

2 Peter 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

It cannot be denied, but that some question there hath been, both about the penman and the authority of this Epistle. The former hath been questioned, because of the difference of the style of this from that of the former Epistle. But, to say nothing of a great likeness of style in both, observed by some; why might not the same person see fit on different occasions, and according to the different things he wrote about, to change his way of writing? Or why may not the Holy Ghost use his instruments in what way he please, and not only dictate to them the matter they are to write, but the expression and phrase? Why must an infinite and sovereign Agent be bound up, and confined to the parts and qualifications of the men he inspired? And if we set aside the judgment of several councils and fathers, (which yet might go far), two great arguments may be drawn from the first chapter, to prove Peter to be the penman of this Epistle. One from the inscription of it, where we have both his names, *Simon* and *Peter*, prefixed to it. Another from 2Pe 1:16, where he affirms himself to have been present with Christ at his transfiguration; from whence we may well argue, that none having ever ascribed it to John, and James being dead before, (though if he had been alive, it cannot be imagined that he should put Peter's name to any epistle of his own writing), and there being none but they two present with our Lord at that time besides Peter, Mt 17:1, none but he could be the writer of it. And indeed, as some observe, if this Epistle be not Peter's, when his name is set to it, it is so far from being canonical, that it is not fit so much as to be reckoned among the apocryphal books, having so great a lie in the front of it. As for the authority of it, there can be no doubt of that if Peter were the writer, when nothing concurs in it repugnant to other parts of Scripture, or unbecoming the grace and style of an apostle. And though some of the ancients have questioned it, yet many more have acknowledged it; nor was it ever numbered among apocryphal writings. And its not being found in the first Syriac version, can but argue its being questioned by some, not its being rejected by all. It seems to be written to the Jews of the dispersion, as the former was, which appears by 2Pe 3:1,2, where he mentions the former written to them; and this was written not long before his death, 2Pe 1:14. The scope of it is, partly to call to their remembrance the truths he had preached among them, that so, when they should be destitute of the

apostles' preaching to them, yet they might remember the pure doctrine they had learned of them, 2Pe 1:12,15, and might thereby be fortified against the errors of false teachers, 2Pe 2:1; and partly to persuade and stir them up to diligence in holiness and constancy in the faith. As in his First Epistle he had exhorted them to patience under the tyranny of persecutors, lest they should yield to them; so in this he exhorts them to perseverance in the truth of the gospel, against the deceptions of heretics, lest they should be seduced by them, 2Pe 2:1-22, and continue in holiness, notwithstanding the profaneness of scoffers, 2Pe 3:1-18.

Chapter Summary

2Pe 1:1-4 The apostle, saluting the Christians, admonisheth them of the gifts and promises of the gospel, and their tendency to promote a godly life.
2Pe 1:5-9 He exhorteth them to add to their faith such virtues as would make it fruitful,
2Pe 1:10,11 and thereby to make their calling and election sure,
2Pe 1:12-15 He is careful to remind them hereof, knowing his dissolution to be near,
2Pe 1:16-21 and urgeth the evidence of what he had seen and heard in the holy mount in confirmation of Christ's second coming, together with the word of prophecy, which he recommendeth to their regard.

Ver. 1. *A servant and an apostle;* i.e. such a servant as is likewise an apostle. The former agrees to all gospel ministers generally, the latter is a title of a greater eminency; and so he intimates, that he wrote to them not merely as an ordinary minister, but in the authority of an apostle, an officer of the highest degree in the church.

Like precious faith; not in respect of the degree or strength of it, but in respect of the object, Christ, and the benefits that come by it, justification, sanctification, adoption, &c., in which respect the faith of the weakest believer is as precious as that of the strongest.

With us; either with us apostles, or with us Jewish Christians, born or inhabiting in Judea.

Through the righteousness of God; the Greek preposition which we render *through*, may likewise be rendered *with*, as 2Pe 1:5 Ac 7:38, *in the church*, that is, with the church; and so the sense is either:

1. Through the righteousness, i.e. truth and faithfulness, of Christ in his promises, whereof the faith of the saints was an effect: or:
2. Through the righteousness of Christ, as the meritorious cause of their faith: or:
3. With the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and made theirs upon their believing. They had obtained like precious faith as the apostles themselves and others had, together with the righteousness of Christ, an interest in which always accompanies faith, Ro 4:22.

And our Saviour Jesus Christ: there being but one article in the Greek, these words are to be understood conjunctly, the particle *and* being but an explicative, and the sense is: Through the righteousness of our God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is God: see the like, 2Pe 1:11 3:18 Joh 20:28 Tit 2:14.

2 Peter 1:2

Ver. 2. *Through the knowledge of God;* or acknowledgment, i.e. faith, whereby we are made partakers of all the saving graces of the Spirit; and whereby being justified, we are at peace with God, Ro 5:1.

And of Jesus our Lord; there being no saving knowledge of God, or faith in him, but by Christ.

2 Peter 1:3

Ver. 3. *According as;* this may refer either:

1. To what goes before: *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, &c., according as his divine power hath given unto us, &c.;* and then in these words the apostle shows what reason there was to hope, that grace

and peace should be multiplied to them, and perfected in them, viz. because God hath already given them all things pertaining to life and godliness; q. d. He that hath done thus much for you, will do more, and finish his work in you. Or:

2. To what follows; and then the Greek phrase rendered *according as*, is not a note of similitude, but of illation, and may be rendered, since, or seeing that, and so the words are not a part of the salutation, but the beginning of the body of the Epistle, and relate to 2Pe 1:5: Seeing that *his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain, &c., add to your faith virtue, &c.*; as God hath done his part, so do you yours in the diligent performance of what he hath enabled you unto.

Divine power may relate either to God, or rather to Christ, immediately going before; and then it tends to the confirming their hope of the multiplication of grace and peace to them, not only from God, but from Christ, in that they had already experienced his Divine power in giving them *all things pertaining to life and godliness*, i.e. whatever may be helpful to it, the Spirit, faith, repentance, &c., Joh 7:39 2Co 4:6 2Ti 2:25.

Unto life; either:

1. Spiritual life, and then *godliness* may be added by way of explication, that life which consists in godliness, or a godly life; or, by *life* may be meant the inward, permanent principle of spiritual acts, and the exercise of them may be called *godliness*, as the perfection of that principle is called *glory*. Or:
2. Eternal life, to which we attain through godliness, as the way; and then likewise they are understood distinctly, *life* as the end, and *godliness* as the means; and so *life* in this verse is the same as *peace* in the former, and *godliness* the same as *grace*.

To glory and virtue: according to our translation, *glory* may be the same as *life* before, and *virtue* the same with *godliness*; and then the words set forth the end of God's calling us, viz. unto *glory* or *life* hereafter, as well as *virtue* or *godliness* now. But the Greek preposition $\delta\iota\alpha$ is no where (as some observe) in the New Testament found to signify *to*; for in Ro 6:4 (which some allege) it is best rendered *by*, *glory* being there put for God's

power; and therefore our margin here reads it *by* glory and virtue; which may either be, by an hendiadis, for glorious virtue, taking virtue for power, that glorious power of God which is put forth in calling us, Eph 1:18,19, or his goodness and mercy which appear in the same calling, in which sense the word may be understood; see Tit 3:4,5 1Pe 2:9; or, (which comes to the same), glory being often taken for power Joh 2:11, by *glory and virtue* may be meant God's power and goodness, or mercy.

2 Peter 1:4

Ver. 4. *Whereby*: this word may be rendered, in that, for that, inasmuch as, and then this is an explication of the things that pertain to life and godliness, to glory and virtue, all those things being contained in the promises; or *whereby* may be understood of the glory and virtue last mentioned, taking them in the latter sense explained, 2Pe 1:3; q. d. By which glorious goodness and mercy to us.

Are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: by *promises* we may understand either the matter of the promises, the things promised, Heb 10:36, such as redemption by Christ, reconciliation, adoption, &c., and then they are called *exceeding great and precious*, in comparison of all temporal and worldly things; or else the promises themselves, which are called *great* because of the excellency of the things contained in them, and *precious* in relation to us; great things being not only contained in the promises, but by them secured to us.

That by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature: we are said to be partakers of the Divine nature, not by any communication of the Divine essence to us, but by God's impressing upon us, and infusing into us, those divine qualities and dispositions (knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness) which do express and resemble the perfections of God, and are called his image, Eph 4:24 Col 3:10. And we are said to be made partakers of this Divine nature by the promises of the gospel, because they are the effectual means of our regeneration, (in which that Divine nature is communicated to us), by reason of that quickening Spirit which accompanieth them, 2Co 3:6, works by them, and forms in us the image of that wisdom, righteousness, and holiness of God, which appear in them; or of that *glory of the Lord*, which when by faith we behold in the glass of

gospel promises, we are *changed into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2Co 3:18*. Or, *the Divine nature* may be understood of the glory and immortality of the other life, wherein we shall be conformed to God, and whereof by the promises we are made partakers.

Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; either by corruption here we are to understand:

1. Destruction, to which the greatest part of the world is obnoxious through lust, and then corruption must be opposed to *life* and *peace* before, and *lust* to *virtue* and *godliness*: or rather:
2. All the pravity or wickedness of human nature, which is here said to be, i.e. to reign and prevail, *in the world*, or worldly men, *through lust*, or habitual concupiscence, which is the spring and root from which it proceeds; and then the sense is the same as Ga 5:24. This *corruption through lust* is opposed to *the Divine nature* before, and *escaping* this corruption agrees with being *partakers* of that Divine nature: see Eph 4:22-24 Col 3:9,10.

2 Peter 1:5

Ver. 5. *And beside this, giving all diligence*: here the apostle begins his exhortation, that since God had done so much for them, 2Pe 1:3,4, they would likewise do their duty; and that their care and diligence in improving the grace they had received, might be added to his bounty in giving it them.

Add to; or, minister unto; or it may be a metaphor taken from the ancient way of dancing, in which they joined hands one with another, thereby helping and holding up one another.

Faith is here set forth as the first grace, and which (as it were) leads up, the rest following it, and attending upon it, yet all in conjunction one with another. Faith is set in the first place as the prime grace of a Christian, the foundation and root of all other, as being that without which nothing else can be pleasing to God, Heb 11:6. By *virtue* he seems to understand universal righteousness, or a complication of all those graces by which

faith is wont to work; and this being more general, he proceeds from it to others that are more special.

Knowledge; by this may be meant spiritual prudence, which governs and directs other virtues in their actings; and it is called *knowledge*, because it consists in the practical knowledge of the will of God: see 2Co 6:6 1Pe 3:7.

2 Peter 1:6

Ver. 6. *Temperance*; a grace which represseth, and curbs in, not only sensual lusts, but all inordinate appetites, Ga 5:22 Tit 1:8.

Patience; that Christian fortitude whereby we bear afflictions and injuries, so as to persevere in our duty without being moved by the evils that attend us in the doing of it.

Godliness; which respects our immediate duty to God, and comprehends all the duties of the first table. This is joined to *patience*, as being that which teacheth us, in all we suffer, to acknowledge God's providence, and promises of deliverance and recompence.

2 Peter 1:7

Ver. 7. *Brotherly kindness*; a love to those that are of the household of faith. This is joined to *godliness*, to show that it is in vain to pretend to true religion and yet be destitute of brotherly love.

Charity; this is more general than the former, and relates to all men, even our enemies themselves.

2 Peter 1:8

Ver. 8. *For if these things be in you, and abound*; if ye not only have these graces in you, but abound or grow in them, both as to the inward degree and outward exercise of them.

They make you; either they make you, or declare you, not to be barren, or both; they will be both the causes and evidences of your not being barren.

Barren; or, slothful, idle, unactive.

Nor unfruitful; void of good works, which are frequently compared to fruits, Mt 3:10 7:17-19 Ga 5:22.

In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; i.e. the faith of Christ. But more is implied here than expressed; q. d. They will make you be active and fruitful in the knowledge of Christ, and declare you to be so, and thereby make it appear that ye have not in vain learned Christ.

2 Peter 1:9

Ver. 9. *But he that lacketh these things;* he that doth not live in the exercise of the forementioned graces.

Is blind; spiritually blind, as being destitute of saving knowledge.

And cannot see afar off: the Greek word is variously translated; the most probable account of it is either:

1. That it signifies to feel the way, or grope, as blind men do; and then the meaning is, he that lacketh these things is blind, and, as a blind man, gropes, not knowing which way to go; he is really destitute of the knowledge he pretends to: or:
2. To be purblind, or short-sighted, so as to see things near hand, but not *afar off*, as our translation hath it; and then the sense is, That such a one sees only the things of the world, but cannot look so far as heaven to discern things there, which if he did, he would walk in the way that leads thither, viz. in the practice of the duties before prescribed.

And hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins: he is judged in the sight of God to forget a benefit received, that is not effectually mindful of it, in living suitably to it. And so here, he that professeth himself to have

been purged from his old sins, in justification and sanctification, by the blood and Spirit of Christ, 1Co 6:11 Eph 5:25-27, and yet still lives in sin, and in the neglect of the duty he is engaged to, practically declares his forgetfulness of the mercy he professeth to have been vouchsafed him; and accordingly may be interpreted to have forgotten it, in that he acts like one that had. Or, if this be understood of one that is really purged from his old sins, yet he may be said to forget that so far as he returns again to them, or lives not up to the ends of his purgation, Lu 1:74,75.

2 Peter 1:10

Ver. 10. *Give diligence;* viz. in the exercise of the forementioned graces.

To make your calling, your effectual calling to the faith of Christ, *and election,* your eternal election to grace and glory, *sure,* not in respect of God, whose counsel is in itself sure and stable, Ro 11:29 2Ti 2:19; but in respect of yourselves, who may best discern the cause by its effects, and so your election by your good works to which you were chosen, Eph 1:4, and which prove your calling, (as being the proper genuine fruits of it, Eph 4:1,2, &c.), as that doth election, from whence it proceeds, Ac 13:48 Ro 8:30.

For if ye do these things, the things prescribed, 2Pe 1:5-7, *ye shall never fall;* not wholly apostatize from God's ways, nor so fall through temptation into any sin, as not to recover out of it.

2 Peter 1:11

Ver. 11. *Abundantly;* or richly: while ye minister, or add one grace to another, one good work to another, 2Pe 1:5, &c., God likewise will minister, (the same word is here used as 2Pe 1:5), or add largely or richly, the supplies of the Spirit, in grace, and strength, and consolation, and whatsoever is needful for you in the way, whereby your faith may be increased, your joy promoted, and your perseverance secured, till ye come into the possession of the everlasting kingdom.

2 Peter 1:12

Ver. 12. *I will not be negligent;* i.e. I will be diligent and careful.

Though ye know them: he prevents an objection; q. d. Though ye know these things already, yet being things of great moment, and you being beset with temptations, encompassed about with infirmities, and, while you are on the earth, being in a land of forgetfulness, it is necessary to put you in mind of what you know, that ye may remember to do it. See the like, Ro 15:14,15 1Jo 2:21.

The present truth; the truth of the gospel now revealed to you; that which was the great subject of the apostles' preaching and writings, that Jesus Christ was the Christ; that redemption was wrought by him; that he was risen from the dead; that whosoever believeth on him, should receive remission of sins, &c.; the promise made to the fathers being now fulfilled, Ac 13:32,33, and what was future under the Old Testament being present under the New.

2 Peter 1:13

Ver. 13. *In this tabernacle;* in the body; q. d. Having not long to live, I would live to the best purpose, and so as I may do the most good. He calls his body a tabernacle both in respect of its short continuance, its mean structure, and his laborious life in it.

To stir you up; to awaken and rouse you up, as ye have need, the flesh being slothful; and lest ye should by security and slightness lose the benefit of what ye have learned: where knowledge is not wanting, yet admonitions may be useful.

2 Peter 1:14

Ver. 14. *I must put off;* a metaphor taken from garments; the soul, while in the body, is clothed with flesh, and death to the godly is but the putting off their clothes, and going to bed, Isa 57:2.

This my tabernacle: see 2Co 5:1.

Even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me: Joh 21:18,19, Christ tells Peter of the kind of his death, that it should be violent, but speaks nothing there of the circumstance of the time; and therefore either this apostle had a twofold revelation of his death, the former as to the manner of it, and this latter concerning the time; or, if this here were no other but that, Joh 21:1-25, it may be said, that, Joh 21:18,22 Christ intimates that Peter's death should be before John's, who should live till he came, viz. in judgment against Jerusalem to destroy it, which Peter now (observing the affairs of the Jews, and considering his Master's words, Mt 24:1-51) perceived to be nigh at hand; and thence infers, that his own death was not far off.

2 Peter 1:15

Ver. 15. *These things;* the doctrine before delivered concerning faith in Christ, the practice of good works, and their continuance in both.

Always; this may be joined either to *endeavour*, and so relate to the apostle himself; he would always be diligent, and do his part, that they might have these things in remembrance: or rather, (according to our translation), to having *in remembrance*, Peter being now near his end; and therefore this *always* may better refer to them that were to live after him, than to himself that was so soon to die.

In remembrance; or, to commemorate them, viz. to the benefit and edification of the church; and this includes their having them in remembrance, but implies something more.

