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THE EPISTLES OF
PETER, JOHN & JUDE

THE REVISED VERSION

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS

BY

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PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR
FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE Revised Version has to some extent superseded the need of annotation on the books of the New Testament, so far as the meaning of words and phrases is concerned. But the present Edition will, it is hoped, serve a good purpose in drawing the attention of young scholars to the importance of some of the changes made in that Version.

Another aim is to present in a clear and intelligible form the best and most approved results of recent theological work on these books.

The General Editor takes this opportunity of noting that, as in *The Cambridge Bible for Schools*, each writer is responsible for the interpretation of particular passages, or for the opinion expressed on any point of doctrine. His own part is that of careful supervision and occasional suggestion.

ARTHUR CARR.

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THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

INTRODUCTION

THE letter which bears this title comes to us as well attested as any book in the New Testament. There can be no doubt that it was current at the beginning of the second century A.D., if not before that date, and that it was valued highly by early Christian writers. Thus Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, writing to the Church of Philippi between the years 110 and 117, makes frequent use of it, not indeed referring to it as the work of S. Peter nor making strictly verbal quotations from it, as a modern writer would, but freely and almost unconsciously interweaving it with words of his own. Further, Clement, Bishop of Rome (whose letter, addressed to the Church of Corinth about 93—95, is the earliest Christian writing which remains to us outside the New Testament), almost certainly had it before him, for, after urging the Corinthians to avoid 'evil speakings' (1 Pet. ii. 1), he clinches his argument with the quotation from the Proverbs—'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble'—which is found in 1 Pet. v. 5, and in another passage he writes 'love covereth a multitude of sins' (taken from 1 Pet. iv. 8): while *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which Dr Vernon Bartlett¹ dates not later than 100, contains

¹ Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, v. p. 449.

the warning 'to abstain from fleshly lusts,' which may well be a quotation from 1 Pet. ii. 11. Before the end of the second century, at the time when Christians first began to be interested in the authorship of their sacred books, the Epistle was generally admitted to be the work of S. Peter. We have this stated definitely by two of the most learned Fathers, Irenaeus and Origen, and we cannot doubt that, when the Church historian Eusebius applies to it the epithets 'genuine' and 'undisputed,' he is giving the commonly received opinion. So far as evidence *from outside* is concerned, we cannot expect anything stronger or more definite than this.

When we turn to the contents of the Epistle, to see what proof it gives of its author, date, and destination, we find an express statement that it was written by 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ' (i. 1), who, staying in Babylon, despatched it 'by Silvanus, our faithful brother' (v. 12, 13).

An attempt has been made to deny the genuineness of the Introduction and the Conclusion which contain these personal details; but they rest on just the same manuscript evidence as the rest of the Epistle, and stand or fall with it. If the writer is not really S. Peter, it is someone who is assuming S. Peter's name. What 'Babylon' means can hardly be doubted. It is the city of Rome, called by the author of the Revelation 'Babylon the great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth' (xvii. 5), which earns the title because, like the Chaldaean Babylon, she persecutes the people of God. There are other indications of Roman origin. The writer speaks of provincial governors sent out by the Emperor (ii. 14): he enumerates the districts of 'Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia' (i. 1), doubtless employing 'these terms in the Roman sense' to sum up 'the whole of Asia Minor north of the Taurus range¹, a way of speaking

¹ Sir W. M. Ramsay. *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170*. 5th ed. 1897, p. 110.

which would be natural to one who was in Rome at the time and knew something of provincial organization: in fact Sir W. M. Ramsay says of the Epistle that 'it is impregnated with Roman thought to a degree beyond any other book in the Bible¹.' That S. Peter was connected with the Roman Church and was martyred in Rome under Nero, we have good reason for believing: various early authorities attest it (Eus. *H. E.* ii. 25, v. 8), and there is therefore nothing improbable in his having written a letter from that city. Nor need we be surprised that he, a Galilaean, wrote in a style which, if not classical, is good Hellenistic Greek. The Roman Church, with which he was concerned, was largely a Gentile Church (Rom. xi. 13), of which Greek was the official language, and, although he is described in the Acts as 'unlearned and ignorant' (iv. 13), we must remember that such a description is given from the point of view of the Sanhedrin, and means that he, like our Lord, had had no official training in one of the Rabbinical Schools. Galilee may have been despised, but it was despised largely because it was Greek in culture and civilisation: it lay closer to the thoroughfares of the Eastern world than Jerusalem: and S. Peter himself had experience of foreign converts (Acts x, xi. 1-18) and associated with them intimately at Antioch (Gal. ii. 12).

The people to whom the letter was addressed are described as 'the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion' in various provinces of Asia Minor (i. 1). 'The Dispersion' is a technical term and means the Jews who were scattered up and down the world outside Palestine, but it must be used here in a metaphorical sense of the Christians who were living in small isolated communities in heathen districts, and particularly of Christians who had been converted from Paganism. This is made plain

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 286.

by many allusions in the Epistle. The readers of it once lived in ignorance according to their former lusts (i. 14); theirs was a vain manner of life handed down from their fathers (i. 18), in the past days when they wrought the desire of the Gentiles and were guilty of all imaginable crimes and idolatries (iv. 3). But now they have been called out of darkness into God's marvellous light (ii. 9), a consummation to which the prophets pointed forward, when the Spirit within them foreshadowed the sufferings of Christ (i. 11).

These readers were now passing through a period of manifold trials (i. 6); they were called to be partakers of Christ's sufferings (iv. 13); their adversary the devil was walking about, seeking whom he might devour (v. 8); it was a time of judgement (iv. 17), heralding the end of all things (iv. 7). Whether the author was writing during a time of persecution, or in imminent danger of it, we cannot be certain. The phrase 'fiery trial' (iv. 12) must not mislead us, for it conveys the idea of precious metal tested in a furnace rather than that of cruel torture. We are not limited to the formal persecution of Christians under Nero. There must have been many attacks on them in the provinces, if not in Rome, of which we hear nothing: the treatment of S. Paul at Philippi and Ephesus will serve for an example. In any case, the trouble was wide spread (v. 9), and so the Neronian persecution may have been, for, as Sir W. M. Ramsay says, 'it was inherent in the Imperial system that the Emperor's action should form a model for all provincial governors¹,' and again 'when Nero had once established the principle in Rome, his action served as a precedent in every province².' Still the language of the Epistle, *taken by itself*, does not justify us in coming to an exact conclusion about the date.

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 290 note.

² p. 245.

It remains to consider a few of the objections which have been made to the traditional view that S. Peter wrote this letter.

(1) The absence of such personal allusions and references as we should expect in a work of the Apostle. The writer calls himself simply 'Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ,' and adds that he is 'a fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ' (v. 1). Of his friends he alludes only to Mark (v. 13), with whom we know that S. Peter was intimate (Acts xii. 12), and to Silvanus (v. 12), who, if identical with Silas, was a 'chief man among the brethren' of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 22). He tells us nothing of his own intercourse with his master, nor does he indicate how much he owes to it. This objection is not serious. We have no right to form an artificial standard of what an Apostle's letter should be and then to reject whatever does not conform to it. Several of the Epistles of S. Paul tells us little or nothing of his life and experiences; and we must not forget that the allusion to S. Peter's remembrance of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter (i. 17, 18) is one of the very grounds on which most critics deny the genuineness of that letter. If the presence of personal references is suspicious in the Second Epistle, the absence of them ought not to be treated as suspicious in the first.

(2) The relation between the Roman Empire and the Church depicted in this Epistle,—which is thought not to be suitable to the reign of Nero, but to a later period. Sir W. M. Ramsay, who is the chief upholder of this objection, points out that in the reign of Nero Christians were persecuted not for the bare profession of Christianity, but for certain definite crimes of which their sect was thought to be guilty; while after the reign of Nero (probably in the reign of Vespasian) 'proof of definite crimes committed by the Christians (*flagitia cohaerentia nomini*) was no longer required, but acknowledgement of

the Name alone sufficed for condemnation¹. He goes on to say that 1 Peter fits in exactly with this state of things. 'The Christians are not merely tried when a private accuser comes forward against them, but are sought out for trial by the Roman officials (v. 8, iii. 15). They suffer for the Name (iv. 14-16) pure and simple; the trial takes the form of an enquiry into their religion, giving them the opportunity of "glorifying God in this Name²." He therefore dates the Epistle about 75-80. If this be correct, we must give up all idea that S. Peter wrote it, for the evidence that he perished under Nero is too strong to disregard. But it may seriously be doubted whether the language of the Epistle is conclusive as to this late date. The important words are iv. 15-16, 'For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, 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.' These words do not necessarily mean that the Christians were prosecuted *on the formal charge of being Christians*, and they are quite appropriate to the victims of Nero *who suffered as Christians*, because Christians were *per flagitia invidi* and thought guilty of *odium humani generis* (Tac. Ann. xv. 44). *Afflicti suppliciiis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae* (Suet. Nero 16). The author of the Epistle, like S. Paul (Eph. iv. 28) and S. James (iv. 2), warns his readers to avoid the crimes which bring a scandal on members of the Church. Punishment for such offences is a thing to be ashamed of: it is a glory to suffer when you bear the consequences of being a Christian, and, as a Christian, are suspected of every imaginable crime.

(3) The close connexion between the contents of this letter and the ideas and language of S. Paul. We may admit the truth of this connexion at once, and yet not be compelled to deny that S. Peter wrote the Epistle which

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 245.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 280-1.

bears his name. Insistence on the virtue of faith (i. 5, 7, 9), on union with Christ (iii. 16), on Christ's vicarious sacrifice (i. 19, ii. 21, iii. 18), might have come direct from S. Paul himself. But this need not cause surprise, except to those who start with the presumption that S. Peter and S. Paul must each have taught a different type of Christianity. That is not the conclusion suggested by the Acts or the Epistles of S. Paul. Though S. Peter was entrusted 'with the gospel of the circumcision' (Gal. ii. 7), this gospel was not different from that of the uncircumcision, and the pillar Apostles, James, Cephas and John gave to Paul and Barnabas 'the right hands of fellowship' (Gal. ii. 9). Nor need it surprise us that S. Peter should write to Gentile converts in districts which had been, in part at least, evangelized by S. Paul. He was one of 'the chiefest Apostles,' who had made the first decisive step in the admission of Gentiles to the Church (Acts x.), and at the Council in Jerusalem had voiced the cause of liberty against Judaism (Acts xv. 7-11). Yet it is significant that he does not take upon himself to speak with all authority to churches which he had no share in founding; he only exhorts the elders as 'a fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ' (v. 1): and, on the other hand, if he makes no allusion to the work of S. Paul, we must remember that this is a circular letter, and that three at least of the districts addressed (Pontus, Cappadocia and Bithynia) were not touched by S. Paul on any of his missionary journeys. There is nothing in the *tone* of the Epistle inconsistent with the idea that here we really have the words of S. Peter, addressed to converts whom he had not seen, to strengthen them or to prepare them for the hour of trial. A more serious difficulty lies in the fact that there is a *literary connexion* between 1 Peter and the writings of S. Paul. This connexion is not to be underrated, nor denied: it is there for all readers of the Epistle to notice. There can be little doubt that the author knew and quoted the Epistle

to the Ephesians, and perhaps also that to the Romans. The passages chiefly concerned are

- i. 3 = Eph. i. 3 (Blessed be the God and Father...).
- ii. 18 = Eph. vi. 5 (Duty of servants).
- iii. 1 = Eph. v. 22 (Duty of wives).
- iii. 22 = Eph. i. 20, 21 (Exaltation of Jesus).
- ii. 6-10 = Rom. ix. 25-33 (Quotations from Isaiah and Hosea).
- ii. 13, 14 = Rom. xiii. 1-4 (Obedience to the civil power).
- iii. 9 = Rom. xii. 17 (Not rendering evil for evil).
- iv. 9-11 = Rom. xii. 6-8 (Use of spiritual gifts).

That S. Peter, who probably suffered in the Neronian persecution of 64, may have known these two Epistles, we can well believe. Both of them were undoubtedly published in his life time. That to the Romans was written from Corinth during S. Paul's third missionary journey, and that to the Ephesians from Rome during the imprisonment described in Acts xxviii. The only question is whether S. Peter would have incorporated quotations from the writings of a brother Apostle freely, without acknowledgement, as if he were giving utterance to his own thoughts. Certainly no writer of the twentieth century would do such a thing. But we must remember that the idea of 'literary property' is a modern idea. S. Luke was a friend and companion of S. Mark (Col. iv. 10, 14; Philemon 24). Yet, in writing his Gospel, he silently included four-fifths of the Gospel according to S. Mark, sometimes quoting it *verbatim*, sometimes adapting it to suit his own idea of literary form or historical truth. So S. Peter may have drawn upon the writings of S. Paul, which, from their intrinsic importance, must soon have gained a wide currency. If, on other grounds, the Epistle is appropriate to its supposed author, the difficulty caused by its relation to the writings of S. Paul is not sufficient to warrant us in rejecting an early and almost unanimous tradition.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
PETER

I. 1-2. The Salutation.

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who **1**
are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia,
Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the fore- **2**
knowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the

I. 1. An apostle. S. Peter's apostleship gives him the right to speak freely to the Churches of Asia Minor, even if he does not know them.

The elect. The Christians whom God has chosen for His own possession have taken the place of the chosen people (Isaiah xliii. 20): they are 'the Israel of God' (Gal. vi. 16).

Who are sojourners of the Dispersion. If this be the correct translation, the reference must be to the Christian Jews scattered over Asia Minor. But there is no article before the word meaning 'Dispersion' in Greek; and the phrase must mean 'Christians, of whatever race, scattered up and down,' as the Jews had been, 'among people of other religions'—'sojourners and pilgrims' (ii. 11) on an earth where they have no 'abiding city' (Heb. xi. 13, xiii. 14).

Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The names given make up 'the whole of Asia Minor north of the Taurus range.' Their order seems to be that in which the bearer of the letter, probably Silvanus, visited the Churches, after landing at a sea-port of Pontus. We may wonder why the district south of Taurus is excluded: but 'Cilicia goes with Syria, not with Asia Minor, and Pamphylia and Lycia seem not to have had important Christian communities in early times.' (Ramsay¹.)

2. According to the foreknowledge of God the Father. Most naturally taken with 'the elect.' The work of each

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 110.

Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

3-12. Introduction. The blessing of salvation (a) secured by the Resurrection of Christ, (b) the secret of Christian joy, (c) foretold by prophets.

- 3 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
4 from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven
5 for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last

Person of the Trinity towards man is here defined. God the Father, as it were, takes knowledge of His people before He chooses them out. His foreknowledge and choice show themselves in 'sanctification by the Spirit' (cf. 2 Thess. ii. 13), and result in 'obedience and sprinkling with the blood of Christ.'

Sprinkling. Dr Hort¹ sees here a clear reference to Exodus xxiv. 3-8, where the people with whom God is making His covenant promise to do all that He has said 'and be obedient,' and are sprinkled with the blood of the peace-offerings. There is now a new Covenant between God and man (Mark xiv. 24) sealed by the blood of the new victim, Christ, under which His people pledge themselves to be obedient and to do what He ordains.

Dr Hort finds in the words also a reference to fellowship in martyrdom with Christ (see iv. 13).

Grace to you and peace. Part of the salutation used almost invariably by S. Paul.

3. **Blessed *be* the God and Father.** Cf. Eph. i. 3.

Begat us again. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the starting point of a new existence, in place of a life which was dead (Eph. ii. 1, 5).

4. The new existence will culminate in a Heavenly inheritance, which is the promised land reserved for the Israel of God, or, as v. 5 says, 'a salvation ready to be revealed.'

5. Faith which is 'the assurance of things hoped for' (Heb. xi. 1), by God's help carries men through trial and persecution to their final deliverance, which is nearer now than when they first believed (Rom. xiii. 11).

The last time. The appointed hour of Christ's coming, which will put an end to suffering.

¹ *The First Epistle of St Peter* I. 1-11. 17, 1898, p. 23.

time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little 6
 while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold
 temptations, that the proof of your faith, *being* more 7
 precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by
 fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at
 the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye 8
 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* 9
 souls. Concerning which salvation the prophets sought 10
 and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that
should come unto you: searching what *time* or what 11
 manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them

6. **Wherein.** The Greek should probably be translated 'in whom,' the antecedent being Jesus Christ, as in *v.* 8.

