old Testament is abolished, you must understand thus. First, the difference between the New and the Old Testament is, as we have just said, that the Old Testament pointed forward to Christ, while the

New Testament gives us now that which was promised in the Old and was there set forth in figures or types. Hence the figures are now abolished, for they served the purpose that what was promised in them is now finished, completed and fulfilled. Hence under the New Testament there shall now be no longer any difference or distinction in meats, clothing, places, times, etc., for in Christ nothing avails any more except a new creature. Even the Jews, who were obligated by their law to observe the distinctions in meats, places and the like, were not saved by such observance, and neither were they commanded to observe them for the purpose that they should thereby become righteous before God, but in order that under such discipline and under the burden of the law, they might long and pant for Christ who would bring an end to all that, etc.

Further, it is to be observed that God in the Old Testament administered two kinds of government, through which he himself undertook to rule the people, both inwardly in their heart and outwardly as to their body and their possessions. Hence he gave them so many different laws, all mingled together. To the temporal government belong the laws which teach how to rule children, servants and the home; also, how they should plant, build, borrow, cast lots, fight, etc. To the spiritual government belong all laws which give information about the outward forms of worship, but especially those treating of faith and love, namely, that we should fear, believe and love God with our whole heart and our neighbors as ourselves. But now in the New Testament he reigns in us spiritually through Christ, while the temporal or outward government he executes through the worldly authorities. Therefore since Christ has come the outward government is abolished. Hence God no longer appoints for us outward persons, times and places, but governs us spiritually through the Word, so that we are lords over all that is outward and temporal, and are bound by nothing corporal. However that which pertains to the spiritual government is not abolished, but still stands and will stand, as do the laws of Moses concerning the love of God and the love of your neighbor. These God will have observed, and therefore he gives to his believing children the Holy Ghost, that they may be able to keep them.

Moreover the figures remain also spiritually, that is, whatever is set forth spiritually by the figures; although the outward is abolished. As for example, that a man should be divorced from his wife and let her go her way because of her adultery, is a figure and sign, which is now also spiritually ful-

filled. For thus God rejected the Jews, because they would not believe in Christ, and chose and received the heathen or Gentiles. Also, he does the same now, if one will not walk in his faith, he permits him to be excommunicated from the Christian congregation, in order that he may reform. Similar it is also, that a wife after the death of her husband had to take the brother of her husband and with him rear children, and he had to consent to be called by his name and to take possession of his estate. Although this has gone out of use, it is a figure which pointed to Christ; for he is our brother, has died for us and ascended into heaven, and has commanded us that we cause souls to be pregnant and fruitful through the Gospel; and in this we retain his name, are called after him and enter into his estate. Consequently I dare not glory in myself, that I have converted the people, but must ascribe all to the Lord. Just so it is with all the other figures of the Old Testament, which would require too much time to relate.

Thus all that is not outward or external in the Old Testament is still in force, for example, there are all the sayings of the prophets concerning faith and love. Consequently they even confirm faith and love, as Mat. 7:12: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets." Thus Moses and the prophets are witnesses of the future Christ. For example, when I wish to preach concerning Christ, that he is the only Saviour, through whom every one must be saved, may I not take the saying in Gen. 22:18: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Out of it I create a living voice and say, through Christ, who is the seed of Abraham, must all man kind be blessed: therefore it is necessary that we believe on that Seed, if we wish to escape condemnation. By the use of such sayings we must lay the foundation for our faith, and we should let them remain in force, that we may see in them how they bear witness concerning Christ, in order that our faith thereby may be strengthened. This is what Peter will now do in the following words, when he says:

[10b.] Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.

Here we see that the beloved prophets had a longing in their hearts for the grace and salvation promised in Christ, and now offered and ministered to us and the whole world through the Gospel, which we confidently wait for

in hope through patience. They would have gladly lived in the day it was revealed, and seen and heard what we see and hear, as Christ says, Luke 10:24, but it was not possible for them to experience it. However this they did do, namely, they sighed for it with a deep longing of their hearts, and sought and searched for it with the greatest, earnestness and diligence, and with a delight and joy in the promises given unto the patriarchs, and served us by explaining and developing those promises more richly and fully. Nevertheless they were comforted by the same grace and salvation and died in the faith of the future Christ. This is the meaning of Peter, when he says here: "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, etc."

In like manner Paul speaks, Rom. 16:25-26: "According to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets is made known." Thus you find many sayings in the New Testament taken out of the prophets, with which the Apostles proved that everything has come to pass just as the prophets prophesied. Thus Christ himself proved from the prophet Isaiah that the Messiah was at hand when he says, Mat. 11:5: "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, and the poor have good tidings preached to them," as if to say, just as it was written there, so is it taking place now. Also, we read in Acts 9:22 and 17:2f. of Paul and in Acts 18:22 of Apollus, how they cornered the Jews and proved by the Scriptures that this Jesus, whom they preached unto them, was the true Messiah. For what the prophets had published, that had now all taken place in Christ. Also, in Acts 15 [or 13:46], the Apostles prove how the Gospel must be preached to the heathen, that they might believe. All that has thus run its course and was thus at the time in motion, so that the Jews were convinced and they had to confess that it then went even as the Scriptures long before had foretold. v. 11a. Searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto.

Thus Peter will say: although the prophets did not, properly speaking, know a certain and appointed time, yet they gave in general all the circumstances of the time and place, as how Christ would suffer, what death he would die and how the Gentiles would believe on him; also that one would unmistakably know by the signs, when the time had come. They had also the sure prophecy of Jacob, the patriarch, that the kingdom of the Jews would first cease, before Christ came; but the day and the exact time when

that should take place was not appointed, for it was sufficient that when the time came they could then know for a certainty by these times that Christ was near. Thus the prophet Joel, 2:28, also prophesied of the time when the Holy Ghost should come, saying: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," which saying Peter cited in Acts 2:17, and proved that he spake of the time and appointed persons.

It seems to me Peter had reference especially to the prophet Daniel when he here says: "Searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ did point unto," etc. "What time" means that he surely measured and appointed the time, how long and how many years should pass, Dan. 9:24f. "What manner of time" means that he beautifully pointed forth the condition and tendency of the world at that time: who would have the greatest government or where the empire would be; so that Daniel thus declared not only the time, but also the tendency, appearance and character of that time.

From all this you see how the Apostles have everywhere with great diligence cited the ground and the confirmation of their preaching and doctrine from the prophets. At present the Pope rushes ahead and will deal with us with out the Scriptures and commands us by virtue of the obedience of the Church and of the ban that we believe him. The Apostles were full of the Holy Ghost, were moreover sure that they were sent of Christ and that they preached the pure Gospel; yet they cast themselves under its power and wished that no one should believe them, if they could not by Scripture confirm that it was as they said, in order that the mouth of the unbeliever might be stopped, and that they could not raise any objections. And shall we believe these coarse, untaught blockheads, who do not preach the word of God? The only thing they can do is continually to cry: It was impossible for the fathers to err, the Church has now taught and believed for centuries the same as we do; there fore we dare not be called to give an account.

We can indeed prove from the Scriptures that no one will be saved except he believes on Christ; further they can say nothing against this; but with their idle talk they will never convince us from the Scriptures that he will be condemned who does not fast on this or that day, etc. Therefore we will not and should not believe them. Now Peter says further:

[11b.] When it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them.

One may understand this as referring to both kinds of suffering, that of Christ and that of his followers; since Paul calls the suffering of all Christians the suffering of Christ. For as the faith, the name, the word and the work of Christ are ours, because we believe on him; just so is his suffering also ours, and ours his, because we suffer for his sake. Thus will the suffering of Christ be fulfilled daily in Christians until the end of the world.

This then is now our comfort in all our suffering, that which is laid upon us for Christ's sake he reckons for his own suffering; for in Acts 9:4 he says: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Yet Saul did not persecute him, for he was now seated too high for that, but he persecuted the Christians. Also, Zech. 2:8, "For he that toucheth you (the believers), toucheth the apple of his eye," and we are sure that eternal glory will follow this suffering. But as Christ our Lord and Saviour had to suffer before he came to glory, so we must follow him, first take upon us our Cross and bear it after him, and expect there after eternal glory and joy.

Hence he says: God's Spirit, who was in them, bore witness through them, that whosoever believed in Christ and confessed him shall without fail calculate that he must suffer much first, according to the example of his Lord, before he comes to glory. With this Peter comforts all believers to take no offense when they are compelled to suffer in the world all kinds of anxiety and need, abuse and disgrace for the sake of the name of Christ, and do not through impatience despair and doubt, as if nothing would come of it all in the end: but remember all the prophets proclaimed by the revelation of the Holy Ghost that the Cross would precede, and then would certainly follow the glory; for God makes us poor and then rich, bruises and slays, and then heals and restores to life. The devil does just the opposite.

The reason however we now understand the prophets so little may be their language is unknown to us; but they have in other respects spoken plainly enough. Therefore persons acquainted with their language who have the Spirit of God (and all believers have), for them they are not hard to understand, since they know that the whole Scriptures tend in the direction to teach us concerning faith, hope, love and patience, in temptations and tribulations. Whoever does not know and understand this, and has not the Spirit of God, to him the writings of the prophets are of course unknown and in a foreign language. However if we must be deficient in one, better have the Spirit with out the language, than the language without the Spirit. If now indeed they have a special manner of speaking, yet remember it is the Apos-

tles who preach, for they have said much both concerning the suffering and the glory of Christ and of those who believe on him: as when David spake concerning Christ, Ps. 22:7, “I am a worm and no man”; by that he showed how low he was cast down and humiliated in his suffering. Likewise he writes concerning the Christians in the forty-fourth Psalm that they complain how they are persecuted and destroyed by the enemies of the truth, and say: “Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Ps. 41:22.

[12a.] To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven.

That is, the prophets would have gladly lived in the blessed time of grace and been present to hear Christ preach and see him work his miracles, as he himself says in Mat. 13:17: “Many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see,” etc. But as that was impossible, they were satisfied in that they saw and knew from afar the grace and salvation which should be experienced by the whole world through Christ, and they also comforted themselves with it. But in that they left behind them their writings; they did it in service and love to us, were thereby our servants and ministered unto us in order that we might go to them to school and learn also the same lesson. How has grace come to us? “Through those who have preached the Gospel of Christ unto you,” they had a good and faithful teacher, who taught it to them, namely, the Holy Ghost, whom Christ sent from heaven; he opened their minds to understand the holy Scriptures and to be able to minister to others through sermons and the Scriptures. Hence we have indeed a strong foundation for our faith, so that we can indeed arm and defend ourselves against all false doctrines.

[12b.] Which things angels desire to look into.

So great is that which the Apostles have declared unto us through the Holy Ghost coming upon them from heaven, that even the angels have pleasure in looking into it. Here Peter asks us to open our eyes and behold what the Gospel is, that we may have our pleasure and delight in it, for other pleasures and treasures present themselves to us than the riches and pomp of the

whole world, namely, how we are rescued from the power of the devil, freed from sin and death and become the children and heirs of God through Christ. This we cannot yet see with the natural eyes, but must believe it; that we are the partakers and co-partners of the righteousness, truth, salvation and all the heavenly treasures which God has, for since he delivers up for us all Christ, his only Son, the highest good, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things, Rom. 8:32, namely, grace, righteousness, eternal life and salvation, in which the angels in heaven have extreme pleasure and delight. All this is offered to us in the Gospel, and if we believe it, then we will also have like pleasure and delight from it. But our joy and pleasure cannot be as perfect as that of the angels, as long as we live upon the earth in the kingdom of the devil. Here indeed it begins in us and we receive some of it through faith; but in heaven the joy is so great that no human heart can contain it, and when we arrive there we will also experience it.

Thus far Peter has shown what kind of doctrine the Gospel is, namely, that which witnesseth of Christ that we are born again through his death and resurrection to an incorruptible inheritance, etc., and as it was aforetime proclaimed by the prophets, so it should come to pass and be preached; he teaches us in the Scriptures that we may receive from them comfort and the strengthening of our faith, and that we shall arm and fortify ourselves with them against all the fiery darts of the devil, the temptations of the world, the melancholy and the sadness of heart, etc. Now he takes a step in advance and admonishes us to hold to the same preaching of the Gospel in faith and imitate it in love, and says:

[13a.] Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind.

This is an exhortation to faith and the meaning is, inasmuch as such an unspeakable treasure is published and offered through the Gospel, that the angels in heaven have their pleasure and delight in looking into it, hold fast to it now and place thy trust in it with all thy affections, so that yours may be a true faith and not a painted or devised fancy and dream.

Peter does not here speak of a bodily girding, as a man girds his sword about his loins, but of a spiritual girding of the mind, which is also referred to in Luke 12:13, where we read: "Let your loins be girded about." In some passages of Scripture loins mean bodily unchastity, and according to this sense girding the loins means to suppress unchastity and live chaste lives.

The Scriptures also call loins the natural birth that comes from the father. Thus we read in Gen. 35:11 of Jacob that God promised him that kings should come out of his loins, etc., and Acts 2:30 teaches David knew that the fruit of his loins should sit upon his throne.

But the spiritual girding, of which the Apostle here speaks, takes place thus: as a virgin is bodily pure and chaste, so is the soul chaste through faith, by virtue of which it is the bride of Christ. But when it falls from faith into false doctrine, then it comes to shame; wherefore the Scriptures everywhere call idolatry and unbelief adultery and fornication, that is, when the soul holds to the doctrines of men and renounces thus faith and Christ. This Peter now forbids here in that he enjoins us to gird the loins of our mind, as if he should say, you have now heard the Gospel and have entered into faith; therefore take heed that you continue in it and become not unchaste through false doctrine, that ye waver not nor run hither and thither with your good works.

And here he continues to speak in a special way when he says, the loins of your mind. By “mind” he means that which we call “to be disposed,” as when I say, I think that is right; and as Paul says, thus we hold, thus are we minded. With these words he, properly speaking, touches upon faith and will say to them, you have created a right mind in that we must be justified before God through faith; in that mind continue, gird it well, hold firmly to it, let nothing tear you from it, and then it will be well with thee. For many false teachers will arise and spread the doctrines of men to pervert your mind and unloosen the girdle of your faith; therefore be warned and take it well to heart. The hypocrites, who rest upon their own works and go about in an honorable, fine life, are also of the mind that God must establish them in heaven because of their good works, they are puffed up, walk about with high heads, stand firm in their mind and darkness like the pharisees, Luke 18:11f., to whom Mary also refers in the “Magnificat,” so that they need even the little words which are found here in St. Peter. He scatters those who are proud in the imagination of their heart.

[13b.] Be sober.

To be sober is helpful to the outward body and is the chief part of faith. For when man through faith becomes at once justified, he is not yet entirely free of evil desires. Faith has indeed commenced to bring the flesh into subjec-

tion; but nevertheless it still continually bestirs itself and rages at times in all kinds of lust, which would gladly again be experienced and act according to their own will. Therefore the Spirit has to work daily to bridle and suppress lust, to slay it thus without intermission, and to give attention to the flesh, lest it casts aside faith altogether. Therefore they deceive themselves, who say they have faith, and think that is enough and there is no danger, though at the time they are fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

Wherever faith is true and pure, it must attack the body and hold it, as it were, with a bridle, so that it does not do according to its lusts. Therefore Peter says that we shall be sober.

Yet it is not his idea that we should ruin the body or weaken it too much, as do those who have fasted to madness and martyred themselves to death. St. Bernard was for a time given to this folly, although otherwise he was a holy man, so that he denied his body so much, that his breath was offensive and he could not associate in society; yet later he rescued himself out of this state, and he then prohibited his brethren to torture their bodies. For he saw he had made himself incapable to serve his brethren. Hence Peter requires no more than that we be temperate, that is, deny the body so much that we feel it is still too wanton. Here he appoints no certain time, how long one shall fast, as the Pope has done, but he places it before each one as a private, personal matter, that he fast so that he continues temperate, and not burden the body with gluttony, to the end that he continue in his reason and common sense, and determine to what extent it is necessary for him to chastise the body. For it is of no use at all that a command on this subject be given to a whole company of persons or to the public at large, since we are so unlike one another, one strong and another weak as to the body, so that one must deny himself much, another little, in order that the body may at the same time remain healthy and prepared to do good service.

That the rough element however of society falls upon this and hence wishes indeed so to live that they need not fast and dare eat flesh, is not right. For these do not grasp the Gospel, and are of no use, just as well as the others, for the only thing they do is disregard the Pope's command, and will nevertheless not gird their mind and soul, as Peter says, but let the body to its wantonness, that they may continue lazy and fat. Good it is that one should fast, that is, fast rightly, that one gives the body no more food than is necessary to retain good health. And let each labor and watch that the old donkey become not too wanton and go dancing on the ice and break a bone;

but go in the bridle and follow the Spirit; not like those do who, when they fast, fill themselves with fish and the best wine so full at the same time that their bellies are puffed out. Hence Peter says here be sober, and adds now further:

[13c.] And set your hope perfectly in the grace that is to be brought unto you.

The Christian faith is of such a nature that it places itself unfettered upon the word of God with all confidence; it weighs itself upon it as upon a pair of scales and cheerfully lives in that word. Hence Peter says: then are the loins of your mind girded and your faith pure and upright when you weigh all with the word, be on it what may, possessions, honor, body or life. Thus with these words he describes very beautifully an upright, unfeigned faith. It must not be a lazy and sleepy faith or dream, but a living and active thing, so that we enter into faith with our whole heart and cling to the word. God grant that we may press through fortune and misfortune with our faith, go as it will with us. For example, when I shall come to die, then I must turn all my power fresh upon Christ, freely stretch forth my neck and comfort myself with the word of God, which cannot lie to me. At this time faith must go straight through, let nothing mislead it, and cast everything out of sight that it sees, hears and feels. Such a faith Peter requires, which does not consist in thoughts and words, but in the power to do this.

Peter says further, set your hope upon the grace that is being brought unto you, which means that you have not merited this marvelous grace; but it is purely gratuitously brought to you. For the Gospel which reveals this grace, we have not invented or discovered; but the Holy Ghost has sent it down from heaven into the world. What is it then that is brought to us? That which we have above heard; whoever believes on Christ and clings to his word, he possesses Christ with all his riches, so that he becomes Lord over sin, death, Satan and hell and has the assurance of eternal life. This treasure is brought to us before our very door, and laid in our bosom without any effort or merit on our part, yea, unlooked for and without us knowing it or thinking about it. Therefore the Apostle desires that we cheerfully exercise ourselves in it. For God, who has offered unto us such grace, will surely not lie to us.

[13e.] At the revelation of Jesus Christ.

God does not permit his grace to be brought to any one except through Christ. Therefore no human being shall venture to appear before him without this mediator, as we have also heretofore sufficiently heard. For he will hear no one unless he brings with him Christ, his beloved Son, whom alone he beholds and for his sake also those who cling to him. Hence it is the Father's will that we know the Son, how we have been reconciled unto the Father by his blood, so that we dare now appear before him. For to this end has the Lord Christ come to the world, taken upon himself flesh and blood, and attached himself to us, that he might acquire for us such grace with the Father. For the same purpose were all the prophets and patriarchs likewise kept through such faith in Christ and were saved; for they all had to believe on the saying God spake to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Therefore, as we have said, the faith of the Jews and of the Turks avails nothing, and neither does the faith of those who rest upon their own works and try to enter heaven through them. St. Peter speaks thus: The grace will be brought to you, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ; or to put it in our vernacular still more plainly, because Jesus Christ is revealed unto you.

Through the Gospel it is made known unto us what Christ is, that we learn to know him and to know him in the sense that he is our Saviour, takes from us sin and death, helps us out of all misfortunes, reconciles us to the Father, and without our own works sanctifies and saves us. Now whoever does not know Christ thus must fail. For though you already know that he is the Son of God, that he died and arose again and sits at the right hand of the Father; thus you have nevertheless not yet known Christ rightly, and that will not help you; but you must know and believe that he has done all this for your sake, to help you. Therefore that which has heretofore been preached and taught in the high schools was trifling and useless, for they knew nothing of this knowledge, and they had not come farther than that they considered how greatly the Lord Christ suffered and how he leisurely sits above in heaven and has joy with himself; and their hearts remain thus only dry and withered, in which faith cannot become a living power.

The Lord and Saviour should not be represented as though he did all this for himself, but be so preached that we know he is ours. For otherwise what was the need that he should come upon the earth and shed his blood? But since he was sent into the world for the purpose, as he says in John 3:17, that the world through him should be saved, so then he must have accom-

plished that at least for which he was sent by the Father. For the sending by and the going out from the Father one should understand not only as referring to his divine nature, but to his human nature and his office. As soon as he had been baptized he commenced, and he accomplished that for which he was sent into the world, namely, that he preached the truth and enlisted us, so that all who believe on him should be saved. Thus he revealed himself and gave the opportunity to know him and he himself brought us grace.

[14a.] As children of obedience.

That is, conduct yourselves as obedient children. Obedience in the Scriptures is called faith. But that little word the Pope has also twisted to pieces for us with his high schools and monasteries and whatever stood in the Scriptures about this obedience they cited to support their non sense and lies, as for example the saying, to obey is better than sacrifice, 1 Sam. 15:22. For since they see that obedience is highly praised in the Scriptures, they have twisted it to their advantage to blindfold the people so that one would think that obedience to them was that of which the Scriptures speak. In this way they have misled us from the word of God into their lies and the obedience of the devil. Whoever hears the word of God and believes it, is an obedient son of God; therefore whatever is not the word of God, tread under your feet and turn from it.

[14b.] Not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance.

That is, do not carry the bearing in your manner of life as before. Then you were idolatrous, you lived in unbelief, unchastity, gluttony, drinking, avarice, wrath, jealousy and hatred; that was a wicked, heathenish state from which you have departed, and like the blind you did not know what you did. These evil lusts now put away.

Here you see how he attributes the blame to their ignorance, that all misfortune comes from that. For where there is no faith and knowledge of Christ, there is nothing but error and blindness, so that we do not know what is right and what is wrong, and hence the people fall then into all kinds of vice. So has it actually gone in the past; whenever Christ was supplanted and obscured, error began, and the question broke forth in the

whole world, how could men be saved. And this question itself is evidence sufficient of blindness and ignorance, that the right conception of faith was lost and no one knew anything about it any longer. Hence it is that the world is so full of various sects and all is divided into schisms; for every person wishes to enter heaven in his own way. Because of this calamity, we must continually fall the deeper in blindness, since we are not able to help ourselves. Hence Peter says you have made fools of yourselves long enough; therefore cease now from that course, because you have been instructed and have received the true knowledge.

[15, 16.] But like as he who called you is holy, be ye your-

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selves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.

Peter cites here a passage from the Old Testament, Lev. 19:2, where God says, “Ye shall be holy; for I, Jehovah, your God, am holy”; that is, since I am your Lord and your God, and you are my people, so you should be as I am. For a true Lord makes his people like himself, and they walk in obedience and conduct themselves in harmony with the will of their Lord. And now as God, our Lord, is holy, his people are also holy. Therefore we all are holy, if we walk in faith.

The Scriptures do not speak much about the saints who have died, but of those who still live upon the earth. Thus the prophet David glories in Ps. 86:2: “Lord, preserve my soul, for I am holy (godly).” But here our learned leaders again pervert the passage and say the prophet had a special revelation, that he called himself holy. By this they confess they lack faith and have not the revelation of Christ; otherwise they would have experienced it. For whoever is a Christian feels such a revelation; but those who do not feel it are not Christians. For whoever is a Christian enters with his Lord Christ into the fellowship of all his riches. Now, since Christ is holy, so he must also be holy, or lie that Christ is holy. Are you baptized then you have put on the robe of holiness, which is Christ, as Paul says in Gal. 3:27.

The little word holy means that which is God’s own and is due to him alone, which we in German call *geweiht* (in English consecrated, dedicated). Thus Peter says now: You have given yourselves to God as his own; therefore take heed that you do not allow yourselves to be led again into

worldly lusts; but let God alone reign, live and work in you; then you are holy, as he is holy.

Thus far the Apostle has described the grace that has been brought unto us, the Gospel and preaching of Christ, and taught us how we are to conduct ourselves toward it, namely, that we continue in the pure, fixed meaning of faith, so as to know that no work we can do or think avails before God. When we preach thus, reason falls in and says: Oh, if that be true, then we are not allowed to do any good work. Rough persons and blockheads also stumble and turn the very essence of Christianity into the liberty of the flesh, and think they may do whatever they wish. Such Peter meets here, stands before them and teaches how we must use our Christian liberty only in relation to God. For here there is nothing more necessary than faith, that I give God his honor and hold him as my God. That he is just, true and merciful. This makes us free from sin and all evil. When I now have given God this, what I then live, I live for the good of my neighbor, to serve and help him. The greatest work that follows faith is that I confess Christ with my mouth, bear witness, also with my blood, and spend my life where I may do the most good. However God is not in need of such work; but I do it in order that thereby my faith may be confirmed and published, so that others may be brought to faith. Then other works follow, all of which must be directed to the end that I thereby serve my neighbors, all which God must work in us. Therefore it is of no use that we wish to live after the flesh and do whatever we lust after. Hence Peter now adds:

[17.] And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear.

Thus Peter says: You have now through faith come to this, that you are the children of God and he is your Father, and you have obtained an incorruptible inheritance in heaven, as he above said; so that nothing more remains than that the veil be removed, and the treasure now hid den be uncovered. For this however you must wait until you shall see it. Although you have now come into the state that you may cheerfully call God your Father, yet he is so just that he will reward each one according to his works, and respect not the person.