2 Peter 1:16

Ver. 16. *Cunningly devised fables;* human figments artificially contrived, either to please and gratify men's fancies, or to deceive and pervert their judgment: q. d. The things we have preached unto you (the sum of which is the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ) are the true sayings of God, not the fictions of men: and so he may have respect both to heathenish and Jewish fables. See 1Ti 1:4 4:7 2Ti 4:4 Tit 1:14.

The power; this relates to the Divine nature of Christ with its glorious effects, the efficacy of his doctrine, the miracles whereby he confirmed it, and especially his resurrection from the dead, Ro 1:4.

And coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; this respects his human nature, his coming in the flesh, in which he manifested the power before mentioned; both together contain the sum of the whole gospel, viz. that Christ, the promised Messiah, is come in the flesh, and that he was furnished with power sufficient and ability to save sinners to the utmost. Or, Christ's coming here may be his second coming, to which the word here used is for the most part applied in the New Testament, and whereof his transfiguration, in the following verse, was a representation and a forerunner; and in the belief of which the apostle would confirm these saints against those that scoffed at it, 2Pe 3:3,4.

But were eye-witnesses of his majesty: by Christ's majesty may be understood all that glory which did shine out in him during the whole time of his abode upon earth, Joh 1:14, but especially that more eminent manifestation of it in his transfiguration, in the next verse.

2 Peter 1:17

Ver. 17. Either *honour and glory* for glorious honour; or *glory* may relate to that lustre which appeared in the body of Christ at his transfiguration, Mt 17:2, and *honour* to the voice which came to him from his Father, and the honourable testimony thereby given him.

From the excellent glory; either from heaven, or from the glorious God, the Father of Christ, who, by this voice, did in a special manner manifest his glorious presence.

This is my beloved Son; i.e. This is the Messiah so often promised, and therefore all that was spoken of the Messiah in the law and the prophets centres in him.

In whom I am well pleased: this implies not only that Christ is peculiarly the Beloved of the Father, but that all they that are adopted to God by faith

in Christ, are beloved, and graciously accepted, in and through him, Mt 3:17 Joh 17:26 Eph 1:6.

2 Peter 1:18

Ver. 18. *We*; I, and James, and John.

Heard: the apostle avoucheth himself to have been an ear-witness, as well as eye-witness, of Christ's glory, hereby intimating that there was as much certainty of the gospel, even in a human way, as could possibly be obtained of any thing that is done in the world, seeing men can be humanly certain of nothing more than of what they perceive by their senses: compare 1Jo 1:1,3.

The holy mount; so called, not because of any inherent holiness in it, but because of the extraordinary manifestation of God's presence there; in the same sense as the *ground* is called *holy* where God appeared to Moses and to Joshua, Ex 3:5 Jos 5:15.

2 Peter 1:19

Ver. 19. Peter having proved the certainty of the evangelical doctrine, by their testimony that had seen Christ's glory in his transfiguration, and heard the Father's testimony of him, now proves the same by the testimony of the prophets under the Old Testament, and calls the *word of prophecy a more sure word*, comparing it either:

1. With the voice from heaven, than which he calls the word of prophecy more firm or sure, not in respect of truth, (which was equal in both), but in respect of the manner of its revelation; the voice from heaven being transient, and heard only by three apostles; whereas the word of prophecy was not only received by the prophets from God, but by his command committed to writing, confirmed by a succession of their fellow prophets in their several generations, and approved by Christ himself, and by him preferred before miracles themselves, Lu 16:29,31.
Or:

2. With the testimony of Peter and the other two apostles concerning that voice which came to Christ, than which testimony the word of prophecy is said to be more sure; not simply and in itself, but in respect of those to whom the apostle wrote; it was more firm in their minds who had received it; or, more sure as to them that were Jews, and had so fully entertained the writings of the prophets, and had them in so great veneration, being confirmed by the consent of so many ages; whereas the testimony of these apostles did not so fully appear to them to be Divine, as not being heretofore expressed in Scripture.

Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed; i.e. that ye search and study it, subject your consciences to the power of it, and order your conversations according to it.

A light; or, lamp, to which the word is often compared, Ps 119:105 Pr 6:23; because, as a lamp or candle lighted dispels the darkness, and gives light to those that are in the house or room where it is; so the word gives light to all that are in God's house, as the church is called, 1Ti 3:15.

A dark place; or, dirty, squalid, because places that have no light are usually filthy; the dirt which is not seen is not removed.

Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts; either,

1. The last day, called *the day* by way of excellency, because when it once begins it will never end, and will be all light without any darkness: and then what is said of the word of prophecy is to be understood of the whole Scripture; and the sense is, that whereas the whole time of this life is but a kind of night of error and ignorance, God hath set up his candle, given us the light of the Scripture to guide us and lead us, till we come to the glorious light of the future life, in which we shall have no need of the light of the Scripture to direct us, but shall see God as he is, and face to face, 1Co 13:12. According to this exposition, the dawning of the day, and the day-star arising, do not signify different parts of the same day, but rather the whole day, as opposed to that darkness which would totally overspread us, were it not for the light the word affords us: our minds of themselves are dark, in them the light of the word shines, and dispels the darkness by degrees, according as the Spirit gives us more understanding of it; but yet the darkness will not be

wholly removed, till the day of eternal life dawn upon us, and the day-star of the perfect knowledge of God in the beatifical vision arise in our hearts. Or:

2. By the day dawning, and the day-star arising, may be understood a more full, clear, and explicit knowledge of Christ, and the mysteries of the gospel; and then this relates particularly to the prophecies of The Old Testament; and, as Paul calls the times of the Old Testament a *night*, Ro 13:12, as being a time of darkness and shadows, in comparison of the light and knowledge of Christ under the New Testament; so Peter here compares the writings of the prophets to a candle, which gives some, but less light, and the preaching of the gospel to the dawning day, and day-star arising; and commends these Christian Jews to whom he wrote, for making use of and attending to even this lesser light, till they attained to greater degrees of illumination, and the day-star of a more full and clear knowledge of Christ, as revealed in the gospel, did arise in their hearts. This exposition is favoured by Ac 17:11; they there, and so the Jewish converts here, did search the Scriptures, to see if the things spoken by the apostles did agree with what was before written by the prophets; and as they there, so these here, are commended for their diligence in so doing, and intimation given them, that they must attend to the light of the Old Testament prophecies, till they were thereby led into a greater knowledge and understanding of the gospel revelation.

2 Peter 1:20

Ver. 20. *Knowing this first;* either, principally and above other things, as being most worthy to be known; or, knowing this as the first principle of faith, or the first thing to be believed.

That no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation: the Greek word here used may be rendered, either:

1. As our translators do, *interpretation*, or explication; and then the meaning is, not that private men are not to interpret the Scripture, only refer all to the church; but that no man nor company of men, no church nor public officers, are to interpret the Scripture of their own heads, according to their own minds, so as to make their private sense be the

sense of the Scripture, but to seek the understanding of it from God, who shows them the meaning of the word in the word itself, (the more obscure places being expounded by the more clear), and by his Spirit leads believers, in their searching the Scripture, into the understanding of his mind in it: God himself being the author of the word, as 2Pe 1:21, is the best interpreter of it. Or:

2. Mission or dismissal; a metaphor taken from races, where they that ran were let loose from the stage where the race began, that they might run their course. The prophets in the Old Testament are said to *run*, as being God's messengers, Jer 23:21, and God is said to *send* them, Eze 13:6,7. And then this doth not immediately concern the interpretation of the Scripture, but the first revelation of it, spoken of in the next verse; and the question is not: Who hath authority to interpret the Scripture now written? But: What authority the penmen had to write it? And consequently, what respect is due to it? And why believers are so carefully to take heed to it? And then the meaning is, that it is the first principle of our faith, that the Scripture is not of human invention, but Divine inspiration; that the prophets wrote not their own private sense in it, but the mind of God; and at his command, not their own pleasure.

2 Peter 1:21

Ver. 21. *The prophecy*; the prophetic writings, or word of prophecy, 2Pe 1:19.

Came not in old time by the will of man; the prophets spake not of themselves what and when they pleased.

But holy men of God; prophets, called men of God, 1Sa 2:27 9:6 1Ki 17:18, and elsewhere. They are here called *holy*, not only because of their lives, wherein they were examples to others, but because they were the special instruments of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified them to the work of preaching, and penning what he dictated to them.

Spake as they were moved; or, carried out, or acted, i.e. elevated above their own natural abilities. This may imply the illumination of their minds with the knowledge of Divine mysteries, the gift of infallibility, that they

might not err, of prophecy, to foretell things to come, and a peculiar instinct of *the Holy Ghost*, whereby they were moved to preach or write.