If need be. If God so will.

Manifold temptations. R.V. margin 'trials,' intended to test their faith in all kinds of ways.

7. **The proof of your faith.** Strictly speaking, it is not the 'proof' which is more precious, but the 'faith' that is proved. The words are used loosely, but the meaning is clear. Gold, perishable substance though it be, is purified in the fire (Ps. xii. 6): faith, which is imperishable, will show its worth still more when it has been through the fiery trial (*iv.* 12), and will receive praise and honour from God.

That perisheth though it is proved. The R.V. has spoiled the sense; which is 'Gold that perisheth and yet is refined in the fire.'

At the revelation. Christ's second coming is the revelation of Himself, when men will see Him as He is.

8. **On whom.** Goes closely with 'believing.'

9. Even now, by anticipation, Christian converts receive the deliverance from pain and death, which is the destined result of faith in God.

10. **The grace that *should come*.** The divine favour which has been shown towards the Gentiles by their admission within the covenant. Compare Isaiah lii. 10, 15, Joel ii. 28, Micah iv. 1-5, Zech. xiv. 16.

11. The later prophets, who spoke of the privileges of the Gentiles, were inspired by the Spirit of Christ to foretell the sufferings that should befall the Messiah (Isaiah liii., Zech. xii. 10) and the triumphs that should follow them (Isaiah lii. 13):

did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings
 12 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 Ghost sent forth from
 heaven; which things angels desire to look into.

13—25. Need for seriousness, because (a) God is the judge,
 (b) Christ has redeemed you with His blood. Need for love
 of the brethren.

13 Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober
 and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be
 14 brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as
 children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according
 15 to your former lusts in *the time of your ignorance*: but
 like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also

but they could not tell either the exact moment at which
 such things would happen, or the circumstances which should
 attend them.

12. To the prophets, who asked when these things should
 be, the answer came that the fulfilment of all the prophecy by
 which they were privileged to serve God was not for themselves
 but for these Gentiles, who now, through the work of Evangelists
 guided by the Spirit, have received the very blessings which the
 prophets foretold.

Which things angels desire to look into. For the interest
 of the angels in God's dispensation towards men, cf. Eph.
 iii. 10.

13. **Girding up the loins of your mind.** With every
 faculty intent and watchful.

Be sober. Keep your balance, do not be upset by false
 opinions.

The grace. In one sense (that of admission to the covenant)
 the grace is theirs already: in another (that of final deliverance)
 it will only be brought to them at the coming of Christ.

14. Instead of taking as your standard the fleeting ignorant
 desires of heathenism, model yourselves on God (Matt. v. 48),
 who is the Holy One, completely separate from all defilement.

15. **Be ye...holy.** The Greek is 'Become holy.'

holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye 16 shall be holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on him as 17 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 18 things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, 19 as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, *even the blood* of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the 20 foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through him are believers in 21 God, which raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God.

In all manner of living. In every form of intercourse with other people.

16. Because it is written. Lev. xi. 44.

17. If ye call on him. If the God whom you invoke as Father is also the righteous and impartial judge, 'see that ye walk circumspectly' all the time that you are sojourners in this sinful and alien world.

18. A further reason for fear, namely, the tremendous cost of redemption.

Redeemed. Delivered from bondage, as the children of Israel had been (Exod. xv. 13).

Vain manner of life. A way of living which was delusive, disappointing, governed by false ideas.

19. The reference probably is to the Paschal Lamb, who was to be 'without blemish,' and whose blood sprinkled 'on the two side posts and on the lintel' of the door secured the deliverance of the Israelites from the destroying Angel.

20. Who was foreknown. God foreknew His Son, in the sense that He designated Him to His work long before. Dr Hort¹ compares God's words to Jeremiah at his call (Jer. i. 5), 'Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee.'

Manifested. When He became man.

At the end of the times. When the fulness of time was come, and things were ripe for His manifestation.

21. And gave him glory. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was the crowning revelation of what He really was. Cf. Rom. i. 4, 'Who was declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead.' Phil. ii. 9.

So that your faith and hope might be in God. All the

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 80.

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

II 1-10. The Christian's growth and privilege.

- 2 Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile,
 2 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;

glorification and exaltation of the Son is to lead men's thoughts to the Father, and to make Him the object of their trust and hope: so the Son reveals the Father.

22. Practical advice. Obedience to the truth, i.e. to the teaching of the Gospel which reveals things as they are, will lead to a cleansing of their very selves. (Cf. John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.') When the cleansing is effected and evil passions removed, an energetic and genuine brotherly love will reign.

23. Remember that your new birth is due, not to perishable seed, but to the imperishable revelation of God, through His Son and through His preachers. Therefore fruitful, permanent results are expected of you.

For the thought of 'the seed' and 'the word,' cf. the Parable of the Sower, Mark iv. 1-20.

24-25. For. Isaiah xl. 6-8.

II. 1. Therefore. Because you are regenerate.

All wickedness. The special vices noted are those which are most incompatible with love of the brethren.

2. The Christians have just been begotten again. They have to 'turn, and become as little children' (Matt. xviii. 3), to desire the food of babes, which can nourish the higher faculties of the soul, and in which there is nothing treacherous or deceptive (as

if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious : unto whom³
 coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with⁴
 God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up⁵
 a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up
 spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus
 Christ. Because it is contained in scripture, ⁶

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 which believe is the preciousness : but ⁷
 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 offence ; ⁸

opposed to *v.* 1. Cf. *v.* 22). This will make them grow to full manhood and become more fit for salvation, for it is the grace of the Lord Himself, as they have already experienced (*v.* 3).

3. An adaptation of Ps. xxxiv. 8.

4-5. An illustration of the graciousness of Christ. He is the corner-stone, once rejected but now accepted (Ps. cxviii. 22), and all Christians must be closely built on to Him. But the union is a personal, a 'living,' union: the Christian community is a house, but it is something more. It has priestly duties to perform and sacrifices to offer which are superior to the sacrifices of the Law—acts of prayer, praise, and self-devotion, which God accepts because they are offered through Jesus Christ and draw all their worth from Him.

6. Because. The very words of the Old Testament prove what has been said.

Scripture. Isaiah xxviii. 16 (freely quoted from the Greek translation).

Shall not be put to shame. The Heb. has 'shall not make haste,' i.e. shall not have to flee in fear.

7. For you therefore. As you believe, you find Him precious, and will enjoy all the benefits that come from Him.

The stone which. Ps. cxviii. 22. Disbelieving people find that the Psalmist's words come true after all.

8. A stone. Isaiah viii. 14.

Rock of offence. The rock which trips the traveller up, as he

for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: where-
 9 unto 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 shew forth the excellencies of him
 who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light :
 10 which in time past were no people, but now are the people
 of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have
 obtained mercy.

II. 11-IV. 11. Practical suggestions.

II. 11-12. Need for inward purity and seemly behaviour.

11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to
 abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul ;
 12 having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles ; that,
 wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by

goes. Unbelievers refuse to listen to the prophecy which speaks
 of Christ as the corner-stone, and so it becomes to them a stum-
 bling block.

Whereunto also they were appointed. Stumbling is the
 foreordained penalty of disobedience.

9. Made up of phrases from the Greek translation of Is. xliii.
 20, 21 and Exod. xix. 5, 6.

The Christian community has taken the place of the Jewish
 nation (i. 1). They have been specially chosen, made priests
 (v. 5) in God's kingdom, consecrated and set apart to declare
 the glories of God who rescued them from the darkness of
 heathenism.

10. Taken from Hos. ii. 23. Hosea was speaking of the
 recovery of the Jews: S. Peter seems to be speaking of the
 ingathering of the Gentiles (cf. Rom. ix. 25, 26).

11. As sojourners and pilgrims. Because they are such
 (i. 1), they must not entangle themselves with things of a lower
 order in which they have no part, things which are fatal to their
 true self.

12. Wherein. In the very point in which.

As evil-doers. It is probable that abuse of a vague kind was
 very soon thrown at the Christians. Suetonius speaks of them
 as '*genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae*' (Nero 16):
 Tacitus says that they were '*per flagitia invisī*' (Ann. xv. 44),
 but cannot bring any more definite charge against them than '*odium
 humani generis*.' Popular prejudice helped Nero when he per-

your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13-17. Duty of subjection to the civil power.

Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake : whether it be to the king, as supreme ; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers 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 cloke of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18-25. Relation of slaves to masters.

Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear ; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the

secuted them in 64 A. D. In the next century very definite charges of incest and cannibalism were made against them.

The day of visitation. A day when God comes to work upon the heathen and open their eyes to the truth. The phrase comes from the Old Testament, Is. x. 3, Jer. xxvii. 21. Cf. also Luke xix. 44.

13. For the Lord's sake. Who was Himself subject.

The king. The Roman Emperor.

14. Governors. Provincial governors, who owe their commission to the Emperor, and whose function is to check evil and applaud good. Cf. Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

15. God wishes you to deserve such applause by proving that you are not evil-doers (*v.* 12) : then you will stop the mouths of ignorant people who persist in calumniating you.

16. A cloke of. A disguise for. Though Christians are free (John viii. 32, Gal. v. 1), they are still subject to the moral law, for they are the Lord's bondservants (1 Cor. vii. 22, ix. 21).

17. Honour all men. There is to be no contempt shown to the heathen among whom they dwell.

The brotherhood. The body of Christian brethren.

18. With all fear. Dr Bigg¹ thinks that 'fear of God' is meant, but the similar passage in Eph. vi. 5 ('with fear and trembling') seems to point to the meaning 'fear of man,' 'fear ..lest they should do anything aniss' (Hammond²).

¹ *The International Critical Commentary. Epistles of St Peter and St Jude*, 1901, p. 142.

² *A paraphrase and annotation upon all the books of the New Testament*, 4th ed. 1675, p. 641.

19 froward. For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward
 20 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
 21 with God. For hereunto were ye called: because Christ
 also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye
 22 should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile
 23 found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled
 not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but com-
 24 mitted *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
 25 whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray
 like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and
 Bishop of your souls.

III. 1-6. Relation of wives to husbands.

3 In like manner, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own
 husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may

Froward. Perverse, wayward, crooked.

19. **For conscience toward God.** Because like S. Paul, he wishes 'to have a conscience void of offence toward God.' (Acts xxiv. 16.)

Griefs. Pains.

21. **Hereunto.** To do well and suffer for it.

22. **Who did no sin.** Isaiah liii. 9. (The whole paragraph is coloured by the language of Isaiah liii.)

23. **Committed *himself*.** Entrusted His cause.

24. **Bare our sins.** Lifted up our sins in His own body on to the tree. Christ not only was the sin-offering Himself (Isaiah liii. 10), but also, as the Priest, presented the sins of the whole world upon the altar of the Cross on which He suffered.

25. **Shepherd.** Just as Christ is both Victim and Priest, so He is both the Lamb who suffers patiently and the Shepherd who gathers the sheep that are scattered abroad (John x. 16).

Bishop. The word is not yet fixed down to its ecclesiastical sense, and had better be translated 'overseer.' In v. 2 (if the text be correct) the Presbyters are commanded: 'Tend the flock of God which is among you, *exercising the oversight*, not of constraint, but willingly, according to God.' Cf. Acts xx. 28.

without the word be gained by the behaviour of their wives; beholding your chaste behaviour *coupled* with a fear. Whose *adorning* let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting 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.

7. Relation of husbands to wives.

Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with *your wives* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the woman,

III 2. Coupled with fear. The passage in Eph. v. 33 ('And let the wife see that she fear her husband') shows whom the wife is to fear. She is to be so modest and so fearfully eager to obey her husband that, even without any direct Christian teaching, she may win him to the faith.

4. The hidden man of the heart. What is required is not outward ornament but inward personality, which must show itself (clothe itself) in meekness and quietness, an apparel which never wears out and alone has value in God's eyes.

5. The holy women, of the Old Testament.

6. Calling him lord. Gen. xviii. 12 'My lord being old also.'

Whose children ye now are. You are the true descendants of Sarah, who exhibit her spirit of faith. (Heb. xi. 11, 12. Cf. Gal. iii. 7.)

Put in fear by any terror. Cf. v. 14. Do not be afraid of any 'sudden fear' (Prov. iii. 25) from without. Do not be unduly anxious, but persevere in well-doing.

7. In like manner. You husbands have duties to your wives, *just as* you wives have to your husbands.

According to knowledge. The life of the husband with his wife ought to be guided by knowledge, and not by caprice or lust. He must treat her with special respect, because he knows that (a) she is weaker than he, (b) she, like him, has the good gift of eternal life held out to her.

as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered.

8-12. General precepts as to duties towards neighbours.

8 Finally, *be* ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as
9 brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: not rendering
evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise
blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should
10 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:
11 And let him turn away from evil, and do good;
Let him seek peace, and pursue it.
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.

To the end that your prayers be not hindered. If you do not render to your wives their due, God will not listen to your petitions, when you pray.

8. Likeminded. Cf. Rom. xii. 16. 'Be of the same mind one toward another.' Agree in disposition one with another.

9. Not rendering evil for evil. Rom. xii. 17 (with only one different word).

But contrariwise blessing, as Christ commanded (Luke vi. 28).

For hereunto were ye called. Those who are to be addressed one day as the 'blessed of my Father' (Matt. xxv. 34) must not utter anything but blessing.

10-12. With slight changes from the Greek of Ps. xxxiv.

12-16. S. Peter begins to quote the passage in order to show the reward of those who govern their tongue: but the last two verses of it apply generally to the upright behaviour which procures peace.

10. Love life. Enjoy this life.

11. Pursue it. Not be contented till he has found it.

12. Upon the righteous, to bless them.

Upon them that do evil, to punish them.

13-22. Suffering for righteousness' sake. Its effect exemplified by the suffering of Christ, who by it (1) was enabled to extend His ministry to others besides the living, (2) was raised in triumph to heaven.

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of 13 that which is good? But and if ye should suffer for 14 righteousness' sake, blessed *are ye*: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts 15 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 16 good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God should 17 so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous 18 for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in 19 which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison,

13. **And who is he.** S. Peter builds on the words of the previous quotation. 'The Psalm is quite true. Who can harm you, if you really love (be zealous of) what is good? I do not call suffering for righteousness sake by the name of harm: for Christ has pronounced a blessing on that' (Matt. v. 10).

14. **Fear not their fear.** Do not be afraid of their threats. From Isaiah viii. 12, 13.

15. **Sanctify,** by making Him the only object of your fear (Isaiah viii. 13, cf. Luke xii. 5).

Yet with meekness. Though you are bold enough to explain your hope, yet do so without arrogance and self-assertion.

16. **Having a good conscience.** If your conduct be good and your conscience clear, you will silence your detractors.

18. **Because Christ.** If you suffer for well-doing, you will be imitating Christ, and such suffering has its effect. For instance, Christ the righteous needed only to suffer 'once' for sins: He dealt decisively with sins, and so brought those who were far away to God. (Cf. S. Peter's words in Acts ii. 39.)

Quickened in the spirit. Though His body died, His spirit gained new life and activity by death, and was enabled to extend the sphere of its ministry (v. 19).

19. **In which.** Clothed in that human spirit.

20 which 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
 21 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 ;
 22 who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven ; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

He went and preached. After His death and before His Resurrection (as *v.* 22 implies) He made a journey and preached the Gospel (*iv.* 6) to the spirits who were kept in ward awaiting the judgement of the great day, and gave them an opportunity of repentance.

20. Which aforetime were disobedient. S. Peter seems here to limit the preaching of Christ to the spirits of the sinners who perished in the Deluge. As however in *iv.* 6 he gives a wider reference to this preaching, we must conclude that those who were disobedient in the days of Noah are selected as a type of monstrous sinners who yet have been offered a chance of repenting.

Few, that is, eight. Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives.

Through water. The water of the Flood was a type of the water of baptism, but, unlike baptismal washing, it was a means of salvation to only a very few.