Therefore you dare not think, because you bear already the great name and are called a Christian or a son of God, he will on that account spare

your work, if you live without fear and presume it is enough that you glory in possessing merely the name. The world judgeth according to the person, so that it does not punish all equally and spares those who are befriended, rich, beautiful, learned, wise and influential, but God has no respect for any of these, all are alike before him, be the person as great as he may. Hence he slew in Egypt the first born son of King Pharaoh just as well as the first born son of the poorest man. Therefore it is the will of the Apostle that we expect such a judgment of God and stand in fear, so that we do not glory in being called Christians and rely upon it that he will be more lenient to us than to other persons. For this was the very thing that aforesometimes misled the Jews, who gloried in being of the seed of Abraham and the people of God. The Scriptures make no distinction as to the flesh, but as to the spirit. True he had promised Christ should be born of Abraham and a holy people would spring from him; but it does not therefore follow that all who are Abraham's descendants are children of God. He has also promised that the heathen should be saved; but he did not say that he would save all the heathen.

Here now a question arises. Since we say God saves us alone through faith without respect to our works, why then does Peter say God judges not with respect to the person, but according to the works? Answer: What we have learned as to how faith alone justifies us before God, is without the least doubt true, since it is so clear from the Scriptures that no one can deny it; and now the Apostle says here God judges according to each man's works, is also true; but we should certainly rather hold where there is no faith there the good works which God commands cannot possibly be; and on the contrary, where no good works are there is no faith. Hence faith and good works are yoked together, so that thus the sum total of the whole Christian life consists in these two parts; not that good works contribute anything to our justification before God, but that faith without good works does not exist, or it is not true faith. Therefore, although God does indeed judge us according to our works, nevertheless it remains true that the works are only the fruits of faith, by which one sees where faith is and where unbelief is. Therefore God will pass judgment upon you and convince you that you have believed or not believed. Just as we cannot determine and judge one to be a liar except from his words, yet it is manifest that he did not become a liar through his words, but he had become a liar before he spoke a lie, for the lie must come out of the heart into the mouth.

Therefore I understand this passage only in the most simple manner thus: good works are the fruits and signs of faith and God judges people according to such fruits, which must indeed here follow, in order that we may publicly see where faith or unfaith in the heart really is. God will not judge according to whether you are called a Christian or are baptized, but he will ask you: are you a Christian, then tell me where are the good works by which you can prove your faith.

Therefore Peter now says: Since you have such a Father, who judges not according to the person, conduct your manner of life, as long as you sojourn here, in fear; that is, exercise fear toward thy Father, not because of pain and punishment, as un-Christians and the devil fear, but that he forsakes thee not and withdraws his hand; as a pious child fears lest it provokes its father and does something that may not be pleasing to him. It is just such a fear God wishes us to have, in order to keep ourselves from sin and serve our neighbor while we live here upon the earth.

A Christian, if he truly believes, has Christ with all his treasures as his own possession, and is God's son, as we have heard. But the time he yet lives is only a pilgrimage, for his spirit is already in heaven through faith, by virtue of which he is Lord over all things. But God permits him still to live in the flesh and his body to move upon the earth, to the end that he may help others and bring them also to heaven. Therefore we must use all these things upon earth in no other way than as a guest who travels through the land and comes to a hotel where he must lodge over night and takes only food and lodging from the host, and says not that the property of the host belongs to him, etc. Just so should we also treat our temporal possessions, as if they were not ours, and enjoy only so much of them as we need to nourish the body and then help our neighbors with the balance. Thus the life of the Christian is only a lodging for the night, since we have here no continuing city, but must journey on to heaven, where the Father is. Therefore we should not live here in rioting, but stand in fear, as Peter says.

[18, 19a.] Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with, corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your former manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ.

That ought to stir you, he will say, to the fear of God in which you should stand, so that you realize how much has been accomplished to redeem you.

Heretofore you have been citizens of the world, sitting among devils, but now God has rescued you out of this state, and placed you in another where you are citizens of heaven, but pilgrims and guests on earth; therefore pass the time of your sojourning in fear; and see to it that you do not despise this and lose the noble, precious treasure God has bestowed upon you, through which you are bought with a price; and come to glory by virtue of your being now the children of God.

What then is the treasure with which we are redeemed? Not corruptible gold or silver, but the precious blood of Christ, the Son of God. The treasure is so costly and precious that the mind and heart of man can not contain it; so precious that a little drop of this innocent blood would have been sufficient for the sin of the whole world; yet it was the good pleasure of the Father to pour out his grace so richly and to let it cost him so much that he permitted his only Son, Christ, to shed all his blood, and gives us this treasure entirely gratuitously. Therefore it is his will that we cast not such rich grace to the wind or lightly esteem it; but let it move us to live in fear that this treasure be not taken from us.

And here it is well to note Peter says: You are redeemed from the vain manner of life practiced and handed down from your fathers; for by these words he casts to the ground all the commandments upon which we stand, when we think our cause must be right because it was preserved thus from ancient times to the present, and all our fore fathers held the same, among whom were also wise and pious people. For he thus says: All that our fathers ordered and did was evil; what you learned from them about worship was also evil, hence it cost the Son of God his blood to redeem the people from it. And now whatever is not washed by that blood, is all poisoned and cursed by the flesh. From this it now follows, the more a man tries to make himself righteous, and possesses not Christ, the more is he only in his own way and the deeper he falls into blindness and wickedness, and condemns himself by virtue of this precious blood.

The outward, coarse sins against the Second Table, are small in comparison with the sin, that man teaches how he ought to become righteous through his own works and merit, and establishes a worship according to his own reason, which is a sin against the First Table, by which this innocent blood is degraded and blasphemed in the highest degree. In like manner have the heathen committed much greater sin in that they worshiped the sun and moon and their idols, which they held to be the true worship, than

in any other. Therefore human godliness is mere blasphemy of the true God and is the greatest of all sins a person can commit. Such is also the very essence of that with which the world haunts us, namely, that which it holds to be worship and godliness is before God worse than any other sin, as for example the offices of the priests and monks; and what appears good in the eyes of the world, and is yet without faith. Therefore whoever will not receive grace from God through the blood of Christ, it is better for him that he never again appears before the eyes of God, for he only thereby provokes his majesty more and more.

[19b.] As of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Here Peter however expounds the Scriptures, for this is a powerful, rich Epistle, although it is short. After speaking of their vain manner of life handed down from the fathers, he makes use of a number of passages in the prophets, as in Jeremiah 16:19: “The nations shall come from the ends of the earth, and shall say, our fathers have inherited nought but lies”; as if Peter should say: The prophets also have proclaimed that the heathen should be redeemed from the traditions of the fathers through the precious blood of Christ. Thus will he here also point us to the Scriptures, when he says: “You are redeemed through the blood of Christ as of an innocent and spotless lamb,” and explains that which is written in the prophets and in Moses, for example, that in Is. 53:7: As a lamb he is led to the slaughter; also, the figure in Ex. 12:2f. of the Passover or Easter Lamb. All this he explains here and says, Christ is the spotless and innocent lamb, through which, as it stands written in Ex. 12:5, it shall be without blemish, is signified that Christ’s blood was shed for our sins.

[20a.] Who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times.

That is, we have not merited it, neither have we moreover at any time prayed God that the precious blood of Christ should be shed for us; therefore we can not glory in ourselves, the praise belongs to no one, but to God alone; God promised it to us without any merit on our part, and also revealed or made known that which he knew and ordained from eternity, before the world was created. In the prophets it was truly promised, but dimly

and not publicly; however now since the resurrection of Christ and the sending forth of the Holy Ghost it is publicly preached and sounded forth in the whole world.

The end of the time, however, of which Peter here speaks, is the time of grace, when the Gospel was preached in all the world by the Apostles after Christ's ascension, and will be continued to be preached until the last day. The Prophets, Apostles and Christ himself call it the last hour, not because soon after the ascension of Christ the last day would come, but because, after this preaching of the Gospel of Christ no other shall come, and there will be no better Gospel revealed and explained than that which is now explained and revealed. For prior to Christ's coming in the flesh one revelation prepared the way for and passed into another: wherefore God said, Ex. 6:2, "By my name, Jehovah, I was not known to them." Although the patriarchs indeed knew God, yet they did not at that time have such public preaching of God as later went forth from Moses and the prophets. But now no preaching shall come into the world more glorious and more public than the Gospel; therefore it is the last. All the ages have now passed away, but today at last it is revealed unto us.

In the next place according to time it is not long to the end of the world, as Peter makes very clear in 2 Pet. 3:8, where he says, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; which leads us to the right calculation of this time, in order that we judge as God views it; and now is the last time and it has already an end, that which remains being as nothing before God. Salvation is now already revealed and completed, God permits the world to stand yet longer that his name may be still further honored and praised, although he is as for himself already revealed in the most perfect manner.

[20b, 21.] For your sake, who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God.

For our sake, he says, is Christ revealed through the Gospel; for neither God nor Christ was in need of it, but it is done for our benefit, that we should believe in God, and that not through us but through Christ, who redeemed us by his precious blood and advocates our cause before God the Father, whom he gave even for that very purpose unto death, and again raised him from the dead and caused to be preached in all the world repentance and forgive-

ness of sins in his name; so that all who believe on him have access unto the Father through him, and without whom they could never come unto him. Thus we have faith toward God and also hope through that same faith. Faith alone saves us, but it must be a faith in God, for if God help not, then there is nothing that can help, although you had even the favor and friendship of all mankind. Hence you must have the friendship of God that you may glory in that he is your Father and you are his child, that you trust him more than your natural father and mother, that he will help you in all need, and that he will do all this alone through our only Mediator and Saviour, Christ our Lord. Therefore he says that such faith does not come from human strength, but God creates it in us, for the reason that Christ merited it with his blood, to whom he therefore gave glory and placed him at his right hand, that he might work such faith in us through the power of God.

Thus far have we now heard how Peter exhorts us to gird up the loins of our mind, so as to remain pure in heart and live in faith; then he urges, since our redemption has cost such a precious treasure, that we pass the time of our sojourning in fear, and do not depend upon the mere fact we are called Christians, seeing God is a judge who asks not concerning the person, judges one like another without any respect of persons. Now he says further and closes his first Epistle:

[22a.] Seeing ye have purified your souls (make your souls chaste, Luther) in your obedience to the truth through the Spirit.

Paul, in Gal. 5:22, mentions the fruits which follow faith; and likewise Peter says here one fruit of faith is when we purify our souls in obedience to the truth through the Spirit. For where there is a righteous faith it brings the body under subjection to it and controls the lusts of the flesh; and although it does indeed not put to death the body, it brings it into obedience to the Spirit and holds it with a bridle. This is just the meaning of Paul also, when he speaks of the fruit of the spirit. A great work it is indeed that the spirit should become lord over the flesh and tame the evil lusts, which are born into us from our father and mother; for it is not possible to do this without grace, namely, to live in the married state chaste, not to say any thing of the unmarried state.

But why does he say: "Make your souls chaste"? He well knows that the desires of the flesh remain in us after baptism until we are in our graves.

Therefore it is not enough for one to abstain from the activities of life and continue pure and chaste outwardly and let the evil lusts stick in the heart; but one must strive to the end that his soul becomes pure and chaste through faith; also, that lust may take its departure from the heart and that the soul may become an enemy of evil lusts and desires, and continually strike them with faith until the soul is free of them.

Here he adds a beautiful clause, that we should “purify our souls in our obedience to the truth through the Spirit.” There has been much preaching on chastity and many books written on the subject; where they have said we should fast a certain time, and not eat flesh nor drink wine, etc., in order that we may be free from temptation. And indeed this has helped some, but it was not enough, for the evil lusts and desires of the heart cannot thus be extinguished. [See Ed. 1523.]

Chapter 2.

[v. 4a.] Unto whom coming (as to) a living stone.

Christ is this precious foundation or corner-stone upon which both the Jews and the Gentiles must be built through faith, if they are not to be terrified, that is, if they are not to doubt in their abyss of sin and thus be ruined and die.

As builders lay the corner-stone where it will rest secure and firm so as to bear up the entire building; just so God laid Christ as a corner-stone and he will indeed remain such; and to the end that all who build upon him, that is, are called through the Gospel and accept and believe it, may become righteous and be saved, and be assured that they shall indeed be secure and unmovable in the face of all misfortune, be it caused by sin, death or Satan. On the other hand, those who are not built upon him must be lost and condemned, there is in short no help or counsel for them.

He is moreover a test-stone, who has indeed been kept and in every way tempted through suffering and the cross, so that he can truly sympathize with and help those who are tempted, since all who are built upon him meet such experiences, for they must be made in his image, Rom. 8:17. He is also a precious corner stone. Precious is he in the hearts of the believers in Christ and in the presence of God; but in the eye of the world he is despised, and rejected by the builders, namely, the best people of the world who teach and govern differently. But the prophet designates him as the corner-stone, for he has united the two walls, the two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles and made them one people and one Church. Thus Christ, the living stone, bears up the whole building and joins all parts harmoniously so that it grows into a living temple in the Lord, against which all the gates of hell can not prevail. For whoever is built upon this foundation-stone, that is, whoever believes, shall not, as the prophet clearly shows, be put to shame. Of this more will be said later. v. 4b. Rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious. Here he cites a passage in Ps. 118:22, 23: "The stone which

the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. This is Jehovah's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." The same passage Christ also quotes in Mat. 21:42; also Peter in Acts 4:11, where he says: "He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner"; as if Peter should say: You are the builders, God has charged you with the building of his house, that is, his people, making them better and teaching them the way of salvation; he instituted your priesthood, Aaron, whose successors you are, he himself consecrated and committed unto you the Law, the Scriptures and the office of preaching. And thus he has made you builders, so that you should esteem the Stone which he himself laid, and build yourselves and your people upon him, that is accept him and point your people to him as the true Lord and Saviour, so that whoever believes on him shall not be put to shame, etc. But what do you do? You have not only not accepted him, but in the most shameless and ignominious manner you have rejected him, yea, condemned and put him to death on the cross as a blasphemer of God, as a seducer and as a rebel, etc. This you have done so that he who was truly despised and rejected by you builders and your disciples, is chosen by God and is precious in his sight; he made him the foundation and corner-stone so that he might carry the entire building and join together the two walls, to the end that all who are built upon him by faith may never be put to shame. Therefore since you rejected him, God has in turn rejected you and accepted the heathen as his people. In like manner Christ himself makes use of this same passage in Mat. 21;42.

[5b.] To be a holy priesthood.

By these words he overthrows the outward and material priesthood which existed heretofore in the Old Testament, and at the same time the temple at Jerusalem where this priesthood ministered and was maintained; and he will thus say: The law of Moses with its offerings and divine service has all been abolished, and it receives now a new priesthood in which spiritual sacrifices are offered, which through Christ are well pleasing to God, etc.

We have discussed very much the subject that those who are called priests are not priests before God, and we based our argument upon this passage of Peter. For Peter "speaks very clearly: Ye should build yourselves up into a spiritual and holy priesthood, therefore whoever fills the office of

a priest must indeed be holy; whoever is not holy can not fill the office; but how holy our priests are is as clear as day.

Moreover Peter makes no difference between spiritual and secular persons, clergy and laity, as the Papists have heretofore done by calling themselves spiritual and the common Christians secular or worldly; therefore they must confess without any thanks that Peter speaks here in general of all Christians, all of whom are born again and called to the end that they should lay aside all evil, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, etc., and be as the newborn babe which drinks the unadulterated milk, etc., and builds upon Christ, the elect, precious stone. Hence the Papists can not prove with this text their priesthood, which they themselves have devised without any foundation in the Scriptures, and like thieves of God they have stolen and appropriated to themselves alone the glorious, precious name priest, which is common to all Christians. As their priesthood so are also their laws, offerings and works. They would make a fine play to act out on Shrove Tuesday, the carnival period of the year, if the Divine Name would only not be blasphemed by such a representation.

Therefore all Christian believers, who are built upon this stone, compose this holy and spiritual priesthood. For since Christ is the bridegroom and we the bride, the bride has all the bridegroom has, even his own body. For when he gives himself to the bride, he gives himself entirely to her, whatever he is, and on the other hand the bride also gives herself to him. Now Christ is the eternal high priest, anointed by God himself, who offered his own body for us, also interceded in our behalf on the cross, and in the third place also preached the Gospel, and taught all men to know God and himself. And these three offices he has also given to us all; because since he was a priest and we are his brethren it follows that all Christians have the power and the command to preach and proclaim God's grace and power, etc., and appear before God to pray for one another, and offer himself to God; yet, as Paul says, that all things may be done in order, every one ought not to teach in the congregation and administer the holy Sacraments; but those alone who are called by the congregation and are charged with that office; the others are quietly to listen, etc. More on this later.

[5c.] To offer up spiritual sacrifices.

Thus the bodily or temporal sacrifices of the same priest hood are at an end, so that both the priesthood and the sacrifice have now been annulled, and all at present is new and spiritual. For the true, eternal high priest, Christ, is at hand, as Rev. 1:5, 6 says: Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father. And just as he has sacrificed his body, so we should sacrifice also ours, Rom. 12:1. Here is now fulfilled all that is signified by the outward sacrifice of the Old Testament, as they all were held and meant in short to preach the Gospel; for, whoever preaches the Gospel observes and fulfills all, he sticks the calf dead, namely, kills the carnal mind and slays the old Adam. For this stubborn nature in the flesh and blood we should sacrifice and destroy there on the cross. There the true office of the priest is administered when we sacrifice to God the wicked rogue, the corrupt old stupid fellow, namely, the carnal man. For at last all must be laid aside that we have inherited from the old Adam, as we have heard before in the first chapter. This is the only sacrifice that is pleasing and acceptable to God. From this you can see whither our fools and blind leaders have led us with their trickery, who have not understood what the true priesthood is nor what kind of sacrifices we should offer unto God.

Now you may say: If it be true that we all are priests and should preach, what state of things would there then be? Shall there be no difference among the people, and shall the women also be priests? Answer: Under the New Testament no priest should by right wear the tonsure; not that it is wrong in itself that one should even permit his head to be shaved; but because one should not make a difference between those who until the present time are called priests and the ordinary Christian man, which faith can not allow. It ought to be so arranged that those who are now called priests should all become plain laymen like other people, and only some of them who are competent should be chosen out of the congregation to the preaching office. Thus there is only an outward distinction for the sake of the office, in that one is called out of the congregation; but before God there is no distinction; for that certain ones are selected from the large company of the congregation, is done in order that, as representatives of the congregation, they may bear and fill the office which they all have. Hence, as we have said, all Christians shall sacrifice, pray, and preach and confess the grace of God in Christ. Therefore shall no one self-chosen stand up and preach in the congregation; but they ought to be selected out of the company of be-

lievers and appointed thereto, who may be removed in case they are found unfaithful. For Paul teaches in Tim. 3:2 and Tit. 1:6: such persons shall be blameless, without reproach.

Therefore the Pope, contrary to the Word of God, has devised his own priesthood, and in doing so has shamefully and in an unchristianlike manner misrepresented the truth by teaching they are holy and spiritual who live in the state of the priests. Beloved, outward anointing and shaving the tonsure make no one holy and spiritual; if they did God would have indeed permitted the Levitical priesthood to continue, which he himself instituted. But Christ, the eternal Priest himself, had to intercede in our behalf, die on the cross, and shed his blood and with it cleanse us from our sins. Such doctrines and confession however the troublesome Pope has rooted out with his priesthood, and has brought it to pass that among us Christians there is indeed a greater difference than between us and the Turks. If you wish to see Christians, then you dare not make a distinction among them and say: That is a man or woman, a servant or a master, old or young; but as Paul says in Gal. 3:28: "Ye all are one man in Christ Jesus." Hence they all are even priests, all proclaim the wonderful works of God, each one in his own home; those to whom it is appointed, in the Church; all pray and offer praise to God. For, as I said, in the congregation no one shall teach publicly unless he is called to do so, etc.

This is now the true priesthood, which consists of three parts, as we have heard, that we offer spiritual sacrifices, pray for all present needs, and preach the Word. Whoever now believes on Christ, that he is cleansed from all sins through his blood, is a priest, and is under obligation to proclaim such inexpressible grace and love shown us in Christ; likewise he prays and bears the holy cross, by which the old Adam is put to death and thanks are offered to God. Hence we should not be misled by the monkey play of the Papists, who wish to be the only priests and to be spiritual; for they have no other office than that they wear the tonsure and are anointed. By such jugglery, as T said, we are not consecrated to be priests; it must be by another consecrating bishop, of whom it is written, Ps. 110:4: "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent: thou art a priest forever, etc."

[5d.] Acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Since Christ is the corner-stone upon which we are anchored, it follows that whatever we wish to undertake relative to God must be realized only through him, of which we have heard sufficient. For God has no regard for my good works and my cross though I afflict myself to death; but he has regard for Christ through whom my works avail before God, which without Christ are not worth a straw. Hence the Scriptures rightly call Christ a precious corner stone, which communicates his virtue to all who build upon him by faith. Thus Peter teaches us in this passage how Christ is the living stone, what Christ is; and it is a beautiful figure, from which we easily understand how we are to believe on Christ. Hence it now follows further:

[8b.] For they stumble at the word, being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed.

Here you hear what the cause is: The word and the preaching of Christ, that we must either be built upon him or be lost, find no entrance or welcome in their hearts. Hence when they hear, No one can be justified before God through the works of the law; to praise and practice chastity, poverty and obedience appeases not the wrath of God, but faith in Christ does, etc., they do not believe such preaching of grace, yea, they moreover take offense and stumble. Consequently Paul calls the Gospel the offensive Word of the cross, which those who are lost consider pure foolishness. He says: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. 1:23f.

[9a.] But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.

Therefore mark well that you know how to distinguish those who are priests before God, namely, those who show forth and preach to us the glory and goodness of God in Christ, pray, do good, suffer evil; and those who are called priests because of the consecration, tonsures and long robes; they are priests like Baal's priests were prophets, etc.

Now, just as Christ is not a worldly king, for he had not where to lay his head; but a spiritual, eternal King, to whom God committed all things so that he could rescue his own in every time of need, justify and save them; so are they who believe in him spiritual kings, partakers of the heavenly

possessions, of which neither death nor Satan can rob them. I have spoken these words that you may learn rightly to consider and understand the words priest, king, etc., as they are used in the Scriptures; not like the world, that knows nothing to say of other kings than those who wear golden crowns, have countries and peoples subject to them, who can indeed be also wicked, godless persons, as they generally are. These in the eye of the world are lordly, powerful, rich and proud; but when death comes their power and glory have an end. But with the kings of whom Peter here speaks it is just the opposite; upon earth they are generally poor, miserable, oppressed and despised people, etc.; but before God they are the richest and the most glorious, who have little or nothing and yet they have all; they are poor, and yet they make many rich. Whoever does not acknowledge and know Christ, what God has given to us through him, understands nothing of this.

[11.] Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

Somewhat different is the mode of speech used here by Peter from that of Paul, who would not speak in this manner, as we shall see; for every Apostle has his own style or idiom of speech, just as each prophet has. Until the present he has been firmly laying the foundation of the Christian faith and taught how they have become through Christ the children of grace, God's people and heirs, established in the hope of eternal salvation and built upon him as the elect, precious stone, that they will surely surmount all misfortune, who shortly before had lived like the unbelieving heathen in error and idolatry, knew nothing of Christ and his salvation, etc. Now he continues and exhorts them and all Christians in general as sojourners and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts, not to conform to this world, etc.; and then how every one in whatever vocation, high or low he may be, should conduct himself; as if he should say: You have now heard the Gospel, are baptized and know what Christ has acquired for you, namely, grace and the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life and salvation. Now your sin is indeed forgiven, but it is not yet entirely rooted out of the heart, put to death and buried. Since you then are called to the end that you shall be God's chosen, holy people, kings and priests in his kingdom, apply yourself with all diligence to fulfill your calling, consider yourselves as guests and pilgrims on

earth, turn your face and heart to the true fatherland, in which you are citizens, etc. Not that you should renounce this world completely, for he indeed instructs people in all callings and occupations how to conduct themselves, they should know that they are citizens in heaven, but here on earth pilgrims and guests, tarrying in a strange inn, where they are not at rest, and should have a hearty longing for their true home, etc.

[15.] For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

Hence God has established the civil authorities to punish the wicked and to protect the pious. That is indeed a precious good work, which Peter says here is the will of God. Hence God calls the civil power a minister of God, for good to him who does good, but to him who does evil our avenger of wrath, for the government beareth the sword not in vain, etc. Rom. 13:4. Therefore believers in Christ may bear the sword and know also that they do God a service when they bring the wicked into subjection and punish them, in order that the godly may be able to dwell in peace. And yet at the same time the saying of Christ must stand that we are not to resist evil, also that a Christian, if he bears the sword, does not use it for his own interest nor to avenge himself, but only for the sake of others; and thus it is also for the sake of the work of Christian love that we support and defend the whole Church with the sword and not suffer it to be injured. The great mass of the world will not allow themselves to be ruled with goodness, and therefore their wantonness must be restrained, otherwise we could not live in the same community with them in safety.

[18-20.] Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, etc., etc.

Yes, you say, how if I have a strange and cross master, whom no one can thankfully serve, as there are many such? Peter answers: Art thou a Christian and wilt thou live to please God, then thou must not question how rare and strange thy master is; but ever turn thine eyes and see what God commands thee and requires of thee. Therefore you should meditate thus: I serve my odd and angry master faithfully, and that I do for Christ's sake, who took upon himself the form of a servant for my sake, Phil. 2:7; he re-

quires it of me, and says to me through his Apostle Paul it is a service to him. Therefore you shall not allow yourself to be deceived by the shine and routine of hypo critical work; but have respect for what God has commanded you to do and do it in all fear. Certainly where you hesitate you act not only against your earthly lord, but you sin against God and load yourself with the wrath of God, which is unbearable, therefore he says, “with all fear.” Again if you do what God has commanded you, then you render him an acceptable service and sacrifice. Here then the humblest work of a man servant or a maid servant before God is better, when according to his command, than the works of all the priests and monks put together.