2 Peter 2:1

Chapter Summary

2Pe 2:1-6 The apostle foretelleth the appearance of false teachers, the impiety of them and their followers, and the judgments that would overtake them.

2Pe 2:7-9 The godly shall be delivered, as Lot was out of Sodom.

2Pe 2:10-19 The wicked principles and manners of these seducers described.

2Pe 2:20-22 The mischief of relapsing into sin.

Ver. 1. *But there were false prophets also:* the apostle having

been exhorting them to continuance and progress in faith, admonishes

them here of such as might labour to draw them from it; and having

made mention of the Old Testament prophets, holy men of God, he hereby

takes occasion to tell them of, and caution them against, false

teachers which would be among themselves. This also in the text

plainly relates to what went before: q. d. Together with those

prophets which were sent by God, there were likewise false prophets,

such as were not sent of him.

Among the people; the people of Israel.

Even as there shall be false teachers; teachers of false doctrine,

Mt 7:15 Ac 20:29.

Among you; among you Jewish, as well as among the Gentile

Christians; or, among you as Christians and God's people under the New Testament, in opposition to the people of God under the Old.

Who shall privily bring in: the Greek word signifies either to bring in slyly and craftily, under specious pretences, and without being observed, Ga 2:4 Jude 1:4; or, to bring in over and above, or beside the doctrine of the gospel, which they did not renounce; or both may be implied.

Damnable heresies; Greek, heresies of destruction, i.e. destructive, such as lead to destruction, viz. eternal, or damnation.

Even denying; either in their words or their practices, either directly, or by consequence of their doctrines or actions; they that profess they know God, but contradict that profession in their lives, are said to deny him, Tit 1:16.

The Lord; either:

1. God the Father, so called, Lu 2:29 Ac 4:24, &c., and probably Re 6:10; nor is there any necessity, but, Jude 1:4, the word may be understood of God the Father. Or rather:

2. Christ.

That bought them: if we understand it of God the Father, the sense is, either:

1. Denying God that bought them, or acquired them and made them his,

viz. by calling them out of the darkness and gross wickedness of the world, to the knowledge of Christ and the gospel, and the fellowship of his church. In this general sense the word buying is sometimes taken, Isa 55:1 Re 3:18. Or:

2. Denying God that bought the people of Israel (whereof these false teachers that should be among the Christian Jews were to be a part) out of Egypt, to make them his peculiar people, whereof they would boast themselves, and yet by their wicked practices deny that God that bought them; the words seem to be taken out of De 32:6:
Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? As likewise from 2Pe 2:5 of that chapter. Peter calls them *spots*, 2Pe 2:13 of this chapter.

But if we understand it of Christ, which seems most probable, the sense is, either:

1. That Christ bought or redeemed them, (in which sense the word is sometimes taken), in that by his death he purchased the continuance of their lives, and the staying of their execution, and rescued them from that present destruction which, without Christ's interposition, had seized on them, as it had likewise on the whole visible creation immediately upon the apostacy of mankind. Or:

2. This is spoken not only of their pretences, that they should profess themselves redeemed by Christ, but in the

style of the
visible church, which should judge them to be so
till they declared
the contrary by their wicked actions; and it
likewise holds true in
a forensical or judicial style, according to which
whosoever
professeth himself to be redeemed by Christ, and yet
denies him in
his deeds, is said to deny the Lord that bought him;
it being alike
as to the greatness of the crime, whether he be
really redeemed,
or, professing himself to be so, denies his
Redeemer.

And bring upon themselves swift destruction; shall
hasten their
own destruction, it may be temporal in this world; to
be sure, eternal
in the other. It may be called *swift*, as coming upon
them
unawares, and when they think least of it, as 1Th 5:3.

2 Peter 2:2

Ver. 2. *And many shall follow their pernicious ways;* Greek, their destructions, i.e. those ways of error which are attended with destruction (the effect being put for the cause by a metonymy); and the sense is, that as these false teachers shall bring destruction upon themselves by their heresies; so others, running with them into the same errors, shall fall into the same destruction.

By reason of whom; or, by whom, viz. these false teachers, or their followers, or both.

The way of truth; the gospel, so called, as being the doctrine of saving truth. It is called the way, Ac 9:2 19:9 22:4; *the way of salvation,* Ac 16:17; *the way of God,* Ac 18:26.

Shall be evil spoken of; blasphemed, whether by false teachers themselves and their followers, or by others taking occasion by them: see Ro 2:24 1Ti 6:1 Tit 2:5.

2 Peter 2:3

Ver. 3. *With feigned words;* deceitful speeches, which have a show of truth to hide their errors.

Make merchandise of you; as of slaves or beasts: it seems to be a metaphor taken from merchants that speak great things of bad wares, the better to vend them; the sense is, with specious words, and pious pretences, they shall deceive you to make a gain of you.

Whose judgment; or, condemnation.

Now of a long time; being of old determined by God, and foretold in the Scripture, and so nearer than they themselves imagine.

Lingereth not; i.e. goes on apace, and hastens on them.

And their damnation; or, destruction.

Slumbereth not: i.e. watcheth, as ready to overtake them in its time: it may be a metaphor taken from a traveller, as Pr 6:11; or the apostle alludes to De 32:35, where the like expression is found: see 2Pe 2:1.

2 Peter 2:4

Ver. 4. *For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell:* elsewhere called *the deep*, Lu 8:31, and *the bottomless pit*, Re 9:1 11:7 17:8 20:1,3. This implies a change:

1. Of the state of those sinning angels, that whereas before it was the highest among the creatures, now it is the lowest.
2. Of their place, that whereas they were before the throne of God with the rest of the angels, they are now thrust down into a lower place, agreeable to their sin and misery. What place that is we find not expressed in Scripture, and therefore we are not to be over curious in our inquiries after it; but may rest satisfied, that they are excluded from the place of their primitive happiness, and are in a place where they are afflicted with the pain both of loss and sense.

And delivered them into chains of darkness: either to be bound, or held with darkness as with chains; or kept in *chains under darkness*, as Jude 1:6; where *darkness* may imply the misery and horror of their condition, and *chains*, their

obduracy in their wickedness, their despair of deliverance, their expectation of future judgment, [Heb 10:27](#), together with the providence and power of God, watching over and holding them in that condition, till final vengeance come upon them. It is a metaphor taken from malefactors condemned, who are bound in chains, and kept in the dungeon till execution.

To be reserved; so kept that they cannot escape.

Unto judgment; viz. that of the last day, the time of their full torment, in which the wrath of God, which they feel in a great measure now, will come upon them to the utmost.

2 Peter 2:5

Ver. 5. *And spared not the old world: the world,* for men in the world, viz. those that lived in it before the flood.

But saved Noah the eighth person; viz. together with the other seven, his wife, three sons, and their wives, [1Pe 3:20](#). Noah may be particularly named, because God had a special respect to him, and for his sake spared others.

A preacher: constituted to be so by Divine authority and commission.

Of righteousness: i.e. not only:

1. Of the righteousness of God, who had threatened to destroy the world for its wickedness; but:
2. Of the righteousness of Christ upon all them that should believe. It is not to be doubted but he preached the same righteousness whereof he himself was heir, and that was the righteousness of faith, [Heb 11:7](#); and this he did not in words only, but in his actions; in that he built the ark for the saving himself and his household, which was a type of the salvation of believers by Christ. And:
3. Of the righteousness of sanctification, in his exhorting the men that then were to repentance and holiness, if possibly thereby they might prevent the approaching deluge.

Bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; the whole multitude of wicked men then living in the world.

2 Peter 2:6

Ver. 6. *The cities of Sodom and Gomorrha;* which being the chief of the five, include Admah and Zeboim, Zoar, the fifth, being spared for Lot's sake, Ge 14:18, compared with Ge 19:25.

Condemned them with an overthrow; i.e. punished them with a total subversion, or brought that destruction upon them to which he had condemned them.

Making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; of his wrath and vengeance ready to be poured out upon others that should live ungodly, to deter them from the imitation of the sins of those that had so miserably perished. The word may be rendered a type, (as it is, Heb 8:5, and Heb 9:23), viz. of hell-fire, which is to be the punishment of wicked men at the last day: Jude 1:7 implies as much. As the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt was a kind of type of the deliverance of all God's people to the end of the world; so the subversion of these cities was so memorable an instance of Divine vengeance, that the Scripture frequently alludes to it, as a type or pattern, when it speaks of the general destruction of the wicked of the world.

2 Peter 2:7

Ver. 7. *Vexed;* grievously afflicted or wearied.

The wicked; unjust, lawless, (understand men), such as had no respect to law or justice, in opposition to Lot, whom he calls *just* and *righteous*.