21. Which also after a true likeness. 'The reality, of which the water of the Flood was a type, even baptism saves you' (Chase¹).

Not the putting away. But remember, says S. Peter, that it is not the external washing alone which has value in Baptism. A most important part of the Sacrament is the question (or questions) put to the candidate, in order to prove whether he has a good conscience before God who tries the hearts. For the kind of question and the answer made to it, see Acts viii. 37 (R.V. marg.). Though Baptism saves, something is required of him who is baptized ; and baptism only has effect in virtue of 'the Resurrection of Jesus Christ' (*i.* 3).

22. On the right hand of God. Raised to a place of supreme honour.

Angels and authorities and powers. All heavenly beings in their various ranks (Eph. i. 20-21).

¹ Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, iii. p. 793.

IV. 1-6. The Christian must not return to the old Gentile vices.

Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye 4
yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath
suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that ye no 2
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 3
may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles,
and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings,
revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries: where- 4
in they think it strange that ye run not with *them* into the
same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*: who shall give 5
- account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the
dead. For unto this end was the gospel preached even 6
to the dead, that they might be judged according to men
in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

VI. 1. **The same mind.** The same attitude towards things, the same idea of life.

He that hath suffered. Suffering such as Christ bore makes a man better: so far as sin is concerned, he is dead to it (Col. iii. 3).

2. The rest of your time in the flesh. The words all go together—the rest of your bodily life.

To the lusts. Devoted to the lusts.

3. The desire of the Gentiles, is defined in the next sentence. They liked to do such things themselves and wished others to do the same.

To have walked in. To have made your habit.

4. Wherein. In which matter, i.e. in the matter of behaviour.

Excess of riot. Pool, or sink, of profligacy.

Speaking evil of you. Attributing to you vile motives for your abstinence.

5. Who. But they.

6. For. Christ is ready to judge, because the dead have already heard the Gospel and the living are hearing now. There is therefore no injustice in His judgement.

Unto this end. That they might...

According to men. Like men.

According to God. Like God.

'Judgment in the flesh is death...Death is that penalty which

7-11. Christian life in view of the approaching end.

- 7 But the end of all things is at hand : be ye therefore of
8 sound mind, and be sober unto prayer : above all things
being fervent in your love among yourselves ; for love
9 covereth a multitude of sins : using hospitality one to
10 another without murmuring : according as each hath
received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good
11 stewards of the manifold grace of God ; if any man
speaketh, *speaking* as it were oracles of God ; if any man
ministereth, *ministering* as of the strength which God

all men alike must pay...Life like God in spirit is blessed life' (Bigg¹).

The reference here (as in iii. 19) is to the descent into Hell, by which Our Lord gave to those who had died before His coming the chance of salvation. We notice that here the message is not confined to the sinners before the Deluge. Many commentators take 'the dead' to mean those who were 'dead in sin.' But this explanation makes the word 'even' meaningless, and gives two different meanings to the word 'dead' in two successive verses. In the Apocryphal Gospel of Peter (c. 10) we have: 'And they heard a voice from the heavens saying, Hast thou preached to them that sleep? And a response was heard from the cross, Yea.'

7. **Be sober.** Instead of indulging in excess, be serious, watch and pray.

8. **Love covereth a multitude of sins.** Covereth = makes atonement for (a Heb. phrase). For whose sins does love make atonement? Probably the sins of him who loves. Cf. James v. 20 (the same phrase, with perhaps the same meaning) and Luke vii. 47. 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much.'

9. **Without murmuring.** Without complaining because you have to entertain strangers.

10. If God has given to anyone of you a good gift (as in 1 Cor. xii. 4-11), let him make a full use of it for the benefit of others, remembering that he is but a steward (1 Cor. iv. 1), entrusted with one of God's various blessings. Cf. Rom. xii. 6-8.

11. **Speaketh, in preaching or teaching.**

As it were oracles of God. As one inspired to speak by God.

Ministereth. Renders service to others (1 Cor. xii. 5).

As of the strength. As one strengthened by God to render service.

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 170-171.

supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12-19. Consolation under suffering.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial ¹² among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but insomuch ¹³ as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy. If ye are reproached for the name of ¹⁴ Christ, blessed *are ye*; because the *Spirit* of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. For let none of you ¹⁵ suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if *a man suffer* as a ¹⁶ Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify

12. **Fiery trial.** The trial which proves you like a refiner's fire.

14. **Reproached for the name of Christ.** Cf. Acts v. 41. 'Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name.' Dr Bigg¹ argues that to S. Peter's audience 'the most serious and pressing form of suffering as yet is reproach, not imprisonment or death,' but see Intr. p. 4.

Because the Spirit of glory. To suffer for the Name is an evident proof of Spiritual grace, a proof that God's Spirit, who turns shame into triumph, makes His abode with you.

15. **For.** I say 'suffer for Christ's name,' for I would not have you suffer for any other offence.

Meddler in other men's matters. The word so translated is never found elsewhere, and the exact reference of it is doubtful. It may mean 'one who interferes with other people's affairs and so causes disunion or strife,' or 'one who busies himself with things which do not befit a Christian,' or, it may mean 'judicial informer' or *delator*. Jülicher², who thinks the Epistle to have been written early in the second century, says that, if we take it thus, we have a direct reference to the enactment of Trajan about the year 111 A.D., which forbade such informations (Plin. *Ep. Traj.* x. 91).

16. **But if a man suffer as a Christian.** For the early use of the word Christian, see Acts xi. 26 (at Antioch), xxvi. 28 (by Agrippa). It probably began as a Gentile nickname before A.D. 44, and was in full use by 64 at the time of the persecution by

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 177.

² *An Introduction to the New Testament*, E. Tr. 1904, p. 213.

17 God in this name. For the time *is come* for judgement 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
 18 God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall
 19 the ungodly and sinner appear? Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.

V. 1-5. The duty of elders towards the Church, and the duty of all members of the Church to one another.

5 The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a

Nero (Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44, Suet. *Nero* 16). Many critics have used this verse as an argument to prove the late date of the Epistle on the ground that the profession of Christianity (*nomen ipsum*) was not in itself illegal till after the rescript of Trajan to Pliny in 111. Ramsay¹ however has shown that, even before this, 'the admission of the Name Christian in itself entailed condemnation,' so that this passage lends no colour to a second century date. He himself dates the Epistle about 80, on the strength of this allusion (see Intr. p. 6), but the words are not necessarily inconsistent with the date of Nero. Even if Christians did not suffer in 64 for the illegal offence of Christianity, yet they suffered because they were Christians, and Christians were a hated sect.

17. **The house of God**, i.e. the household of God, Christian men and women. The sufferings of the Church are the first tribulation, which is the prelude to the final judgment.

18. **An exact quotation** from the Greek Translation of Prov. xi. 31. Compare also our Lord's words as to the severity of the trial even for the elect (Mark xiii. 19-22).

19. The suffering is part of the Divine purpose; and God who made man can be trusted not to forsake those whom He has made.

V. 1. **The elders...among you.** Local churches generally seem to have had elders in the Apostolic age, e.g. Jerusalem (Acts xi. 30, xv. 4, 6, 22), the Churches of South Galatia (Acts xiv. 23), Ephesus (Acts xx. 17, 1 Tim. v. 17), Crete (Titus i. 5). These elders are sometimes also spoken of as bishops (Acts xx. 28, Titus i. 5-7), the former name having reference to their age, the latter to their duty, which was to 'exercise the oversight' of the flock of God,—subject, no doubt, to the Apostles or to Apostolic men (1 Tim. v. 19-20).

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 223.

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 unto 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. Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

6-11. Final words. The need for humility, patience, watchfulness.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you. Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom

A fellow-elder. He might command as an Apostle, but he prefers to exhort them as an elder like themselves, who can enter into their difficulties. See Intr. p. 54 and 2 John 1 (note).

Witness, i.e. eye-witness. A claim to speak with authority.

2. **Tend**, as S. Peter himself had been told to do (John xxi. 16).

Of constraint. Because you must.

According unto God. Like God (cf. iv. 6).

3. **Making yourselves ensamples.** The example of a good life is more likely than a domineering temper to procure obedience.

4. **That fadeth not away.** Unlike that given to successful athletes (1 Cor. ix. 25).

5. **The elder.** These are (see on v. 1) older in age as well as higher in office, and therefore are specially entitled to the respect of younger men.

Gird yourselves. The Greek word is *ἐγκομβώσασθε* (*κόμβος* = knot). 'Tie round you the garment of humility.'

God resisteth the proud. From the Greek translation of Prov. iii. 34.

7. **Anxiety** in time of trial.

8. **Seeking whom he may devour.** The devil is the author of the persecutions which afflict the Church.

withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in
 10 the world. 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, stablish, strengthen
 11 you. To him *be* the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12-14. Commendation of the messenger. Greetings and farewell.

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.
 13 She that is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, saluteth

10. **The God of all grace.** The God who gives every good gift.

In Christ. As members of Christ.

Perfect. Supply all that is lacking, remedy all that is defective.

Stablish, so that no fears can shake you.

12. **Silvanus.** Probably, though not certainly, the same as the Silas of the Acts and the Silvanus of S. Paul's Epistles (Acts xv. 22, 40 ; 2 Cor. i. 19 ; 1 Thess. i. 1 ; 2 Thess. i. 1). If so, there was a special appropriateness in his being chosen to carry a letter to the Churches of Asia Minor, for he had accompanied S. Paul on his second journey to Derbe and Lystra and 'through the region of Phrygia and Galatia' to Troas.

Briefly, because Silvanus would be able to say more, when he came.

This is the true grace of God. This which I have written to you (the doctrine of patience under persecutions) is God's truth. Do not be surprised at it (iv. 12), but hold it fast.

13. **She that is in Babylon, elect together with you.** By Babylon is probably meant Rome, which was doing to the Christian community what the Great Babylon had done to the Jewish nation. She was 'drunken with the blood of the Saints' (Rev. xvii. 6, a passage which leaves no doubt that Rome is meant). This interpretation is as old as the fourth century. But who is 'she that is elect together with you'? It may be (1) S. Peter's wife, a prominent Christian lady who accompanied her husband on his travels (1 Cor. ix. 5). Yet was she the only Christian lady in Rome that he uses such a pompous phrase about her? Or (2), and far more probably, the Church of Rome, which has been called to share the same privileges as the

you ; and *so doth* Mark my son. Salute one another with ¹⁴
a kiss of love.

Peace be unto you all that are in Christ.

Churches scattered over Asia Minor. This suits well with the symbolical character of the phrase, but cannot be treated as certain. A similar difficulty exists with regard to the phrase 'elect lady' in 2 John 1.

Mark my son. My spiritual child. A very early and good tradition connects S. Mark closely with S. Peter as his pupil and interpreter (cf. also Acts xii. 12). It is certain too that S. Mark was at least once in Rome (Col. iv. 10, Philemon 24), and may have gone there again just before S. Paul's death (2 Tim. iv. 11). This fits in with the interpretation of Babylon given above.

14. Kiss of love. A sign of Christian brotherhood (Rom. xvi. 16 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 20). At a later date the 'Kiss of peace' was kept up in the service of the Church, as an essential part of the Liturgy of the Faithful.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

INTRODUCTION

THE writer of this letter claims to be 'Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ' (i. 1). That his readers may have no doubt who this Simon Peter is, he adds that he was present 'in the holy mount' (i. 18), where he heard the heavenly voice which said 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased' (i. 17), and that he had received from the Lord Jesus Christ a clear intimation of the swift 'putting off of his tabernacle' (i. 14), a reference to his own death which can best be understood in the light of John xxi. 18, 19. To make the identification complete, he points out that this is the second letter that he has written to the same people, and that the theme of both the letters is the same (iii. 1). We naturally interpret this verse as implying that its author is the man who wrote 1 Peter, and so doubtless he meant us to interpret it; for, though the treatment in the two Epistles is different, both have for their principal subject the second coming of the Lord. The first Epistle is intended to comfort and strengthen those who were already enduring persecution, or in imminent danger of it, with the thought that 'the end of all things is at hand': the second, written at a time when 'false teachers' were

attempting 'with feigned words' to 'make merchandise of' the converts to the faith (ii. 1, 3), and mockers who walked after their own lusts were inclined to say 'Where is the promise of his coming?' (iii. 3-4), asserts that, though the Lord delay His return, yet return He will (iii. 8-10), and that the whole duty of the Christian man is to make his 'calling and election sure,' and so gain an 'entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (i. 10, 11).

Yet, though the writer clearly wishes us to think of him as S. Peter the Apostle, who wrote the first Epistle which bears that name, the difficulties which lie in the way of our doing so are practically insuperable. To begin with, there is no book of the New Testament which is so little used, or which is treated with so much suspicion, by Christian Fathers as 2 Peter. The first writer who appears to quote from it is the Alexandrine scholar Origen (185-253): and we may notice that all the quotations from it in his writings occur not in the original Greek, but in the Latin translation made about two centuries later, and that Origen himself states that 'Peter...has left one acknowledged Epistle: perhaps also a second, but that is doubtful' (Eus. *H. E.* vi. 25). This was the general opinion for a long time. Eusebius (*H. E.* iii. 3) says: 'We have learned that his extant second Epistle does not belong to the canon; yet, as it has appeared profitable to many, it has been studied with the other Scriptures': and indeed it was not till the Council of Hippo in 393 that it was formally admitted as canonical. It is strange that a letter written by an Apostle should have left no certain trace of itself in Christian literature before the beginning of the third century, and that writers after that date should still have treated it with suspicion.

When we turn to the contents of the Epistle, we are not only struck with the suspicious frequency with which

the author insists on his Apostleship (i. 1, 14, 18), but we find much else in it which makes us hesitate to ascribe it to S. Peter. It is written in a style which even the casual English reader can detect as different from that of the first Epistle: it is full of rare words and strange, obscure expressions: it hardly contains a phrase which can be regarded as a quotation from the Old Testament. The same conclusion follows from a study of the doctrine contained in it. There is not a word about the suffering, or death, or Resurrection, or Ascension of Jesus Christ: only one hint of His redeeming work (ii. 1), and only one allusion to His human life (i. 17, 18). Strangely enough, that one allusion is to the Transfiguration, which is chosen, in preference to all other events, as the proof of the glorification of the Saviour. In general it is dangerous to view a writing with suspicion because it does not contain what we had expected that it would contain. But here 1 Peter supplies us with the standard. That Epistle is full of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. It does not set out to explain them systematically in the form of a theological treatise, but it presupposes them and alludes to them on every page: it makes it clear that they were to the writer the source of his inspiration and his hope. 2 Peter seems to belong to another atmosphere. The difference between them is to be sought not in the dangers which affected the readers of the two Epistles, but in the spirit and interests of two different writers.

These are negative arguments which tend to show that the two Epistles ascribed to S. Peter are by two separate authors, and that, if S. Peter be rightly regarded as the author of the first Epistle, he cannot have written the second. But there are other proofs of a more positive kind which lead us to place the Epistle in the second century, long after S. Peter's death. Dr Chase¹ thinks that he can detect in the false

¹ Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, iii. p. 811.

teachers criticized some trace of the later Gnostic heresies (see below p. 52). They not only practised but taught immorality (ii. 2, 14, 18): they incited others to libertinism (ii. 19): they perverted Scripture (iii. 16). All these were characteristics, or at least supposed characteristics, of Gnostics in the second century: they do not fit in so well with what we know of heretics in S. Peter's day. Still more decisive are two passages in the third chapter, iii. 4, iii. 16. In the former occurs the phrase, 'Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that *the fathers* fell asleep, all things continue as they were...' To take 'the fathers' as referring to the patriarchs is to make nonsense of the whole passage, which deals with the disappointment felt at the delay of the Lord's coming, which had been expected within the lifetime of the first generation of Christians. It is those Christians who are here called 'the fathers,' and the writer, by using such a phrase, makes it clear that he does not belong to that generation, and therefore cannot be S. Peter. The latter verse runs as follows: 'as also in all his' (S. Paul's) 'epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.' Here the meaning is plain. The author speaks of S. Paul's Epistles as 'Scriptures,' and he possesses not merely isolated examples of them, but a complete collection. In the lifetime of S. Peter such a thing was impossible.