For he is worthy of praise, he says, who has obtained a good cheerful conscience before God through faith in Christ, and thinks thus: If my lord were twice as odd and cross, I would even then not allow myself to be moved by impatience and disobedience, and much less return evil for evil, but with a strong will endure the evil and suffer the wrong. For if I should experience at the same time great injustice and suffering, what is that compared to the fact that Christ, my Lord and Redeemer, who never committed any sin, etc., did the greatest, yea, the inexpressible benefactions of the world, and was so scandalously rewarded for it, that he had to die on the Cross between two malefactors as a blasphemer of God and as a rebel? He suffered for the sake of his good deeds, and the severest pain, the like of which no human being on the earth ever experienced and endured; him will I imitate. For the yoke and the burden he places upon me are easy and light. But whoever suffers now for their wicked deeds, as the godless, disobedient servants do, cannot have this glory, etc.

Therefore not only servants, but all Christians must take up their Cross and follow Christ, and the more they suffer wrongfully the better it is with them; therefore you should take up your Cross from God willingly and thank him. That is the true suffering which is well pleasing to God. For what would that mean if you were cruelly beaten and you had well deserved it, and would then glory in your Cross? Therefore Peter says: If you suffer and endure for your well doing, that is grace with God, that is pleasing and great thanksgiving before God and true worship. Behold these are the true, precious good works described by God, which man shall do. On the contrary the Pope and his following have tramped these teachings under their feet, and devised and advertised other works. Therefore we should stretch forth our hands, thank God and from our very heart be happy that we have

again come to this, and imitate the Christians with all earnestness. Now it follows further:

[21-25.] For hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow his steps, etc., etc.

That is, what I have said, the servants should picture in their hearts and stir themselves to be gladly subject to their irritable masters and to suffer wrongfully for their faithfulness and good deeds. Since here they hear that the same met even Christ, their Lord and Saviour, in comparison with whom they are nothing; therefore they should also keep in mind that Christ, the innocent and spotless Lamb of God, the elect, precious corner-stone, who never did any sin, in whose mouth was found no guile, sacrificed our sins in his own body on the Cross, not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of us poor miserable human beings, that we might be healed by his wounds, and yet he merited by it no thanks from the wicked world. What wonder is it then that we who are by nature the children of wrath should receive evil reward for our faithful service and labor from our worldly lords? etc.

So Peter wishes to say now: You servants have two reasons which should move you gladly and willingly to be subject to your irritable masters. First, your calling implies that you shall be willing to suffer for well-doing, and not only endure the evil, but even reward it with good. Secondly, the example of Christ requires it; for aside from that he has suffered for us, has delivered us from the power of Satan by his death and resurrection, and justified and saved us, he has also left us an example, that we should walk in his steps, that is, that we, yes, we all, each in his calling, should show all faithfulness and kindness to their masters and to every one, and expect as a reward for it ingratitude, hatred, envy, persecution and all misfortune; to this Peter says, we are called. Christ also teaches us the same by his own example, who with the highest temporal and spiritual blessing, has served not only his own people to whom he was promised, healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, etc., preached the Gospel to the poor; but he also became a curse in order that through him the whole world' might be blessed. And for all he received the reward that he not only had to hear, he was a Samaritan, possessed with the devil, a glutton, a winebibber, a publican and a friend of sinners; but he was finally mocked, reviled, spit

upon, pierced, nailed to the Cross and there blasphemed in the most bitter and virulent manner, and hanging between two malefactors as an arch-evil-doer, who had both blasphemed God and raised a sedition against the government, he died. And all this he willingly and patiently suffered, never took vengeance on his enemies, never reviled them again nor threatened; but committed his cause to him who judgeth righteously. Yea, he even prayed for them while on the Cross and said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Therefore if thou wilt be a Christian, thou shalt then imitate thy Lord, and have compassion on those who cause thee suffering, and even pray for them that God might not punish them. For they do far more harm to their own souls than to your body. If thou dost take this to heart, thou wilt surely forget thy misfortune and cheer fully suffer all.

But whoever is not moved by this exhortation of Peter to bear all kinds of evil and to suffer misfortune, can by no means glory in that he is a Christian; for if the Lord himself goes ahead and steps into the mire, then the servant should follow him thither, yea, and he is right in doing so. Since Christ empties himself of his divine essence and becomes a servant of us all, much more should we, who are conceived and born in sin, most deeply humiliate ourselves, descend to the lowest depth and become servants of others, etc. But even if this had already been done, what were our humility, obedience, well-doing and suffering compared to the humiliation, obedience, well-doing and suffering of this exalted person of whom Peter bears witness he was sinless, which title belongs to him alone. For no saint, be he an Apostle, prophet or patriarch, can boast that he never committed any sin, etc. But they rightly bear the title as is written in Ps. 14:3: "They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Therefore have all without exception in universal Christendom prayed: Forgive us our transgressions, Ps. 32:5, and comforted themselves so sweetly with the article of faith on the forgiveness of sins through Christ, just as we do now. This is yet a powerful sermon, and domestics are strongly exhorted to obedience with many beautiful words; but it is a doctrine and admonition for the divinely saved who follow Christ, for so readily will they not accompany him; he does it far in advance of us as an example to all. The great mass of servants however continue as they are, yea, they grow worse, as now the common cry is heard everywhere that domestics are disobedient and unfaithful, etc.; they will indeed be found by God in his own, time, be punished here on the earth and yonder in eternity, etc.

In this connection Peter introduces several passages from the prophet Isaiah: “Who had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth,” Is. 53:9; also, “With whose stripes we are healed,” Is. 53:5. All that Christ did and spoke in preaching, in giving counsel and in chastising has been good, useful, comforting and blessed; and therefore he indeed merited that every one should fall at his feet and bear him in their hands; he had also indeed the power and right to take vengeance on his adversaries; yet he allowed them to revile, mock and blaspheme him and finally put him to death. It is this example that you should follow, and if you consider it rightly and earnestly aspire to imitate it, then you will sing praise and thanksgiving to God, that you were worthy to be like Christ, and not murmur nor be impatient when men cause you to suffer, since your Lord did not revile again, neither threatened, but instead prayed for his enemies, as has been said.

Here you may reply: How! Shall I then say they are right who treat me unjustly, and say of them, they have done well? Answer: No! But this is what you should say: Though I have not deserved it, and you have wronged me, yet I will cheerfully from my heart suffer it, for the sake of my Lord and Saviour, who for his divine and inexpressible good deeds suffered all kinds of evil and finally died the ignominious death of the Cross, “who his own self bore our sins in his body,” as Peter says, which means he did not suffer for himself, but for the entire human race, by which he atoned for the horrible fall of Adam and restored again what Satan had destroyed. Whoever does not acknowledge such fathomless love, nor is thankful to him, will not escape the wrath and punishment of him who judges righteously. The Jews, Greeks, Romans, etc., had to bear the brunt; and he will in his own time visit those who at present blaspheme and persecute the Gospel of Christ.

Chapter 3.

[7c.] That your prayers be not hindered.

What does Peter mean by this? He means if you do not act with reason, but constantly hum, murmur and bluster, and self-willed force your way through everything while at the same time you are a frail woman, and neither forgive the other nor consider it for the best, then you will not be in a frame of mind and heart to pray. Here we see that Christians should pray. For, although they are indeed in a state of grace before God, because of Christ on whom they believe; yet Satan never takes a vacation, but walks about as a roaring lion, etc.; hence the world is at enmity with them, persecutes them, etc.; their own flesh also torments them; against all this they have no other defense and weapon than prayer. But in order to be true prayer all disharmony, unwillingness and wrath must be put away: otherwise you will never pray well, yes, you feel a hindrance is in the way as soon as you begin to say, "Our Father, who art in heaven," etc. Therefore Peter teaches wives to be subject to their husbands, and on the other hand teaches husbands to dwell with their wives according to knowledge; if they do not, their prayers will be hindered, which will be a sign that they are not Christians, that they do not enjoy the forgiveness of their sins by God, because they do not forgive one another, etc. These are now the true, precious, good works we are to do. If that were preached and known, then we all would have our homes full, yes, full of good deeds. Hitherto we have heard how Christians should act in all the vocations of life, and especially in their relations toward others. He further teaches now how Christians are to be and live among themselves, namely, "be like minded," etc., and then how they are to act toward their enemies who persecute them and cause them suffering, namely, they shall not return evil for evil, etc., and says in verse 8: [See edition of 1523.]

[9.] Not rendering evil for evil, nor reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

But why should we render good for evil, bless those who curse us? Because, Peter says, ye are hereunto called that ye should inherit a blessing, which means that instead of children of wrath and enemies of God, ye should become children of grace and friends of God through Christ; and consequently ye have no reason to revile, but to bless, etc.

You have received a blessing from God, not only for yourselves, but also that you may be a blessing to those who are still held by the curse, or in other words you are to pray for them that they may also come to faith through your doctrine, patience and exemplary manner of living. Is your effort in their behalf lost and they rush ahead injuring and cursing you, then consider how highly God has exalted and honored you; for the blessing you shall inherit is not temporal, pertains not to this fleeting life; but it is that you are now in the state of grace with God through Christ, enjoy the forgiveness of your sins, are rescued from death and the power of Satan, and now look for eternal life and salvation. Of this you are sure, for to this end you were baptized and received the Holy Spirit through the word of grace, who assures you of it. Therefore, even if you should lose your head on account of it, what would that be compared with the glory of this salvation? Hence you have more cause to pray for your enemies and to have compassion upon them than to be angry with them, and the like. They are children of wrath and condemnation, and greater punishment they could not have. If they do in justice, it will surely overtake them in time, so that they will weep for it bitterly enough and will have to suffer because of such injustice; if not here in time, then here after eternally in the abyss of hell.

[10.] For he that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.

This verse introduced here by Peter from Ps. 34:13 pertains especially to doctrine. But since he is here speaking of the outward life of Christians, he has very beautifully applied it; and teaches by it how they shall prepare for them selves peace and happy days, and says: They shall not plot and strive, like the children of the world, who can have no peace or rest before they take vengeance and cool their rage on those who have caused them grief by

hand or mouth. Therefore, if the world and false brethren show you an evil, spiteful spirit, cause you grief or injury, reproach and curse you, do not let your anger, rise, do not wish to take vengeance, do not render evil for evil, one invective for another; otherwise you will receive a double misfortune instead of one; outwardly injury to your body, honor and property, and inwardly a restless spirit, an evil conscience and in addition lose your best treasure, the grace and blessing of God and load upon yourself his wrath and everlasting curse. But possess thy soul in patience and establish thy heart in contentment, and remember it is enough that you received injury in body and property or are wickedly reviled, etc. Should I also lose on account of it the peace and joy of my soul, become angry and impatient, in return do evil and curse, which would be the will and joy of the devil? Be that far from me, etc.

Peter calls that, “To refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile”; which is an art that Christians only understand, yes, and are still students in it, for you cannot easily graduate in this fine art. With people who are not Christians the contrary takes place. If one should punish them and tell them the truth, they would curse him with all the plagues; and if you cause them any suffering or harm, they repay you sevenfold, etc.

[11.] And let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it.

To turn away from evil, and do good, signifies if one hear wicked words, not to render one invective word for another, but a word of blessing, likewise not only endure and suffer wrong and injustice, but overcome the evil with the good. Therefore if your enemy cools his rage on you and cause you all the suffering he can; if you then bear it, revile and rage not back, but be a blessing to him and do him all the good you can, in this way you seek peace and also find it, etc., that is to say, keep a good conscience and a friendly, quiet heart, that can with true assurance say: Forgive us, beloved Lord, our debts, etc.

Peter adds not in vain the words: “He seeks peace and pursues it.” Only do not think that peace will pursue you; yea, you will indeed feel, when you suffer and are reviled without any cause on your part, that you will be moved to anger, impatience, revenge, etc.; that you would gladly render evil for evil; but this is the time when you should stand firmly and conquer yourself, be sorry and pursue peace. This is accomplished when you do not

render evil for evil, nor curse in return, but commend the matter to God, and let it comfort you that you are a child of grace and of blessing, and pray that you may not fall into temptation, etc. Now he concludes this exhortation with a promise.

[12.] For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication; but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.

If thou canst confidently believe that the eyes of the Lord neither slumber nor sleep, but behold those who have held their peace outwardly with their mouth and tongue, and inwardly have a friendly spirit toward their enemies, then you will easily stand all kinds of temptations.

This is a very beautiful, glorious consolation for the righteous, the believers in Christ, who are persecuted by the world and must sorely suffer; and yet they prudently restrain themselves, so that they do not render evil for evil, and govern their tongue and lips so as not to curse back, but do good to their enemies and bless them, that the Lord may not turn his countenance from them, \$s if he were angry with them; and that his eyes sleep not nor slumber, as they might think, if they are thus persecuted; but graciously look upon them as his dear children and safely protect them. They must suffer much, as the Psalm later says; but God helps them out of all, etc. Moreover, what they pray God for will surely be vouchsafed to them, for his ears, he says, give heed unto their prayer. Is that true, as true it must be without doubt, for the prophet David surely lies not; then he will never forget us nor will he ever let us drop out of his sight. With this we shall comfort ourselves, and this it is that should move a Christian to suffer with patience all the injustice and disgrace that can be laid upon him. For when one rightly reflects, then he sees that the soul of the one who causes him suffering, if he does not repent, must suffer forever in hell. For Peter says further that the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil; he does not behold them with a friendly eye, as he does the righteous, but with an angry countenance. In a person who is very angry one sees how his whole countenance is disfigured and changed; he looks sour, bites his teeth, wrinkles his brow, mouth and nose, and in general looks like one who will knock things to pieces with all his might. With such a countenance, Peter says, the Lord beholds those who do evil, so that he will utterly root out their memory from the earth, as all historians testify that he has rooted out many great and mighty potentates,

that neither a branch nor a root of them remains. So the final result is that all who persecute the righteous do themselves only harm, lose the blessing and the friendly countenance of the Lord, will not only be up rooted here in time, but will also still possess their guilt yonder; therefore they must be condemned forever.

Because of this a Christian heart should say: Beloved Father, since our adversaries have so horribly fallen in thy wrath and have cast themselves so lamentably into eternal fire, I pray thou wouldst forgive them, rescue them from thy anger and show them grace, just as thou hast done to me. For, as I said, just as he looks upon the righteous with grace, so he frowns upon the wicked, wrinkles his countenance and in anger turns upon them. Since we therefore know that he looks upon us graciously and upon them ungraciously, we should have mercy and pity upon them, and pray that God would increase our faith to believe that his face is friendly toward us who suffer, and then be cheerful and give understanding to those who persecute us, so that they may believe that God is angry with them, and that they may be terrified and converted. Further Peter says [see edition 1523, verse 13]:

Chapter 4.

[2.] That ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

We should hereafter, as long as we live upon the earth, take the flesh captive by virtue of the Cross and sufferings of Christ, and bring it under control, so that we live not like the unbelievers, who know nothing of God, never inquire for his word, and continue to live in their lusts with out any fear of God, as if this life were to last forever and God would never hold judgment and punish their sins. But we should now lead an honorable, holy life as becometh the children of God, and apply ourselves with all earnestness to do the will of our heavenly Father; not that we may thereby merit anything, for our eternal inheritance Christ has acquired for us without any merit or assistance on our part; but in order that God may thereby be praised and our neighbor served.

[3.] For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revelings, carousings, and abominable idolatries.

We have already done too much, before we believed, in passing our lives so shamefully after the manner of the heathen in his lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revelings, carousings, and abominable idolatries. Here Peter enumerates vices in which the wild, uncivilized people lived; and now they are common among the people generally, not only among the Papists who blaspheme and persecute the Gospel, but also among people who wish to be honored as its friends. But Peter says where such vices reign among the people, be they called as they may, it is a sign that they fear not God, and that they have no true faith, nor love nor patience, etc.; but since they all give themselves up to wantonness, live in their lusts and the like, they are still steeped in their abominable idolatries.

[4-5.] Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you; who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead.

That is: You have heretofore lived like the heathen in abominable idolatries and scandalous sins and vices, as has been said; but now that you have renounced them seems strange to the heathen and they think you exceptional and wonderful, in that you now express your opinion of the same former disorderly life you lived in common with them, and you no longer in company with them slander God's word and those who believe it. They say, what great fools Christians are to turn from all the joy and pleasure of this life, etc. But let them think you strange and forever slander you, they will indeed have to give an account for that. Therefore commend all to him, who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

[7b.] Be ye therefore of sound mind (temperate) and be sober (watchful) unto prayer.

Here the Apostle exhorts them to prayer and in the same words shows that this duty or office (amt) to pray is entrusted to every one; for the spirit of grace and of supplication is poured upon all believers, Zech. 12:10; therefore whoever does not pray, has only forgotten that he is a Christian. To be sure true Christians do indeed pray without ceasing, for be they where they may and do what they wish, their hearts are continually overflowing with thoughts like these: O, dear Father, give grace that thy name may be hallowed in all the world through the preaching of the Gospel, that multitudes may be converted, become righteous and be saved, so that the will of Satan and of the wicked world may not be done, but that thy gracious, fatherly will may be accomplished. And besides Christians pray also at their family altars and in the churches, where the congregations assemble to hear God's word and to receive the holy communion, and where they are accustomed to pray for the needs of all Christendom and to give thanks with their spirits and with their offerings for all the blessings received. But if prayer is to spring from the heart and be offered in sincerity, then the suppliant must be of sound mind and sober, for a drunkard is never in a fit condition to pray. For how can such a person contend against the devil with faith and earnest prayer; yea, he is verily already swallowed by Satan.

“To be of sound mind” or temperate has reference to the excesses in manners, clothing, ornaments and all kinds of pomp, that they be not drawn into them but that they conduct themselves modestly as is becoming Christians. “To be sober” means that we eat and drink only sufficient, so that the body may practice abstinence and perform its functions aright; also, that the soul may be watchful and in a state to study and meditate upon God’s word and to pray in sincerity. Eat and drink we must, therefore God gives us the sunshine and rain, lets the corn, wine and all kinds of fruit grow for us to enjoy with thanksgiving. Hence, debauchery in eating and drinking is forbidden. In Luke 21:34 Christ says: “Take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, etc.” Paul in Gal. 5:21 counts gluttony and drunkenness among the works of the flesh and says: “They who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

In the same manner the Apostle wishes now to say: I faithfully exhort you to be of sound mind and sober; for you are a people called into a state where you must continually be upon the battlefield warring against sin and the god of this world, Satan, who is thy adversary and walks about thee and strives far more eagerly for thy soul than a hungry wolf does for sheep. In order to withstand him you must not feel too secure and fall asleep, but be of sound mind and sober, and be armed with prayer and spiritual weapons, Eph. 6. And on this subject there should be a great deal of preaching, for we Germans are about sinking in ruin under the shameful vice of overeating and overdrinking.

[8.] Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins.

As to thine own person be of sound mind and sober so that you may pray aright and in sincerity; then look to those around you and with whom you live that you may love them from your heart. The Apostles made diligent use of these words. In Rom. 12:9 Paul says: “Let love be without hypocrisy.” 1 John 3:18: “My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth,” and 1 Peter 1:22: “Love one another from the heart fervently.” For everybody complains of hypocritical people, of whom the world is always full, who in their words and manners appear friendly, but do not mean it in their hearts, as the proverbs run: Fine words,

but nothing back of them; also: Beware of cats that in front lick you and behind scratch you. And such persons can cover up the rogue to perfection, yea even adorn him, so that, if they act ever so deceitful, they think they have the right and authority to do so. God knows, they say, I wished him everything good, I was even ready to suffer that he might realize his every desire, and where I knew how to help him with personal service and with my means, I shall not fail to do so. However he is too wicked, unthankful, etc.; that, though one should show him every kindness, all is in vain and is lost with him, etc.

Such is a false, deceitful love, which indeed the worst wretches on earth have. But you Christians, Peter wishes to say, should exercise true love, which does not glitter and shine like an *ignis fatuus*, and yet at the bottom of the heart it is hypocrisy, but a love that possesses such ardor and fire in itself that it springs forth from the heart, and is such a fine and noble virtue that it is never provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, 1 Cor. 13:4f. And as Peter says here, it does not cover one, two, ten, twenty, a hundred sins, but a multitude of sins. For if one person has the right love to another and means it truly and sincerely, he can not represent him as bad, he considers everything relating to him in the best light. He may indeed be angry with him, punish his sin and vice, in harmony with the word of Christ, Mat. 18:15f.: "And if thy brother sin against thee, etc." But he can not be his enemy, unless he be a public blasphemer of God and a persecutor of his Word, of whom the Prophet says, Ps. 139:22: "I hate them with perfect hatred, etc."

A pious father indeed loves his son from his heart; but if the son be bad and disobedient, the more the father loves him, the harder he chastises him with words, and yea in deed even whips him until the blood runs, not because he is his enemy or has pleasure in punishing him and wishes to kill him; but because he is so pained that his son will not be good. All the while however he considers him his son and heir and his father-heart remains the same toward him, though at the time his words and actions may appear different. So also a pious mother may have a diseased and scabby child, and yet she does not therefore cast the child away and hate it, but she cares the more for it, and has greater sympathy for, and more worry and labor with it, than with all her other children. She is indeed by no means pleased with the scabs and ulcers, but since it is her child, love blinds her, so that the bad sores dare not be called bad, but they must receive another name to suggest

that the child will, after the sores are gone, become very healthy and beautiful. If the child's eyes are squint then they are called ogling eyes; if they are black, then they must be brown and the like. Thus the mother does not only cover the defects of her child, but she beautifies them.

Just so should it be among us Christians. It always happens that at times you do or say something that grieves me, and I do things that do not please you; as one member of the body injures another, for example, when the teeth bite the tongue, the finger is run into the eye and the like, and yet it is not done purposely. Here we should act in harmony with Peter's doctrine, not only one bear the other's burden, cover his failings and defects, but also excuse and adorn them, as also Paul teaches in 1 Cor. 12:23: "And those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness," etc. [See Ed. 1539.]

[9.] Using hospitality one to another without murmuring.

The Apostles and disciples of Christ traveled through all countries and kingdoms at the same time and preached the Gospel in the whole world. Now wherever they came, they were strangers and guests, possessed nothing of their own, as Christ commanded them to take nothing with them on their journey, but only to be thoughtful and diligent in doing the duties of their calling. For wherever they came they would find everywhere people who would hear and welcome them, and would provide for their daily bread and their other needs, for a laborer is worthy of his bread and butter. In this connection the exhortation of Peter went forth that Christians should be hospitable to their brethren, and especially gladly receive them, welcome them to their homes and hearts, permit them to eat and drink with them, and show them every kindness, as the teachers of the Gospel, and also do the same to other poor brethren, who were driven into misery because they confessed their Christian faith. And this they were to do without murmuring, that is with joy and gladly from the heart for the sake of Christ, who was received in such persons, Mat. 10:40. To entertain willingly and to be hospitable is one of the virtues that should shine among Christians; but as rare as Christians are, so rare is also this virtue.

Peter comes now into the Church, speaks of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, with which Christendom is adorned, by which not the body but the soul is

served and helped, and says:

[10.] According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

The world knows no different than to think that the gifts it has, be they wisdom, art, knowledge, power, honor, riches, etc., it has of itself, and it does not believe that it has received them from God; and therefore it boasts of them, uses them only for its own benefit, does not serve its neighbor with them; yea, it wishes to be highly honored and praised by those who possess them not. On the contrary, Peter teaches us Christians here that all gifts temporal and spiritual we have are gifts of God, which he gives to us for the purpose that one should serve the other with them; and the more one has received from him, the more he has to give an account for. That is what he means when he said above: "Love one another from the heart fervently," prove the same by being hospitable one to the other; and here: "According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, etc."; as if he should say: Gifts you have, which are not innate in you, neither have you inherited them from your mother as an heirloom; but you have received them from God, not to the end, that you should puff yourselves up because of them, and be considered great and lordly by others; but that you should be faithful stewards of God and of his manifold gifts with which he has adorned you, and use them well, namely, for his praise, honor and glory and for the benefit and salvation of your neighbor.

However Peter speaks here especially of the spiritual gifts, of which the world knows nothing, and never inquires about them (for it cares only for one thing, how to fill the stomach, etc.). These spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit pours out richly upon his Christendom and decorates and adorns it with them; for to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, etc. 1 Cor. 12:4f., Rom. 12:6. Now those who have such gifts, especially those to whom is given the office to teach the congregation of God and to feed them with the pure Word, that they use the same as Peter here teaches, namely, to serve them faithfully to whom they minister, that they may come to the right knowledge and faith of Christ and be saved. Paul after speaking long on such gifts in 1 Cor. 12 finally strikes as with a powerful thunder-clap, and says in the next chapter, 1 Cor. 13:1f.: Though one, yea, I myself, spake with the tongues of men and of angels,

and had the gift of prophecy, and knew all mysteries and all knowledge, and had all faith so as to remove mountains, and though he bestowed all his goods to feed the poor and gave his body to be burned, and had not love, he would be nothing.

Truly these are very powerful words and terrible to hear, that one might be a fine, eminent, educated man, possess many beautiful, spiritual gifts, be highly cultured and experienced in the Scriptures, moreover be blessed with strong convictions and aptness to teach, so as easily to impart his convictions to others, that they could thoroughly understand, grasp and retain them; and yet all will not help him; but with all these glorious gifts, even though they were again as great and glorious, he is nothing and is lost. How does this come to pass? Paul himself explains and says: If he has not love, that is, when such gifts make him proud as if they had grown on him and he had not received them, he makes of them an idol, seeks only his own advantage, how he may thereby obtain great honor and high position, that he may be served and adored because of his great intelligence and rare ability; and is not in the least concerned for the honor of God and the welfare and salvation of his neighbor.