2 Peter 2:8

Ver. 8. *Seeing and hearing;* their wickedness was so open and shameless, that he not only heard the report of it, but saw them commit it, Isa 3:9.

Vexed; Greek, tormented, i.e. extremely afflicted and troubled his own soul, provoking himself to godly sorrow at the sight and fame of their unlawful deeds. His grief was voluntary, and he active in it; the like is said of Christ, on occasion of Lazarus's death, Joh 11:33, where the margin reads, he troubled himself.

2 Peter 2:9

Ver. 9. *The Lord knoweth;* according to the common rule, that words of

knowledge in Scripture connote affections, as Ps 1:6. God's knowing here implies not only his infinite wisdom, whereby he is never at a loss, but knows all the various ways whereby the godly may be delivered; but likewise his love and good will to them, whereby he is ready to do it, hath a heart for it: so the word is taken, Ec 4:13 Am 3:10; the text reads, *will no more be admonished*, the margin, knows not, &c.

How to deliver the godly; those that walk in the steps of just Lot and Noah, who was perfect in his generation. This concludes what the apostle began, 2Pe 2:4: the sum is: If God spared neither wicked angels nor wicked men, destroying the old world and Sodom, but delivered Lot and Noah, righteous persons; he still hath wisdom, power, and will to deliver other godly men, and punish other wicked men.

Out of temptations; afflictions, Jas 1:2,12.

And to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: the Greek word is in the present tense, which may be understood, either:

1. As put for the future, and then the sense is as in our translation, that though God many times lets the wicked alone in this world, so that they escape present punishment, yet they shall not escape future torment; they are a while spared, but never pardoned; and when free from temporal evils, are reserved for eternal vengeance. Or:
2. It may be understood as in the present tense, which agrees well with the instances of God's vengeance before mentioned, which was executed on wicked men in this world; and then the sense is: The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations when he sees fit, even in this life, and how to reserve those wicked men, whom he punisheth with temporal judgments here, to a much more severe and dreadful punishment at the day of judgment hereafter.

2 Peter 2:10

Ver. 10. *But chiefly them*: the apostle here applies the general doctrine delivered to false teachers, whose character he gives in several particulars; the sense is, that God reserves all wicked men to the day of judgment, but those especially that second their corrupt doctrine with a wicked conversation. The verb *reserve* is to be repeated from the former verse.

That walk after the flesh; to walk after the flesh is either:

1. To follow the conduct of the sensual appetite, like brute beasts, which are led by sense, not by reason or judgment: or:
2. More especially it implies their giving up themselves to filthy lusts, probably unnatural ones, Jude 1:7, *going after strange flesh*.

In the lust of; i.e. through, or out of, implying the cause or spring from whence their actual uncleanness came, viz. their own lust.

Uncleanness; or, pollution; q. d. In the lust whereby they are polluted, or in their impure lusts.

And despise government; i.e. governors, or magistrates; as *brotherhood* for brethren, 1Pe 2:17.

Presumptuous; Greek, bold, or daring, viz. because *they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities*.

Self-willed; stubborn, refractory, addicted to their own ways, and therefore will not be ruled by others.

Dignities; or, glories, viz. rulers and magistrates, whom God hath made glorious, or on whom he hath put the honour of being above others, and made them his own lieutenants and vicegerents upon earth.

2 Peter 2:11

Ver. 11. *Angels;* good angels, Jude 1:9.

Greater; either greater than these audacious false teachers, or else greater than the forementioned dignities.

In power and might; i.e. greater in their natural strength, and in their dignity.

Bring not railing accusation; use not reviling, reproachful language; the same with speaking evil in the former verse.

Against them; either:

1. Against dignities, 2Pe 2:10; and then the meaning is, that good angels, great and powerful as they are, yet bring not a railing accusation before the Lord against

magistrates and princes, but when they have had any thing against them, yet have carried themselves with modesty, and due respect to that dignity in which God had placed such, having a regard to civil government as God's constitution, and being themselves, at God's appointment, guardians and keepers, even of wicked kingdoms, as Da 10:1-21 and Da 11:1-45. Or:

2. Against themselves, as in the margin; and then the sense is, that angels do not reproach nor revile each other, nay, not the devil himself as appears, Jude 1:9, which place may explain this; and therefore it did ill become these false teachers, who were so much below angels, to contemn, revile, or rail on princes and civil magistrates, who were so much above themselves, and had their authority from God.

2 Peter 2:12

Ver. 12. *But these;* the false teachers before mentioned.

As natural brute beasts; beasts which are void of reason, and follow only their sensual inclination.

Made to be taken and destroyed; being made for men's use, and so to be a prey to them; while they hasten after their food, they are taken in nets and snares, and being taken are destroyed.

Speak evil of the things that they understand not; either the great mysteries of religion, whereof they are stupidly ignorant; or rather, dignities, before mentioned, which they, (not knowing, or not considering, them to be of God, and of so great use to men), following the inclination of their own corrupt natures, speak against.

And shall utterly perish in their own corruption; or, shall be corrupted in their own corruption, i.e. shall be utterly destroyed by their own fault and folly; penal corruption (or perdition) following upon sinful. The sum is: That as brute beasts, which have no reason, follow their brutish appetite, till it lead them into destruction, and where they sought their meat they find their death, Pr 7:23; so these false teachers, not being guided by reason, much less by the light of the Spirit, but merely by sway of their natural inclinations, in speaking evil of that ordinance which God hath honoured, shall bring upon themselves that destruction they have deserved.

2 Peter 2:13

Ver. 13. *And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness:* under this general term, all the several sins they are charged with are comprehended.

As they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time; this is said to aggravate their sin, and signifies either their impudence in it, that they had cast off all shame, and practised their luxury by day light, whereas ordinary sinners are wont to choose the night for such works of darkness, Ro 13:12,13 1Th 5:7; or their security, that they spent the day of their life in their pleasures, placing their happiness in present enjoyments, unmindful of a future reckoning and an eternal state.

Spots they are and blemishes; not only altogether polluted themselves, but such as defile others, and are blemishes to the church whereof they profess themselves members.

Sporting themselves with their own deceivings: some read *αγαπαις* instead of *απαταις*, leaving out the pronoun, rendered *their own*; and understand this of the love feasts, in which they luxuriously gorged themselves. This might well agree with Jude 1:12, but that the generality of Greek copies read *απαταις*, which we turn *deceivings*, i.e. either errors, taking the word passively; q. d. They do but make a sport of sin, and please themselves with it; and this agrees too with Jude 1:12, *feeding themselves without fear*: or cheatings, or imposings upon others, taking *deceivings* actively; q. d. They sport themselves while they so finely deceive you, pretending love in their feasting with you, when they do it only to gratify their appetites; or sporting themselves, and making merry, with what they have cheated you of.

While they feast with you; viz. in your feasts of charity, with the specious pretence of which they covered their naughtiness.

2 Peter 2:14

Ver. 14. *Having eyes;* he mentions the eyes, both because they let in the objects of lust into the heart, Job 31:1 Mt 5:28, and because the signs of lust in the heart appear especially in the eyes, Ge 39:7 Pr 6:25.

Full of adultery; full of an adulteress, which either may be a Hebraism, the concrete being put for the abstract, as drunken for drunkenness, and thirsty for

thirst, De 29:19; or it may be a proverbial expression of the wretchedness of such men's hearts, when they still carried an adulteress in their eyes.

That cannot cease from sin; never satisfied with looking upon, or still looking about for, such objects as might inflame their lusts; or still seeking with wanton looks to entice others to folly.

Beguiling; either alluring them by their wantonness to embrace their false doctrines, promising them pleasures and carnal liberties, 2Pe 2:18; or enticing them to lewdness, by instilling false doctrines into them, which tend to licentiousness.

Unstable souls; those that were not well grounded in the faith and doctrine of holiness, who might therefore easily be drawn aside.

An heart they have exercised with covetous practices; a heart wholly intent upon getting gain, accustomed to it, and skilful in it.

Practices; the word is in the plural number, to show that the seducers had several arts and ways of exercising their covetousness.

Cursed children; Greek, children of the curse. It may be taken either actively, for such as were causes of a curse, brought a curse with them; or passively, for such as were worthy of a curse, or obnoxious to it; as *children of wrath*, Eph 2:3.

2 Peter 2:15

Ver. 15. *The right way;* the way of truth, 2Pe 2:2, i.e. the way of faith and holiness, which is the only right way to happiness.

Are gone astray; into the by-paths of error. There is but one right way, and many wrong, in which they wander that leave the right. He seems to allude to Balaam, Nu 22:1-41, who left the way of God, which was, to be obedient to God, and not go beyond his word, Nu 2:18, and ran into the way of sin, when he went with Balak's messengers to curse God's people; and therefore his way is said to be perverse, Nu 2:32.