One important question yet remains, that of the relation of this Epistle to the Epistle of S. Jude. There can be no doubt that one of the two has drawn largely upon the other, but we have still to ask 'Which is the borrower?' The answer has only an indirect bearing upon the Apostolic authorship of either writing, for it is not to be assumed that, if one writer has borrowed from the other without acknowledgement, he cannot possibly

be regarded as an Apostle (see above p. 8). Only if we discover on the part of the borrower a tendency to alter or modify what he has borrowed, according to later ideas, are we justified in placing him at a date below the Apostolic age. On the whole, we are entitled to say that 2 Peter is dependent on Jude, not *vice versa*, and that by far the greater part of Jude is taken up and repeated in 2 Peter. This is particularly true of 2 Peter ii, which reproduces most of Jude 3—18, but indeed resemblances to Jude are found in the other chapters too. The only argument on the other side seems to be that the Apostolic prophecy contained in Jude 18 might possibly be identified with 2 Peter iii. 3, which would favour the priority of the latter; but, as Professor Jülicher¹ points out, this is only brought forward in Jude as a prophecy universally known 'In all the rest of the passage,' he adds, 'we should be more likely, in comparing, so far as is possible, the parallels between Jude and 2 Peter, to recognise a motive for the latter to alter, amplify, smooth down and give a rhetorical polish to the material he had before him in Jude, than *vice versa*.' One such motive, at any rate, is apparent in the carefulness with which the author of 2 Peter avoids all use of Apocryphal literature. Thus in 2 Peter ii. 11 (=Jude 9) the direct reference to the *Assumption of Moses* is omitted, and the particular instance of angelic forbearance is magnified into a general rule, *the meaning of which can only be understood in the light of the passage from which it is borrowed*. We may note also that the quotation from Enoch contained in Jude 14 is suppressed by the author of 2 Pet., though it would have served his purpose to include it, for it bears on the very point which he wishes to enforce, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The truth is that Apocryphal writings became unpopular

¹ *An Introduction to the New Testament*, E. Tr. 1904, p. 237.

in the second century, owing to the use made of them by Gnostic heretics. It is more than probable that the author of 2 Peter was actuated by such a feeling of dislike, when he copied the Epistle of S. Jude but left out all reference to Apocrypha: if so, he cannot have lived earlier than 150 A.D.

Who the author was, we are unable to determine. In 1886 a parchment book was dug up at Akhmîm in Upper Egypt, containing part of a so-called Apocalypse of Peter. This Apocalypse, as Dr M. R. James has shown¹, has many resemblances to 2 Peter. It may be by the same hand, or it may have emanated from the same school of thought. In any case, its discovery in Egypt, coupled with the fact that the first mention of 2 Peter comes from Alexandria, leads us to guess that the author of the Epistle was an Egyptian Christian, who lived in the second century, at a time when Gnostic heresies were unsettling the faith of many, and who, assuming the person of S. Peter in order to lend weight to his utterance, wrote to his Christian brethren to fortify them in their possession of the common faith, and to encourage them to 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

¹ *The Gospel according to Peter and the Revelation of Peter*, by J. Armitage Robinson and M. R. James. 2nd ed. 1892, pp. 52, 53.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
PETER

I. 1—2. Salutation.

1 **S**IMON Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,
to them that have obtained a like precious faith with
us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus
2 Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the
knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

3—11. Exhortation to the brethren to abound in every sort of
goodness with a view to entrance into the kingdom.

3 seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things
that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge
4 of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby
he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great
promises; that through these ye may become partakers

1. 1. **With us.** With us Jews.

In the righteousness. Jesus Christ is just, and gives faith to
Jews and Gentiles alike.

2. **In the knowledge.** To know God is to enjoy grace and
peace. We are justified in saying this, because (v. 3) we are sure
that, by coming to know Him who has called us by the revela-
tion of His own character ('glory') and has appealed to us by
His own intrinsic goodness ('virtue'), we are endowed with
every good and perfect gift.

4. **Whereby.** By His own glory and virtue, which are the
pledge of good things in store for us.

Through these. The promises. For the whole thought of.
1 John iii. 2, 3.

of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. Yea, and for this very 5 cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in *your* virtue knowledge; and in 6 *your* knowledge temperance; and in *your* temperance patience; and in *your* patience godliness; and in *your* 7 godliness love of the brethren; and in *your* love of the brethren love. For if these things are yours and abound, 8 they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh 9 these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. Wherefore, 10 brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the 11 entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Partakers of the divine nature. Cf. Heb. iii. 14, xii. 10. Christian Fathers loved to develop this idea: e.g. Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* liv. 3, 'For He was made man that we might be made God.'

5. For this very cause. Because God has promised you so much, you must do something on your own part.

5-7. Faith is the fundamental Christian virtue. It is 'the assurance of things hoped for' (Heb. xi. 1), and it leads on to (1) moral activity, (2) spiritual discernment, (3) self-control, (4) endurance of trial and persecution, (5) love of the Christian brethren, (6) love of all mankind.

8. Unto the knowledge, which is both the beginning (*v.* 3) and the goal of the Christian life.

9. On the other hand, the absence of all such virtues leads to your becoming short-sighted, incapable of seeing anything except the things of earth, forgetful of the Baptism by which you were born again from sin.

10. Make your calling and election sure. Though God has picked the brethren out of the heathen 'for His own possession,' it rests with them to ensure that His blessing is not wasted.

Ye shall never stumble. This does not mean 'you will never sin,' but 'your progress will be steady, uninterrupted, unto the Kingdom of your Lord.'

12-21. The necessity of reminding the brethren of the truth of their faith, which rests on (a) the evidence of eye-witnesses, including that of the writer, (b) the testimony of Hebrew prophets.

12 Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and
 13 are established in the truth which is with *you*. And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir
 14 you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our
 15 Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my
 16 decease to call these things to remembrance. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus

12. To put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them. So in Jude 5.

13. In this tabernacle. The idea is that human life is a pilgrimage, and the body is a tent in which man takes up his temporary dwelling. Cf. Isaiah xxxviii. 12, 'Mine age is removed, and is carried away from me as a shepherd's tent.' 2 Cor. v. 1, 'If the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved.'

14. Swiftly. And therefore the writer must not delay to speak.

As our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. It is most natural to see in these words a reference to the prophecy of our Lord in John xxi. 18. The writer either is S. Peter or wishes himself to be thought to be S. Peter, who, feeling the approach of old age, realises that the prophecy is soon to be fulfilled.

15. I will give diligence. Does this refer to the present Epistle, which the writer means to leave behind him as an authentic statement of the faith? Or (more probably) to some exact narrative of the facts of the Lord's life which is to confirm the belief of the disciples? If to the latter, the allusion may be to the Gospel of S. Mark, which, according to a very early tradition, was based upon the preaching of S. Peter (Eus. *H. E.* iii. 39).

16. Our preaching as to (1) the power, (2) the Second Coming, of our Lord is not founded on fanciful myths, but on what we saw ourselves at the Transfiguration.

Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he 17 received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and 18 this voice we *ourselves* heard come out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. And we have the 19 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: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of 20 private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by 21 the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

17. **Such a voice.** A voice such as follows—'This is my beloved son...'

From the excellent glory. The bright cloud which overshadowed the disciples and betokened the presence of God (Matt. xvii. 5).

This is my beloved Son. As in Matt. xvii. 5, Mark ix. 7. Matthew alone adds 'in whom I am well pleased.' Luke has something quite different (ix. 35).

18. **Holy mount.** The mountain, which was probably a southern spur of Hermon, was made holy by God's appearing there.

19. **The word of prophecy *made* more sure.** The Transfiguration confirmed the prophecies which foretold the glory of the Messiah (such as Isaiah lx. 1, Malachi iv. 1).

Until the day dawn. It is most natural to take these words as meaning 'until the Second Coming of Christ, who scatters all shadows and illuminates all obscurity.' Till then, men must study prophecy: after that their minds will be lit up to see things as they are.

20. **No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation.** People have no right to interpret prophecies to suit their own fancies. It is possible to study the Old Testament in the wrong way, reading into it our own mistaken ideas. Cf. iii. 16. Eusebius mentions a heretical sect of the 2nd cent., who 'use the Law and Prophets and Gospels, but interpret *in their own way* the thoughts of the Sacred Scriptures' (*H. E.* iv. 29).

21. **For no prophecy ever came by the will of man.** A reason for the precept of v. 20. Prophecy is God-given: therefore to interpret it requires something more than human ingenuity.

II. 1-22. Danger from false teachers, who (a) deny their Redeemer, (b) are guilty of scandalous immorality.

- 2 But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves
2 swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall
3 be evil spoken of. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction
4 slumbereth not. For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them
5 to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement; and

II. 1. **Among the people.** The people of Israel. Cf. Deut. xiii. 1-5, xviii. 20-22, Jeremiah v. 31, Ezekiel xiii.

That bought them, with His blood. Cf. 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Ye were bought with a price.' Acts xx. 28, 1 Pet. i. 18-19.

2. **Shall be evil spoken of,** by the Gentiles.

3. **In covetousness.** They will suppress or disguise the truth, they will speak only so as to please their hearers, and they will expect to be paid handsomely. These were the people who supposed 'that godliness is a way of gain' (1 Tim. vi. 5). That the danger was a real one appears from *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, ch. xi. (written about 100 A.D.), 'Let every apostle that cometh to you be received as the Lord. And he shall remain one day, and if there be need the second also; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle departs let him take naught, save provision of bread till he be lodged. *But if he ask for money, he is a false prophet.*' So in ch. xii. where any wayfarer who visits a Christian community and is unwilling to work for his living there is called '*one that makes gain of Christ.*'

Now from of old. The sentence was pronounced long ago against false prophets under the old dispensation (1 Kings xxii. 25, Jeremiah xxviii. 15-17, Ezekiel xiii. 9); it is ready now to be executed against these false teachers.

4=Jude 6 (note). The reference is probably to the sin of 'the sons of God' who married 'the daughters of men' (Gen. vi. 1, 2, 4).

Unto judgement, which is only completed at Christ's Second

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; and 6 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; and 7 delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among 8 them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* lawless deeds): the Lord knoweth 9 how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgement; but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in 10 the lust of defilement, and despise dominion. Daring, selfwilled, they tremble not to rail at dignities: whereas 11

Coming. 1 Cor. vi. 3, 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?'

5. With seven others. 'Few, that is, eight souls' (1 Pet. iii. 20).

A preacher of righteousness. He is not mentioned in the Book of Genesis as preaching, but there was a Jewish tradition that he did preach. Josephus, *Ant.* i. 3, 1, 'But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and, being displeased at their conduct, tried to persuade them to change their dispositions and acts for the better.' So Clement of Rome 7, 'Noah preached repentance, and they that obeyed were saved.'

6 = Jude 7.

7. **Righteous Lot.** So alluded to in Genesis xviii. 23, 'Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked?'

9. **Under punishment.** In 1 Pet. iii. 19-20 the spirits of those who were disobedient in the days of Noah are said to be 'in prison': in Jude 6 the wanton angels are said to be kept 'in everlasting bonds.' All are suffering chastisement, but the final judgement is not yet.

10 = Jude 8.

Walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement. Follow carnal instincts and indulge in desires that defile a man.

Dominion. The sovereignty of God.

Dignities. The angelic orders. The false teachers are so presumptuous that they speak evil of God himself and of His highest messengers.

angels, though greater in might and power, bring not
 12 a railing judgement against them before the Lord. 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,
 13 suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing; *men* that
 count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and
 blemishes, revelling in their love-feasts while they feast

11=Jude 9 (which has special reference to Michael the archangel).

Bring not a railing judgement. The meaning is very obscure, but seems to be that, though the false teachers speak evil of angels, the latter (in spite of their superiority in strength and power) do not retaliate by slanderous accusations against *them* before the Lord. They are content to leave the matter in God's hands. The author of 2 Pet. has, as so often, adapted Jude, and made a particular instance (the forbearance of Michael when disputing with the devil) into a general rule.

12=Jude 10.

In matters whereof they are ignorant. At dignities.

Shall in their destroying surely be destroyed. Shall be ruined as they try to ruin others. This gives good sense, but puts a strain upon the Greek, as the word translated 'their' ought not to be taken to mean 'their own,' if we can help it. It is better to translate 'Shall be destroyed with their destruction.' These men are like the brute beasts: they follow their own blind instincts, and they shall perish as the beasts perish.

13. **Suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing.** They suffer what they call wrong (the punishment which God inflicts) as a return for the wrong that they have done.

To revel in the day-time. A sign of great dissipation. Juv. i. 49, *Exul ab octava Marius bibit.* Tac. Ann. xiv. 2, *Medio diei, cum id temporis Nero per vinum et epulas incalesceret.* The usual hour for dinner was 3 p.m.

Spots. Jude 12 has 'hidden rocks,' but the words are very much alike, *σπίλου* (2 Peter) *σπιλάδες* (Jude), and Dr Lightfoot¹ was inclined to take both as meaning 'spots.'

Revelling in their love-feasts. If the reading be right (*ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις*), this is one of the two passages in the New Testament in which the Christian 'Love-Feast' is alluded to by name, the other being Jude 12 (almost the same words). From very early times the 'Breaking of the Bread' (Acts ii. 42) was associated

¹ *On a Fresh Revision of the English New Testament*, 1871, p. 137 note 2.

with you ; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot 14
 cease from sin ; enticing unstedfast souls ; having a
 heart exercised in covetousness ; children of cursing ;
 forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed 15
 the way of Balaam the *son* of Beor, who loved the hire of
 wrong-doing ; but he was rebuked for his own trans- 16
 gression : a dumb ass spake with man's voice and stayed
 the madness of the prophet. These are springs without 17
 water, and mists driven by a storm ; for whom the
 blackness of darkness hath been reserved. For, uttering 18
 great swelling *words* of vanity, they entice in the lusts of
 the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping
 from them that live in error ; promising them liberty, 19
 while they themselves are bondservants of corruption ;

with a common meal, or Agape, to which each member of the Church brought his share. If any had nothing to bring, says S. Chrysostom commenting on 1 Cor. (*Hom.* xxvii. 1), 'the rich provided the food, while the poor were their guests and all feasted together.' It is easy to see to what abuses this feast was liable (1 Cor. xi. 21-22).

The reading of most MSS. and versions is *ἀπάταις*—R.V. margin 'deceivings.' 'Because of their wiles they are admitted to your feasts.'

14. Children of cursing. Accursed people—a Hebrew phrase.

15. Who loved the hire of wrong-doing. He persisted in going to curse Israel, though God had told him not to go and the angel blocked his way, because Balak offered him a bribe (Numbers xxii. 7, xxiv. 11).

16. A dumb ass. Numbers xxii. 30.

17. Springs without water, because they profess to have knowledge, and really have none.

Mists driven by a storm, because they have no serious purpose.

For whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved. This is the fate assigned (and more appropriately assigned) to the 'wandering stars' in Jude 13.

18. Uttering great swelling words of vanity. They utter boastful promises of being able to free others from their sins (*v.* 19), but only entice them into wantonness.

Them that live in error. The heathen. The people who are most liable to fall victims to false teaching are those who are just giving up the ordinary life of Gentiles.

for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also
 20 brought into bondage. 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
 21 worse with them than the first. For it were better for
 them not to have known the way of righteousness, than,
 after knowing it, to turn back from the holy command-
 22 ment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them
 according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his
 own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to
 wallowing in the mire.

19. **For of whom a man is overcome.** An explanation of the word 'bond-servants.' To be worsted by corrupting lusts is to become the slave of them.

20. **After they have escaped.** As the words stand 'they' may mean either (1) the persons referred to in v. 18, 'who are just escaping from them that live in error,' or (2) the false teachers. The latter meaning is better: for the writer is alluding to people who have *already* escaped from the defilements of the world, and who have *already* come to a knowledge of the Saviour and of the path of righteousness, not to novices in the faith.

The last state. A quotation from Our Lord's parable of the Unclean Spirit returning to the house from whence he came out (Matt. xii. 45, Luke xi. 26).