These are disagreeable people, and yet they are common in the world, especially among the preachers. As soon as one feels he can do something another cannot; is apt to learn, has a fine voice, despatches work quickly, he over does it, becomes proud, despises others who can not equal him, yea, he thinks he knows more than those under whom he studied and is suddenly changed from pupil to professor and wishes to make a show before the whole world. If then the public join him and praise and boast of his ability (as such spirits strive for this one thing with all their might), he is then first made a little gentle and is tickled so that he does not know whether he is walking upon the earth or in the clouds. Such characters do the greatest harm to Christianity; what pious orthodox teachers did so well, and planted and built during long years with great care and labor, they break to pieces and ruin in a short time, and consider their ways better and holier, and they must also be honored by such names which suggest that they were seeking the honor of God and the salvation of their neighbors, etc.

The Apostles had much to do with such scandalous persons, therefore they so faithfully exhort that the spiritual gifts be used aright. But it did not avail anything. How did Paul fare? When he had preached a long time and founded here and there churches with the greatest care and at the risk of his

life, he had scarcely turned his back when false brethren were soon upon his heels, who discredited his person and doctrine, were gifted in speech and clever persons and of finer appearance than Paul himself; and thus they led the people astray and they fell from Paul's teachings as we see clearly in his Epistles. Therefore he speaks so strongly against such ambitious spirits and says: If they had yet gifts twice as great, if it were possible that they should speak with the tongues of angels, knew all prophecy, knowledge and mystery of the Scriptures, and besides could raise the dead, yet they are of Satan since they act and believe thus; as Christ also passes terrible judgment on such when he says in Mat. 7:23: "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity"; although they preached in his name, cast out devils, and did many wonderful works; and in Mat. 11:19 he complains that wisdom must be justified of her children.

Therefore this exhortation of Peter is necessary that every one, however able and learned he may be, should use the gifts he has received to the end that the body of Christ, his congregation, may be edified by them; for to whom much is given, of him much will be required, etc., that thus in all things, as he says later, God may be praised through Jesus Christ. Whoever now preaches the word of God in its purity, without the addition of any human doctrine, that God out of pure love gave his only begotten Son Jesus Christ for the sins of the lost world, seeks not his own, but God's honor, does not like God, rule over you, but serves you with his gifts, points out to you how you may be delivered from your sins and be saved, etc. Whoever does the contrary seeks his own honor and advantage as is the manner and character of all work-righteous persons, etc. Here it would be well to speak of temporal gifts, how they should be rightly used; but it would take too long, besides, I have often considered them in other places.

[11a.] If any man speaketh, speaking (let him speak) as it were oracles (the word) of God.

The Apostle considers gifts under two heads, speaking and doing; for all the works of those having an office in the church are contained in the two headings, speaking and doing. He means thus to say: Whoever is a steward in the congregation of God either speaks something or does some thing, and at times he is engaged in both. If he speak, he is to take heed that he speaks the word of God. Here both teachers and hearers are concerned, that the former teach nothing in the church and the latter hear nothing aside from the

word of God. For here the theme is not how to govern a country or a people, a house or a court, how to build, plant, etc.; but the theme is how may man be delivered from sin, acquire God's grace and be saved, how God is disposed toward us and the like. This can not be learned from any jurist, philosopher, work-saint nor from the Pope with his canons; for no one has at any time seen God. However if it is to be made known to you, then you must learn it from the Gospel of Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father and has revealed the Father's will to us in his Word. Therefore whoever is now called to speak in the Church, to preach, teach and exhort, should speak what Christ has spoken and commanded on subjects relating to our personal salvation. But Christ speaks thus on this point: That he is the good Shepherd, who gives his life for the sheep, who gives unto them eternal life; likewise, if any man will keep his Word, he shall never see death. He is the resurrection, and the life, whosoever believes on him though he die, yet shall he live. He is the way, the truth and the life; so that no one can come to the Father, except through him. To the Apostles however he says in Mat. 28:20: They shall teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them; as Luke says: To preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name; and Mark: Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved. Wherever this doctrine goes, there both preacher and hearer are sure, that the former speak the Word of God and that the latter hear that Word. For Christ's sheep hear his voice, and it is done unto them according to his Word. But is the doctrine different and even proposes another way by which to be delivered from sin than through Christ, the falsity of it appears at once. For such teachers do not speak the word of God, and the hearers do not hear it; hence theirs is not the true faith, and they can not be delivered from their sin, nor be saved, etc.

[11b.] If any man ministereth (have an office, amt), ministering (let him minister) as of the strength which God supplieth.

Therefore whoever baptizes, administers the Holy Communion, speaks absolution, visits and comforts the sick, etc., does it not in his own strength, for thus he would dishonor and blaspheme God; but he does it in the strength of him who commanded it and said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation." Like wise Paul also says in 1 Cor. 11, that he did not institute the Lord's Supper; but the Lord himself was the

founder of the ordinance; and from him he received it, and he gives it to them from him. Likewise when I lay my hands upon any one and declare unto him the absolution of his sins, I do it upon the authority of Christ's word, when he said in Mat. 18:18. "Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," etc. So now the will of Peter is that nothing be taught in the Church except the word of God, and nothing be done, unless God has commanded and arranged it.

Here it is earnestly forbidden to accept any human commandment, whether of the Pope or of a bishop, unless the assurance is given that God does what he does, and he can say: In doing this I have the Word and command of God. Where this is not the case he is to be looked upon as a liar. For God's order is that our conscience must rest upon the bare rock. Now all this is said of the common government of the Church so that no one follows in these matters his own fancy, nor does anything which he is not sure that God wishes to have it as he does it. From this you see how Peter long ago overthrew the government of the Pope as it is at present in the world. Wherever the contrary of the saying, "If any man speak, if any man have an office, etc.," is held, you will find that there the very opposite is done. There neither the word nor the work of God have continued in their right use; but have been outrageously perverted; and the poor people have been led to depend upon human doctrines and their own works, etc. It follows:

[11e.] That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

This is the end of the song, the conclusion. Everything that is spoken or done in the Church should be directed to the end that God be praised in all things, and that the praise be through Jesus Christ. And this does take place when by means of the Gospel God's inexpressible grace and mercy are preached, which he has shown to us in Christ Jesus, whom he offered for our sins, in order that we might have in him the righteousness that avails before God. Wherever that is known God alone will be praised and thanked, as the one who out of pure fatherly grace, without any assistance on our part, gave such a precious treasure for our sins, etc. This is the true praise and thank offering that is pleasing to God; yet, be it remembered that it is accomplished through Jesus Christ; for without and apart from him God has no pleasure either in our prayers or in our thanksgiving.

With the words Peter here speaks: “Whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen,” he shows that Christ is true God; for he ascribes to him even that which he ascribes to the Father, namely, divine glory and dominion, which he has from everlasting to everlasting; and this Peter would not have done were Christ not true God. Otherwise it would have been called robbing God of his glory, which he cannot suffer, as is proclaimed through the prophet Isaiah, Is. 42:8: “My glory will I not give to another.”

[13a.] But inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, rejoice.

Do not wonder, Peter wishes to say, that you suffer much, be not angry or sad over it as if God had forgotten and forsaken you, but accept it as a sure sign of his fatherly will toward you. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth everyone whom he receiveth” [Heb. 12:6]. This he truly proved in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, and allowed him to become a curse, etc. Therefore rejoice much more that you are promoted to this honor and that you are now in this like Christ, follow in his footsteps and suffer with him; you shall be well recompensed, as he further says:

[13b.] That at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy.

In 1 Pet. 1:6f. he spoke in a similar way and said: “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ,” etc. Here he adds a new thought and speaks of his glory which shall be revealed at that day which will be beyond the power of the tongue to express or of the mind to comprehend, from which we shall have eternal joy and delight, and compared with which all the suffering we meet with in this life, as Paul says in Rom. 8:18, is to be reckoned as nothing. Whoever lays hold of this, to him no suffering is too heavy, as we read of certain martyrs, both men and women, who went as cheerfully to the stake as to a banquet. Likewise the Apostles departed from the presence of the council and thanked God that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Christ. Acts 5:41.

[14a.] If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye.

As if he should say: Therefore all depends upon that, should you not believe in and confess this name, then the world would love and esteem you, for there is no name hated more by the world than just the name of Jesus Christ; not that it can not mention his name or hear it mentioned, yea, the worst and bitterest enemies of this name bear it and boast of it the most; besides, they call themselves the Christian Church and the people of God, but slander and condemn us as heretics and as the worst enemies of God. Why? Because we do not let this name be considered as an ordinary name, written only with letters as your and my names are; but because we believe, preach and confess, that the person, called Jesus Christ, according to his name, is the only Saviour of the world who saves from sin, the only High Priest who reconciles the sinner with God, the only Lord and King who helps out of every need and trouble, and that only those who know him as such, does he deliver from sin, death, etc., and they only obtain grace and eternal salvation. But this the people of the world can not tolerate. They indeed grant the name, that he be called Jesus Christ, as I am called Martin; but they will not allow that he should bear his name in reality and in practice, as the angel interprets it in Mat. 1:21: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins"; and Luke 2:10f., where the angel said to the shepherds: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord," etc. However rather than grant that, they condemn his Word, persecute and put to death those teaching and confessing it, and this they did to him also; they put him to death on the cross. For if they grant that then they must confess that monkery, human righteousness, self-chosen works and worship and the like do not deliver from sin, secure not grace and eternal salvation, etc. However, that they will indeed not grant. Therefore among them the name Jesus Christ is in the very foundation of truth a hated and cursed name. For whoever does not speak in the Spirit of God, says Paul in 1 Cor. 12:3, calls Jesus accursed; and again, "No man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." Beloved, then let me not be a poor Doctor of the holy Scriptures, but one who can rightly name the name Jesus Christ, even if he has not written or read many books, etc. [See Ed. 1523.]

[15-16.] For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a meddler in other men's matters; but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.

Thus the Apostle wishes to say: you have heard how you must suffer and how you are to conduct yourselves in your sufferings; but see to it, that you suffer as Christians, who suffer for the sake of righteousness and well-doing, as is said in 1 Pet. 3:14; not as murderers, thieves, evildoers, or as those who venture to do something for which they have no authority, as the fanatical spirits who under the appearance of the truth preach lies and error and stir up rebellion and then must suffer for their evil-doing.

However, if you suffer as Christians, you are not to blush red with shame, but praise God that you are reckoned worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of his Word and of his name. Thus he makes suffering and martyrdom very glorious and precious, so that it is something so valuable that we should praise God for it, when we come to the point that we are to suffer in this way; as Christ also does, when in Mat. 5:11 he says: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven," etc.

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

This saying is taken from the book of Proverbs, 11:31, where Solomon says: "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: how much more the wicked and the sinner!" Peter frequently thought of the sufferings and tribulations Christians had to endure in this life; for they are not only persecuted by the world, but Satan also terrifies them in their hearts, holds before them their sins and magnifies them, so that they fall into a sad and melancholy state; and they are thus tormented both outwardly by persecution and contempt and inwardly by terror and despair. For here the world can not judge differently than that Christians are a condemned people, who receive from God neither consolation nor help; yea, the Christians at times permit themselves to think, since they experience such sadness and melancholy of spirit, that God is angry with them and has forsaken them. Hence the woeful complaints in the Psalms [Ps. 31:23]: "I am cut off from before thine eyes," etc. This is what Peter means when he says here: The righteous

can scarcely be sustained, for although they indeed believe and hold firmly to God's promises, yet they have trouble and labor in persevering to the end and in being finally saved, for Satan makes it bitter and hot enough for them; where will then the godless and the sinner appear? If God thus give the believer a shock that he trembles, how can he stand and abide, who is not only without faith, but has despised God's word and counsel and slandered his saints? Therefore he concludes with the following:

[19.] Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.

That is, those, to whom God sends suffering which they themselves did not seek nor choose, should commit their souls unto their Creator. Such then fare well, they continue in doing good, turn not astray because of suffering, and commit themselves to their Creator, who is faithful. And this is great consolation for thee. God created thy soul without any care or assistance on thy part, when you did not yet have an existence; therefore trust him; yet trust in a way that it be done accompanied by good works, that you become not impatient, sad and angry, and be not provoked to take vengeance on those who caused you the suffering, also that you murmur not against God, give him the lie and fall into doubting; but hold fast on both sides, forgive your enemies and pray for them, and give God the glory that he is merciful, true and faithful, and will never forsake thee in thy need, but will graciously help you out of your troubles, although you may at the time feel differently.

Chapter 5.

[1.] The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

Peter speaks thus for the purpose of interesting and moving the elders by his example to tend the flock of Christ faithfully, even if they have to meet great misfortune in doing so in order that they may not despair and forsake the sheep; but that they do as he does, continually preach Christ and suffer for doing it, and that they comfort themselves with the assurance of becoming partakers of his glory, which shall be revealed. For it cannot be otherwise than that the sufferings precede and the glories follow. 1 Pet. 1:5-6. Therefore he says: I preach not only as you do; but I am also a witness of the sufferings of Christ, namely, I find both in myself and in others that all who believe in Christ and confess him have their fill of suffering; but they are besides also sure of being raised in due time to honor and glory. Now follows what the elders should do.

[2d.] But be of a ready mind.

That is, a pastor should take pleasure in and be inclined to teach, do it cheerfully from his heart and continue to do so with delight, even in poverty and need, and entirely gratuitously for the reason that he is assured that his teaching is well-pleasing to God and that it is the highest benefaction he can do to his neighbor. He seeks not in the pasture of God his own honor, for the sheep committed to him are not for his gain and use; just as Moses, Samuel and all the pious shepherds have done and still do. Thus we have two kinds of wicked shepherds; the first who do their work unwillingly, avoid the labor, ingratitude and the cross; the second class do their duties willingly, but for the sake of filthy lucre. Those who take the golden mean, do it not of constraint, but willingly; not for the sake of disgraceful gain, but from the depth of the heart, etc.

[5a.] Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder.

Although there is one common doctrine that concerns all men, in whatever station they may be; yet the complaint is general that the young people are rough, wild and ill-bred; children will not be subject to their parents, pupils to their teachers, nor servants to their masters and mistresses; there is no obedience or discipline any longer among the young people; but only pride and self-will. Everyone does as he pleases, acts the gentleman, is independent and unreprieved. In the end God will not let them go unpunished. Now whoever is a Christian, and gives heed, knows that he has no choice as to whether he will be in subjection or not; but he is to do so with good grace and cheerfully. God demands it, who says here through St. Peter: "Ye younger, be subject unto the elder."

To this end Christ is presented to you as an example, that you be of the same mind as he. Although he existed in the form of God and was equal with God; yet, he was a servant of us all, became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross, Phil. 2:6-8. And above in chapter 2 and verse 18 the Apostle admonishes servants not only to be obedient and serve their irritable masters with all faithfulness; but suffer ingratitude and all evil from them, and follow in the footsteps of their Lord Christ, who did no sin, etc. If thou dost now despise the command of God, thy Creator, and art not moved by the example of Christ thy Lord and Saviour, then thou art no Christian and thy baptism, Christ's sufferings and blood, God's grace and favor, avail thee nothing; yea, thou dost bring upon thyself the heavy and unbearable wrath and disfavor of God; who, as Peter says later, resisteth the proud, will overthrow and utterly destroy thee, thou poor worm of the dust, by his powerful hand, with which he casted down to hell the disobedient angels in chains of darkness. Of this divine punishment we not only read in all histories, but also daily experience it. I fear that the disobedience and recklessness of our young people will be soon punished and more terribly than any one imagines. May God in mercy take his own to himself before that time comes and spare them the sight of such misery!

[5b.] Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another.

The Apostle turns here and modifies his words, teaching that all Christians should be subject to one another. But how does this harmonize, if the elders

shall rule and at the same time are to be subject? Are we to overthrow what has been said? No, we will let the words stand, that they were spoken in general of all Christians, that we should be subject to another; the younger to the elder, as I said, and on the other hand, the elder to the younger, especially if they are in office and are ready to serve them with their spiritual and temporal gifts every hour and minute if necessary, with comfort, counsel, admonition, help, punishment, etc. Also for the reason that both old and young have the same spiritual blessings, even the young as well as the old have the word of grace, faith, baptism, hope, the Spirit, Christ, God, life, salvation. There is no difference, there is no young or old, but all are one in Christ. Therefore whoever is in heart a Christian is at once blessed with the highest gifts and is a teacher of others, he humbles himself also before the lowest Christian; for he belongs to Christ just as well as he, Christ redeemed all with the same precious blood; yea, he does not only bear the infirmities and burdens of the weak, but he also covers them, yea, that means to serve and to be in subjection in practice. Often in history the younger are more competent and more highly endowed by God than the older. Therefore Peter wishes that we all serve one another.

Paul also teaches the same in Rom. 12:10: "In honor preferring one another"; and Phil. 2:3: "In lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself." Likewise in Luke 14:8-11. [See Ed. 1539.]

[5c.] Gird yourselves with humility. For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

God distributes his gifts among his people according to his good pleasure, adorns some with temporal blessings, as health, strength, beauty, riches, honor, power, etc.; while others he adorns with spiritual blessings, as wisdom, knowledge of the holy Scriptures, and the like; and he does all this to the end, as I said, that they might acknowledge that they received these gifts from him, then thank him for them and make good use of them for the benefit and happiness of their neighbors. This is here taught by Peter when he says: "Gird yourselves with humility," (or as Luther renders it, hold fast to humility. Translator), and it is a serious and necessary teaching. For the way of the world is, when one has a little more than another, then he holds up his head, becomes proud and arrogant; as do the rich, the noble, the powerful, the beautiful, etc.; likewise the learned, the eloquent, the pious, etc. No one

of these characters even remembers that he received his gifts from God, suppresses all mention of thanks to him for them, and much less does he use them to serve and instruct his neighbors; but he imagines they are a peculiar growth of his own, hence he overestimates himself, no one is good enough for him to associate with, yea, others are even a stench to him; he uses thus what he has only to despise and injure his neighbor, and in the face of all this he wishes his neighbor to do him honor and even to worship him; while in himself there is neither any love nor humility, but mere contempt and pride. Therefore such a person sins not only against the Second Table of the Law, against his neighbor; but also against the First Table, against God, whose grace and mercy he should preach and praise; for his gifts were bestowed upon him to the end, that he might not do this very thing; but instead he uses his gifts to seek his own glory and honor. This is surely reviling and slandering the name of God in the most outrageous manner. Therefore the pride that germinates and grows from the gifts of the spirit is a satanic vice and is directly against God's name and God's word.

However, among you Christians, says Peter, it should not be so; but you should know it is God's will and his earnest command that you, as one body in Christ and members, one of another, should have fervent love to and be subject to one another; since you have the same faith and hope, the same baptism and Spirit, and in short have like blessings in Christ, in which you are one without any difference whatever. But should one Christian be endowed with more gifts than another, he knows that he received them from God for the purpose of serving others with them, that God may be praised thereby through Jesus Christ. Therefore the higher you are favored, the deeper will you humble yourself even before the lowest people; while they permit themselves to be taught, directed, reformed, admonished by you in all humility, in order that you may join hands with one another, and hold tightly and firmly to humility, that you all may remain intact and complete, and not be divided and torn by anger, pride, ingratitude and impatience. However great earnestness will be required to accomplish this, for humility does not so easily find an entrance into our hearts, neither is it put on like a coat. Hence he says further:

[6.] Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

If however you do the contrary and let not this faithful admonition move you nor the Spirit of Christ rule you, but on the contrary you follow Satan who is a proud, arrogant spirit, and does nothing but sow pride in human hearts so that they trust in their temporal possessions, honor, power, wisdom, holiness and the like, with which they comfort themselves, and are not comforted by Christ's sufferings nor concern themselves about God's threatenings and promises; then you may rest assured that you are accumulating to yourself the wrath and enmity of God, who created you and holds your life in his hand. He resisteth the proud who will not humble themselves under his mighty hand; in a moment he can overthrow thee and hurl thee to the abyss of hell; as he has proved from the beginning of the world; as one reads not only in the Bible but in all histories, and sees daily before his own eyes, if he will only believe it.

Mary, the holy mother of Christ, sings also of the same in her Magnificat and paints forth more in detail this passage of St. Peter, and says that his mercy is unto generations and generations on them that fear him, that he hath exalted them of low degree, fed and filled the hungry with good things, and finally delivered them out of all need and saved them. On the contrary he scattereth the proud in the imagination of their heart, hath put down princes from their thrones, and the rich he hath sent empty away, so that they must finally perish forever, as Peter grasps in the few words: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." But on both sides however they think it should indeed be better. Whatever on the one hand the proud, influential and rich may will or wish is done, they have every desire of their hearts realized. Hence, they cannot think otherwise than that they have a gracious God, and the last thing they can believe is that God resisteth them and will overthrow them. On the other hand, since the pious must suffer much, as we have heard through this entire Epistle, it seems that God is angry with them and resisteth them with all his might. Therefore as it goes so contradictory, Christians should not let that worry them, but hold firmly to the word of God and be comforted by his promises, as Peter further teaches and says:

[7.] Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you.

This is a beautiful and comforting passage which every Christian should believe and write in his heart, that it may comfort him in every need and

temptation. Peter wishes to say: If the world persecute you, the devil terrify and make your heart sad by his fiery darts, if brethren are malicious and treacherous to you, or in any other way at tack you, be not angry or impatient, murmur and complain not, even if it continue a long time and there is no end to it, the time will not be so long; for God takes it to heart and he will attend to all. Indeed by becoming angry and impatient we would only give them occasion to tread us entirely under their feet, cause us all suffering and damage possible and finally also ruin us. Therefore do not worry in the least, only take care for this, and do not be over anxious as to: How shall I secure money, home, food and the like? How shall I be delivered from this need or danger? Where will I be when I die? But follow my counsel; let each one do in his calling what God commands him. Does evil befall him while doing his duty, then he endures it and proves thereby his patience and humility and consoles himself besides, that God, to whom he is now reconciled through Christ and whose child he has become through faith in him, is almighty and merciful; on him he calls and casts all his anxiety with confidence upon him, whether temporal or spiritual, for he careth for us. This we should in no way doubt.

The prophet David speaks thus also in Psalm 55:22, from which Peter quotes this passage, where David says: "Cast thy burden upon Jehovah, and he will sustain thee" (he delays, yea, too long, and lets me in the meantime ever stick in my need: Ah! hold fast and persevere), "he will never suffer the righteous to be moved." Many more like passages are found in the Bible. Therefore this doctrine is to be found nowhere else, except in the Holy Scriptures. No philosopher, no legislator teaches man to cast all his cares upon God. Hence the world knows nothing of it, perverts everything, has not only scruples as to what it should do, but it will suffer nothing. Does it happen to the world different than it expected, it becomes angry and impatient, and contemplates how to take vengeance; contrary to the counsel of Peter, it takes the cares upon itself, it should cast upon God, for they are too heavy and it cannot bear them. Consequently we see that in general all people, especially those in high stations, carry and are worried with their cares day and night, can never have any peace, and they pass their lives wretchedly with vain and useless anxieties. And if things do not succeed and prosper as they planned, which is generally the case, they become raging and foolish, also indeed some die largely because of their great suffering. On the other hand if they succeed, that success as a rule means their greatest ruin.

Where is the trouble? Here, they follow not Peter's advice and cast all their cares upon God; but retain them to themselves and wish to carry their cares themselves, etc.

But you have such grand promises, through which you are certain that God will not forsake you, but will surely take care of you. Therefore cast all thy anxiety upon him and let him attend to it. These are beyond measure loving words; how could he have made them sweeter and more friendly? But why does he use such strong persuasion? Because no one will cheerfully bend here and let his own opinion go for nought. Therefore he imparts such comfort that God does not only take notice of us, but he cares for us and heartily welcomes us into his friendship. So now everyone does what God has commanded and if you have well and faithfully accomplished it and thereby secured the world's anger and hatred, for its reward is nothing else, then suffer it only joyfully, go ever right ahead and let nothing turn you from your calling. Do not be concerned as to how you are to be exalted, but let God take care of that. For thus it is beautifully systematized; the smaller part, the labor and suffering, fall to your lot and it can not be otherwise; the greater part, the anxiety, God takes upon himself. In this way you can reach your mark in life beautifully, which otherwise would have been impossible, if the care and anxiety had to ever rest upon you, etc. In conclusion he gives a short warning and says:

[8-9a.] Be sober, be watchful; your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand steadfastly in your faith.

Satan is by nature such a wicked and poisonous spirit, that he cannot tolerate anything that is good; it pains him that even an apple, a cherry and the like grow; it causes him pain and grief that a single healthy person should live upon the earth, and if God would not restrain him, he would hurl everything together in ruin. But to nothing is he a more bitter enemy than to the dear Word; because, while he can conceal himself under all creatures, the Word is the only agency that can disclose him and reveal to everybody how black he is. Since then you have God's Word, Peter says, and you cleave by faith to it, you should know beforehand that Satan will be your enemy; and you should know that he is not only a wise, cunning, but also a very wicked, poisonous and powerful spirit; so that he rules and dominates the

whole world; and therefore Christ also calls him in John 14:30 the Prince, and Paul in 2 Cor. 4:4 and Eph. 6:12, the God and Ruler of this world.