Following the way of Balaam;

1. In respect of their false doctrine: for, as Balaam was disobedient to God, and, against his command, went to Balak; so these men forsook the way of truth prescribed by God in his word.

2. In respect of their wicked lives: Balaam taught Balak to entice the children of Israel to *commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed unto idols*, Re 2:14; and these taught men to commit lewdness, and indulge themselves in their sensualities.
3. Chiefly in respect of their covetousness, as follows.

Of Bosor; either this is the name of his country, called *Pethor*, Nu 22:5, and by change of two letters, *P* into *B*, and *th* into *s*, (frequent in the Syriac language), *Besor*, or *Bosor*: or, the name of his father, called *Beor*, in Numbers, having two names; unless the apostle call him *Bosor* in allusion to *Basar*, flesh, as being of a fleshly mind, as the false teachers here were. Thus *Beth-el* was called *Beth-aven*, Ho 4:15; and *Beelzebub* called *Beelzebul*, the god of dung, Mt 10:25.

Who loved the wages of unrighteousness; the reward which Balak offered him for an unrighteous act, viz. the cursing of God's people.

2 Peter 2:16

Ver. 16. *But was rebuked*; not only by the angel's speaking to him, but by the ass's, as follows.

The dumb ass speaking with man's voice, forbade; not in express words, that we read of, but the ass's speaking with human voice, discerning the angel before Balaam did, and going back, when he, carried out by the power of his covetousness, would needs go forward, were so prodigious things as might sufficiently convince him of his sin, in going to Balak contrary to God's command at first given; and it was no small dishonour put upon him, that he who would not hearken to God, should have an ass for his teacher.

The madness; in going against God's command, and to curse those who, God had told him, were blessed.

Objection. Balaam had leave given him to go with Balak's messengers, Nu 22:20, and refused Balak's offers, 2Pe 2:18.

Answer.

1. Balaam did not condemn the gifts offered, but had a desire after them, as appears by his inquiring of God the second time, 2Pe 2:19, though God had fully revealed his will to him before, 2Pe 2:12.

2. God bade him go that he might bless the people, 2Pe 2:12, compared with 2Pe 2:20, whereas he went not out of a respect to God's answer, but out of a covetous mind, and a desire to curse Israel, as appears by Jos 24:9,10, and by the cursed counsel he gave, Nu 25:1, compared with Nu 31:16, and Re 2:14.

Of the prophet: Balaam is called a prophet here, either:

1. Because he pretended to be so: thus the false prophets are sometimes called absolutely *prophets*, Jer 6:13 26:7,8,11. Or:
2. Because he really was a prophet, though a wicked and covetous one; for he inquired of God, and had answers from him, Nu 6:22 8:9,10,18,19; and Moses says expressly, that *the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth*, Nu 23:5,16; and that prophecy concerning the Messiah, Nu 24:17, could not but be of God, yet it is probable that Balaam, out of covetousness, might sometimes use divination, nay, it is plain in some cases he did, Nu 24:1.

2 Peter 2:17

Ver. 17. *These are wells without water:* he compares seducers:

1. To *wells without water*; because as a well invites a traveller to it in hope of quenching his thirst, but being without water, mocks his expectation; so false teachers, making a show of true wisdom and saving knowledge, draw men to them, but being destitute of it, delude them, and make them no wiser than they were.

Clouds that are carried with a tempest;

2. To *clouds*, &c.; because as clouds many times, promising rain and refreshment, either are scattered by the wind, or break out into a tempest; so these, when they promise to refresh their hearers' souls with the truth of God, being themselves destitute of it, do them no good, or with their pernicious errors, or corrupt manners, do them much harm. By this comparison he sets forth:
 - (1.) Their inconstancy, that, like clouds driven with the wind, they are tossed to and fro, from one doctrine to another, Eph 4:14. And:
 - (2.) Their deceitfulness, that they make a show of what they have not, as clouds do of rain, when yet they are scattered, without yielding any.

The mist of darkness; i.e. the darkest darkness, called *outer darkness*, Mt 8:12 22:13 25:30; by which the torments of hell are sometimes set forth, as well as sometimes by fire.

2 Peter 2:18

Ver. 18. *Great swelling words of vanity;* i.e. big words, full of sound, and void of sense, at least of truth. He seems to tax the affected, vain speech of seducers, who were wont to clothe their erroneous doctrines (if not disguise the truths of God) with strange, uncouth phrases, which made a show of some rare discoveries, or deep mysteries, whereas indeed they were empty of any thing solid, or tending to edification.

They allure: as with a bait; a metaphor taken from the manner of taking fish.

Through the lusts of the flesh; to which they give liberty, as a bait to draw men after them.

Through much wantonness; this explains the former, and shows what lusts they indulge men in, viz. wantonness and uncleanness.

Those that were clean escaped; truly, or really, which seems the better reading than that in the margin: and this is said of them:

1. In respect of the profession they made of a real conversion.
2. In respect of the assent they gave to the word by which they were called.
3. In respect of the change that appeared in their outward conversation.

From them who live in error: whether the error of Judaism, or heathenism, wherein they had been formerly involved, and others still were. This might be the case of some in whom yet there was no saving change wrought; that they might be brought off from these more foul ways of sin and error in which they had walked and yet might afterward return to the same, or as bad, Mt 12:43 13:21.

2 Peter 2:19

Ver. 19. *While they promise them liberty;* liberty for their lusts, and so from the yoke of the Divine law. They abused the name of Christian liberty, and extended it to licentiousness.

They themselves are the servants of corruption; under the power and dominion of sin.

For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage: he alludes to the law of war, according to which, he that is overcome, and taken captive by his enemy, becomes his servant. These false teachers, that talked so much of Christian liberty, yet being overcome by their own lusts, and kept under by them, were the worst of slaves.

2 Peter 2:20

Ver. 20. *The pollutions of the world;* those more gross wickednesses in which most of the world still lieth, 1Jo 5:19.

Through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; such a knowledge of Christ as brings with it an outward reformation of life, though it do not purify the heart. For that the apostle doth not here speak of those that were rooted in Christ by a saving and heart purifying faith, appears by 2Pe 2:14, where he calls them *unstable souls*.

They are again entangled therein, and overcome; return to their old sins, yield up themselves to them, and continue in them.

2 Peter 2:21

Ver. 21. *It had been better for them not to have known;* their sin had been less if they had not known the truth, but now they sin against knowledge, and therein their apostasy is much worse than their ignorance would have been.

The way of righteousness; the way of obtaining righteousness by Christ, and of living godly in Christ, 2Ti 3:12, prescribed in the gospel; the same which is called *the right way*, 2Pe 2:15, and *the way of truth*, 2Pe 2:2.

The holy commandment; the same in other words. It is called *holy*, not only as proceeding from God, who is holy, but as teaching nothing but what is holy, and being the means God useth in making men holy, and as being opposed to the pollutions of the world before mentioned.

2 Peter 2:22

Ver. 22. *But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb:* this is added, to prevent the scandal that might arise from their apostacy;

q. d. It is not to be wondered at that they are again entangled in and overcome by their former pollutions, when there never was a thorough change wrought in their hearts. Dogs and swine (beasts unclean by the law) they still were, under the greatest appearances of reformation, and such they now show themselves to be by their vile apostacy.

The dog is turned to his own vomit again: as dogs vomit up what is burdensome to them, but, still being dogs, and not having changed their natures by easing their stomachs, lick up their own vomit again; so these, under a fit of conviction, through the power of the word, disgorge those sins which burdened their consciences, but having thereby gotten some ease, and their old nature and love to their former lusts still remaining, they again return to the same sins they had for a time forsaken.

The sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire: as swine, that naturally love the dirt and mire, if sometimes they be washed from it, yet, still retaining their former disposition, return again to it; so likewise these here mentioned, however they may be washed from the pollutions of the world, and by the preaching of the gospel brought off from their former ways of sin, and brought into a profession of holiness, yet, still retaining their old nature and corrupt dispositions, they are easily prevailed over by them, and so relapse into their former abominations.

2 Peter 3:1

Chapter Summary

2Pe 3:1-7 The apostle declareth it to be the design of both his Epistles to remind the brethren of Christ's coming to judgment, in opposition to scoffers.

2Pe 3:8,9 No argument can be drawn against it from the delay, which is designed to leave men room for repentance.

2Pe 3:10-14 He describeth the day of the Lord, and exhorteth to holiness of life in expectation of it.

2Pe 3:15,16 He showeth that Paul had taught the like in his Epistles,

2Pe 3:17,18 and concludeth with advice to beware of

seduction, and to grow in Christian grace and knowledge.