21. **The holy commandment delivered unto them.** Christianity is not only a creed, but is also a rule of life, authorized by our Lord and therefore holy, handed on by Christian teachers to Christian converts.

22. **It has happened unto them according to the true proverb.** The truth of the proverb is exemplified in their case. The part of the proverb which refers to the dog is found in Prov. xxvi. 11, 'As a dog that returneth to his vomit, so is a fool that repeateth his folly': the part which refers to the sow is not found in Scripture, but can be paralleled from writers both pagan and Christian. See esp. Lucr. vi. 975 sqq. (quoted by Mayor¹)

*Nobis caenum taeterrima cum sit
 Spurcities, eadem subus haec iucunda videtur,
 Insatiabiliter toti ut volvantur ibidem.*

¹ *The Epistle of St Jude and the Second Epistle of St Peter*, 1907, p. 144.

III. 1-7. Warning against mockers, who speak contemptuously of the Lord's return.

This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write **3** unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should **2** remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: knowing this first, that **3** in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise **4** of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they wilfully forget, **5** that there were heavens from of old, and an earth

III. 1. **The second epistle.** The allusion seems naturally to be to 1 Peter, which the author claims to have written, just as he claims to be Simon Peter (i. 1), and to have received express revelation from Jesus Christ (i. 14, 18).

2. By the holy prophets. For the stress laid upon prophecy in both Epistles, see 1 Pet. i. 10-12, 2 Pet. i. 19-21.

Through your apostles. The reference here seems to be not necessarily to the Twelve, but to those who first brought the Gospel to the people here addressed. So S. Paul calls Epaphroditus the 'apostle' of the Philippians (Phil. ii. 25). The divine character of the message, on which so much stress is laid here, is briefly alluded to in 1 Pet. i. 12.

4. Where is the promise of his coming? What has become of all those express statements of the Lord's Return, as in Mark ix. 1, xiii. 26, John xxi. 22?

The fathers. The first generation of Christians. They were the people who had expected (as S. Paul once did, 1 Thess. iv. 15, 1 Cor. xv. 51) that the coming of the Lord would take place in their lifetime: yet they had died, and nothing strange had happened yet. The use of the phrase makes it clear that the writer did not belong to the first generation himself.

5-6. The answer to the mockers. It is not true to say that everything is as it was from the beginning. For (1) both heavens and earth once did not exist at all—they were called into existence long ago (but not first of all things) by the word of God: and (2) they have been destroyed within the memory of man.

compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of
 6 God; by which means the world that then was, being
 7 overflowed with water, perished: 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
 judgement and destruction of ungodly men.

8-18. God's merciful delay and the terrors of His coming.
 The promise of a new Universe hereafter.

8 But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is
 with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years

5. **Compacted out of water and amidst water.** The idea, taken from Gen. i. 2, 6-10, is that 'by the Divine word, a solid "firmament" was created, which separated the huge mass of primitive waters enveloping the earth into two parts, one being above the firmament, and the other below it' (Driver, *Genesis* p. 7). On the Third Day of Creation the latter was gathered into 'seas,' and so dry land appeared.

By the word of God. God said 'Let there be a firmament' (Gen. i. 6), and 'Let the dry land appear' (Gen. i. 9).

6. **The world that then was.** Both heaven and earth. The narrative in Genesis vi. and vii. does not state that heaven was involved with earth in the Deluge. But it may be noticed that the story of the Deluge is prefaced by an account of the monstrous unions of 'sons of God' with 'daughters of men,' so that the compiler of Genesis may well have believed the punishment to have been inflicted on heavenly beings as well as men. Nor again is it said in Genesis that even the earth was *destroyed*, but there was certainly a later tradition to that effect. In the Book of Enoch (x. 2) an angel is sent to 'the son of Lamech' (Noah) to say that 'the whole earth will be destroyed.' Cf. Jos. *Ant.* i. 2, 3.

7. **Stored up for fire.** Reserved for a second destruction, but this time by fire and not by water. God had promised Noah that there should not 'any more be a *flood* to destroy the earth' (Gen. ix. 11). He had also often spoken of His coming being heralded by fire (e.g. Joel ii. 30, Ps. l. 3, quoted by Mayor¹). Hence the idea of the Day of Judgement expressed in this verse, which can be paralleled even from S. Paul (2 Thess. i. 7-8).

8. A warning against impatience drawn from Ps. xc. 4, 'Do not think that the Judgement must come as quickly as you expect it. God's to-morrow may be—to us—a thousand years hence.'

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 155.

as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, 9
 as some count slackness ; but is longsuffering to you-ward,
 not wishing that any should perish, but that all should
 come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come 10
 as a thief ; in the 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 there-
 in shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus 11
 all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to
 be in *all* holy living and godliness, looking for and 12
 earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, 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 13
 and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14-16. The need for steadfastness, peace and purity in view of
 the future.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these 14
 things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace,

9. God's delay is not due to laziness. You must not attribute
 to Him the sort of dilatory waiting that you might attribute to
 men. He has a purpose, which is that of universal salvation.

10. *As a thief.* Matt. xxiv. 43, Luke xii. 39.

The elements. Probably, the sun, moon and stars—a very
 common meaning of the Greek word (*στοιχεῖα*). In Matt. xxiv.
 29 one of the signs of the coming of Christ is that 'the stars
 shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens' (the sun
 and moon) 'shall be shaken.'

The works that are therein. Everything that man has done
 and built upon the earth.

13. *According to his promise,* contained in Isaiah lxx. 17,
 'For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth,' and
 Isaiah lxvi. 22.

Wherein dwelleth righteousness. Righteousness will be no
 longer a casual visitor, but will take up her *permanent* abode in
 them. The Greek word for 'dwell' (*κατοικεῖν*) points to settled
 residence.

14. As righteousness is to dwell in the new heavens and
 earth, you must try to develop it now, (1) by being at peace

15 without spot and blameless in his sight. And account
that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as
our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom
16 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
unstedfast wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto

with all men, (2) by avoiding everything that can stain or soil you.

15. Salvation. A means of salvation. God delays that all may be saved (*v.* 9).

As our beloved brother Paul also...wrote unto you. The reference seems to be naturally to the statement that 'the long suffering of our Lord is salvation.' There is something very like this in Rom. ii. 4, 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' which has led many critics to infer that the author of 2 Pet. was addressing the Roman Church. Or the reference may be to an Epistle of S. Paul which exists no longer.

According to the wisdom given to him. The words are hardly a disparagement of S. Paul, implying that even he had his limitations, but read rather like a reminiscence of a familiar phrase of his which he uses when introducing an important statement, e.g. Rom. xii. 3, 'I say, *through the grace that was given me*, to every man that is among you...' xv. 15, 'Putting you again in remembrance, *because of the grace that was given me of God...*' 1 Cor. iii. 10, 'According to the grace of God which was given me,....I laid a foundation.'

16. As also in all his epistles. The writer means that all the Epistles of S. Paul which he knows agree in doctrine with the one just mentioned.

Speaking in them of these things. When he dwells upon these subjects—specially the Second Coming and the way to prepare for it (1 Cor. xv. 58, 1 Thess. v. 1-11).

Wherein. In his Epistles.

Some things hard to be understood. As, for instance, the doctrine of election by grace, which men who had no disciplined reason ('ignorant') or moral stability ('unstedfast') could easily interpret as an utter denial of morality. This was certainly the case with some extreme Reformers in the sixteenth century.

Wrest. Twist, pervert.

The other scriptures. In the other books of the New Testament the word 'Scripture' seems to be confined to the writings

their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, knowing 17 *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 18 our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* the glory both now and for ever. Amen.

of the Old Testament. The author of this Epistle, by putting the Letters of S. Paul on a level with those writings and treating them as 'Scripture,' shows himself to belong to an age later than that in which the rest of the New Testament was written. This would naturally be when S. Paul was already dead, and when there was in existence a collection of his Epistles, 'to which, as authoritative documents of the faith, appeal was made' (Chase¹).

18. **For ever.** The Greek has a remarkable phrase *εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος* = unto the day of eternity, which is probably taken from Ecclus. xviii. 10.

¹ Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, iii. p. 810.

THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

INTRODUCTION

THE external evidence for the early date and Apostolic authorship of the first Epistle general of S. John is abundant and good. Polycarp certainly quotes 1 John iv. 2-3, and *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* contains a phrase 'to perfect it in Thy love,' which looks like a reminiscence of 1 John iv. 18. Irenaeus, Origen, and the author of the Muratorian fragment, all attribute it to S. John, clearly meaning the Apostle. Ignatius does not quote from it directly, but in his language he shows so many points of contact with it, that we are at least entitled to assume that such a type of teaching as it represents was current in the Church at the beginning of the second century.

The internal evidence points in the same direction. It can scarcely be doubted that the Epistle and the fourth Gospel are by the same author. There is the same general vocabulary, the same poverty of connecting particles, the same Hebraic turn of phrase, the same habit of repeating in a negative what has just been said in a positive form, in both: there are the same central ideas of 'light' and 'life' and 'love.' Even the application of the title 'Advocate' to Jesus Christ instead of to the Holy Spirit has its parallel in John xiv. 16. Yet there is nothing to suggest that the author of the Epistle was

simply a slavish imitator of the Gospel, who wished to gain for his writing a credit to which it was not entitled. Profesor Jülicher¹ calls attention to 'some peculiarities' both of thought and style which are found in the Epistle, but adds that 'these differences can nearly all be explained by the peculiar objects of the Epistle,—objects which concentrated the writer's attention on certain points which did not always coincide with the favourite themes of the Gospel.' The Epistle is too independent of the Gospel to be a forgery, while it is too closely connected with it to have been written by any other hand.

If the writer of both books be the same, any argument which goes towards establishing the Apostolic authorship of the one helps, so far, to establish that of the other, and *vice versa*. We cannot here attempt a full answer to the question 'Who wrote the Gospel?' But we may point out that (1) the tradition of the second century is strongly in favour of the view that S. John was the author, (2) modern scholars seem to be coming to agree that the author was a Jew who wrote about 100 A.D., (3) some of those who deny that S. John wrote it are willing to admit that the Gospel has a historical background in the teaching of the Apostle himself. For ourselves, we hold that there are more difficulties involved in rejecting than in upholding the Apostolic authorship. But the question now is whether the contents of the Epistle throw any light on the subject. The author in two places (i. 1-2, iv. 14) apparently claims to have been an eye-witness of the life that was manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. Is there anything in the Epistle which makes such a claim untrustworthy? It has been suggested that the false teaching which the writer combats is one of the so-called Gnostic heresies, which reached their fullest development in the middle of the

¹ *An Introduction to the New Testament*, E. Tr. 1904, pp. 246-250.

second century. As an intellectual movement Gnosticism began long before that date. There are traces of it in the errors attacked in S. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians (i. 15-20, ii. 9, 18) and to Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 1-5, vi. 20). Its main principle was a belief in the inherent evilness of matter, which led its upholders (1) to deny that God created the world, (2) to reject the Incarnation of His Son, (3) to interpose a long chain of angelic beings which separated perfect God from imperfect man, (4) to exaggerate the value of knowledge as against moral activity; but, as time went on, different Gnostic systems added special features of their own, some of them peculiarly repulsive and absurd. Clearly, if the Epistle shows any knowledge of these later developments, it cannot have been written by S. John. But it shows no knowledge of them. It is a pastoral letter, addressed to a wide circle of readers, with two objects in view—the one positive, to declare the truth 'concerning the Word of life,' and so to join its readers in living union with the Father and the Son (i. 1-4, v. 13), the other negative, to expose the errors which were then threatening to destroy the truth. These errors are given in ii. 22, 23, iv. 2, 3, and consist in denying 'that Jesus is the Christ,' or 'that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.' Here is the simplest form of Docetic Gnosticism, which maintained that the human body of Christ was not real, but only seemed to be real, and so denied the historical truth of His sufferings and Resurrection.

It is interesting to note that Irenaeus accuses the sect of the Nicolaitans, who are mentioned in the Revelation as existing at Ephesus (ii. 6) and Pergamum (ii. 15), of holding that Christ and Jesus were distinct from each other, and that 'the Christ from above,' descended upon 'Jesus,' but, being incapable of suffering, 'flew back again to the fulness of the Godhead' (iii. 11. 7).

He regards them as the forerunners of a certain Cerinthus, whose views he describes in much the same language (i. 21). Ignatius also found similar heresies in the Churches of Asia, when he passed through them on his way to Rome (100-115). When we remember that S. John is said to have lived in Asia up to the time of Trajan (Iren. ii. 33. 3), and to have actually been at Ephesus when Cerinthus was there (Iren. iii. 3. 4)¹, we cannot think it improbable that he wrote the first Epistle which bears his name in Ephesus or the neighbourhood, to uphold the fundamental truth of the Incarnation, and to expose the Docetic errors which threatened it even in his day.

One difficulty remains to be considered. It is sometimes said that, though the author is really John, he is not John the Apostle, but another John *ὁ πρεσβύτερος* ('the elder' or 'the presbyter'); and colour is given to this statement by the fact that the author of the second and third Epistles (see below) simply calls himself *ὁ πρεσβύτερος*. That there was such a John can hardly be doubted. His existence rests on good authority, that of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (? 70-140), who distinguishes the two Johns, and may perhaps have known this one personally². By the end of the fourth

¹ The story is given on the authority of Polycarp, who knew S. John well. 'And there are some who heard him' [Polycarp] 'say that John, the disciple of the Lord, once went to bathe at Ephesus, and, seeing Cerinthus inside the bath-house, flung himself out without bathing, saying, as he did so, "Let us fly for fear even the bath-house fall on us, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within."'

² His exact words are: 'And, if any one came who had followed the elders (*τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις*), I used to enquire from him about the discourses of the elders, what Andrew or Peter said, or Philip, or Thomas, or James; or what John said, or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of the Lord: and the things which Aristion and John *ὁ πρεσβύτερος*, the disciples of the Lord, say' (Eus. *H.E.* iii. 39). 'Say' may imply that his informants were still living, or mean simply 'relate in books.'

century A.D. some people assigned the second and third Epistles to him (Jerome, *de Virr. Ill.* ix.), and now Dr Harnack¹ would assign to him all the Johannine writings. It is a slender basis on which to build so big a structure. We must note, first of all, that Papias speaks even of Apostles as *οἱ πρεσβύτεροι*, so that there is no reason why John the son of Zebedee should not have written of himself in the same way. Moreover, the title 'the elder,' without the addition of any proper name, is much more suitable to a man who held a commanding position, such as S. John the Apostle held at Ephesus, than to one whose very existence is ignored by most of the Asian Fathers, and of whose stay in Asia the only evidence is a tradition that there were two monuments in Ephesus, each bearing the name of John (Eus. *H. E.* vii. 25). Irenaeus, the pupil of Polycarp, knew of whom he was speaking, when he talked of 'John the disciple of the Lord' as the author of the Gospel and the first Epistle, and he gives us no ground for thinking that he meant any one but John the son of Zebedee. It is hard to see what Dr Harnack gains by his hypothesis. It does not help him to put the Johannine writings any later than the traditional view would put them, nor does it explain any inconsistencies between the fourth Gospel and the Synoptists, for, in either case, the author was 'a disciple of the Lord' and might be expected to know the truth: it only heaps upon an obscure member the unique collection of writings which have been almost unanimously attributed to a chief Apostle of the Church.

When we turn to the second and third Epistles, we realise that they hang together with the first, and must

¹ *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur*, 1897, i. p. 675; *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, Zweite Auflage, 1906, i. pp. 71-72.

not be considered apart from it. Undoubtedly attempts have been made to separate them. Origen, for instance, says that 'John...has left also an Epistle of very few lines: perhaps also a second and a third, for not all consider these genuine' (Eus. *H. E.* vi. 25), and Eusebius in one passage (*H. E.* iii. 25), while reckoning the first Epistle among 'the accepted books,' puts the second and third in the list of 'those which are disputed but are nevertheless recognised by most people.' On the other hand, Irenaeus not only quotes 2 John 11 as a saying of 'John the disciple of the Lord,' but also quotes 2 John 7, 8 as coming from 'the above mentioned' (i.e. first) Epistle of the same writer, a slip of memory which shows that he at least believed that S. John wrote both Epistles (iii. 17. 8): while Eusebius himself, when giving his own opinion, says that John in his Epistles either makes no mention of his own name or calls himself 'presbyter' (elder), a clear reference to the opening words of 2 and 3 John (*Dem. Ev.* iii. 5).