If now Satan, thy adversary, were far from you, and would let you alone in peace, he would do little harm; but he will not do that. He is not a thousand miles from you, but encircles you and stands by your side, so close to you that he cannot come closer; he does not lie upon a cushion, and sleeps and snores; but he walks about without ceasing day and night; not that he may joke and play with you, nor because he wishes to see what you are doing; but he is angry and furious, and hungrier than a wolf or lion, and seeks not how to appease his hunger with thy possessions or to do you harm in other ways, inflict wounds upon your body, or beat you with a club, or burn your house and court; but his only purpose is to swallow you whole. He walks about, tries and seeks everything, until at last he causes you to fall; now he attacks you and stirs you to adultery and anger, then to avarice, pride, etc. If he succeed not in this way he tries with terror, unbelief, etc., to persuade you to let go of the Word of God and to doubt his grace.

He can even aside from temptation appear to you as an angel of light, so that one thinks all he instills into you and disputes with you is surely God's word from the Scriptures and the pure truth, and you would indeed swear and die by it, and yet it is nothing but error and falsehood. So cunningly and wickedly does he plot for you Christians; for the godless he has already taken captive by his snares, so that they must do, speak and think as he wills, 2 Tim. 2:26. So here Peter warns us now faithfully, and betrays to us our enemy, that we should indeed look out for him; as Paul also warns us in 2 Cor. 2:11, "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices;" and Eph. 6:12, "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood," etc.

But as to how we are to oppose Satan in this life and guard ourselves against his attacks Peter teaches and says: First you are to be sober and watchful, not merely as to the body, but much more as to the soul, and bestir yourself with all earnestness that you be not drunken and sleepy, but sober and watchful, in other words, that you may always take pleasure in God's word, remember it, meditate upon it and diligently cling to it, thank God for it, and pray that you may understand it better and lay hold on it more firmly. Where that is done the body remains in a fine sober and watchful state and you gladly go to church, hear God's word, and let nothing keep you away, you continue temperate, etc. But if the body be surfeited, sluggish and lazy, it is a certain sign that the soul before was drunken, that is,

secure, weary and tired of the Word, and besides sleeps and snores. Therefore Satan takes special pains to intoxicate us spiritually so that in time our love for and pleasure in the Word may leave us and we acquire a distaste for it, become enemies of the preachers of the Word, when they chastise us for our vices and threaten us with God's judgment, or when on the other hand through his fanatical or quack preachers Satan perverts and falsifies the Word, yet with such a show that those, who hear it and are not well posted, do not know otherwise than that it is the pure truth; as we have experienced during late years with the Sacramentarians, Anabaptists and other sects. Thus are lost both the true doctrine and the true faith, and there is no longer any resistance offered to the devil.

[9b.] Knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world.

Shortly before, prior to the denial of Christ by Peter, the Lord showed Peter that Satan would sift him and bring him to the point that he would thrice deny his Lord. He said further in Luke 22:32, "But I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again (art converted), establish thy brethren." What the Lord commanded him at that time he does in this passage especially, namely, comforts or establishes his brethren, the Christians, who are plagued and tempted by Satan; he will now say: I have preached to you of the devil and painted him forth in his true colors, that he neither sleeps nor recreates, but watches and walks about without tiring and the like. This you will surely experience for yourselves, etc.

Now the temptations of the Christian are twofold, spiritual and bodily. The spiritual, set forth in the First Table of the Law, are the higher and harder; the bodily temptations, set forth in the Second Table, are of a lower order and lighter. The degree of suffering is according as persons are strong or weak in faith. Some are tempted by coarse sins; as unchastity, anger, impatience, etc.; which cause pain to the pious, Christian hearts, and they would gladly be free from such temptations, but they cannot. They must however battle and slay the works of the flesh by the Spirit. Hence they persevere in the inner man and go right ahead, otherwise they are not Christians, and will die the eternal death, Rom. 8:13. Satan attacks others harder, so that they are persecuted and banished for the sake of God's Word, robbed

of their possessions, and a portion of them martyred for confessing the truth: these have severer suffering than the first. Yet since they suffer for the sake of a good cause, for the sake of Christ and the truth, it is great consolation. Therefore though they outwardly suffer anxiety and need, yet, their heart is content ed and in favor with God through Christ.

Moreover Satan attacks certain Christians especially hard, as the highly enlightened and experienced classes, with strong spiritual temptations, and puts at times terrible and wicked thoughts into their hearts, so that they can not see, acknowledge or hold God to be gracious, true, faithful, patient, etc., but imagines the very opposite of him; hence they hate his judgment, are in no way pleased with his government, they lose both God and his promises, and can neither pray nor call upon him, yea, they rage and murmur terribly against him. That is a very perilous and irresistible temptation, if it continue long, it consumes our marrow and bones, of which the Psalter often complains and likewise Job, Jeremiah and others. I imagine Peter also experienced a large share of it, since he denied Christ, and had the Lord not prayed for him before and graciously looked upon him soon after his fall, and permitted peace to be spoken to his soul, and had he himself not later comforted him, he would have had to doubt, and be ruined and lost in sin and thus have followed Judas.

Therefore what he speaks he speaks from his own experience to console and strengthen all Christians, who suffer or are tempted; as if he should say: No one among you who suffers or is tempted in soul or body, even in the highest and severest degree, should imagine that he suffers something special, new or rare, or as if no one before him or contemporary with him had ever experienced and endured such hard and terrible temptations; no, you are not alone. Your suffering and temptation cannot be so great, severe and exceptional, that your brethren before you or your contemporaries have not experienced the same and indeed even greater and worse temptations; if you will not believe this then you may learn it from me as a living example. I was so bold that I did not only resolve to stand by my Lord and Master, even if all the others forsook him, but also to accompany him to prison and to death; I was so certain that I gave the dear Lord the lie about the matter, when he said to me, that very night I would not only along with the others be offended at him, but that I would do worse than they, namely, deny him thrice. What happened? Christ was found true, but he found in me that I was not only a liar, and shamelessly denied him; but that I perjured myself

and swore terribly that I never knew him. That was suffering and temptation, good and strong.

Therefore has Christ the Lord commanded, that when I am again restored to the right path after my fall, I shall strengthen and comfort my brethren; so I say as an Apostle of Christ, as one who has a special commission, and also as he who has experienced it, that no suffering or temptation so high, rare and wonderful can take place or meet you that others were not tempted and tried like you or even worse; not only God's dear children, your brethren, who lived before you from the beginning of the world; but also those, who now live, in your day, scattered here and there in the world as far as Christ's name is known and published, they all meet the same that you meet; for they have the devil as their adversary who walks about them also and seeks to swallow them as well as you, etc.

Hence whoever is a Christian and earnestly desires to remain so, let him not feel too secure, be idle and lazy, but watch, teach, practice the Word faithfully, persevere in prayer, be prepared for temptation and suffering, and remember that he is called thereto, as the Apostle said in 1 Pet. 2:21. For Christ himself speaks in Mat. 16:24 thus: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me;" and John 16:33: "In the world ye have tribulation," etc.; and in Acts 14:22 Paul says: "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God;" and 2 Tim. 3:12, "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Therefore if you come so far that you are tempted and must suffer as a Christian, take it as a sign of grace, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. And remember you do not suffer alone, but all Christendom with you, and it cannot be so wonderful and exceptional with you that others have not experienced the like, yea, indeed even in a higher and severer degree.

What tribulations and misery were endured by the great saints, as the prophets, apostles and especially the patriarchs who lived so long, is indescribable, yet, a part of these tribulations, noticed only in the briefest manner, will remain unthought and unexpressed until we see face to face on that great day. It was the hardest for Adam and Eve because they had no examples before their eyes, with which they could comfort themselves. We have before us all the Scriptures, where we can see how it has gone with all the saints, and the head and Lord of all the saints. In brief the sense is: in this we should be resigned, that we must suffer here for a short time and follow

our Lord Christ, yet, be confident of the eternal life and glory; not because of our suffering, but because they are promised by God and acquired by Christ, etc.¹

[11.] To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

This is the sacrifice of praise that we Christians should offer to God; for since he does all to commence and to complete our salvation, gives us his beloved Son, sends us the Holy Spirit, who strengthens and comforts us through all our lives, sustains us by the pure doctrine, etc., it is right and proper that the honor and praise be his, whose are the work and the power. Therefore let him be praised in eternity, Amen.

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1. This is the last use made of the sermons Luther preached on the First Epistle of St. Peter in 1539 in this commentary. In 1539 he preached five sermons on the fourth and fifth chapters of First Peter. June 1, on 1 Pet. 4:9-11: June 22. on 5:5-6: June 29. on 5:7-8; July 6. on 5:8. and July 13. on 5:9.↩

Second Epistle Of St. Peter Preached And Explained By Martin Luther, 1523.

Introduction

The reason St. Peter wrote this second Epistle was that he saw how the true, pure doctrine of faith was being corrupted, obscured and suppressed; and he wished to meet two kinds of error which sprang from a false understanding of the doctrine of faith and to guard it on both sides, namely: that we attribute not to our works the power to justify us and make us acceptable to God, which belongs to faith alone; and in the second place, that no one should think that faith exists without being accompanied by good works. For if we preach concerning faith that it justifies and makes us righteous without any assistance of our good efforts, the people reply: Then we need do no good works, as is seen in our daily experience; and again, if we emphasize good works and extol them, then faith is laid aside and neglected, so that in this it is very difficult to keep the golden mean where the preachers are not true and faithful.

Now we have constantly taught, that all is to be ascribed to faith, that it alone justifies us before God and sanctifies us. Consequently if faith be present, from it good works will and must proceed; since it is impossible that we should go through this life entirely idle, and should do nothing at all.

This is what St. Peter will teach also in this Epistle and meet those who may have perhaps wrongly understood the First Epistle, that faith would be sufficient even if they did no good works. And against this especially the

first chapter is directed, that believers should prove themselves by their good works and thus become assured of their faith.

The second chapter is against those, who immediately commence with good works and suppress faith. Therefore he warns against the future false teachers, who would root out and utterly exterminate the true faith by human doctrines. For he evidently saw what a horrible falling away there would yet be in the world; as it had already at that time commenced, as Paul in 2 Thess. 2:7 says: "For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work." Thus this Epistle was written for a warning that we prove our faith by our good works and yet, that we do not trust in our good works.

Chapter 1.

Analysis Of Contents By J. G. Walch.

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- a. Its sense and meaning, (b) Its use. A short review of the matter discussed.

[1.] Simon Peter, a servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness (God gives) of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ.

In these words we have the subscription and the superscription of this Epistle in order that we may know who wrote it and to whom it was written, namely, to those who have heard God's word and live in faith. But what kind of faith is it? Peter says: "In the righteousness of God," the righteousness that God gives. Here he gives the righteousness of faith alone, as Paul also says in Rom. 1:17: "In the Gospel is revealed a righteousness that avails before God, which springs from faith"; as it is written in Hab. 2:4, "The righteous shall live by his faith." By these words Peter wishes to admonish them to be thoroughly armed and not let the doctrine of faith be overthrown, which they have laid hold of and thoroughly understand.

And moreover in that he adds: "In the righteousness, which God gives," he excludes all human righteousness. For through faith alone we are justified before God; and therefore faith is called the God-righteousness, for it avails nothing before the world, yea, it is even condemned by the world.

[2.] Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

This is the greeting, which in former times it was the custom to insert at the beginning of letters, and it has this significant meaning: Instead of my presence and service I wish that you would increase in grace and peace and

grow richer and richer, which grace springs from the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ; or in other words, which grace no one can have except he has the knowledge; of God and of Jesus Christ.

This knowledge of God the Apostles and also the prophets are continually setting forth in the Scriptures, as Is. 11:9, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the deep." That is, so abundantly will the knowledge of God break forth, as when the waters overflow, gush forth and flood a whole country; and from this such peace will follow that no one will then cause another any injury or suffering. But that is not called knowing God, when you believe as the Turks, the Jews and the devil believe, that God created all things; also even, that Christ was born of a virgin, suffered, died and rose again; but the true knowledge is, when you instead hold and know that God is your God and Christ is your Christ; which Satan and false Christians cannot believe. Thus this knowledge is nothing more nor less than the true Christian faith. For if you know God and Christ thus, then you will also trust in Him with your whole heart, and confide in him in fortune and misfortune, in life and death. Such confidence evil consciences cannot have, for they know not God beyond that he is the God of St. Peter and of all the saints in heaven; but as their own personal God they know him not; but consider Him to be their taskmaster and their angry judge. To have God, is to have all grace, all mercy, and everything that can be called good. To possess Christ is to possess the Saviour and Mediator who has brought us even to the truth, that God is ours and has obtained all grace for us with God. Thus you must twist into one another that Christ is thine and thou art Christ's, and then you will have this true knowledge. A woman unmarried may indeed say that is a man; but she cannot say that he is her man or husband. Just so we all can truly say, that this is a God, but we all cannot say that he is our God. For we all are not trusting in him nor are we all confronted by him. To this knowledge belongs also what the Scriptures call "*faciem et vultum Domini*," "the face and countenance of the Lord," of which the prophets often speak. Whoever does not see the face of God, knows him not, but sees only his back, that is, he sees an angry and ungracious God. Comp. Jer. 18:17.

And thus you see that the aim of Peter here is not to write especially of faith, since he has done that sufficiently in his First Epistle; but he will give the believers an admonition, that they are to show forth their faith by their

good works. For he will not have faith without its good works, nor on the contrary good works without their accompanying faith; but first of all faith and then the good works to follow upon and spring from the faith. Therefore the Apostle now adds:

[3a.] Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

This is the first of the blessings Peter has commenced to describe, which we have received of God through faith, namely, that to us (seeing we know God by faith) is given “all divine power.” But what kind of power is that? It is the power that serves us in securing eternal life and in godly living here, that is, if we believe we then gain so much that God gives us his divers power. And that power is with us and in us in a way that what we speak and work, we do not do, but God himself does it. He is in us strong, powerful, and almighty, even if we are about to suffer and die, and are weak in the eyes of the world; also, that there is no power nor virtue in ourselves, if we have not this God-power.

But this power of God that is in us, Peter will not have so understood, that we also can create heaven and earth, and do miracles like God did; for how could we be helped by that? But we have God’s power at our disposal in so far as it is useful and necessary for us. Therefore the Apostle inserts and says: “All things that pertain unto life and godliness,” that is, we have such power of God that we are favored with an overflow of his grace, to do good and to live forever.

[3b.] Through the knowledge of him that called us.

Such power of God and such rich grace come from no other source than from this knowledge of God. For if thou dost hold him to be God, then he will also deal with you as God. The same is taught by Paul in 1 Cor. 1:5-7: “In everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift.” This is now the greatest thing of all, the noblest and the most needful that God can bestow, in exchange for which we would not take all that is in heaven and upon earth. For what would it benefit you, if you could go even through fire and water and do all kinds of wonderful

works, and you had not this power of God? And yet many people who do such wonderful deeds shall be condemned. But it is the wonder of wonders that God bestows upon us such power by which all our sins are forgiven and blotted out, and death, Satan and hell vanquished and swallowed up; so that we have an unharassed conscience and a happy heart, and fear nothing.

[3c.] By his own glory and virtue.

How then did that all take place, through which we are called by God? Thus: God permitted his holy Gospel to go forth into the world and to be made known; and consequently no human being had ever before labored to secure it, or sought after it or prayed for it; but before man ever thought of it, God offered, bestowed and shed forth such grace richly beyond all measure, so that he alone has the glory and the praise for it, and we ascribe the virtue and the power to him alone, for it is not our work but his alone. Therefore, seeing the calling is not of us, we should not exalt ourselves as if we did it, but praise and thank him, because he gave us the Gospel and in it bestowed upon us power and might against Satan, death and all evil.

[4a.] Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises.

Peter inserts this clause for the purpose of explaining the nature and character of faith. If we know him as God, then we have through faith eternal life and divine power to triumph over death and Satan, but we see it not and we grasp it not, though it is promised to us. We indeed have it all, though it does not yet appear; but at the day of judgment we shall see it present before our eyes. Here it begins in faith, though we have it not in its fullness; but we have the promise, that we shall live here in the power of God and then be saved forever. Whoever now believes this, has the promise; whoever does not believe it, Has it not, and must be forever lost. How great and precious this now is, Peter paints more fully and says:

[4b.] That through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust.

This we have, Peter says, through the power of faith', namely, that we are partakers of and enjoy the fellowship and communion with the divine nature. This is a passage the like of which is not found in the New and Old Testaments; although it is a small matter with unbelievers that we should have fellowship with the very divine nature it self. But what is the nature of God? It is eternal righteousness, wisdom, eternal life, peace, joy and happiness, and everything good that can be named. Now whoever becomes a partaker of the nature of God, receives all this, namely, he lives forever, possesses endless peace, pleasure and joy, and is sincere, pure, just and almighty against Satan, sin and death. Therefore Peter will say: As impossible as it is to separate eternal life and eternal truth from the nature of God, just so impossible is it to separate them from you. Whatever one does to you, he must do to him, for whoever will crush a Christian must crush God.

All this is contained in the words, "the divine nature"; and Peter chose these words for the purpose to include all' in them; and it is truly a great thing if one believe it. But, as I said above, this is merely instruction in which Peter does not lay the foundation of faith; but paints forth what great and rich treasures we receive through faith; therefore he says, all that will you possess, if you so live as to prove your faith by your life, that you have escaped from worldly lust.

[5a.] Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue.

Here Peter now considers the admonition that they should prove their faith by their good works, seeing such great blessings are bestowed upon you through faith, he would say, that you truly have all that God is, do this now besides; be diligent, and not sluggish; "in your faith supply virtue"; that is, let your faith break out before the people, that it may be zealous to serve, busy, powerful, active and accomplish much, do not continue idle and unfruitful. You have a good inheritance and a good field; but take heed and let not the thistles and tares grow in it.

[5b.] And in your virtue knowledge (discrimination).

This "knowledge" or "discrimination" means in the first place that one should direct his outward life and the virtue of his faith in harmony with

reason. For we should subdue and tame the body so far that we may remain sober, vigorous and prepared to do good; not that we are to torture and mortify ourselves as some whimsical saints have done. For although God is likewise an enemy to the sins remaining in the flesh, yet he does not wish that you should therefore! destroy the body; you should guard against its viciousness and caprice, yet you are not for that reason to ruin or injure it; but give it food and whatever it needs that it may remain healthy and lively.

In the second place discrimination means also that we lead a beautiful and modest manner of life and act with discretion in external matters, as in food and things of that kind; and that we be not in these matters unreasonable, and offend not our neighbor.

[6a.] And in your knowledge, self-control (temperance).

“Temperance” does not apply only to eating and drinking, but it means moderation in all our being and in all our doing, in our words, works and manners, that we live not too expensively and avoid excess in ornaments and clothing, that we break not forth too proudly and make too lofty a show. But here Peter will not fix any rule, measure, or mark, as the orders were bold enough to do, who wished to apprehend everything by rules and framed commands and rules on these things, which had to be rigidly observed in every detail. It is something that cannot be tolerated in Christendom, that men should require by law that there be a common rule or command relating to self-control or temperance; for people are unlike one another, one being of a strong, another of a weak nature; and no one is in all things and at all times situated like another. Therefore each person should study himself, how he is disposed and situated, and what he can bear.

[6b.] And in your self-control patience.

Thus Peter would say: If you lead a temperate and discreet life, you should not imagine that it will be without conflict and temptation. For if you believe and lead a good Christian life, the world will not let you alone, it will have to persecute and hate you; and in this you must show patience, which is a fruit of faith.

[6c.] And in your patience, godliness.

The sense here is, that in all our outward life, whatever we do or suffer, we should so deport ourselves, that we serve God in it, and seek not our own honor and gain; but that thereby God alone may be glorified; and that we conduct ourselves so that others may take knowledge that we do all for God's sake.

[7a.] And in your godliness brotherly kindness.

By these words Peter puts us all under obligation to extend to one another a helping hand, like brethren, and one to protect the other, and none to hate or despise or injure another. This is also a proof of faith, by which we show that we possess the godliness of which he has spoken.

[7b.] And in your brotherly kindness, love (charity).

This love extends to both friend and enemy, even to those who do not show themselves friendly and brotherly to us. Thus Peter has here comprehended in few words whatever pertains to the Christian life, and whatever are the works and fruits of faith, as discretion, temperance, patience, a God-fearing life and brotherly love; and be kind to every body.

[8.] For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is, if you do such works then you are on the right way, then you possess true faith, and the knowledge of God is active and fruitful in you. Therefore take heed that you do not neglect this knowledge; control your body, and do to your neighbor even as you know Christ did to you.

[9.] For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.

Whoever has not this supply of the fruits of faith, gropes like a blind man here and there, leads such a life that he knows not what his real state is, has

no true faith, and of the knowledge of Christ has nothing more than that he can say how he has heard it. Hence he goes along and gropes like a blind man on the road, in an unconscious life, and for gets that he was baptized and his sins were forgiven, is un thankful, and is an idle, negligent man, who takes nothing to heart, and neither feels nor tastes such great grace and blessing.

This is the admonition which Peter gives to us who believe, to agitate and perform those works by which we shall evidence that the true faith is in us. But continue ever firm in this one conviction, namely, that faith alone justifies. Where this then is present, there works must follow. The next verses aim to strengthen our faith.

[10a.] Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure.

The election and eternal foreknowledge of God in them selves are indeed sufficiently settled and man does not need to make them more so. The calling is also effectual and certain. For whoever hears the Gospel, and believes it and is baptized, is called and saved. Since we then are also now thereunto called, we should apply great diligence, says Peter, that our calling and election may be assured with us also, and not only with God.

This is now a mode of scriptural expression that Paul also uses, Eph. 2:12, "Ye were strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world." For although there is no man, neither bad nor good, over whom God does not reign, since all creatures are his, yet Paul says he has no God who does not know, love and trust God, although he has his being in God himself. So here, although the calling and election are effectual enough in themselves, yet with you it is not yet effectual and assured, since you are not yet certain that it includes you. Therefore Peter desires that we make our calling and election sure by good works.

Thus you see what the Apostle attributes to the fruits of faith. Although they are due to our neighbor, that he may be benefited by them, still the fruit is not to be wanting, that faith may thereby become stronger, and ever do more and more good works. Besides, this is quite another kind of power than that of the body, for that grows weary and wastes away if one member of the body is used and exercised too much; but as to this spiritual power, the more it is used and worked the stronger it becomes; and it suffers injury if it be not exercised. For this reason God introduced Christianity at first in

the manner he did, driven and tried by the wrestling of faith, in shame, death and blood shed, that it might become truly strong and mighty, and the more it was oppressed the more it prospered. This now is Peter's meaning that we should not let faith rest and lie still, since it is ordained that it ever becomes stronger and stronger by trial and exercise, until it is assured of its calling and election, and cannot fail.

Here a limitation is set as to how we should treat the fore knowledge of God. There are many light-minded persons who have felt but little of the power of faith, who when they meet this subject stumble, take offense and worry themselves at first with it, and would satisfy themselves by their own reason as to whether they are elected, so that they may be assured where they stand. But desist from this quickly; it is something that can not be grasped by the mind. However, if you will become assured then the only way is that marked out for you here by Peter. If you choose another way for yourself, then you have failed already, and your own experience must teach you. If faith be well exercised and tried, then you will finally be assured of the fact, so that you cannot fail, as now further follows:

[10b.] For if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble.

That is, ye are to stand immovable, not stumble nor sin; but succeed in all difficulties and ever prosper, and everything will adjust itself aright. On the other hand, if you wish to adjust matters with your own reason, the devil will soon hurl you into despair and hatred of God.

[11.] For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This is the road on which we enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore no one should propose to enter by the dreams and thoughts of faith he has invented in his own heart. We must have a living, well disciplined and approved faith. God help us! How have our deceivers written, taught and spoken against this text; yet whoever has even the least measure or only a spark of faith, shall be saved when he comes to die. If you however put off believing and in this way think to attain such faith quickly and suddenly, you will then have waited too long. Yet you are to understand well, that they who are strong have enough to do, although we are not to despair even of such as

are weak. For it may indeed easily happen that they shall endure to the end, yet it will be difficult and hard, and will cause much worry; but whoever carefully sees to it in his life, that his faith be exercised and strengthened by good works, he shall have an abundant entrance, and with a calm spirit and confidence enter upon the future life, so that he will die comfortably, and despise this life, and go on, even triumphantly, and with gladness be ushered into the eternal kingdom. But those who take another road shall not enter thus with joy; the door shall not stand open to them so wide; moreover an entrance shall not be supplied so richly unto them, but it shall be narrow and hard for them, so that they tremble, and would rather their whole life should be spent in weakness than that they should die even once.

[12.] Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you.

That is the same as we have often said, although God has now let such a great light go forth by the revelation of the Gospel, so that we know what true Christian life and doctrine are, and see how all Scripture insists upon it, yet this light we are not to neglect but use daily, not for the sake of doctrine, but for the sake of putting us in remembrance. For there is a twofold office in the Christian Church, as Paul says, Rom. 12:7-8: "He that teacheth, let him give himself to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, let him give himself to his exhortation." "To teach," is to set forth the fundamental principles of faith to those who have no knowledge of faith. But to "exhort," or as Peter says, "to remind," is to preach to those who know and have heard the doctrine already, so that they are seized by it and awakened, in order that they should not be heedless, but go forward and grow. We are all overburdened with the old sluggard load, with our flesh and blood, that ever chooses the byroads, and keeps us ever subject to its load, so that the soul easily falls asleep. Therefore we are continually to urge and shake it, as a master urges his servants, lest they become sluggish, although they know very well what they should do. For since we must pursue this course for the sake of our temporal support, far more must we do it here in spiritual matters.

[13.] And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.