Ver. 1. *This second epistle:* this confirms what has been said, that this Epistle was written by Peter, as well as the former.

I stir up your pure minds; or, sincere minds: the sense is either:

1. I stir up your minds, that they may be pure and sincere; and then he doth not so much commend them for what they were, as direct and exhort them to what they should be, that they might receive benefit by what he wrote, there being nothing that contributes more to the fruitful entertaining of the word, than sincerity and honesty of heart, when men lay aside those things which are contrary to it, and might hinder its efficacy, 1Pe 2:1,2. Or:
2. I stir up your minds, though pure and sincere, to continuance and constancy in that pure doctrine ye have received.

By way of remembrance: see 2Pe 1:13.

2 Peter 3:2

Ver. 2. *The words which were spoken before by the holy prophets;* the word of prophecy, 2Pe 1:19: he joins the prophets and apostles together, as concurring in their doctrine, and so useth it as an argument to persuade them to constancy in the faith of the gospel, that what the apostles preached to them was confirmed by what the prophets under the Old Testament had taught before, Ac 26:22 Eph 2:20.

And of the commandment of us; by this he means the whole doctrine of the gospel preached by him and the other apostles: see 2Pe 2:21 1Jo 3:23.

The apostles of the Lord and Saviour; who was the author of this commandment, and the principal in giving it, and from whom the apostles received it, who were but ministers and instruments in delivering it to others.

2 Peter 3:3

Ver. 3. *Knowing this first;* especially, as being very necessary to be known. The apostle having in the former chapter cautioned these saints against the more close enemies of the gospel, seducers and false teachers, here he foretells them of more open enemies, profane scoffers.

In the last days: see 1Co 10:11 2Ti 3:1.

Scoffers; profane contemners of God, and deriders of his truth, Ps 1:1 119:51 Isa 28:14,22.

Walking after their own lusts; such as are natural to them; lusts of ungodliness, Jude 1:18.

2 Peter 3:4

Ver. 4. *And saying, Where is the promise?* Questioning or denying the great truths of the gospel, thereby to encourage themselves in walking after their own lusts.

Of his coming; viz. Christ's, mentioned 2Pe 3:2. Possibly these scoffers might drop the name of Christ by way of contempt, not vouchsafing to mention it, as the Jews did, Joh 9:29; q. d. Where is the promise of his coming whom you expect?

His coming, to judge the world; q. d. His promised coming doth not appear, the promise of it is not fulfilled.

For since the fathers, who died in the faith of Christ's coming, and had the promise of it, *fell asleep;* i.e. died; the usual phrase of Scripture, which these scoffers seem to speak in derision;

q. d. It is so long since the fathers fell asleep, (as you call it), that it were more than time for them to be awakened, whereas we see the contrary.

All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation; i.e. the world continues to be the same it was, and hath the same parts it had;

we see nothing changed, nothing abolished, but still nature keeps its old course. Thus they argue, that because there had been no such great change, therefore there should be none; because Christ was not yet come to judgment, therefore he should not come at all; not considering the power of God, who is as able to destroy the world as to make it, nor the will of God revealed in his word concerning the end of it.

2 Peter 3:5

Ver. 5. *For this they willingly are ignorant of;* they will not know what they ought to know, and, if they would search the Scripture, might know.

That by the word of God; the command of God, or *word of his power,* as it is called, Heb 1:3: see Ge 1:6,9 Ps 33:6 148:5.

The heavens were; were created, or had a being given them, Ge 1:6.

Of old; from the beginning of the world.

And the earth; the globe of the earth, which comprehends likewise the seas and rivers, as parts of the whole.

Standing out of the water and in the water: according to our translation, the sense of these words may be plainly this, that the earth, standing partly out of the water, (as all the dry land doth, whose surface is higher than the water), and partly in the water, (as those parts do which are under it), or in the midst of the water, as being covered and encompassed by seas and rivers. But most expositors follow the marginal reading, and render the Greek word by consisting; and then the meaning may be, either:

1. That the earth consisting of water, as the matter out of which it was formed, (Moses calling the chaos which was that matter, *waters,* Ge 1:2), and by water, from which it hath its compactness and solidity, and without which it would be wholly dry, mere useless dust, unfit for the generation and production of natural things. If we understand the words thus, the argument lies against the scoffers; for the earth thus consists of and by water, yet God made use of the water for the destroying of the world; and so natural causes are not sufficient for its preservation

without the power of God sustaining it in its being; and whenever he withdraws that power, in spite of all inferior causes, it must perish. Or:

2. The words may thus be read, the heavens were of old, and the earth (supply from the former clause) was out of the water, and consisting by, or in, the water; and the meaning is, that the earth did emerge, or appear out of, or above, the water, viz. when God gathered the waters together, and made the dry land appear; and doth consist by, or among, or in, the midst of the waters, as was before explained.

2 Peter 3:6

Ver. 6. *Whereby;* by which heavens and water, mentioned in the former verse, the fountains of the great deep being broken up, and the windows of heaven opened, Ge 7:11. Or, by the word of God, as the principal cause, and the water as the instrumental, which, at his command, was poured out upon the earth both from above and below.

The world; the earth, with all the inhabitants of it, eight persons excepted. This the apostle allegeth against the forementioned scoffers, who said that all things continued as they were, when yet the flood had made so great a change in the face of the lower creation.

2 Peter 3:7

Ver. 7. *The heavens;* the ethereal, or starry heaven, as well as aerial; for, 2Pe 3:10,12, he distinguisheth the heavens that are to perish by fire, from the elements; and 2Pe 3:13, he opposeth a new heaven to that heaven which is to be consumed; but the new heaven is not meant merely of the aerial heaven. And why should not this be meant of the same heavens, which elsewhere in Scripture are said to perish? Job 14:12. Ps 102:26: *All of them wax old, &c.*

By the same word; the same as 2Pe 3:5.

Are kept in store; are kept safe as in a treasury, and untouched for a time, that they may be destroyed at last.

Reserved unto fire; that they may be consumed by it. The destruction of the world by fire at the last day, is opposed to the destruction of it by water in the flood.

Against the day of judgment; the general judgment.

And perdition of ungodly men; this the apostle speaks with an emphasis, because they were *ungodly* against whom he here bends his discourse.

2 Peter 3:8

Ver. 8. *Be not ignorant of this one thing;* i.e. be sure of it: the same word is here used as 2Pe 3:5; and so he cautions them against the ignorance of scoffers, and to prevent it, would have them certainly know *this one thing*, which is extant in the Scripture, which foretells Christ's coming.

That one day is with the Lord; the Lord Jesus Christ, of whose coming he speaks.

As a thousand years; by a synecdoche, *a thousand years* is put for any, even the longest revolution of time; and the sense is, that though there be great difference of time, long and short, with us, who are subject to time, and are measured by it; yet with Him who is eternal, without succession, to whom nothing is past, nothing future, but all things present, there is no difference of time, none long, none short, but a thousand years, nay, all the time that hath run out since the creation of the world, is but as a day; and we are not to judge of the Lord's delay in coming by our own sense, but by God's eternity.

2 Peter 3:9

Ver. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise;* i.e. doth not defer the fulfilling of it beyond the appointed time, Isa 60:22.

As some men count slackness; either the scoffers here mentioned, who, because of Christ's not yet coming, questioned whether he would come at

all, as if God had changed his purpose, or would not fulfil it: or believers themselves, who, through the weakness of their faith, and greatness of their sufferings, might grow into some degree of impatience, and think Christ slow in coming to avenge their cause, and give them their reward. So much may be gathered from Re 6:10.

But is long-suffering to usward; to us believers, or us elect.

Not willing that any should perish; any that he hath ordained to life, though not yet called.

But that all should come to repentance; all whom he hath elected; he would have the whole number of them filled up, and defers the day of judgment till it be so: or this may be meant not of God's secret and effectual will, but of his revealed will, whereby he calls all to repentance promiscuously that hear the gospel preached, hath made it their duty, approves of it, hath prescribed it as the way of salvation, commanded them to seek salvation in that way, and is ready to receive and save them upon their repenting: see 1Ti 2:4.

2 Peter 3:10

Ver. 10. *But the day of the Lord;* the day of judgment is here called *the day of the Lord* by way of eminence, as *the great day*, Jude 1:6, and the *great day of God Almighty*, Re 16:14, and *the day of the Lord Jesus*, 1Co 1:8 5:5 2Co 1:14 Php 1:6,10.

Will come as a thief in the night; as a thief comes suddenly and unexpectedly, when he thinks all in the house are most secure.

In the which the heavens; viz. those that are visible, in distinction from the empyreal heaven, or place of glorified spirits.