There is indeed no ground for doubting that all three are by the same hand. Anyone who will go carefully through the two shorter Epistles can verify this for himself (see especially 2 John 5, 6, 7, 9; 3 John 11). He will find some differences in language between them and the first Epistle, but he must remember that they are letters of a different character, intended for a narrower circle of readers, dealing each with a special topic; and yet, in spite of these differences, the phrasing, the tone, and the doctrinal standpoint are the same. We can suggest no reason why the second and third Epistles should be forged in imitation of the first. They support no dogma which is not supported abundantly elsewhere, and it is specially hard to see how a forger, who wished to pass himself off as an important person, could have written such a letter as the third Epistle, in which the

author confesses that his authority is disputed and his supporters ejected from a particular Church (*vv.* 9, 10). But we can easily tell why the Epistles have been sometimes doubted, and why they are so rarely quoted by the Fathers. They are very short, containing only 27 verses between them; they are of a semi-private, occasional character; and their author gives himself a title which may have suggested to many minds that he was not an Apostle at all.

The second Epistle seems to be addressed to a single Church (see note on *v.* 1), within the district in which the first was circulated, to warn it against the same errors (*v.* 7). The name of the Church remains a riddle, but the fact of the general supervision of the Churches of Asia by S. John is fairly well attested. Clement of Alexandria says: 'When on the death of the tyrant [Domitian] he returned to Ephesus from the island of Patmos, he used to go away, upon invitation, to the neighbouring districts of the Gentiles, in some places to appoint bishops, in other places to set in order whole Churches, elsewhere to choose to the ministry some one of those who were pointed out by the Spirit' (*Eus. H. E.* iii. 23).

Dom J. Chapman¹ suggests that the letter was written to the Church of Rome, to congratulate it on the martyrdom of some of its members, and to warn it against false teachers from Ephesus. But, when the author says that he has found 'certain of thy children walking in truth' (*v.* 4), he must surely mean, not that they have been martyred, but that they lead a moral life which corresponds with their inward belief. And to take 'the elect lady' (*v.* 1) as necessarily meaning the Church of Rome, because S. Peter means that when he says 'She that is at Babylon, elect together with you' (1 Pet. v. 13)

¹ *Journal of Theological Studies*, v. pp. 517-534.

is to forget that the word 'Babylon' gives the key to the puzzle. The omission of the name of the Church is not a great difficulty. The messenger must have been told which Church he was to visit, and, if members of that Church were satisfied who 'the elder' was who sent him, they would probably not mind how the letter was addressed.

The third Epistle is a private letter to a certain Gaius, who is commended for his hospitality to some missionaries who visited his Church. His conduct is shown to be in marked contrast with that of a certain Diotrephes, who rejected the authority of the writer and refused to receive them. Of a third Christian, Demetrius, who was probably another hospitable member of the same Church, it is said that 'he hath the witness of all men' (v. 12), that is, his goodness is universally attested.

Dom J. Chapman¹ again has an ingenious explanation. He identifies Gaius with the Gaius of Rom. xvi. 23, and accepts the tradition that he was the first bishop of Thessalonica (Origen, *Comm. in Ep. ad Rom.* x. 41). Demetrius is the same as Demas (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24), whom S. Paul blames for forsaking him, because he 'loved this present world' (2 Tim. iv. 10), and going to Thessalonica, which was perhaps his native place; but who in reality only left Rome, because a persecution was raging ('for the sake of the Name' v. 7). Thessalonica became too hot to hold him, owing to the second letter of S. Paul to Timothy, and even some years later, when he wished to return to Thessalonica and die there, Diotrephes, one of the presbyters, refused to admit him.

There are too many unprovable assumptions in this hypothesis, and the names of Gaius and Demetrius are far too common to admit of certain identification. If we are to identify Demetrius, it is more natural, with

¹ *Journal of Theological Studies*, v. pp. 357-368.

Dr Vernon Bartlet¹, to think of Demetrius, the silversmith of Ephesus (Acts xix. 24). He may have been converted after S. Paul's departure and have become one of the missionary brethren, but he would still be looked upon with suspicion, and S. John may have felt himself specially bound to recommend him on his journey, in view of the suspicious attitude of Diotrephes. But even this guess is precarious. The real interest of the letter is, not that it helps us to increase our scanty knowledge of certain New Testament characters, but that it throws light on a dark corner of the Constitutional History of the Church. It shows how in some quarters the travelling teachers were still a familiar feature of Church life even at the end of the first century, and so bears out the truth of the picture given by *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (xi. xii., quoted on 2 Pet. ii. 3). Diotrephes was probably not, as Dr Harnack² thinks him, 'the bishop' of the church concerned; but the mistrust of the travelling teachers, even when they brought testimonials from so high an authority as S. John, marks a stage in the process by which local Churches came to enjoy an independent existence under their own bishops. By the time of Ignatius, fifteen or twenty years later, the Churches of Asia were organized on episcopal lines.

¹ *Journal of Theological Studies*, vi. pp. 204-216.

² *Ueber den dritten Johannesbrief*, 1897, pp. 21-27. Cf. Wernle, *Die Anfänge unserer Religion*, Zweite Auflage, 1904, p. 426.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
JOHN

I. 1-4. Preface. Purpose of the Epistle is to communicate that revelation of life which culminated in the Incarnation, and so to promote fellowship and joy.

THAT which was from the beginning, that which we 1
have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes,
that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning
the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we 2
have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the
life, the eternal *life*, which was with the Father, and was
manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard 3
declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship
with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and
with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write, 4
that our joy may be fulfilled.

5-10. What God is, and how man is related to Him.

And this is the message which we have heard from 5

I. 1. **The Word of life.** The message of life, which had been communicated to man ever since creation, was specially given to us Apostles: we heard it from the lips of Christ, we saw it in His person. We realised it when we touched Him after His Resurrection (Luke xxiv. 39).

3, 4. Our object in revealing this truth to you is to unite you closely to ourselves by the bond of a common faith, and so to the Father and the Son with whom we are united; this double union will complete our happiness.

5. **From him.** From Jesus Christ, who reveals the Father (John xiv. 9).

him, and announce unto you, that God is light, and in
 6 him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellow-
 ship with him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do
 7 not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the
 light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood
 8 of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that
 we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is
 9 not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and
 righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from
 10 all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned,
 we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

II. 1-6. How sin can be remedied, and the proof that it has
 been remedied.

2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that
 ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an
 Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

God is light. In God is found all perfection. Just as He is 'Spirit' (John iv. 24) and 'Love' (1 John iv. 8), He is also 'Light,' perfect holiness and perfect truth, to which sin and error are absolutely foreign.

6. **Walk in the darkness.** Deliberately to choose sin and error in our daily life, while claiming to be united to God, is to be guilty of falsehood.

7. **If we walk in the light, as he is in the light.** We do not exist in the light by nature, as He does, but we can imitate Him in our conduct. Then indeed we are capable of realising union with other Christians and therefore union with Christ (v. 3). The result of this union is purification by His blood (cf. v. 9).

10. **We make him a liar,** because all through history He has been dealing with man on the assumption that man *has* sinned.

His word is not in us. We have not really accepted His revelation of the truth, nor made it our own.

II. 1. **Advocate,** as our Lord Himself implies, when He speaks of 'the Spirit of truth' as 'another Advocate' (John xiv. 16, R.V. margin). Jesus Christ pleads our cause before God the Father, when the adversary would accuse us; and He is entitled to do so, for (a) He is Himself completely righteous, (b) He is the atoning sacrifice for sin (v. 2).

and he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours 2 only, but also for the whole world. And hereby know we 3 that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He 4 that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him : but whoso 5 keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby know we that we are in him : he that 6 saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

7-11. The commandment of love, which is both old and new.

Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but 7 an old commandment which ye had from the beginning : the old commandment is the word which ye heard. Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which 8 thing is true in him and in you ; because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth. He 9 that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother 10 abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in 11 the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth

3. **Know him.** Recognise Him in His true character, as the 'Advocate,' 'the righteous' one, 'the propitiation.'

5. **Hath the love of God been perfected.** The love of God towards man, already displayed in the propitiation of Jesus Christ, reaches its full development in those who keep His word, i.e. who try to live up to the revelation which He has given to them.

7. **From the beginning.** Since first you heard the Gospel.

8. **A new commandment.** Though it is old, it is also a new commandment, because it 'is true in him and in you,' i.e. because its truth is being verified afresh in the facts of Christ's life and in the course of Christian experience. Christians are showing every day by their conduct that the reign of darkness (defined in v. 11) is drawing to a close.

10. **None occasion of stumbling in him.** He finds no obstacle in his path : unlike the man in v. 11, he is able to see his course clear before him.

not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.

12-14. The reason for giving this charge to his readers.

12 I write unto you, *my* little children, because your sins
 13 are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you,
 fathers, because ye know him which is from the beginning.
 I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome
 the evil one. I have written unto you, little children,
 14 because ye know the Father. I have written unto you,
 fathers, because ye know him which is from the beginning.
 I have written unto you, young men, because ye are
 strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have
 overcome the evil one.

15-17. The charge itself. God and the world.

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the
 world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father
 16 is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the
 flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life,

12. *My little children.* As in *v.* 1, he addresses his readers under this title of affection, and then divides them into two classes, 'fathers' (i.e. older men) and 'young men.' The word translated 'little children' in *v.* 13 has a different Greek original (*παιδία* instead of *τεκνία*), but refers to the same people.

For his name's sake. Because of Christ who is revealed as our Redeemer.

13. *Him which is from the beginning.* The Word (John i. 1).

The evil one. Cf. Matt. vi. 13 (R.V.).

I have written. This may refer to a previous writing sent by the author to the same circle of readers, perhaps to the Gospel of S. John (so Rothe¹). But, as in *vv.* 21, 26 'I have written' seems to refer to the present Epistle, it is better to take it so here. The author now repeats what he has already said, but this time, for the sake of emphasis, he uses the epistolary aorist (*ἔγραψα*) instead of the present (*γράφω*), putting himself in the position of those who would receive the letter. Cf. 1 Cor. v. 11.

14. *The word of God abideth in you.* See on i. 10.

16. *The lust of the eyes.* 'The desire of which the eyes are

¹ *Der Erste Brief Johannis*, 1878, pp. 67-68.

is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world 17
passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth
the will of God abideth for ever.

18-29. The contrast between falsehood, as represented by
the Antichrist, and the truth.

Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that 18
antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many
antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour.
They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if 19
they had been of us, they would have continued with us:
but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest how
that they all are not of us. And ye have an anointing 20
from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not 21
written unto you because ye know not the truth, but
because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth.
Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the 22

the organ,' aesthetic desire for 'all that is fairest and most
attractive in the world' (Westcott¹).

The vainglory of life. The boastfulness which arises from
outward conditions of life, e.g. from wealth, position, power.

17. Unlike obedience to worldly desires, obedience to the
will of God is independent of all time. Cf. what S. Paul says
of love (1 Cor. xiii. 8).

18. **Ye heard that antichrist cometh**, from our Lord Himself.
Matt. xxiv. 24; Mark xiii. 22; Luke xxi. 8.

19. **They went out from us, but they were not of us.**
Though they first belonged in name to our Christian society and
went out from us into the world, they did not really share in our
Christian life.

20. **Ye have an anointing from the Holy One.** God has
consecrated you to Himself by the gift of the Spirit. So God is
said to have anointed Jesus (Acts x. 38), and S. Paul says 'He
that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God'
(2 Cor. i. 21). It is not necessary to see in these words a reference
to the practice of anointing with oil at Baptism. That practice was
probably a later one, and was itself based on such texts as these.

And ye know all things, so that you are not likely to be led
away by impostors.

22. This verse must be interpreted in the light of iv. 2, 3,

¹ *The Epistles of St. John*, 1883, pp. 63-64.

Christ? This is the antichrist, *even* he that denieth the
 23 Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the
 same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son
 24 hath the Father also. As for you, let that abide in you
 which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye
 heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall
 25 abide in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the
 promise which he promised us, *even* the life eternal.
 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them
 27 that would lead you astray. And as for you, the anointing
 which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not
 that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth
 you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and
 28 even as it taught you, ye abide in him. And now, *my*
 little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested,
 we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him
 29 at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know

where the spirit of the antichrist is further defined. To deny that 'Jesus is the Christ' then will not mean simply to deny that Jesus is the expected Messiah of the Jews, but to deny that the man Jesus is the same Person as the heavenly Being 'Christ.' This denial is further defined in *v.* 23 as a denial of the Son, and therefore involves also a denial of the Fatherhood of God.

23. **Hath not the Father.** Denies Him and is incapable of communion with Him.

27. **The anointing.** See on *v.* 20.

Ye need not that any one teach you, because the Holy Spirit guides you 'into all the truth' (John xvi. 13), and you, holding fast the truth which He taught you, remain in close union with the Son of God.

28. **If he shall be manifested,** at His Second Coming. Cf. iii. 2. In both passages the word 'if' (*ἐάν*) does not mean that the writer doubted that Christ *would* be manifested, but only that he was uncertain under what conditions the manifestation would take place.

And not be ashamed before him, like the people described in the Revelation at the opening of the sixth seal (Rev. vi. 15-17).

29. Those who set themselves to imitate in action the perfect righteousness of Christ are His true children: they alone, it is implied, will have boldness to meet Him at His Coming.

that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him.

III. 1-12. The children of God and the children of the Devil.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed **3** upon us, that we should be called children of God : and *such* we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children **2** of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one **3** that hath this hope *set* on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawless- **4** ness : and sin is lawlessness. And ye know that he was **5** manifested to take away sins ; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever **6**

III. 1. **Knoweth us not.** Does not understand us, as it failed to understand Him (John xvi. 3).

2. It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. By the anointing of the Spirit we have already received 'the adoption of sons' (Rom. viii. 15, Gal. iv. 5), but we cannot yet tell to what a height we are capable of rising. All that we can say is that one day we shall behold God's face (Rev. xxii. 4), and that we must then resemble Him, for only those can see Him who are like Him (Matt. v. 8).

3. Even as he is pure. Christ.

4. Sin is lawlessness. It is the rebellion of disobedient, human wills against the law of God. The Christian doctrine is, as Dr Gore¹ points out, that sin is not natural, but is 'misuse, disorder,' and that it has its seat, not in the body, but in the will.

5. A further reason why sin is incompatible with the profession of the Christian faith.

Was manifested, in the flesh. The purpose of the Incarnation was to do away with sins.

6. Not inconsistent with i. 8-10. There the writer asserts that we are all sinners : here he is thinking of sin in its essential nature, and says that union with Christ is inconsistent with the wilful and habitual practice of sin.

¹ *Lux Mundi*, 14th ed. 1895. Appendix ii. pp. 387-390.

7 sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him. *My*
 little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth
 8 righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: he
 that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from
 the beginning. To this end was the Son of God mani-
 fested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.
 9 Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his
 seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is
 10 begotten of God. In this the children of God are manifest,
 and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not
 righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not
 11 his brother. For this is the message which ye heard
 12 from the beginning, that we should love one another: not
 as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And
 wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil,
 and his brother's righteous.

Hath not seen him 'with the eye of the spirit' (Rothe¹), and so cannot understand His perfect purity (*v.* 3) and sinlessness (*v.* 5).

7. **A man is known by what he does.** He who makes righteousness the rule of his conduct proves that, in his character, he has modelled himself on the righteousness of Christ,—in other words, that 'he is begotten of God' (*v.* 9).

8. **From the beginning.** Ever since there was such a thing as sin.

9. **His seed abideth in him**, i.e. God's seed, the germ of life which He bestows, remains in the believer. For the metaphor cf. James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23.

He cannot sin. Sin is with him not a physical, but a moral impossibility. Any sin that he commits is accidental: it is not a natural consequence of his character, which has no affinity with sin.