Here Peter calls his body a tabernacle wherein the soul dwells; and it is a phrase like that in 1 Peter 3:7, where he speaks of the body as a vessel or an instrument. So Paul also speaks in 2 Cor. 5:1-2: "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven."

"For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, etc.," verse 4. There the Apostle Paul speaks also of the body as a house, and makes two homes, and two sojournings. So Peter speaks here of the body as a tabernacle wherein the soul rests, and he makes it mean enough; he will not call it a house, but a hut or tent-house, such as shepherds occupy. Great is the treasure, but small is the house in which it lies and dwells.

[14-15.] Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance.

Here Peter testifies of himself that he has become as sure of eternal life, and to him God revealed beforehand when he should die. But this took place for our sake and for the sake of our faith, for there must have been some such persons as knew assuredly that they were elected, who should found and establish faith, that we might know that they preached not the doctrine of men, but the word of God. But ere they came to such assurance, God thoroughly proved them, and purified them. Thus Peter now says: I will not only remind you with the living voice, but set such things also in writing, and charge you through others, that ye ever hold them in remembrance during my life and after my death, and not let them slip. Notice here how great anxiety the Apostle had for souls; yet, alas! it did not help any.

[16-18.] For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was born such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount.

There Peter refers to the history written in the Gospel, Mat. 17:1f., how Jesus took to himself three of his disciples, Peter, James and John, and led

them up into a high mountain, and was glorified or transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light, and there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him, while a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." When the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one save Jesus only. And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen from the dead." Mat. 17:7-9.

So Peter would now say, that which I preach to you of Christ and of his coming, this Gospel that we preach, we have not drawn it from our fingers nor devised it ourselves nor taken it from cunning writers of fables, who know how to speak brilliantly of everything (such as at that very time the Greeks were). For it is mere fable, and fancy, and idle babbling that they cunningly give forth, and in which they would be wise. Such we have not heard, nor have we followed them; that is, we preach not the nonsense of men, but are sure that what we preach is of God, and have become so through our eyes and ears; that is to say, When we were with Christ upon the mountain, and saw and heard his glory; for his glory was, that his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow; besides we heard a voice from the highest Majesty: "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him."

So confident now should every preacher be, and not doubt, that he possesses and preaches God's word, that he could even die for it, since it is worth life to us. Now there is no man so holy that he needs to die for the doctrine he has taught concerning himself. Therefore one concludes from this that the Apostles had assurance from God that their Gospel was God's word. And here it is also proved that the Gospel is nothing else than the preaching of Christ. Therefore we should hear no other preaching, for none, other pleases the Father. "This is my beloved Son," he says; "hear ye him," he is your Doctor or Teacher; as though he had said: When ye hear him, then ye have heard me. Therefore Peter now says: We have preached Christ and made him known to you, that he is Lord, and rules over all things, and all power is his; and whosoever believes on him has likewise his power.

Such things we ourselves have not devised, but have seen and heard them through God's revelation, who has charged us that we should hear Christ.

But why does Paul separate from one another the power and the coming or presence of Christ? The power consists, as we have heard above, verse three, in that he is mighty over all things; that all must lie at his feet; and this shall continue as long as the world stands. While we are flesh and blood, and live upon the earth, so long shall Christ's kingdom flourish, even to the day of judgment. Then shall come another period, when he shall give up the kingdom to God the Father, of which Paul speaks, 1 Cor. 15:23-24: "Christ the first fruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father," etc. Also, verse 28: "And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him."

How, is then the kingdom not God the Father's now? Is not all subject to him? Answer: Paul explains himself in the same chapter, verse 28, and says: "That God may be all in all"; that is, whatever any one shall need or should have, that God will be; as Peter has told us above, in verse 4, that we should be partakers of the divine nature. Therefore we shall have all that God has, and all that is needful for us we shall have in him; wisdom, righteousness, strength and life; a truth which we now believe and grasp merely with the ear and possess in the word of God. But then shall the Word cease, when our souls shall be enlarged and we shall indeed see and feel all as a present reality.

Both Paul and Peter teach, that the power of Christ's kingdom is now in motion; now he rules by means of his Word made flesh, and thereby through his humanity he reigns over the devil, sin, death, and all things. But at the last day this shall be made clear. Therefore, although God ever rules, still it is not yet manifest to us. He clearly be holds us, but we behold him not. Consequently Christ must deliver up to the Father the kingdom, so that we also shall see it, and then we shall be Christ's brethren and God's children. Thus Christ received from God honor and glory, Peter here says, when the Father made all things subject to him, and made him Lord, and glorified him by this voice, in which he says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Mat. 17:5.

By this Peter would confirm his doctrine and preaching, that it might be known whence he received his doctrine. But nothing more happened to him

than that he had heard this, and was enabled to preach it. But the Holy Spirit had also to come and strengthen him, that he might believe in it, and preach and confess it cheerfully. The former belongs only to the office of the preacher, not to the soul; but the latter belongs to the Spirit.

[19.] And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.

Here Peter grasps right hold of his theme and would say at least this much: all that I preach is to subserve the end, that your conscience may be assured, and your heart may stand firm in this teaching, and not let itself be torn from its faith, and that thus both I and you may be certain that we have God's word. For it is an important matter as respects the Gospel that we should receive and hold it in its integrity and purity, without addition and without false doctrine. Therefore Peter begins henceforth to write against human doctrines.

But why does he say: "We have a sure word of prophecy?" Answer: I hold indeed that we will have no more prophets, such as the Jews had in former times under the Old Testament. But a prophet eminently should he be who preaches Jesus Christ. Therefore, although many prophets in the Old Testament have foretold things to come, yet they came and were sent by God for this reason especially, that they should foretell of Christ. Those then who believe on Christ are all prophets, for they have the true central article of faith that the prophets had, although they have not the gift to foretell things to come; for as we, through the faith of our Master, are Christ's brethren, are kings and priests, so are we all through Christ also prophets. For we can all decide as to what belongs to salvation and God's honor and to a Christian life, besides we know as much of future things as is necessary for us to know, viz., that the day of judgment shall come, and that we shall rise from the dead; besides, we understand the whole Scriptures. Of this Paul also speaks in 1 Cor. 14:31: "Ye can all prophesy, one by one."

This now is what Peter says: We have such a word of prophecy as is sure in itself; see to it only that it be sure to you; "whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." As though he should say: It will be necessary for you to hold firmly to it; for it was given even to the end to serve the Gospel; as though one were imprisoned in a house, in the midst of the night, when it was

pitch-dark; and it was necessary that one should kindle a light, till the day came when he could see. Eminently such is the Gospel in the midst of the night and the darkness. For all human reason is mere error and blindness, while the world is even nothing else but a kingdom of darkness. In this darkness has God now kindled a light, even the Gospel, whereby we may see and walk, while we are on the earth, till the morning dawns and the day breaks.

Thus this text also strongly opposes all human doctrine; for since the word of God is the light in a dark and gloomy place, the conclusion follows that all besides it is darkness. For if there were another light besides the Word, Peter would not have spoken as he did. Therefore look not to how gifted with reason they are who teach any other doctrine, however grandly they set it forth; if you cannot trace God's word in it, then doubt not that it is mere darkness. And let it not disturb you at all that they say they have the Holy Spirit. How can they have God's Spirit if they do not have his Word? Wherefore they do nothing else but call darkness light and make the light darkness, as Isaiah says, in 5:20.

This is God's word, even the Gospel; that we are ransomed by Christ from death, sin and hell: whoever hears that, has this light and has kindled this lamp in his heart, even that by which we may see the one that enlightens us, and teaches us whatever we need to know. But where this is not, there we rush on, and by principles and works of our own device would find out the way to heaven. Of this you can judge and see by your light, that it is darkness. Therefore since they have not the light, neither wish to receive it, they must remain in darkness and blindness. For that light teaches us all we ought to know and all that is necessary to salvation, a thing which the world by its wisdom and reason knows not. And this light we must still have and depend upon, even to the day of judgment. Then shall we have no more need of the Word, just as we put out the lamp when the day breaks.

[20-21.] Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

Here Peter takes up the subject of false doctrine. Since ye know, he says, that we have the word of God, abide in the same and suffer yourselves never to be drawn from it by others who teach falsely, though they come

and affirm they have the Holy Spirit. For ye should know first of all, the second matter he will speak of later, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation; by this be directed, and do not think to explain the Scripture by your own reason and wisdom.

In this the private interpretation of Scripture by all the fathers is overthrown and rejected, and it is forbidden to build upon such interpretations. Though Jerome, or Augustine, or any one of the fathers has explained it of himself, yet we will not have it from him. Peter has forbidden you to explain it by your own reason. The Holy Spirit will explain it himself, or it shall remain unexplained. If now any one of the holy fathers can prove that he draws his explanation from the Scriptures, which prove that it should be so explained, then it is right; where this is not the case, I for one shall not believe him.

Thus Peter lays hold on the boldest and best teachers; therefore we should rest assured that none is to be believed who expounds the Scriptures by interpreting and explaining them with his own powers. For the true sense cannot be obtained by private interpretation. Here have all the teachers and fathers who have explained the Scriptures stumbled, so far as they are extant to us. As when they refer the passage of Christ, Mat. 16:18: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church," to the Pope; that is a human, self-invented explanation; therefore no one is to believe them. For they cannot prove out of the Scriptures that Peter is ever spoken of as Pope. But we can prove that the rock is Christ and faith, as Paul says. This explanation is the right one; for of this we are sure, it has not been invented by men, but drawn from God's word. Now what is found written and foretold in the prophets says Peter, that men have not discovered nor invented; but holy and pious men have spoken it from the Holy Spirit.

This is now the first chapter in which Peter has first of all taught us what really good works are whereby we are to give proof of our faith. In the second place, that in Christendom nothing should be preached but God's word alone. The reason why it should be so is no other, as we have said, than that men should preach the word which shall remain forever, whereby souls may be saved and live forever. Now there follows a faithful admonition, which Christ and Paul and all the Apostles have also given, that each should look out for himself and guard against false teachers. It is especially necessary for us to observe it carefully, so that we may not suffer that right and authority which all Christians have to be torn from us, viz.: to judge and de-

cide on all doctrines; and that we may not let it come so far as to wait till the Councils determine what we are to believe, and then follow that. This we wish now to consider.

Chapter 2.

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS BY J. G. WALCH.

A Picture of False Teachers in Their Sins, and the Punishment Connected with Those Sins.

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[1a.] But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers.

This is what Peter would say: All prophecy must proceed from the Holy Spirit, even to the end of the world, just as it has gone forth from the beginning of the world, so that nothing shall be preached but God's word. Yet it has ever so happened that close upon the true prophets and the word of God there have been false teachers, and so also it shall continue. Therefore, since ye have God's word, ye should take heed to yourselves that ye do not have in addition also false teachers. This is sufficient admonition, and it cannot fail where the word of God is preached in its purity; that close upon it false

teachers also should arise. The reason is, not every one lays hold of the word, and believes it, although it is preached to all. They who believe it follow it, and hold fast to it, but the greater part, they who do not believe, receive a false understanding of it, hence they become false teachers.

We have not seriously considered, nor have we attended to, this warning; but we have gone astray, and whatever has been preached we have done. There we have stumbled and fallen and been led away by delusions, as though the Pope, with his priests and monks, could not err. Thus those that should have been on their guard against such things have been the first to urge them upon us. So we are not free from blame, though we have a wrong belief and follow false teachers: it will not help us that we have not known, since we were warned beforehand. Besides, God has bidden us that we should each judge what this or that one preaches, and give account of it; if we do not, then are we lost. Therefore it concerns every one's own soul's salvation to know what God's word is, and what false doctrines are.

Such warnings against false teachers are moreover very frequent, here and there, throughout the Scriptures. Paul in Acts 20:29f. gives just such an admonition in his preaching, when he blesses them of Ephesus and bids them his farewell, where he speaks in this manner: "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." Christ proclaims it also in Mat. 24:23-24: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe it not. For 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." And again, Paul, 1 Tim. 4:1: "But the Spirit saith expressly that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies," etc. As forcefully as such admonitions have now gone forth, so careful should we have been; yet they have been of no avail. The admonitions have been kept silent, and thus we have wandered and suffered ourselves to be led astray.

Now let us see who those false teachers may be of whom Peter speaks. I think God ordained by special counsel that our teachers should have been called doctors, that it might be seen whom Peter means. For he as much as uses the word here; false doctors, that is, false teachers, he says; not false prophets or false Apostles. In this he hits even the high schools, where this

class of men is created, and whence all the preachers have come forth into the world; so that there is not a city under the Papacy which does not have such teachers turned out from its high schools. For all the world thinks they are the fountain, the streams of which are to teach the people. This is a desperate error, so that no more cruel thing has ever come upon the earth than has come from the high schools. Therefore Peter says such vain, false teachers are to appear. But what shall they do? This follows further:

[1b.] Who shall privily bring in destructive heresies.

He calls them destructive heresies, sects, or classes and orders, because whoever is persuaded into them is already lost. These they shall secretly bring in, he says, not that they shall preach that the Gospel and the Holy Scriptures are false, for that would work quite against them, but the names, God, Christ, faith, church, baptism, sacrament, they still hold, and suffer to continue. But under these, names they bring forward and set up something entirely different. For there is a great difference, whether I say a man preaches against this doctrine or privily introduces other ideas along with it. When I preach, for example, that Christ is the Son of God and true man, and whoever believes on him shall be saved, that is right preaching and true Gospel. But if one preaches that Christ is not the Son of God, nor true man, moreover that faith does not save, it is in plain contradiction to it. Of this Peter does not speak, for this is what our high schools, priests and monks do not attempt, but he speaks of those associate doctrines which they introduce through the true doctrine. As when they speak thus: It is true that Christ is real God and real man; that he died for our sins, and no one can be saved who does not believe him, but that belongs only to the common state of ordinary Christians. We wish however to set up a more complete order, in which men shall vow chastity, poverty and obedience, as well as fast, endow institutions, etc. Whoever does this shall go full tide up to heaven. Where men now preach and hear such things as that there is nothing better and more saving than virginity and obedience, and that the monk and the priest are in a higher and more perfect calling than the ordinary Christian person, there is nothing said against the pure Christian doctrine directly, nor are faith and baptism denied, nor that Christ is the Saviour. But they privately introduce such doctrines along with these as to lead men away from the right path, that they build upon themselves and their works, and hold

nothing more in regard to Christ than these words: We believe that Christ is the Son of God, and man; that he died and rose again; that he is the Saviour of the world, etc. But they repose no trust and confidence in him, for if they did that they would not rest an hour upon them selves. Thus they have also preached and said among the people: Ye are indeed Christians, but that is not enough; ye must also do such and such works, build churches and cloisters, found masses and vigils, etc. The great multitude has tumbled into this notion, and thought it is right; by which Christendom is divided and separated into as many sects almost as there are states and people.

But men should have preached and taught: Ye are Christians indeed, and just as well as those a hundred miles away, ye have all of you one Christ, one baptism, one faith, one spirit, one Word, one God; so that no work man can do helps to make a Christian. Thus the people would have been held in a common faith, there would be no difference before God, but one would be like another. This unity they have rent asunder, in that they say: You are a Christian, but you must do certain works in order to be saved; and thus they lead us away from faith to works. Therefore Peter says, if we explain it rightly, it amounts to nothing but this: There shall come high schools, doctors, priests and monks, and all classes of men, who shall bring in ruinous sects and orders, and shall lead the world astray by false doctrines. Such are those whom he means here, for they all hold to the notion that their calling and order save them, and they cause men to build and trust on that notion. For where men do not hold to this view they carefully keep clear of entering them.

[1c.] Denying even the Master that bought them.

Oh! say they, we do not deny the Lord at all. But if any one says: Since you are ransomed by Christ, and his blood blots out your sin, what will you blot out by your doings? Then they say: Ah! faith does not do it alone, works must also aid toward it. Thus they confess the Lord Christ indeed with their mouth, but with their hearts they entirely deny him.

See how admirably Peter expresses it: "They deny even the Master that bought them." They should be under him as under a master whose own they are; but now, though they believe indeed that he is a master and has purchased the whole world by his blood, yet they do not believe that they are bought, and that he is their master; and they say: He has indeed bought and

ransomed them, but then this is not enough, we must first by our works expiate sin and make satisfaction for it.

But we say, if you yourself take away and blot out your sin, what has Christ then done? You certainly can never make two Christs who take away sin. He should and must be the only one to take away our guilt. If that be true, then I cannot understand how I am myself to cancel my own sin. If I do it, I can neither say nor believe that he takes it away. And that is called denying Christ; for, although they hold Christ to be their master, they deny that he has bought them. They believe indeed that he sits above in heaven and is Lord; but that which is his peculiar office, to take away sin, they do not grant him, but ascribe it to their own works. Thus they leave to him nothing more than the name and title; but his work, his power and his office they appropriate to themselves. Therefore Christ truly said, Mat. 24:5, "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray." For they are really those who do not say: I am called Christ; but those who say: I am Christ, for they seize to themselves the office that belongs to Christ, thrust him from his throne, and seat themselves in his place. We see before our eyes that it is going thus and no one can deny it. Therefore Peter calls them damnable or destructive heresies, for they all run straight to hell; so that I suppose that among a thousand hardly one is saved. For whoever among them shall be saved must say at least: My obedience, my chastity, etc., do not save me; my works do not take away my sin. But how many there are who have these views and remain in their condemned state!

[1d.] Bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

That is, their condemnation shall quickly overtake them; although it is plain that God forbears long, yet he will come soon enough. But it does not take place visibly as respects the body, that we should be able to see it with our eyes, but just as Ps. 55:23 says, "They shall not live out half their days"; that is, death shall seize upon them ere they themselves expect it, so that they shall say, like Hezekiah, Is. 38:10: "I said in the noontide of my days I shall go into the gates of Sheol"; as though they should say: O Lord God, is death already here? For those who do not live in faith, are never weary of life, the longer they live the longer they wish to live, and the holier they appear to be the more terrible will death be to them, especially to those who

have scrupulous consciences and cruelly urge and vex themselves by works. For it is not possible to vanquish death by human powers; where faith is wanting, the conscience must tremble and despair. Where faith is strong, death delays too long; while on the other hand it comes to the unbelieving always too soon, for there is no end to their thirst and love of life.

Now this is what Peter means here: these people who start such sects, and so deny Christ, must meet death with the greatest unwillingness, trembling and despair; for they can have no other thought but this: Who knows whether God will be gracious to me and will forgive my sins? And they remain forever in such doubt: Who knows it — who knows it? and their conscience will never be happy. The longer they thus continue, the more terrible is death to them. For death cannot be subdued before sin and an evil conscience have been taken away. Thus will their condemnation come upon them quickly, and they will have to abide in eternal death.

[2a.] And many shall follow their lascivious doings.

It is now apparent before our eyes that it has come to pass just as Peter years ago declared. There has not been a father or mother who wished not to have a priest, monk or nun from their children; thus one fool has made another. For when people have seen the misfortune and misery that are found in the marriage state, and have not been taught that it is the more blessed state, they wished to do the best for their children, to help them to a happy life and freedom from wretchedness. Therefore Peter has foretold here nothing else than that the world should become full of priests, monks and nuns. Thus the youth, and the best in the world, have run in multitudes to the devil; so that Peter says, alas! only too truly, that many shall follow their lascivious doings.

[2b.] By reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of.

This also is a fact that is apparent before our eyes. To “blaspheme” is to libel, condemn and curse; as when one condemns the Christian life as error and heresy. If one now should preach and say that their course is against the Gospel, because they lead men away from faith to works, then they go about and cry: Thou art cursed, thou leadest the world astray; and blas-

pHEME indeed yet more, in perverting what Christ has said, and saying no to it, (Comp. Mat. 5:20f.); as when they make nothing but a story out of what Christ has commanded; likewise, that they forbid what Christ would have left free, and make that sin which he does not, besides condemning and burning whoever preaches against them. The way of truth is a well-ordered life and walk, in which there is no fraud nor hypocrisy, such as that faith is in which all Christians walk. This way the false teachers cannot tolerate; hence they blaspheme and condemn it, in order to praise and defend their order and sect.

[3a.] And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.

This is really the way of all false teachers; they preach concerning avarice in order that they may fill their belly; just as we see that not one of them has ever held a mass or vigil gratis. So neither has a monastery or an institution been erected for which sufficient tax or tribute could be levied. There is also not a cloister in the world that serves the world for God's sake. It is all done merely for money. But if any one really preaches true faith, that does not bring in much money; for then all pilgrimages, indulgences, cloisters and monasteries, to which more than half the wealth of the world has been devoted and given must cease; of which no one has any benefit except the priests and monks only.

But how do they work it to draw the gold into their own hands? "With feigned words," says Peter, "shall they make merchandise of you." For they have selected words for this very purpose by which to make money of the people. As when they say: If you give the dear Virgin, or this or that saint, so many hundred florins, you do a great and excellent good work, and merit so much indulgence and the forgiveness of sins; and you rescue many souls from purgatory, etc.

These and like words are chosen and devised merely for the purpose to shave us of our money. For in them there is truly no merit and no grace, neither any blotting out of sin. Yet they explain all the noble words of Scripture to the end that they may make annual merchandise with them for money. So also the holy and very gracious Sacrament has become nothing more than an annual fair or market. For they use it for nothing more than to smear the people's mouths and flay them of their money. Therefore see now whether Peter has not judged them and painted them according to life:

[3b.] Whose sentence now from of old lingereth not.

They shall not do this long, nor carry it out, he would say; for when they urge it most strongly their sentence and condemnation shall fall upon themselves. Even now it begins; they shall not escape it, as Paul also says, 2 Tim. 3:9: "Their folly shall be evident to all men," so that they shall be put to shame. God grant that they may be converted and come out from their dangerous state when they hear and understand it. For, though there are some who have; not been seduced into this state, yet it is in itself nothing but a mere pernicious sect.

Thus Peter has commenced to describe the shameful, godless life that should follow the genuine doctrines of the Gospel, which the Apostles preached. Now he goes further, and sets before us three terrible examples; of the fallen angels, of the whole flooded world, and of Sodom; how God condemned them, and speaks thus:

[4.] For if God spared not angels when they sinned, out casted them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

With these words Peter terrifies those who live so gay and secure as we see those do who cleave to that which the Pope has enacted, being so daring and shameless that they would tread every one under foot. Therefore he would say this much: Is it not great presumption on their part that they go on so eagerly, and would accomplish everything with their own head, as though God should yield to them, and spare them, who yet spared not the angels? As though he had said: These examples should justly terrify even the saints when they see such a severe sentence in that God has not spared those high spirits and noble beings who are far shrewder and wiser than we, but thrust them into chains of darkness; such is the severe sentence and condemnation to which he ordained them and in which they are held bound and imprisoned, so that they cannot flee away out of the hands of God, since they have been cast into outer darkness, as Christ says in the Gospel, Mat. 25:30; 22:13.

And here Peter also shows that the devils have not yet their final punishment, but still go about in a hardened, desperate state, and look every moment for their judgment; just as a man that is condemned to death is perfectly desperate, hardened and becomes more and more wicked. But their

punishment has not yet overtaken them, but they are now only bound and reserved for it. This is the first example. Now follows the second:

[5.] And spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.

This is also a fearful example, than which there is not a more horrible one in the .Scriptures. One might almost despair in view of it, even if he were strong in faith. For when such language and judgment of God go to a man's heart, and he thinks of it, that so he too shall die, he must tremble and fear, if he be not well armed, since among so many in the whole world no one but these eight only were saved. But how did they deserve it, that God by such o severe sentence should have drowned all together in one mass, husband and wife, master and servant, young and old, beast and bird? Because they led such a wicked life. Noah was a pious man and a preacher of righteousness, and had already lived five hundred years before the flood, when God commanded him to build an ark, on which he then wrought a hundred years; and always led a uniformly godly life.

Whence you may judge what a Cross he had to bear, and in what care and anxiety the pious man stood, when he had to show by words and works that he was a Christian. For it cannot be possible that faith should conceal itself, and not break out before men in words and well doing. So this man was a lonely preacher perhaps long before God bade him build the ark and spread the word of God not in one place, but doubtless through many lands. Therefore he must have greatly suffered and been severely persecuted, inasmuch as he is specially , - as Peter says, sustained and kept by God, or he would soon have been overwhelmed and slain. For he had to bear much envy and hatred and make even many high, wise and holy people his enemies. But it did not help, for the world despised God's word and continually grew worse.

When they had now carried on their wickedness a long, time, Jehovah said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years," Gen. 6:3. Also, verse 7: "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man and beast; and creeping things," etc. These words he preached and enforced daily, and began to build the ark as had been commanded him; and he labors on it a hundred years. But the people laughed at him and were

only so much the more obstinate and hardened. But what the sin was for which God destroyed, the world Gen. 6:2-4 tells us, that “the sons of God,” that is, those born of holy parents, and were instructed and brought up in the faith and in the knowledge of God, “saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose; of whom came mighty tyrants,” who did everything they chose after their own caprice; therefore God punished the world and destroyed it by the flood.

[6.] And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly.

This is the third example, drawn from the destruction of those five cities, Gen. 19:24-25, of which also the prophet Ezekiel speaks, in 16:49f., addressing the city of Jerusalem: This was the sin of Sodom thy sister, pride, fulness of bread, luxury and idleness, and that to the poor they did not extend a helping hand, and have exalted themselves, and have wrought such shameful cruelty before me that I have even destroyed them. For Sodom was a land, like the garden of Jehovah, as Moses says, Gen. 13:10, and a rich mine of costly oil and wine and all things, so that every one would think, here dwells God. Therefore they were secure, and led such a shameful life as Moses describes. Nothing brought this sin upon the people than the false assurance they had enough to eat and drink and to spare, and added to this their idleness. Just as we still see, the richer cities are, the more shamefully do the people in them live; but where there is hunger and grief there the sins are fewer. Therefore God permits his faithful ones to obtain their food with difficulty, so that thereby they continue to be pious.