Shall pass away; either wholly, so as to cease to be; or rather, as to their present being and condition, so as to cease to be what they now are, and to give place to the new heaven, Re 21:1. The same word is used, Mt 24:35 Lu 16:17.

With a great noise; either swiftly and violently, or with such a noise as is usually caused by such violent and speedy motions.

The elements, in a natural sense, as integral parts of the universe, air, water, earth.

Shall melt with fervent heat; so 2Pe 3:12, where another word is used in the Greek, which properly signifies melting, or being on fire, or burning, shall be dissolved or destroyed. So the word signifies, Joh 2:19 1Jo 3:8.

The earth also; the habitable part of the world. Though the earth, as a part of the world, be included in the elements before mentioned, yet here it may be taken with respect to its inhabitants, and the things contained in it.

And the works that are therein shall be burned up; not only artificial, men's works, but natural, all that variety of creatures, animate and inanimate, wherewith God hath stored this lower world for the present use of man; and so all those delectable things in which carnal men seek their happiness.

2 Peter 3:11

Ver. 11. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved;* seeing the coming of the Lord will be so terrible, as to bring with it the consumption of the world, and the destruction of these things here below, upon which we are so apt to set our affections.

What manner of persons ought ye to be; how prudent, accurate, diligent, zealous, and every way excellent persons! The Greek word is often used by way of admiration of some singular excellency in persons or things, Mt 8:27 Mr 13:1 Lu 1:29.

In all holy conversation and godliness: the words in the Greek are both in the plural number, and may imply not only a continued course of holy walking throughout our whole time, but likewise diligence in the performance of all sorts of duties, and exercise of all those various graces wherewith the Spirit of God furnisheth believers in order thereto.

2 Peter 3:12

Ver. 12. *Looking for;* patiently waiting for, and expecting.

And hasting unto; by fervent desire of it, and diligent preparation for it.

The coming of the day of God; the day of the Lord, 2Pe 3:10.

2 Peter 3:13

Ver. 13. *Nevertheless we, according to his promise:* see Isa 65:17 Isa 66:22 Re 21:1,27, to which this text seems to refer, speak of a new state of the church here in the world, yet by way of allusion to the renovation of the world, which is ultimately there promised, and the perpetuity of the gospel church till then is thereby assured.

Look for new heavens and a new earth; instead of the present world, which is to be consumed by fire, 2Pe 3:10,12, or the first heaven and earth, which pass away, Re 21:1. These will be new heavens and a new earth, either as to their substance, or as to their qualities, refined and purified from all defilement, and free from all that vanity to which the creature was made subject by the sin of man, Ro 8:20,21.

Wherein dwelleth; i.e. perpetually abideth, and not only for a time, Ro 8:11 2Co 6:16 2Ti 1:14.

Righteousness; either this may be understood of righteousness in the abstract, that together with the destruction of the world the kingdom of sin shall be destroyed, and God's elect, the inhabitants of the new world, shall be filled with righteousness, whereas before sin had dwelt in them: or else the abstract may be put for the concrete, and by *righteousness* may be meant righteous persons, who only shall be the inhabitants of the new world, the wicked being turned into hell, Re 21:27; and by this way of expressing it may be implied the perfection of the righteousness of such. Not only the new heaven is mentioned, but the new earth, because the whole world will then be the possession and kingdom of the saints, who follow Christ wherever he goes.

2 Peter 3:14

Ver. 14. *Such things;* Christ's coming to judgment; the destruction of this world; a new heaven and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness.

Of him; Christ the Judge.

In peace; at peace with God, from whence proceeds peace of conscience, and an amicable, peaceable disposition toward others; all which may here be comprehended.

Without spot, and blameless: either:

1. By these words he means absolute perfection; and then he shows what we are to design and aim at in this life, though we attain it not till we come into the other: or:
2. A thorough sanctification through faith in Christ, a being got above fleshly lusts, and the pollutions of the world, and any such carriage as our hearts may reproach us for, 1Ti 6:14. If it be objected, that such, having sin still in them, cannot be said to be *without spot, and blameless*, in the sight of God; it may be answered, that though they have sin in them, yet being, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, justified in the sight of God, and accepted in the Beloved, Eph 1:6, he overlooks their infirmities, and imputes no sin to them, sees no spot in them, so as to condemn them for it. The apostle seems here to reflect on the seducers before mentioned, whom, 2Pe 2:13, he had called *spots and blemishes*; and he persuades these saints to look to themselves, that they might be found of Christ (not such as the other were, but) *without spot, and blameless*; or, as it is translated, Eph 5:27, *without blemish*, i.e. in a state of sanctification, as well as justification.

2 Peter 3:15

Ver. 15. *And account;* reckon with yourselves, and be confidently persuaded; or take for granted.

The longsuffering of our Lord; viz. in his not yet coming to judgment, and bearing with so much sin in the world without presently punishing it.

Is salvation; i.e. tends or conduceth to salvation, in that hereby he gives space for repentance to the elect unconverted, and alloweth time for the building up and perfecting those that are converted, 2Pe 3:9.

Even as our beloved brother Paul; not only brother in Christ, as a saint, but in office, as an apostle.

According to the wisdom given unto him; that eminent and profound knowledge in the mysteries of the gospel in which Paul did excel, 1Co 2:6,7 Eph 3:3,4. Peter makes such honourable mention of Paul:

1. That he might commend to the Jewish Christians the doctrine Paul had preached, though a minister of the uncircumcision;
2. To show that he had nothing the worse thoughts of him for being so sharply reprov'd by him, Ga 2:1-21; and:
3. That he might arm the saints against those heretics that abused Paul's writings, and wrested them to their own meaning, probably, to patronize their errors.

Hath written unto you; unto you Jewish believers, viz. either:

1. In his Epistle to the Romans, Ro 2:4, where is a passage very like this: or:
2. In his Epistle to the Hebrews, which, though it were not entitled to the Jews of the dispersion, yet was written to their nation; and in that Epistle several places there are of the same purport with this here; (see Heb 9:28 10:23,25,36,37); and other Epistle of Paul to the Jews we have none: and in this he shows much of that *wisdom* God gave him in the mystery of the gospel; and in this likewise are many things *hard to be understood*.

2 Peter 3:16

Ver. 16. *As also in all his epistles;* to make the sense complete, we must supply here from the former verse, *he hath written.*

Speaking in them of these things; viz. concerning the second coming of Christ, and end of the world, the patience that should be exercised in waiting for it; about avoiding scoffers that deny these truths, and the other instructions contained in these two Epistles, but especially in the two latter chapters of this Second Epistle.

In which are some things hard to be understood; in which Epistles, or rather, in which things contained in Paul's Epistles, for the Greek relative is of a different gender, and cannot agree with *Epistles*:

q. d. Some of the doctrines delivered by Paul in his Epistles are hard to be understood. And so this doth not prove Paul's Epistles, much less the whole Scripture, to be obscure and dark: the style and expression may be as clear as the nature of the things will bear, and yet the things themselves so expressed may be hard to be understood, either by reason of their own obscurity, as prophecies, the excellency and sublimeness of them, as some mysterious doctrines, or the weakness of men's minds, and their incapacity of apprehending spiritual things, 1Co 2:14, compared with 1Co 13:9,10.

Which they that are unlearned; they that are ignorant of the Scripture, *unskilful in the word of righteousness,* Heb 5:13; or indocible, that will not be instructed.

And unstable; such as are ill grounded, and therefore unstedfast, and easily deceived, 2Pe 2:14: see Eph 4:14.

Wrest; pervert the Scripture, and offer violence to it, and, as it were, rack and torture it to make it confess what it never meant.

To their own destruction; eternal destruction, viz. while they use the Scriptures to countenance their errors; or stumble at some things in them, which are obscure, thereby taking occasion to deny the truth of God; and so make the Scripture the instrument of their perdition, which God appointed to be the means of salvation.

2 Peter 3:17

Ver. 17. *Seeing ye know these things,* which I have been now writing to you of, viz. That the Judge will certainly come; or, that heretics, deceivers, and scoffers will come; or both may be comprehended.

Beware lest ye also; as well as others have been.

Fall from your own stedfastness; the stedfastness of your faith. This admonition he gives them, not to discourage them with fear of apostacy, but to awaken them to that holy care which would be a means to prevent it; and so to keep them from security, and trust in themselves, not to weaken their faith, and reliance on the promise.

2 Peter 3:18

Ver. 18. *But grow in grace;* in all those spiritual gifts ye have received from Christ, especially sanctifying.

And in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; in faith, whereby ye are sanctified, and made partakers of that grace.

To him be glory both now and for ever; which belongs only to God; and therefore this proves Christ to be God.