These are the three fearful examples by which Peter threatens those that are godless. And as he applied it to them, we must hold that this is its import. And it is spoken especially of the spiritual orders; Pope, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks and nuns, and all who follow them. These are, as it were, angels in the Apostles' stead, appointed to this very end, that they should preach and make known God's words. For an angel is a messenger, or one sent, who discharges his message by word of mouth, for which reason preachers are called in Scripture angels, that is, messengers of God. Such angels should our clergy be. But as these angels of old fell from God, and set themselves above God, and wished to be their own masters, so these do also, and have nothing but just the name of messengers, as those have

the name alone of angels. So these also, as they have fallen from God, shall be held in chains of darkness and reserved to condemnation; as he has said in verse 3, that their sentence does not linger, nor their damnation slumber, although punishment has not as yet overtaken them.

In the second place, they are like the former world, who, although they heard the prophets and the word of God, yet blasphemed and reviled them; and as Moses writes, in Gen. 6:3, took to themselves wives according to their pleasure, whomsoever they would, and became great and powerful tyrants. Observe then whether all that Moses wrote of them is not now taking place. These are the great scamps that live in revelry, oppress the world by their tyranny, and no one dare reprove them. Whom they will they take for a wife or daughter, in spite of any one's complaining. For if any one finds fault with it they are themselves judges, and there is no one who can win his case with them. Accordingly whatever they can devise to bring into their hands by oppression or fines, that they also execute. And if any one should tax it, they then say: It is the spiritual possession of the Church; it is exempt, and no one dare lay hands on it. And as to those who preach God's word, they punish them even to death, and declare God's sentence on those that laugh at them; they will not hear the word, and they persecute the very preachers of righteousness, and, remaining great and mighty lords, retain their title, that they may be called spiritual, like those that are God's children, yet rule with full power in all obstinacy; but they must at last be subdued and destroyed. But the others who preach God's word shall be kept and sustained.

Thirdly, as the land where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were located was a fertile country, and all had enough of whatever the earth could bear, the people became indolent, glutted themselves with food and drink, and to none of the poor did they reach out the hand. Such is the case also with our spiritual leaders, who possess generally, the best land, the best castles and cities, and the greatest rents and tribute, while they have enough also to eat and drink. Besides, there is not a more indolent class of people on the earth, that lives without any care or labor, and is fed by the sweat of the poor. But what indolence brings with it we see before our eyes. The Pope forbids them to take a married wife, so that if they then keep their concubines and have children they must give money to the bishops for every child, whereby they smooth the thing over and cancel the sin. I will not here speak of other secret sins which one dare not indeed name.

The summary is, you see, Peter does not consider the state of the clergy to be different from that of Sodom and Gomorrah. For they are all characters who are a benefit? to no one, they lend no one a helping hand, but seize to themselves all they can under the pretense, affirming that what is given to them is given to God, and they let no one be helped, though he suffer want. Therefore just as those were overthrown and turned to ashes, so shall these also be destroyed at the last day.

[7.] And delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked.

Was it not a great aggravation that they not only rushed publicly and shamelessly into whoredom and adultery, but into sins that dare not be mentioned, insomuch that they did not even spare the angels who came to Lot? And they rushed on thus in their course, both young and old, in all the corners of the city. Against this, righteous Lot daily preached and warned them, but all in vain, except that he is silenced by them, so that he had to cease preaching and he could not help the evil, just as is the case with us at present. For there is now no more hope to reform or help this grievous course of life that the world leads.

[8.] For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds- Here Peter describes the Cross which this holy man must have borne while he preached to the people and brought up his daughters in faith; and so with them was saved by God. Now Peter concludes by stating how the godless are reserved for punishment at the day of judgment.

[9-10.] The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment; but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement.

This is certainly deep passion and earnestness on the part of the Apostle. If God spared not, says he, the young, new world, how much more severely and fearfully will he punish now, after that the Gospel has been revealed and preached, and formerly no such great light had gone forth; as Christ also declares, Mat. 11:23f.: "Woe to thee, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of

Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.” But such threatening is in vain; and the godless do not turn because of it.

“To walk in the lust of defilement” is to live just like an unreasoning beast, according to mere sense and every kind of lust. So everything is ordered by the laws of the Pope, as it has pleased him, and all must subserve their caprice and tyranny; and they have warped and explained all just as they pleased, and moreover said that the holy See at Borne cannot err. And there is not one who has preached anything of faith or love; but they have taught nothing except what they have themselves devised.

[10b-11.] And despise dominion (government). Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities: whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord.

Kings, princes and lords and all civil governments he calls “Dominions”; and not the Pope and bishops, for these are not to be lords at all; since Christ in the New Testament instituted only servants, so that one Christian is to serve an other, and hold him in honor. Therefore this is Peter’s meaning: they should be subject and obedient to the civil government; as the sword is introduced by God’s ordinance, stand thou in fear. Yet they do the very reverse of this. They have excepted themselves, and say they are not subject to the civil government. Yea, they have not only excepted themselves, but have even subjected the civil rulers to themselves, and trampled on them with their feet, and permit themselves shamelessly to be called lords, even by kings and princes, just as the Pope writes of himself that he is a lord of heaven and earth, and has in his hand both the civil and spiritual sword, and that every one must fall at his feet.

Besides, Peter says, “They tremble not to rail at dignities.” For it has become to the Pope a small and mean thing to put kings and princes under ban, to curse them, and depose them; also, to excite mischief among them, and stir the princes up one against another. And those who resisted he has quickly overthrown and trodden upon, not because they have done anything against faith or love, but only because they have not been willing to be subject to the See of Rome or kiss the foot of the Pope, because his power was as much greater than that of secular princes as the sun is than the moon, or as the heaven is higher than the earth, as they blaspheme and lie; while they themselves are under obligation to be subject and obedient to them, and

bless them and pray for them, as Christ our Lord subjected himself to Pilate, and gave to the Emperor the penny tribute. They ought therefore to tremble for railing against the rulers and dignities; yet they are unaffrighted and presumptuous in regard to it, and they revile with all zeal and recklessness, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord; and yet they are hardened, and blaspheme and curse the very thing from which they cannot escape; how then will these wretched people endure it?

[12-13a.] But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed, suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing.

Peter identifies them, as though they had within them not a spark of hunger for the Spirit, perform no duties of the spiritual office they should administer, but live like the swine, and are drowned in their carnal life.

But in that he says, “they are born mere animals to be taken and destroyed,” it may be understood in a two-fold manner: first, as of those that take and destroy, such as the wolf, lion, bear, the sparrow-hawk and eagle; so these grasp to themselves and tear away from others all they can, goods and honor. Secondly, of those that shall be taken, crushed and destroyed at the judgment of the last day.

[13b.] Men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time.

See, how indignant St. Peter is! I must not chide the young gentlemen so grievously. They think if they only live well, and have good times, then they have enough of every thing, and are right well fixed; this one can easily trace in their spiritual claim, when they say that whoever touches them as to their property or their belly, is of the devil. They themselves cannot deny that their whole system is framed to the end, that they may have lazy and idle times, have sufficient of every thing, they will burden them selves with no trouble or labor, but every person has to do enough for them, and they pretend they must go to the choir and pray. God commanded all men to eat their bread in the sweat of their face, Gen. 3:19, and he imposed trial and anxiety upon all. Meanwhile, these young masters would slip their heads out of this noose, and recline upon their cushions. It is however the

greatest blindness, that they are so hardened, as to hold that such a shameful life is right and praiseworthy.

[13c.] Spots and blemishes

They know no different than that they adorn Christianity, as the sun and moon do heaven, and are the noblest and most precious jewels, like gold and precious stones; yet St. Peter calls them spots of shame and blemishes. The true Christian life develops from faith, serves every one in love, bears the holy cross, which is the true badge, ornament, jewel and honor of the Christian Church; but these have, in place of the cross, lust and luxury; instead of love to their neighbor, they seek their own interest, snatch all to themselves, and let nothing go to another for his advantage; moreover they know nothing at all of faith. Therefore they are nothing but the spots and stains which Christianity must have as its shame and derision. That is, I think, chiding enough, for our spiritual lords.

[13d.] Reveling in their deceivings while they feast with you.

What was given at first out of Christian love, to procure a common fund for widows and worthy persons, and also for the poor, so that no one among the Christians need suffer want or beg; property of this kind is now all devoted to monasteries and cloisters, from which our ecclesiastics cram their stomachs, living upon it most luxuriously, and passing their days in pleasure; and to this end they say it belongs to them, and no one dare reprove them for it. The Holy Spirit will not permit that the servants of the Church should lead an easy, effeminate life from other people's labor; moreover it is indeed kept from the day laborers and from the common man with his wife and child.

[14a.] Having eyes full of adultery.

Such must always follow when the body is crammed with food and drink, one goes about idly, as was said above, verse 13b. But why does Peter say, — not, they are adulterers, — but, “They have eyes full of adultery?” It 's as much as though he should say: They think ever on nothing but fornica-

tion, and can never restrain their roguery, nor be satisfied and quiet. This is the cause of their continual gluttony and revelry, so far as they can drive it, and thus they are suffered to live at large and to be unpunished, just as they like; as follows:

[14b.] And that cannot cease from sin.

The Pope has forbidden any prince or secular magistrate to punish ecclesiastics, and where they venture to do it, he puts them under the ban; but it is committed to the bishops. However, since they are knaves themselves, they wink at it or look at it through their fingers. Thus they have exempted themselves from subjection to civil government and the sword, so that no one dares to restrain them in their caprice, and they all live to their own lusts, like those of old before the deluge.

[14c.] Enticing unsteadfast souls.

With such great show as they exhibit in their knavish life, as saying mass, begging, singing, etc., do they allure and draw light-minded and unstable souls, who are without faith, to imagine everything is spiritual, and all is shaped to that end. For it is thought that in their position every one shall have enough, and good times besides, and more over, that he shall also reach heaven; and yet all is done only to the end, that they may fill their bellies and their lazy pockets.

[14d.] Having a heart exercised in covetousness.

This vice is so gross and open among the clergy, that even the common people have complained of it. Yet he says not, they are covetous, but, "They have a heart penetrated with covetousness," and especially exercised with it. This may be seen in the fact that they have invented so many swindling and cunning stories that it is impossible to count them, by which they draw all the world's wealth to themselves. All that this class practices and pursues is simply pure covetousness, and all must be worth high prices. They show it also most plainly in how they are equipped and prepared on all sides to draw the money from the people; so Peter here told the truth.

[14e.] Children of cursing.

That is in the Hebrew as much as to say, they are cursed children, subject to the curse of God, so that before God they have no favor or salvation, and become only more wicked from day to day, and continually greater blasphemers of God; so that they surely laden themselves heavily with the wrath and terrible judgment of God. That is surely spoken severely and fearfully enough; since it is high time that whoever can flee and run, should flee and run from this cursed state. Should we bear such a title, then it is certainly pitiful. For if the high Majesty also arraigns, curses and condemns, who will endure it?

[15a.] Forsaking the right way, they went astray.

They should have taught the right way, how we must cleave to Christ and come to God through faith, and through love to our neighbor, and then bear the holy cross, and endure whatever meets us in doing so. But they preach no more thus; for they go hither and thither, become monks and priests, found churches, masses, etc., etc.; and lead the people from faith in Christ to their own works, which are of no use to their neighbor.

[15b-16.] Having followed the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the hire of wrong-doing; but he was rebuked for his own transgression: a dumb ass (beast of burden) spake with man's voice and stayed the madness of the prophet.

Here he introduces an illustration from the fourth book of Moses, chapters 22, 23, and 24. When the children of Israel had journeyed out of Egypt and had come into the land of the Moabites, king Balak sent to a prophet in Syria, by the name of Balaam, and besought him to come and curse the Jewish people, that they might become weak and that he might slay them. Then God appeared to Balaam, and forbade him to curse the people; therefore the prophet declines to comply with the request of Balak. Thereupon the king sent to him once more, and promised to give him large wealth. Then God permits him to go to him, yet he was to say nothing except what he should direct him to say. Upon this he arose and mounted an ass. The angel of God came and walked in the way, and stood before him with a drawn sword. The ass saw it, and turned aside out of the way, at which the prophet

struck her, that she should walk in the way. Then the angel went to a narrow place where the ass could not turn aside, and when she presses against the wall and bruises the prophet's foot, she is forced to fall under him upon her knees; this grieved him so that he became angry and he struck the ass with his staff. Then God opens the mouth of the beast to speak with the voice of a man, and she said: What have I done to you that you should strike me so? And he said: Ah! if I had now a sword in my hand, I would slay you. Then the ass answered and said: Am I yet the ass upon which thou hast ridden continually even to this day, and have done the like of this never before? Then were the eyes of the prophet opened, so that he saw the angel with the drawn sword, at which he was affrighted and would have turned back. Then the angel bade him go on, but thereupon forbade him to speak anything except what he should say to him.

When now the prophet was come to the king, he takes him up to a height from which he could see all the people of Israel. Then the prophet bade him erect seven altars, and on each offer a sacrifice; and then went aside and asked the Lord what he should say. And God gave him his word in his mouth. And he rose up to bless and glorify the people of Israel with fair words; and this he did three times, one after another. Then was the king filled with wrath, and said: Did I not call thee that thou shouldst curse mine enemies? and instead thou hast blest them now these three times. I had thought that I should honor thee, but the Lord hath turned thee away from honor. Balaam answered and said: Yet I told thee at first, though thou shouldst give me thine house full of silver and gold, still I could speak nothing else but what God should say to me.

Yet the prophet afterward gave the king counsel how he should manage the people, because he was not allowed to curse them and overcome them by force, so that they should sin against God. Then the king sets up an idol, by name Baal-Peor, and causes that the Moabite women, daughters of lords and princes, should ensnare the people to them selves, to sacrifice to their gods; and when they had brought them to themselves they made supplication to the idol with meats and drinks, and committed sin with the women. Then was God angry, and commanded the chief of the people to be hung upon the gallows, and permitted four and twenty thousand men to be overcome in one day. Such was this prophet Balaam's advice, for the sake of money.

Of this Peter here speaks, and would say that our ecclesiastics are especially Balaam's children and scholars. For just as he gave evil counsel to set up an idol so that the children of Israel should be brought to sin and provoke God that they should be slain, so have our bishops also set up an idol, in God's name, to wit, their human doctrine of their own works; and they let faith go, and lure to themselves Christian souls whom they injure, and thereby provoke God to anger, so that he has punished the world with blindness and stupidity, for all this we may thank our spiritual masters.

Thus Peter compares especially these false teachers to the prophet Balaam, since they, just like Balaam, purely for the sake of money, set up such idolatry and ruin souls. With this his true name agrees; for Bileam or Balaam is called in Hebrew, a swallower or swiller, like one who gapes his throat open, and swallows and devours all. This shameful name he had to bear, because he brought so many people into sin, when they were destroyed and overcome. Such Balaamites are our bishops and ecclesiastics, who are the throat of the devil, by which he draws so many souls to himself, and swallows them. But the surname of this prophet is, the son of Bosor, which means flesh, or as Moses says, son of Beor, that is, son of a fool. A fool is his father. So are these also, blind, dull and foolish people, who must themselves indeed rule. Such people the flesh produces, for the spirit makes men of another stamp. So God has given these in the Scriptures their own name, and by their name they are so painted that we may know what estimate to put upon them.

Now "the dumb beast of burden," the ass, signifies the people that lets itself be bridled and ridden, and goes as it is led; like the ass, that was forced and beaten cruelly when she went out of the way into the ditch, and must neither give place before the angel in the way so long as possible, nor turn aside, and hence it had to fall down. For in the same way have these seducers also urged on the people, until they at last have become sensible that it is not to be endured, and that they have been unfairly dealt with, and hence they have wished to turn aside from the way. But the power has been too great by which they have over whelmed and deafened the people, that at length God has: opened our lips and given words to our mouths, that even the children speak of it; thus their folly is made plain, and they must be ashamed.

In like manner we ought to meet them when they go about, and publish that it is out of place for the laity to read and hear the Scriptures, and there-

fore say, we must hear what the Councils decide. For then you may answer, Has not God spoken even by an ass? Be content that we confess that ye in times past preached the word of God. But now ye have become fools, and are possessed by avarice, what wonder is it that now the common people have been roused and impelled by God to speak the truth, though it has been burdened and oppressed like a dumb beast of burden. This is their likeness, taken from the prophet Balaam. Now Peter says further of these false teachers:

[17a.] These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm.

In like manner Solomon presents us a comparison from Prov. 25:14, and says, As when a great cloud and strong wind go forth, and yet no rain follows, so is a man who greatly boasts of himself, and does not make good his words. Thus Peter says here, “These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm”; that is, they make great show, and have nothing beside. They are like the dry, false and exhausted wells, although they have the fame and title of being true wells. For Scripture calls those who teach, wells, as the ones from whom should flow that whole some doctrine by which souls are quickened. To this office are they anointed and set apart. But what do they do? Nothing; for everywhere there is nothing more than the bare name, just as they are called shepherds, and yet are wolves.

Besides, they are “the mists driven by a storm,” not like the thick, black and lowering clouds which are wont to give us rain, but like those fleecy ones which move about and fly high in the air, and are very light, which the wind drives wherever it will, from which no rain can fall. So our teachers also sweep about and move high in Christendom, like clouds in the heavens, but permit themselves to be driven about wherever the devil chooses, to whom they are ready to yield in all kinds of lusts. But yet they in no way preach the word of God like true teachers and preachers, who are called clouds in Scripture, for example, Is. 5:6, as all things that give forth water signify preachers in the Scriptures:

[17b.] For whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved.

They live now at their ease, and things go with them just as they would have them. But eternal darkness shall come upon them, although they do not believe nor apprehend it.

[18a.] For uttering great swelling words of vanity.

If you ask how they can be called wells without water, and clouds without rain, since they nevertheless fill the whole world full of their preaching, Peter answers: they rain and preach, alas! altogether too much; but they are only vain, swollen and puffed-up words, by which they blow the poor people's ears full, so that they think it is some thing fine; and yet there is nothing in all they preach. Just as the monks, with high, bold words, set forth their obedience, poverty and chastity, and people think they are a holy people, while yet it is nothing but mere trickery, and not the least faith nor love can be found among them. Like this, also, is their pretense that the life of bishops is more perfect since they do nothing but ride about pompously on their fine horses, and now and then consecrate churches and altars, and baptize bells. The whole fabric of the Pope is through and through full of such swollen and pompous words.

[18b.] They entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error.

This is what these wells and teachers do, so that they who were almost escaped must fall into the snare of wickedness, and for the first time be truly captured. A child that has been baptized, rescued from all sins, snatched from the devil and transplanted from Adam into Christ, when he begins to reason is soon entangled and led away into error. The people should be taught of faith, and love, and the holy cross; but our clergy go their own way, exalt their own works whereby they fall back again into error, even though they had escaped it. But how does this come to pass? Thus: in that by guile they entice the people in the lusts of the flesh. Their strongest enticement is in their saying that priests, monks and nuns should not marry, and they pledge themselves to maintain chastity. By this they do no more than allure to unchastity, so that the wretched people must perish in their wicked lusts, and there is nothing to help them.

Here you clearly see that Peter speaks of none other than teachers who rule in Christendom, where people are baptized and believing; for among the Turks and heathen, no one has thus escaped; it is only among Christians, where they have the chance to lead souls astray, and bring them into the snare of the devil.

[19.] Promising them liberty, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.

They set up orders by which a man is to be saved, as Thomas the monk preacher has shamelessly written, that when a man enters into one of these orders, it is as though he had just come forth from his baptism. Then they promise him freedom and forgiveness of sins by virtue of their own works. Such blasphemy must we hear, while they set their human fancies and ludicrous conceits, destitute of faith, on a level with faith and baptism which God has established, and which are peculiarly his work. Who is to endure this and still keep silent? Such stories have the monks gotten up, and crammed into the young; and such teachers men have set up as saints; but the other saints, who were truly saints, they have burnt to ashes.

[20.] For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first.

Here Peter proves why they are the servants of corruption. "To acknowledge Christ" is to know what he is, even our Saviour, who forgives us our sins from pure grace. By thus acknowledging Christ we escape the vice and are delivered from the pollution of the world. But though they have now been delivered from sin in baptism, they shall after wards be plunged again into sin, in that they have turned from faith to their own works. For where there is no faith, the Spirit is absent; but where the Spirit is absent, there is nothing but flesh, so nothing at all pure can be there. Thus it has gone hitherto in Christendom. Rome first heard the pure Gospel, but afterward went back and fell away to human doctrines, until all abominations have come even upon herself; and her last end has become worse than her first, in that she is now far more hopeless in her heathenism than she ever was before she heard the word of God.

[21, 22.] For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to Ms own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire.

This proverb Peter has taken from Prov. 26:11, where Solomon says: “As a dog that returneth to his vomit, so is a fool that repeateth his folly.” By baptism they have cast out unbelief, and have been washed from their polluted life, and have entered upon a pure life of faith and love; then they fall from it again into unbelief and their own works, and defile themselves again in their filth. Therefore we are not to apply this proverb to works; for little is accomplished by one saying and directing after confession: Thou shalt henceforth be chaste, meek, patient, etc. But if you will be righteous, pray God that he may give you a real faith, and see to it that you forsake your unbelief. When you shall then have attained faith, good works will afterwards take care of themselves, and you will live purely and chastely. Moreover you will not be able to defend yourself with any other means; and although you can conceal the rogue in your heart for a time, yet at last he will come out.

This is the second chapter of this Epistle, in which Peter speaks specially of our former teachers, how shamefully we have been misled by them. We have indeed had warning enough, but we have not given heed to it; therefore the fault is ours that we have not laid hold on the Gospel, and that we have by our lives deserved such anger of God. We all hear it generally with gladness, when some one assaults and upbraids the Pope along with his priests and monks; but yet, no one will draw advantage to himself from it. It is not such a trifling matter of sport that one dare laugh at it, but of such seriousness that the heart should fear and tremble before it. Consequently we should lay bold of it with seriousness, and pray God to turn from us his anger and such plagues. For this calamity has not come upon us unforeseen, but it is sent upon us by God as a punishment, as Paul says, 2 Thes. 2:10f: “Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie,” etc., etc. For had the punishment gone only so far that the false teachers alone were lost, it would have been a little thing compared with the fact that they have been the rulers and have carried all the world with them to hell. Consequently there is no help for the evil except that we lay hold of it with godly fear and humility, confess our guilt, and pray God

to turn away the punishment from us. By prayer we must storm the false teachers, otherwise the devil will not let us win. Now follows further:

Chapter 3.

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS BY J. G. WALCH.

The Preparation of Christians For “The Day of the Lord.”

WHY PETER WROTE HIS SECOND EPISTLE, vs. 1-2.

I. OF THE LAST DAY.

1. Of the signs of the last day, vs. 3-4.
2. Of the certainty of the last day, vs. 5-6.
3. What will take place at the last day, vs. 7-10.

II. HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD PREPARE HIMSELF FOR THE LAST DAY.

1. Should he expect the last day with joy and hasten to welcome it? vs. 11-12

Of the new heaven and the new earth, v. 13.

2. Should a Christian despise vanity, and live a blameless life? v. 14.
3. Should a Christian esteem the long-suffering of God as gain? v. 15.

The witness of Peter to Paul’s doctrine, v. 16.

4. Should a Christian beware of false teachers? vs. 17-18.

[1, 2.] This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your Apostles.

Here Peter now comes to us again, and warns us in this chapter to be prepared, and look every moment for the last day; and he says first, that he has written this Epistle, not in order to lay the foundation of faith, which he had done before, but to awaken, remind, restrain, and urge them not to forget the same, and to abide in the clear sense and understanding which they have of a true Christian life. For it is the preacher's office, as we have often said, not only to teach, but also continually to admonish and restrain. For since our flesh and blood ever cling to us, God's word must be valiant and vigilant in us, that we may not give room to the flesh, but strive against it, and subdue it.

[3, 4.] Knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Yet men are swayed hither and thither by a book concerning Antichrist, in which is written that before the day of judgment the people shall fall into such error that they shall say, there is no God, and shall scoff at all that is preached of Christ and the judgment day. That is true, whencesoever it has been taken. But we are not so to understand it that the whole world shall say and hold such things, but the greater part. For that time is already now at hand, and shall prevail yet more when the Gospel shall be better spread among the people, then the people will stir themselves in grand style, and the secrets of many hearts break forth, which are now hidden and not revealed. There have even already been many who have altogether rejected the idea of the coming of the day of judgment.

Of such scoffers Peter warns us, and tells us before hand, that they must come, and rush into this hazardous condition and live as they wish. In Rome and Italy this word was long ago fulfilled, and they who come hence, bring such delusions also with them. Therefore as the people have long perplexed themselves in this false notion, so the people also must drive it out.

And even though the day of judgment were now before the door, such people must appear in order that the words of Christ, Mat. 24:37-39, shall be fulfilled! "And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not till the flood came and swal-

lowed them all; so shall be the coming of the Son of Man.” Also, Mat. 24:44: “In an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh.” Likewise, Luke 21:35: “For so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth.” And once more, Luke 17:24: “As the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall the Son of Man be in his day.” That is, so quick and unforeseen and sudden shall he break in upon it, while the world shall be living most securely and while it shall be throwing God’s word to the winds.

Therefore this shall be a sign of the day of judgment that it is near, when the people shall live as they desire, according to all their lusts, and such talk is heard among them as this: “Where is the promise of his coming?” The world has stood so long and continued to abide, is it now for the first time to be otherwise? Thus Peter warns us that we should not be surprised, and that we have a sure sign that the day will soon come. It follows further:

[5, 6.] For this they willfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

Such people they are, he says, as show not enough diligence to read the Scriptures, but obstinately refuse to consider and take warning that so also it was of old. When Noah built the ark, the world which existed and was made through the water and in the water, was destroyed by water, and the people were yet so secure and certain that they thought, surely there is no danger; yet they were all alike destroyed by water. As though he should say: If God did then destroy the world by water, and showed by an example that he can sink it, how much more will he destroy it now since he has promised to do it.

But here Peter speaks a little in detail of the creation. The heaven and the earth stood fast aforetime; they were made of water and existed in the water by the Word of God. Heaven and earth have a beginning; they have not been for ever; the heaven was made from the water, and there was water above and beneath. The earth is made and exists in the water, as Moses writes, to whom Peter here refers. All is sustained by God’s word, as it also was made by the same, for it is not their nature, that they should so exist. Therefore if God did not sustain it, it would all soon fall and sink in the water. For God spoke a word of power when he said, Gen. 1:9, “Let the waters

under the heavens be gathered together unto one place and let the dry land appear"; that is, let the water put itself aside and give room for the earth to come forth, whereon man might dwell; yet naturally the waters should spread themselves over the earth. Therefore this is one of the greatest miracles that God works at the present day.

Now Peter would say: so obstinate and stupid are these scoffers, that they will not do honor to the Holy Spirit, that they read how God holds up the earth in the water, whence they should be convinced that all rests in the hands of God. Therefore, since God at that time drowned the earth, so he will deal also with us. For that example should certainly convince us that, as in that case he did not lie, so he will not lie now.

[7.] But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

At that time, when God destroyed the world by a flood, the water pressed down from above, up from beneath and from all sides, so that nothing could be seen but water only; so that the earth, as its nature was, must have sunk in the water. But now he has promised, and given the rainbow in the heavens for a sign, that he will no more destroy the world by water. Therefore he will now destroy it and let it perish by fire, so that here it shall be fire only, as there it was water only. Of this Paul, 2 Thess. 1:7f., says: "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire," etc. So 1 Cor. 3:13: "Each man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire." So when the day of judgment breaks and bursts in on the world, it will in a moment be fire only; what is in heaven and in earth shall be turned to dust and ashes, and all things must be changed by fire, as that change took place by water. This rainbow shall be the sign that God will keep his Word.

[8-10.] But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

With these words Peter meets those of whom he has just spoken, who say: The Apostles have said much about the day of judgment coming quickly, and yet so long time is past, and still all continues as heretofore. And he has quoted this passage from Moses, in Ps. 90:4, where he says: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past." Hence there are two views of things: one as God views them, the other as the world views them. So also this present life and that to come are different. This life cannot be that, since none can reach that but by death, or by ceasing from this life. Our present life is only to eat, drink, sleep, digest, rear children, etc., in which all moves on successively, hours, days, years, one after another: if you wish now to apprehend that life, you must banish out of your mind the course of this present life; you dare not think that you can so apprehend it, then it will all be one day, one hour, one moment.

Since now in God's sight there is no reckoning of time, a thousand years must be with him, as it were, a day. Therefore the first man, Adam, is just as near to him as he who shall be born last before the day of judgment. For God sees not time lengthwise but obliquely, just as when you look at right-angles to a long tree which lies before you, you can fix in your view both place and parts at once, — a thing you cannot do if you only look at it lengthwise. We can, by our reason, look at time only according to its duration; we must begin to count from Adam, one year after another, even to the last day. But before God it is all one; what is long with us is short with him; and again, with him there is neither measure nor number. So when man dies the body is buried and wastes away, lies in the earth and knows nothing; but when the first man rises at the last day, he will think he has lain there scarcely an hour, when he will look about and become assured that so many people were born of him and have come after him, of whom he had no knowledge at all.

Peter's meaning is: the Lord does not delay his promise as some scoffers imagine, but is long-suffering; therefore should ye be prepared for the last day, — for it will come soon enough to every one after his death, in that he will say, "lo! I have but just now died!" But it comes upon the world all too soon; when the people shall say, "there is peace, no danger threatens," it shall break forth and come upon them, as Paul says, 1 Thess. 5:3. And with so great a noise shall the day tear its way and burst forth like a great storm, that in a moment all must become a waste.

[11-12a.] Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God,

Since ye know this, that all must pass away, both heaven and earth, consider how ye shall be prepared to meet this day, by a holy and godly life and conversation. For Peter describes this day as one that is to come even now, so that men should be prepared for it, to hope for it with joy, and even hasten to run to meet it, as that which sets us free from death, sin and hell.

[12b-13.] By reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

God has promised by the prophets, here and there, that he would create new heavens and a new earth, as in Is. 65:17f.: “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, wherein ye shall be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create.” So in Is. 30:26: “Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day of Jehovah.” And Christ says, Mat. 13:43, “The righteous shall shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.” How that is to pass away we cannot know, except that the promise is, that such a heaven and earth are to be, wherein no sin, but righteousness only, and the children of God shall dwell; as also Paul says, Rom. 8:6, “there shall be pure love, pure joy, and nothing but God’s kingdom.”

Here some may disquiet themselves as to whether the saints shall exist in heaven or on the earth. The text seems to imply that man shall dwell upon the earth, yet so that all heaven and earth shall be a paradise where God dwells, for God dwells not only in heaven, but in all places, wherefore the elect shall be also even where he is.

[14.] Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight.

Since ye have escaped, he says, such misery, and come to so great joy, ye should suffer yourselves to be persuaded to despise willingly all that is

upon the earth, and suffer cheerfully whatever duty requires. Therefore be diligent, that ye may live a peaceful and blameless life.

[15a.] And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.

In that he so spares and delays, and does not come to speedy judgment, consider this as designed for your benefit. He had good reason to be angry and to punish, yet out of his grace he does it not.

[15b-16.] Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Here Peter bears testimony for the Apostle Paul in respect to his doctrine, which shows plainly enough that this Epistle was written long after Paul's Epistles. And this is one of the passages which might be adduced to maintain that this Epistle is not St. Peter's, as also there was one before this in this chapter, verse 9, namely, where he says, "the Lord wishes not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." For it falls some little below the Apostolic spirit; still it is credible that it is none the less the Apostle's, for since in it he is writing not of faith but of love, he lets himself down somewhat, as the manner of love is, inasmuch as it humbles itself to its neighbor, just as faith rises above itself.

However, he saw that many unstable spirits had confused and perverted the words and doctrines of St. Paul, inasmuch as some things in his Epistles are hard to be understood. As when he says thus, "that no one is justified by his works, but by faith alone;" Rom. 3:28; also, that the law is given to make sin more manifest, Gal. 3:19; and also that, "where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly," Rom. 5:20; and other like passages. For when men hear this they say, if that is true, we will go on indolently, and do no good, and so be righteous, as even now it is said, that we forbid good works; for if they so perverted St. Paul's own words, what wonder is it that they should in like manner pervert ours?

[17-18.] Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Since ye know, he says, all that has been said above, and see that many false teachers must come, who lead the world astray, and such scoffers as pervert the Scripture and will not understand it, take care of yourselves; guard against them with diligence, that ye fall not from your faith by reason of the doctrines of error; and grow, so as to become stronger from day to day by the steadfast practice and preaching of the word of God. Here observe how great care the Apostle shows for those who have come to faith which urged him even to write these two Epistles, in which is fully comprehended what a Christian should know, besides also that which is to come. May God give his grace, that we also may lay hold of and retain it. Amen.

**The Epistle of St. Jude
Preached and Explained by
Martin Luther**

1523

Chapter 1.

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS BY J. G. WALCH.

A Picture of False Teachers, In Their Sins and Punishments.

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V. THE CONCLUSION OF THIS PICTURE, vs. 24-25.

[1-2.] Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

The authorship of this Epistle is attributed to the holy Apostle, Saint Jude, the brother of the two Apostles, James the Less and Simon, by the sister of the mother of Christ, who is called Mary (the wife) of James and Cleopas, as we read in Mark 6:3; 16:1. However, this Epistle does not seem to be from one of the first Apostles; for in it the author speaks of the Apostles, as if he were their junior, having lived long after them. In it is nothing special except it refers to the Second Epistle of St. Peter from which it has taken nearly all its words, and on the whole it is nothing else than an Epistle against our clergy, bishops, priests and monks.

[3.] Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

That is to say: I am constrained to write you in order that I may remind and admonish you to press forward and hew a clear path for your feet in the

faith, that has once already been preached to you. As if he should say: It is necessary that I admonish you to be on your guard and continue in the right way. Why it is necessary, however, he states, and says:

[4a.] For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation.

The reason I wish to remind you is, that you may continue in the faith you have heard; because there is already a beginning, and preachers are at hand, to advocate other doctrines besides faith, by which the people are gently and unsuspectingly led astray from the true way. St. Peter in his Second Epistle, 2:1, called attention to the same thing: "There shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies," and the like. Upon these false teachers the sentence of judgment, he says, was announced already long ago, namely, that they are condemned.

This we understand now very well, since we have learned that no one can become righteous or be justified by his own works, but alone through faith in Christ; also, that he must rely upon the work of Christ, as his chief good and only support. Then after faith is present whatever man does should all be done for the benefit of his neighbor, and one should guard against all works that are not done with the intention to benefit his neighbor, as for example the orders of the priests and monks are at the present time. Therefore where any one now secretly introduces anything else than this doctrine of faith relating to such orders and their works he misleads the people so that they will be condemned along with him.

[4b.] Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.

The sermon that is preached to us on the grace of God, and holds before us Christ, how he is offered and given unto us with all that he has, that we are free from sin, death, and all misfortune; such grace and gifts offered through the Gospel, they use only to lead corrupt lives, that is, they call themselves Christians, praise the Gospel, but they lead such lives themselves, in which they work their wantonness in eating and drinking and in their villainous ways, as they boast and say: We are not in a secular but in the spiritual state, and include in that name and claim all good, honor and luxury. That has already commenced, says Jude. For we read, that it began

already a thousand years ago, that the bishops wished to be lords and to be considered of a higher order than the common Christians; as is seen in the Epistles of St. Jerome.

[4c.] And denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

St. Peter also mentioned this same thing in his Epistle; but this denying, as we have heard, is not done by the mouth, for they confess that God is Lord; but they deny the Lord Christ in fact and by their works, consider him not as their Lord, but themselves as their own lord. For when they preach that fasts, pilgrimages, church institutions, chastity, obedience, poverty, etc., are the way to salvation, they lead the people astray by their own works, and keep silent about Christ, and is as much as if they said: Christ is of no account to you, his works help you nothing; but you must merit salvation by your own works. Thus they deny the Lord, who has bought us with his own blood, as Peter says:

[5-7.] Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

Here Jude introduces three examples as St. Peter did in his Epistle. But in addition to those he adds a new one, how he permitted the children of Israel, whom he had led out of Egypt by many miracles, to be overthrown and defeated, when they believed not, so that of the six hundred thousand of twenty years of age and above not more than two were found to have survived when they were numbered. This example he gives to warn and terrify them, as if he would say, let those be on their guard who are called Christians and under this name turn the grace of God into wantonness lest it go with themselves as it did here with the Israelites. And it is true that since the time the Papacy was set up, and the Gospel has been silenced in the whole world, one plague after another has continually been visiting the world, with which God punished the unbelievers and casted them into the throat of the devil.

[8a.] Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh.

These teachers are here called “dreamers.” For just as when a person lies in a dream he is occupied with images, and thinks he has something; but when he wakes up nothing is there. For then he sees that it was a dream and gives it no further attention. So also it is with what these teachers say, it is nothing more than a pure dream; and when their eyes are once opened, they will see that it is nothing. As when they go about pretending that their tonsure and cowl, obedience, poverty and chastity are well-pleasing to God, and these they have before their eyes, but before the eyes of God they are nothing but a pure dream. Thus he gave them truly a becoming name, that they are occupied with dreams by which they deceive themselves and the world. But the Apostles ascribe the vice of living unchaste lives especially to the clergy. God long ago foretold that they would not enter the married state. Now it is scarcely possible that God does as many miracles as there are priests; therefore they cannot all be chaste. In like manner the prophet Daniel, 12:37, says of the Pope’s rule: “Neither shall he regard the desire of women” (in marriage). Thus their outward characteristic, like their inward one, proves that they are dreamers.

[8b.] And set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities (glories).

The third characteristic is that they will not be subject to the civil authority. We have taught that as long as we live upon the earth we are under obligation to every one to be subject and obedient to those in authority; for the Christian faith does not do away with the civil rule; therefore no one can except himself from it. And because of this the Pope’s decree concerning the freedom of the Church is a mere devil’s law.

[9.] But Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

This is one reason why this Epistle was formerly rejected, because an example is cited here that is not found in the Scriptures, how the archangel Michael and the devil contended with one another about the body of Moses. And that could have taken place for the reason that so much is written about Moses in Deut. 34 :6, how God buried him, and yet no one knows his sepul-

chre; and the Scriptures bear witness, Deut. 34:10, that no prophet has arisen since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face, etc. Hence it is said in reference to the same text his body was left concealed in order that the Jews might not practice idolatry with it. And therefore the angel Michael contended with Satan, who desired that the body be disclosed so that the Jews might worship it. And although Michael was an archangel, says Jude, yet he did not make so bold as to curse the devil himself; and yet these scoffers trample under foot the authority ordained by God, and curse in seven, eight and nine degrees or ways, though they are mere men; while this archangel dared not curse the worst devil, who is already condemned; but said no more than: “The Lord rebuke thee.”

[10.] But these rail at whatsoever things they know not: and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed (corrupted).

Such scoffers are they that they can do nothing but anathematize and curse, and deliver to Satan as his own not only kings and magistrates, but also God and his saints as is seen in the bull “*coenae Domini*.” They know not that our salvation is founded upon faith and love, and they can not stand it that we reject and condemn their works and we preach how Christ alone must help us with his works. Therefore they put under the ban and blaspheme all the Christian doctrines they do not know. But what they know through secular knowledge, namely, that the founding of masses and the like bring in money and accumulate treasures, they give themselves up completely to secular knowledge and thereby ruin themselves and everybody.

[11a.] Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain.

Cain struck his brother dead, simply because he was more pious than himself; for Jehovah had respect unto his brother’s offering, but unto his own offering he had not respect. So now “the way of Cain” is to rely upon one’s own works and scoff at the true good works; and circumvent and ruin those traveling on the right road, just as these very ones are doing.

[11b.] And ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire.

They should be established in the inner man, in the assurance of the divine grace; yet, they run abroad and scatter their energies in various kinds of outward good works here and there, and they do it only for the sake of money, that they may fill their bellies, like the prophet Balaam, as we learned in Peter's Epistle, 2 Pet. 2:15.

[11c.] And perished in the gainsaying (rebellion) of Korah.

An account of the rebellion of Korah and how he with his company were destroyed is given us in Numbers 16:1f. Moses was desired and called by God to the end that he should lead his people out of Egypt; and his brother Aaron was also consecrated by God to the high priesthood. Now Korah was also of the same tribe and a relative of theirs, who wished to be great and become prominent, and he joins to himself a party of two hundred and fifty of the best and most prominent men among the people and raises! such a rebellion and tumult that Moses and Aaron had to flee. And Moses fell upon his face and prayed that God might not accept their offering, and bade the congregation of the people to desert them, and said to them, Numb. 16:28f.: "Hereby ye shall know that Jehovah hath sent me to do all these works. If these men die the common death of all men, then Jehovah hath not sent me. But if Jehovah make a new thing, and the ground open its mouth, and swallow them up, and they go down alive into Sheol; then ye shall understand that these men have despised Jehovah." And it came to pass, as he made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods, so they and all that appertained to them, went down alive into Sheol. And fire came forth from Jehovah, and devoured the two hundred and fifty men that offered the incense."

This example St. Jude now cites and applies to these scoffers, who blame us for stirring up seditions, when we preach against them, while they themselves are the cause of all the trouble and misery. For Christ is our Aaron and high priest, and we should let him alone rule. But the Pope and bishops will not allow that, they have established themselves and wish to take the reins of government by force, and have set themselves against Christ. These God punished by letting the earth swallow and cover them, so

that they are drowned and swallowed by a worldly life and by pleasure, and they are now nothing but pure worldliness.

[12-13.] These are they who are hidden rocks (spots) in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that with out fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever.

We have heard sufficient of this in St. Peter's Epistle. All the world have reared their children to be priests and to have an easy life, and not to support themselves with their hands and daily labor, and neither dare they preach, but without care or worry they are to live in their luxury and keep in good spirits by feasting on the wealth of the poor people gathered by the sweat of their face. Likewise the people imagine these idle fellows are the best part, the jewels of Christendom; while they are mere shame-spots and an abomination; they feast well, as the saying runs, what is good belongs in the priests, they are without care and fear, and imagine that Satan does not wish to over throw them; they feed the sheep not, but are wolves that devour the sheep; they are the "clouds" floating above in the air, they sit high in the Church, as those who should preach, and yet they do not preach, but permit Satan to carry them hither and thither.

So also he says they are "autumn trees without fruit, twice dead," they have neither fruit nor leaves; they stand there alone bare like other trees; they make the claim and show as if thy were Christian bishops, while neither the word nor the work of Christian bishops is there, but all is dead at the root.

Further they are like the "wild waves of the sea," that is, like the wind tosses and plays with the waves and billows upon the water, so they go just as the devil leads; and "foam out their own shame," like a pot full of heat, they are so full of pollution that they run over and can not retain control of themselves, but all must out.

They are "wandering stars," planets as they are called, that go backward and not in a steady, straight course. So these bishops have no regular course, their lives and teachings are mere error, in which they are misled and all who follow them. Therefore "the blackness of darkness has been reserved for them for ever."

Thus has Jude now appraised and painted our spiritual leaders, who under the name of Christ and Christianity introduce all kinds of profligacy, and snatch to themselves all the wealth of the world and bring every person by their assumed authority into subjection to themselves. Now follows further:

[14-15a.] And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment upon all.

This saying of Enoch is found nowhere in the Scriptures, and therefore some of the fathers did not receive this Epistle. However, that is not sufficient reason for rejecting a book of Scripture. For St. Paul in 2 Tim. 3:5 mentions two who withstood Moses, Jannes and Jambres, whose names can not be found in the Scriptures. But be that as it may, we let it pass; it is nevertheless true that God from the beginning of the world has permitted his Word to be proclaimed to some, which promised to believers his grace and salvation, but threatened the unbelievers with judgment and condemnation, until after the ascension of Christ; when it began to be proclaimed publicly in all the world. But before the birth of Christ God chose only a single line of descendants from Adam to Abraham, then to David and Mary the mother of Christ, who possessed his Word. Consequently the Gospel has always been preached in the world, but never so publicly as at present in these last times.

Thus also this father, Enoch, preached the word of God, which he without doubt had learned from his father Adam and had received from the Holy Spirit. For the Scriptures say of him in Gen. 5 :24, that he led a godly life, and therefore God took him so that he was never seen again. Hence it is said, that he will come again before the day of judgment. But that is not to be expected, unless it be understood that he will come spiritually; namely, that his preaching treated of the day of judgment. For this passage in which he speaks of the last judgment, sounds as though Enoch had the last judgment already before his eyes. "The Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones," that is, with such a multitude as can not be numbered. For that must be said only of the day of judgment when he shall come with all his holy ones to execute judgment. For heretofore he has not come with many thousand holy ones, but he came alone upon the earth; not to judge, but to bestow grace.

[15b.] And to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought.

This passage Jude appropriately quotes, inasmuch as he is speaking of the false teachers to appear before the day of judgment, and he concludes, that at his second coming the Lord will overthrow the Pope and his rule; since there is no help for them. For as long as the world stands there can be no end nor reformation of them. The passage can not be understood of any others, than of our clergy, who woefully led all the world astray, seeing they can not be worse. And if they were even worse, they would still have to hold on to the name of Christ, and in that name introduce all kinds of misery. Thus he refers this passage rightly to the last judgment, and names those whom the judgment will include. Therefore we conclude, that our young clerical gentlemen must expect the last judgment, be the time long or short.

[15c.] And of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Here he at once treats of their life and preaching and would say: They speak strongly and fiercely against the Lord who is to come, are bold and proud, and as St. Peter said, they mock and revile him. He speaks not of their sinful and shameful living, but of their godless character or state. But the “godless” are those who live without faith, although they lead outwardly an honorable life. The outward wicked deeds are indeed fruits of unbelief, but he is particularly called a godless character who outwardly appears beautiful, and yet his heart is full of unbelief. These very godless ones, he says, the Lord will punish because their preaching is shameless and presumptuous. For they remain ever headstrong, never allow themselves to be swayed in the least, and hard as an anvil, they condemn and revile continually. Thus Enoch in this passage described precisely the state of things that shall exist in the world just before the day of judgment as we see now before our eyes. Further Jude says:

[16a.] These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts, (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words).

When people protest against their doings as unjust and unreasonable, then there is nothing but murmuring and complaining. Likewise if one should fail to give a bishop his right title, then they raise the cry of disobedience. Moreover they are a class you can not restrain. For they assert how they have authority over body and soul, have grasped in their own hands both the temporal and the spiritual power and no one can control them. Hence no one dare preach against them. They escape from paying all tax, tribute and rent, so that no one dare touch their wealth. Besides, no one dare preach a word, before they are asked first about it; and if one attack them even with the Scriptures, they reply: the exposition of the Scriptures must be left to them alone. Thus they live in all things as they wish, according to their own lusts. For they can not charge us of that, as they gladly would if they could, seeing we have subjected ourselves both to the Gospel and to the civil authority; but they wish to be free from both and controlled by neither. And moreover, all their laws and claims are nothing but the fulness of mere high, proud, puffed-up words, which have nothing to back them.

[16b.] Showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

That is the way of the Papists, they judge all according to the person. In all the laws of the Pope from beginning to end you do not find one instance that the bishop humbles himself to the priest, but the chaplain is under the priest, the priest under the bishop, and the bishop under the archbishop, and these under the patriarchs, the patriarchs under the Pope. And after that how each is to wear the robe, the tonsure and the cowl, and possess so many churches and benefices. Thus they have applied all their teaching to the externals and have carried on such a child's play and fool's work that they held it to be a great sin if any one did not share their views. Therefore Jude puts it well, that they put a mask upon all their doings and have that alone before their eyes. Hence no one knows anything of faith, of love nor of the cross. Then the average person thus plays the monkey and the fool, and turns all his property over to them, as if they were devoting it to the true service of God; that is, they keep up a fine appearance, for the sake of their own advantage.

[17-18.] But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts.

This passage shows clearly that our Epistle is not of St. Jude the Apostle, for he does not count nor reckon himself among the other Apostles, but speaks of them as of those who preached long before his day; so that it is easy to conceive another pious man wrote this Epistle, who had read the Epistle of St. Peter, and taken this saying from him.

We indicated above who the “mockers” are, also who “those walking after their own lusts”; not only after their fleshly lusts, but “after the lusts of their godless life” they lead, and they shape all according to their own pleasure, esteem neither the civil authority nor the Word of God; are neither under an external nor an internal government, neither under divine nor human control; they float about between heaven and earth in their lust, just as the devil leads them.

[19.] These are they who make separations (sects) , sensual, having not the Spirit.

Here he touches upon that of which Peter speaks in 2 Pet. 2:1, how they secretly introduce destructive sects. For they are those who have separated themselves to divide the unity in the faith, will not let the ordinary calling of a Christian answer, in which one serves the other, but they start new callings and offices, and pretend to serve God in them. However, they are sensual and brutish men and have no more understanding and spirit than a horse or an ass; push ahead according to their natural reason and fleshly mind, have no word of God according to which they govern themselves and live.

[20-21a.] But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God.

With these few words he comprehends the whole Christian life. Faith is laid as the foundation upon which we should build. But “building” means to grow from day to day in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, which takes place through the Holy Ghost. When we are thus built up, we should do nothing by which to merit anything and be saved; but do all for the pur-

pose of serving our neighbor. We are to be on our guard here, that we abide in love and not fall from it as the fools who advocate special works and a peculiar life, and thus draw the people from love.

[21b.] Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

This is the hope that is interested in the holy cross; therefore our life should be so ordered that it be nothing more than a constant longing and waiting for the future life, yet so, that such waiting be centered in the mercy of Christ; that we call upon him with the conviction that he helps us from this into the next life because of pure mercy and not because of our own work and merit.

[22-23a.] And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire.

That is not expressed in elegant German, but Jude would say: Have mercy on some, save some; that is, let your life be so ordered, that you may have compassion on those who are wretched, blind and hardened, do not rejoice or delight thyself over them; but let them go, keep from them and have nothing to do with them. But the others, whom you can snatch out of the fire, “save”; deal kindly and gently with them as God has dealt with you; treat them not harshly nor rudely, but be disposed to them as to those who lie in the fire, whom you are to snatch out and rescue with all care, consideration and diligence. If they will not allow themselves to be drawn out, then let them go and have mercy upon them; not as the Pope and his inquisitors burn and destroy them with fire.

[23b.] Eating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

True, we have received the Holy Spirit by faith and have become cleansed; but as long as we live here the old garment of flesh and blood still clings continually to us and will not relax its hold. This is the spotted garment that we should lay off and withdraw from as long as we live.

[24-25.] Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory with out blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time and now, and for evermore. Amen.

These words conclude this Epistle. Thus the Apostles do: after they have written, taught, exhorted and prophesied, they pray, express a wish and give thanks. We have thus now seen in these Epistles both what are true, Christian doctrine and life, and what are false, unchristian doctrine and life.

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