10. **Neither he that loveth not his brother**, for love is the highest practical expression of righteousness. The mention of love serves to prepare the reader for the new section *vv.* 13-24, in which it is to be treated more fully.

11. **From the beginning.** See on ii. 7.

12. **Not as Cain was.** We must not imitate Cain who was...

Because his works were evil. Not directly stated, but implied in Gen. iv. 7, where the Lord says to Cain 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 102.

13-24. Hatred and love.

Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you. We ¹³
 know that we have passed out of death into life, because ¹⁴
 we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in
 death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: ¹⁵
 and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding
 in him. Hereby know we love, because he laid down his ¹⁶
 life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the
 brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and ¹⁷
 beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his
 compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in
 him? *My* little children, let us not love in word, neither ¹⁸
 with the tongue; but in deed and truth. Hereby shall ¹⁹
 we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our
 heart before him, whereinsoever our heart condemn us; ²⁰
 because God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all

coucheth at the door.' Cf. also Heb. xi. 4. The murder of
 Abel by his brother was a practical example of the relation
 between righteousness and love. Cain was unrighteous, and
 therefore (1) his sacrifice was rejected, (2) he was so utterly
 without love that he killed Abel.

14. Cf. John v. 24. 'He that heareth my word, and believeth
 him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judge-
 ment, but hath passed out of death into life.' True life is
 enjoyed only by those who believe, and the outward sign of
 belief is the love of the brethren. This is stated explicitly
 below in v. 23.

15-18. If we do not love, we must hate, and every one who
 hates is, potentially, a murderer (Matt. v. 21, 22), just as guilty
 as Cain who actually killed his brother. On the other hand,
 the true nature of love is seen in self-sacrifice, and specially
 in the self-sacrifice of Christ. Many people talk about the
 Divine love, but do not carry it out in action: the most common
 form of this absence of love is want of sympathy with the
 poorer brethren.

19. **Hereby.** Through this love of the brethren.

Assure our heart before him. Calm our accusing conscience,
 when we examine it as in His presence.

20. **Because God is greater than our heart.** Conscience
 may cause us misgivings, and the misgivings may be well-

21 things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have
 22 boldness toward God; and whatsoever we ask, we receive
 of him, because we keep his commandments, and do the
 23 things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his
 commandment, that we should believe in the name of his
 Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave
 24 us commandment. And he that keepeth his command-
 ments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we
 know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us.

IV. 1-6. Spirits of truth and spirits of error.

4 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits,
 whether they are of God: because many false prophets
 2 are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit
 of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is
 3 come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which con-
 fesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the *spirit* of

grounded, but God alone has perfect knowledge; He can understand the truth about our whole character, as conscience cannot understand it, and He, seeing our love for the brethren, forgives what conscience condemns.

21. As the accusing voice of conscience makes us afraid, till we are reassured by the fact of our love for the brethren, so the approving voice of conscience, which tells us that we keep His commandments (v. 21), gives us the confidence to approach God in prayer.

23. **Believe in the name.** Believe in the revelation which He has given of Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, His Son.

As he gave us commandment. John xiii. 34.

24. **He in him.** God in him.

Hereby. By the possession of the spirit we become conscious of union with God.

IV. 1. **Prove.** Test.

False prophets, who are inspired by the false spirits.

2, 3. See on ii. 21, and, with regard to the general character of the heresy thus mentioned, Intr. pp. 52-53. For a similar test of the presence of the Spirit, cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3.

3. **Which confesseth not Jesus.** Which does not admit that Jesus is the Lord, i.e. that the man Jesus is the Incarnate God.

the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already. Ye are of God, *my* little 4 children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. They are 5 of the world: therefore speak they *as* of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that 6 knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7-21. Love towards God and man. Its basis, its origin, its manifestation.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; 7 and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; 8 for God is love. Herein was the love of God manifested 9 in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the

Ye have heard. See on ii. 18.

4. **Them.** The false prophets whom the Christians have resisted in the power of God.

He that is in the world. The evil one, in whom 'the whole world lieth' (v. 19).

5. They represent an order of things which is entirely removed from fellowship with God: and so they bring a message which suits their own moral condition, and they find an audience like themselves.

6. **By this.** By the application of these principles we can distinguish between the spirits. The principles are contained in *vv.* 2-6, and deal with (1) the content of the spirit's utterance, (2) the nature of the people who listen to it.

Of error. Not simply 'of mistake,' but 'of misleading.'

8. **God is love.** Not only is love an attribute, but it is 'the very Being of God.' Just as He is perfect holiness and truth, so He is also 'perfect benevolence' (Westcott¹). For the bearing of this teaching upon the Doctrine of the Trinity, see Illingworth, *Personality Human and Divine*, pp. 69-76; Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 160-162.

9. **In us.** R.V. margin, 'In our case.'

God hath sent his only begotten Son. Cf. John iii. 16. The fact that it was the 'only begotten Son' who was sent enhances the greatness of the gift.

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 161.

10 world, that we might live through him. Herein is love,
 not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his
 11 Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God
 12 so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man
 hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another,
 God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us:
 13 hereby know we that we abide in him, and he in us,
 14 because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have
 beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the
 15 Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall
 confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him,
 16 and he in God. And we know and have believed the love
 which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth
 17 in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. Herein is
 love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in
 the day of judgement; because as he is, even so are we
 18 in this world. There is no fear in love: but perfect love

10. **Herein is love.** This love of His shows us the very essence of love, because it was not called forth by any love on our part, but was an act of His own free will.

12, 13. We cannot yet behold God as He is. No one has ever done that. But, if we love one another, we feel His love completely manifested in ourselves by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Cf. the answer of our Lord to Judas in John xiv. 23. There the condition of God's indwelling is our love towards Him, which is the same truth from another point of view (*vv.* 20, 21).

14-16. The inward proof of God's love is His presence within us: the outward proof is the Mission of His Son, which men must openly admit, as we have done, if they are to experience true union with God.

16. **He that abideth in love.** Dwells in an atmosphere of love, makes love the guiding principle of his life.

17. **Herein is love made perfect with us.** In this fellowship love between us and Him reaches its highest perfection. He wishes it to be so, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement, a boldness inspired by the conscious imitation of Christ in our conduct in the world (*iii.* 3).

18. The mention of 'boldness' suggests the opposite feeling 'fear.' The writer is not thinking only of fear before the judge,

casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love, ¹⁹ because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, ²⁰ and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have ²¹ we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.

V. 1-12. The triumph of faith, which depends not only on an external testimony, but on the witness within the Christian.

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten ⁵ of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. Hereby we know that we ² love the children of God, when we love God, and do his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we ³ keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is begotten of God over- ⁴ cometh the world: and this is the victory that hath

but of fear generally. Love is the negation of selfishness. The selfish man is always afraid, because he is always finding or imagining obstacles in the way of his self-seeking, and 'fear hath punishment,' i.e. involves pain and suffering. The man who abides in love has none of the suspicion and torture which spring from selfishness: progress in love means the gradual abolition of fear.

V. 1. Him also that is begotten of him. The other children of God. Faith leads to love of God, and love of God involves love of the brethren (iv. 21).

2. Hereby we know that we love. If we would discover whether we truly love our brethren, we must ask ourselves whether we love God, i.e. whether we do His will (v. 3). We may do outward acts of charity from unworthy motives, but true love of the brethren can only flow from love of God.

4. For. Explains the last part of v. 3. God's commands are not grievous to Christians, because they, being His children, are, and have already been, enabled to overcome the obstacles offered by the world. This victory consists in, and indeed is, nothing else than faith, the confession that Jesus is the Son of God (v. 5).

5 overcome the world, *even* our faith. And who is he that
 6 overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is
 7 the Son of God? This is he that came by water and
 8 blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but
 9 with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit
 10 that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For
 there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the
 water, and the blood: and the three agree in one. If we
 receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater:
 for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness
 concerning his Son. He that believeth on the Son of

6. **This is he that came.** Christ was proved to be 'he that cometh' (Matt. xi. 3) both by 'water' and 'blood,' i.e. by His Baptism (John i. 31-34) and His Death. At the Crucifixion indeed He gave the double proof, when blood and water issued from His side (John xix. 34, 35).

7. **And it is the Spirit.** The third witness to the same truth ('agree in one' v. 8) is supplied by the Holy Ghost, both in the heart of the believer and in the life of the Church. Christ Himself foretold 'He shall bear witness of me' (John xv. 26).

8. Sums up vv. 6, 7. In the English Bibles (A.V.) vv. 7 and 8 run as follows: 'For there are three that bear record *in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*' The words in italics do not belong to the original text: they have no authority to commend them, being only found in three Greek MSS., of which one was perhaps specially written in the sixteenth century to include them (Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament*, pp. 374-375, 508-511): and they are probably due to a mystical interpretation, which treated 'the Spirit, the water, and the blood' as typifying the Father, the Spirit and the Son, and were kept in the text owing to their supposed value for the Scriptural doctrine of the Trinity.

9. We accept human evidence, much more therefore the evidence given by God! And God's evidence consists in this, that He has borne a threefold testimony (vv. 6-8) to His Son.

10. This evidence must become inward as well as outward. Those who 'believe on' (i.e. trustfully accept) the Son feel a certainty within them that He is what He claims to be.

God hath the witness in him : he that believeth not God hath made him a liar ; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal 11 life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son 12 hath the life ; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

13-17. Boldness in prayer the privilege of God's children.

These things have I written unto you, that ye may 13 know that ye have eternal life, *even* unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the boldness 14 which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us : and if we know that 15 he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him. If any man 16 see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and *God* will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death : not concerning this do I say that he should make request. All unrighteous- 17 ness is sin : and there is a sin not unto death.

He that believeth not God. He who does not believe what God says to him has treated God as if He were a liar instead of the Truth. What God says, and what is verified externally and internally, is that He has given us eternal life in the Son (*v.* 11).

14. The boldness, due to the conscious possession of eternal life.

16. A sin not unto death. 'He that hath the Son hath the life' (*v.* 12), and all sin tends to separate us from Him and so to produce death. 'Yet not all equally ; nor all in a fixed and unalterable degree' (Westcott¹). There is a form of sin which makes complete separation from Him, and for which the writer will not suggest that petition should be made. Perhaps it is the wilful continuance in evil of those who have 'trodden under foot the Son of God' and 'done despite unto the Spirit of grace' (Heb. x. 26-29).

17. All unrighteousness is sin. The stress is to be laid on

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 182.

18-21. The Christian's knowledge. Conclusion.

18 We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth
not ; but he that was begotten of God keepeth him, and
19 the evil one toucheth him not. We know that we are of
20 God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one. And we
know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an
understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are
in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is
21 the true God, and eternal life. *My* little children, guard
yourselves from idols.

'all.' Every breach of duty towards our neighbour is 'sin,' i.e. violates God's will and law (cf. iii. 4).

18. **Sinneth not.** See on iii. 9.

He that was begotten of God. The Son of God, so distinguished from 'whosoever *is* begotten of God,' which means, any true Christian.

Toucheth. The translation is too weak. The word (*ἀρρεταί*) means 'clings to.' The evil one does not fasten on God's children.

19. **Lieth in the evil one.** Is under his dominion.

20. **An understanding.** The Son of God has not only revealed the Father (John i. 18), but He has also given us the power of coming more and more to understand Him, the true God, with Whom we are in union by virtue of our union with His Son.

This is the true God. The Being, of Whom we thus have knowledge and with Whom we are thus united, alone deserves the name of God (cf. v. 21).

Eternal life. Cf. John xvii. 3. 'And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.'

21. **Idols.** Those who know the *true* God cannot tolerate any *false* objects of worship.

THE SECOND EPISTLE
OF
JOHN

1-3. Greeting.

THE elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth; for the truth's sake which abideth in us, 2

1. **The elder.** So S. Peter, in a different connexion, calls himself 'a fellow-elder' (1 Pet. v. 1). The use of the word does not prove that the writer was not an Apostle, nor that he was the person known as 'John the elder' or 'John the presbyter' (see *Intr.* pp. 53-54). An Apostle may have used it because of his advanced age (such as S. John is said to have reached), or because 'of the peculiar relation, both official and fatherly, which' he 'had held to the Churches and their members' in the district in which he had long worked (Salmond¹). We may be sure at least that a forger, wishing to pass for an Apostle, would not have written thus.

The elect lady. Cf. v. 13 'Thine elect sister.' It is a much debated question whether the writer is addressing an individual or a community. On the whole the latter view is the more probable. There is a marked absence of personal references, such as we should expect in a private letter; and the fact that the lady's children are beloved by 'all that know the truth' (v. 1), coupled with the constant use of the plural (vv. 6, 8, 10, 12), in addressing her, seems to point in the same direction. Cf. 1 Pet. v. 13 'She that is in Babylon, elect together with you' (note).

2. **For the truth's sake.** I love you and them, because the truth has taken up its abode in you and them and me. Love is due to the possession of a common privilege.

¹ *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, ii. p. 740.

3 and it shall be with us for ever: Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4-11. Exhortation to continue in truth and love.

4 I rejoice greatly that I have found *certain* of thy children walking in truth, even as we received command-
5 ment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one
6 another. And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye
7 heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, *even* they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh.
8 This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought,
9 but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath

3. **Truth and love**, are the two ways in which the threefold blessing of God will show itself among them. They will (1) hold the right faith, (2) love God and one another.

4. **In truth, even as**. Exactly as.

5. **From the beginning**. See on 1 John ii. 7.

6. **In it**. In love. Love consists in following the various precepts ('commandments') which God has given us: the sum of all His precepts ('commandment') is that we should live a life of love.

7. Cf. 1 John iv. 1-3. The false teachers in both cases deny the Incarnation of the Son of God.

8. **That ye lose not the things which we have wrought**. That you do not forfeit all the good results of our teaching and labour among you.

9. **Goeth onward**. If we take this as the right translation of *πρὸς ἄνω*, it must mean that the deceivers were not contented with holding fast what Christ had taught them about Himself, but went far 'beyond the limits set to the Christian faith' (Westcott¹). But the R.V. margin 'taketh the lead' may be correct, and refer to their setting themselves up as leaders.

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 219.

not God : he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into *your* house, and give him no greeting : for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.

12, 13. Conclusion.

Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write them* with paper and ink : but I hope to come unto you, and to speak face to face, that your joy may be fulfilled. The children of thine elect sister salute thee.

Hath not God. Denies Him and is incapable of communion with Him. Cf. 1 John ii. 22, 23 (notes).

10. **Cometh**, in the guise of a teacher or even of a brother.

This teaching, of Christ (*v.* 9).

11. **Partaketh in his evil works.** Encourages him in his wicked ways, and becomes partly responsible for them.

12. **That your joy may be fulfilled**, by a clearer and fuller exposition of our faith. Cf. 1 John i. 3, 4 (note).

13. **The children of thine elect sister.** See on *v.* 1. If the view taken there be correct, these are the members of another Christian community, from which the Apostle is writing.

THE THIRD EPISTLE
OF
JOHN

1. Greeting.

1 **T**HE elder unto Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truth.

2-4. The writer rejoices that Gaius walks in the truth.

2 Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper
3 and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I
rejoiced greatly, when brethren came and bare witness
4 unto thy truth, even as thou walkest in truth. Greater

1. **The elder.** See on 2 John i.

Gaius. A very common name. S. Paul had three friends who bore it, Gaius of Macedonia (Acts xix. 29), Gaius of Derbe (Acts xx. 4), Gaius of Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23, 1 Cor. i. 14). The last named is called 'my host, and of the whole church,' and therefore possessed one of the qualities of the Gaius mentioned here (vv. 5, 6), but this is a slender ground for identification, and the traditions connected with S. John (if he wrote these Epistles) have to do with Asia rather than with Greece. S. John is said to have made a Gaius Bishop of Pergamum, but we have no other ground for thinking that the letter is addressed to him.

2. A prayer that the outward circumstances and bodily health of Gaius may correspond to his undoubted progress in the spiritual life.

3. **Thy truth.** The sincerity of your Christian faith and conduct.

Even as thou walkest in truth. For you really ('in truth') do live as you profess.

joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

5-8. The virtue of hospitality.

Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou 5 doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal; who bare witness to thy love before the church : whom 6 thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God : because that for the sake of the Name they 7 went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore 8 ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth.

9-12. Diotrephes and Demetrius.

I wrote somewhat unto the church : but Diotrephes, 9 who loveth to have the preeminence among them,

4. My children. A suggestion that Gaius owed his conversion to the writer, which is against identifying him with others of the same name mentioned in the New Testament.

5. A faithful work. A work which becomes a believer.

And strangers withal. And that too brethren personally unknown to you. A special ground for praise.

6. The church, from which this letter was written. Harnack suggests Ephesus.

Set forward on their journey. Not only speed, but help with the necessaries of life. Cf. Tit. iii. 13.

Worthily of God. As you are bound to treat men devoted to God's service.

7. For the sake of the Name they went forth. They started out on a mission to make known the Name of Christ. For a different view, see Intr. p. 57.

Taking nothing of the Gentiles. Not expecting the Gentiles, to whom they preached, to support them.

That we may be fellow-workers with the truth. Help to spread the truth which they proclaim.

9. I wrote somewhat. This previous letter on the same subject (addressed to the Church of which Gaius was a member) has been identified both with 1 John and 2 John. But the contents of those two Epistles make the identification impossible. The letter was disregarded, and has, in consequence, disappeared.

Diotrephes. Unknown (see Intr. pp. 57-58).

10 receiveth us not. Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words : and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth, and casteth *them* out of the church.

11 Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God : he that doeth evil

12 hath not seen God. Demetrius hath the witness of all *men*, and of the truth itself : yea, we also bear witness ; and thou knowest that our witness is true.

13, 14. Conclusion.

13 I had many things to write unto thee, but I am unwilling to write *them* to thee with ink and pen : but I hope shortly to see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace *be* unto thee. The friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name.

Receiveth us not. Disregards my authority, and refuses to countenance your action.

11. 'By their fruits ye shall know them' (Matt. vii. 20), as the opposing examples of Diotrephes and Demetrius show.

12. Demetrius, may have carried the letter, and so the writer wished to commend his messenger : or, more probably, he was a hospitable member of the Church, who opposed Diotrephes. See Intr. pp. 57-58.

Hath the witness. The character of Demetrius is attested by (a) the general opinion of Christians, (b) his own obvious sincerity, (c) the writer's commendation.

Thou knowest that our witness is true. Cf. John xix. 35, xxi. 24.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE

INTRODUCTION

THIS Epistle is mentioned in the earliest list of the books of the New Testament that we possess, the so-called Muratorian fragment (written circ. 175-200, and first published by the Italian scholar Muratori in 1740). It was undoubtedly well known by the end of the second century, for Tertullian (? 150-230) alludes to it, Clement of Alexandria (? 160-220) uses proof texts from it (Eus. *H. E.* vi. 13), and is even said to have written brief notes upon it (Eus. *H. E.* vi. 14), while Origen (185-253), though he hints at reluctance in some quarters to accept it, quotes it himself, and speaks of it as 'short indeed but filled full of words that have been strengthened with the heavenly grace' (*In Matt.* xvii. 30, x. 17). It seems certain that the greeting of *v.* 2 is used in a letter written by the Church of Smyrna to the Church of Philomelium in the year 155 or 156, describing the death of Polycarp, and it is just possible that there are reminiscences of the Epistle in *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (see above p. 1): e.g. in ch. ii. of *v.* 22 (where, unfortunately, the reading is doubtful), in ch. iv. of *v.* 8 ('dominion') and in ch. xvi. of *v.* 14 ('the Lord shall come and all his saints with him'). If this be so, the evidence for its existence is carried down at least to the beginning of the second century.

The general attitude of the Fathers towards it is well put by Eusebius, who says (*H. E.* ii. 23): 'At least not

many of the ancients have mentioned it' [the Epistle of S. James], 'as is the case likewise with the Epistle that bears the name of Jude, which is also one of the seven so-called Catholic Epistles. Nevertheless we know that these also, with the rest, have been read publicly in very many Churches.' And again (*H. E.* iii. 25): "Among the disputed writings, which are nevertheless recognized by most people, are extant the so-called Epistle of James and that of Jude.' We can well believe that the use made of Apocryphal Literature by Gnostic writers in the second century raised a prejudice in some minds against an Epistle which quotes two such documents; in fact, we have the express statement of Jerome (*De Vir. Ill.* iv.) that the Epistle of S. Jude was rejected by many precisely on the ground of its containing a reference to the Book of Enoch. With all due allowance for this prejudice, we may say that the attestation of the Epistle is early and good, and that, considering its length (it has only 25 verses), quotations from it, or reminiscences of its language, are not infrequent.

The author calls himself 'Judas, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James' (*v.* 1). The words 'brother of James' are an integral part of the title, and there is no reason why they should be regarded as a later addition: they indicate the writer as being, or as wishing to be thought, the brother of the Lord. But, in his humility, he does not insist on that relationship: if he asks that his words should be treated with respect, he does so in a humbler capacity, as brother of the bishop of Jerusalem. Now there is nothing in the letter inconsistent with the idea that the writer really is what he claims to be. The fact that he quotes two Apocryphal works, the Book of Enoch and the Assumption of Moses, is no evidence of a late date; for that part of the former which contains the phrase 'The Lord came with ten thousands of his holy

ones' dates, as Dr Charles¹ tells us, from the second century B.C., while the latter was probably composed between the years 7 and 29 A.D. If S. Paul, on more than one occasion (1 Cor. x. 4, Gal. iii. 19, 2 Tim. iii. 8), made use of traditions which do not occur in the Old Testament, there is no reason why S. Jude should not have quoted an Apocryphal book. Nor again is the situation described in the letter incompatible with the lifetime of the brethren of the Lord. Those against whom the author warns his readers are not described as if they were holders of a fully developed heretical system, such as we meet in later history. It is true that they deny 'our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ' (*v.* 4), but so did many people before 100 A.D. (Titus i. 16, see above p. 52). Moreover, most of the charges made against them turn, not on intellectual heresy, but on immorality of a gross, unnatural kind (*vv.* 4-7), insubordination (*vv.* 8-10), avarice (*v.* 11), abuse of the Love Feast (*v.* 12), separation from the company of the faithful (*v.* 16). Everyone of these abuses might be paralleled from the Churches to which S. Paul wrote in the middle of the first century. We can well conceive how S. Jude may have come to write this letter in the same century to Churches with which he was acquainted in Palestine or Syria, and which were in danger from the same errors.

The question of the relation of the Epistle of S. Jude to 2 Peter has been dealt with already (see above pp. 33-35), and reasons have been given why we should regard the latter as indebted to the former. We may add that, while it is easy to understand the epistle of S. Jude being incorporated with 2 Peter, it is not so easy to say why 2 Peter should be reduced to the proportions of the Epistle of S. Jude, in which a large part of it is unrepresented. A detailed study of the parallel passages

¹Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. pp. 705-708, 742, 745.

confirms us in the conclusion that the Epistle of S. Jude is the original.

Jude 6, 7 = 2 Pet. ii. 4, 6 (carnal sin of the angels omitted).

Jude 8, 9 = 2 Pet. ii. 10, 11 (story of Michael generalized).

Jude 10 = 2 Pet. ii. 12 (which seems an ill-arranged adaptation of Jude).

Jude 11 = 2 Pet. ii. 15, 16 (incident of Korah omitted, story of Balaam's ass added).

Jude 12, 13 = 2 Pet. ii. 13, 17 (startling word for 'hidden rocks' altered into more ordinary 'spots.' In 2 Pet. 'for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved' is not as appropriate to 'mists driven by a storm' as it is to 'wandering stars' in Jude).

Jude 14, 15 are without parallel in 2 Peter, as they contain a quotation from an Apocryphal book.

Jude 16 = 2 Pet. ii. 18 (no conclusion to be drawn).

Jude 17, 18 = 2 Pet. iii. 2, 3 (at first sight S. Jude seems to be referring to 2 Pet., but see note on Jude 18).

THE GENERAL EPISTLE
OF
JUDE

1, 2. Introduction and greeting.

JUDAS, 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.

1. **Brother of James.** The only Judas who elsewhere in the New Testament is said to have had a brother called James, is Judas the brother of the Lord (Matt. xiii. 55, Mark vi. 3). If he be the author of the Epistle, we must assume that his humility leads him to say nothing of this relationship, but to describe himself, just as S. Paul sometimes does (Rom. i. 1, Phil. i. 1), as 'a servant of Jesus Christ.' His kinship with the better known James, the head of the Church at Jerusalem, is enough to lend weight to his words, whether he is writing to Jewish or Gentile Christians. See *Intr.* pp. 82-83.

Beloved in God the Father. Closely united to the Father and beloved by Him.

Kept for Jesus Christ. Reserved as the special possession, the chosen people, of our Lord. The word 'kept' suggests a contrast with those 'ungodly men' (v. 4) who have broken away from the true faith.

2. **Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.** The same greeting appears in the letter written by the Church of Smyrna to that of Philomelium describing the martyrdom of Polycarp, in either 155 or 156 A.D. If that be a quotation, it throws some light on the date of the Epistle.

- 3, 4.** Purpose of the Epistle—to insist on the fundamental faith, in face of immoral teachers.
- 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
- 4** which was once for all delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in privily, *even* they who were of old set forth unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.
- 5-16.** Previous examples of sinners who have not escaped judgement. The special wickedness of these sinners and their certain doom.
- 5** Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, how that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward

3. While I was giving all diligence. He had been actively engaged on a letter dealing with the general principles of Christianity, but events compel him to write a special warning against a particular class of heretics.

Once for all. And therefore not to be changed, or mutilated, or denied.

The saints. The (consecrated) members of the Christian Church.

4. Of old. In Enoch i. 9 quoted in *vv.* 14, 15.

Set forth unto this condemnation. Described as doomed to the judgement of which I am going to tell you.

Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. Making the doctrine of God's grace (e.g. election and justification by faith) an excuse for scandalous immorality.

Denying our only Master and Lord. Cf. 2 Pet. ii. 1 'Denying even the Master that bought them.' They did this (a) by their behaviour, (b) by disbelieving His essential divinity.

5. To put you in remembrance, though ye know. So in 2 Pet. i. 12.

Once for all. They had learned the lessons of the past completely, and only needed just to be *reminded* of them now. (One good Manuscript connects the Greek word *ἀραξ* ('once') with 'having saved,' which gives better sense.)

destroyed them that believed not. And angels which 6 kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgement of the great day. Even as 7 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. Yet 8 in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities. But Michael the archangel, when contending with the 9 devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgement, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these rail at whatsoever things 10

Them that believed not. All except Joshua and Caleb (Numb. xiv. 38, 1 Cor. x. 5).

6 = 2 Pet. ii. 4.

Their own principality. The sphere of their own authority = heaven. The angels had come down to earth and been guilty of fornication with the 'daughters of men' (Gen. vi. 1-4): hence their punishment, fully related in Enoch (vi.-xxi.). 'This place is the prison of the angels, and here they will be imprisoned for ever' (xxi. 10).

7 = 2 Pet. ii. 6.

And the cities about them. Admah and Zeboim.

Strange flesh. Unnatural objects of lust (Gen. xix. 5).

8 = 2 Pet. ii. 10.

In their dreamings. Following their own perverse fancies, they are guilty of sensual indulgence and presumption.

Dominion. The sovereignty of God.

Dignities. The angelic orders.

9 = 2 Pet. ii. 11.

The story is taken from an Apocryphal Book known as *The Assumption of Moses*, in which Satan, the lord of matter, claims the body of Moses on the ground of his having murdered the Egyptian (Exod. ii. 12). Yet Michael, says S. Jude, will not retort by speaking evil even of a fallen angel: he leaves the sentence to God.

10. Whatsoever things they know not. They speak evil of the spiritual sphere (dominion, dignities *v.* 8), of which they are ignorant.

they know not : and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they
 11 destroyed. Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire,
 12 and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the
 13 roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of

What they understand naturally. Fleshly indulgence.

11. The way of Cain. Like Cain, the murderer (1 John iii. 12), they slay men's souls.

The error of Balaam. Cf. 2 Pet. ii. 15. Balaam was offered a bribe by Balak (Numbers xxii. 7), and he sinned in persuading the Israelites to commit whoredom at Baal-Peor (Numbers xxv. 1, 2, xxxi. 16). So the false teachers lead their victims into sensual sin.

The gainsaying of Korah, who denied the restriction of the priesthood to Aaron and his family (Numbers xvi. 1-10). So the false teachers set themselves up in opposition to the rulers of the Church.

12 = 2 Peter ii. 13, on which see notes.

Hidden rocks. If this be the right translation, it means that they are an unseen source of danger to those with whom they associate at the most sacred moments.

That without fear feed themselves, when they should be feeding their flocks (Ezek. xxxiv. 2).

Clouds without water. Cf. 2 Pet. ii. 17. We expect rain from clouds, and so we expect instruction from these teachers—and find none.

Autumn trees, which have lost their leaves and are sapless.

Twice dead. Not simply dead, but severed from their root, which is Christ.

13. Foaming out their own shame. Like restless waves, they toss up only the refuse which consists of presumptuous, blasphemous words (*vv.* 8, 16).

Wandering stars. S. Jude seems to be drawing his language from the Book of Enoch (lxxxviii. 1, ed. Charles). 'And he seized that first star which had fallen from the heaven, and bound it hand and foot, and laid it in an abyss: now that abyss was narrow and deep, and horrible and dark.' These irresponsible teachers give

darkness hath been reserved for ever. And to these also ¹⁴
 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying,
 Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy
 ones, to execute judgement upon all, and to convict all ¹⁵
 the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they
 have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which
 ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These, are ¹⁶
 murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts (and
 their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*), shewing
 respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

17-23. Call to Christians (*a*) to remember the warnings of
 the Apostles, (*b*) to build on the foundation of the faith,
 (*c*) to help others.

But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have ¹⁷
 been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus
 Christ; how that they said to you, In the last time there ¹⁸
 shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts.
 These are they who make separations, sensual, having ¹⁹
 no light as they should, and will meet with utter extinction. Cf.
 2 Pet. ii. 17.

14. To these also, as well as to the men of his own day.

The seventh from Adam. Reckoned inclusively. Gen. v. 18.

Saying. Enoch i. 9. The last sentence of the prophecy 'and
 of all the hard things...' is a reminiscence of Enoch xxvii. 2.

16. The teachers grumble against the authority of their true
 Master, but do not mind flattering human masters for the sake of
 gain.

Great swelling words. As in 2 Pet. ii. 18. Most of the
 phrases in this verse seem taken from the Assumption of Moses.

17. The apostles. As in 2 Pet. iii. 2, not necessarily the
 Twelve, but prominent Christian missionaries.

18 = 2 Pet. iii. 3. Those who hold that the Epistle of S. Jude
 is based upon 2 Pet. believe that S. Jude is here quoting directly
 from 2 Pet. S. Jude however is referring to a prophecy well
 known and apparently often repeated (the Greek for 'spoken
 before' is *ελεγον*), and it would be strange in him, if he were
 quoting from 2 Pet. iii., to leave out the most important part of that
 section, namely v. 4. For a similar prophecy, see 1 Tim. iv. 1.

**Mockers, who make fun of serious things, 'righteousness, and
 temperance, and the judgement to come.'**

19. Who make separations. Who cause divisions by with-
 drawing from the main body of the faithful.

20 not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves
 21 on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep
 yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of
 22 our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some
 23 have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching
 them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with
 fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24, 25. Final commendation and doxology.

24 Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling,
 and to set you before the presence of his glory without
 25 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.

• 20, 21. The Christian life contrasted with that of the false teachers. True Christians hold fast the faith, which the others reject: *they* have the Spirit as the inspiration of their prayers: *they* have God's love for them to preserve them: *they* (unlike the mockers), look for 'the crowning mercy' of Christ, the Second Coming which means eternal life.

22, 23. The original text is very uncertain here: 'some primitive error evidently affects the passage' (Westcott and Hort¹). The meaning given by the Revised translation seems to be: (1) Be gentle with those who are in doubt, (2) Rescue from the flame of temptation those who are in danger of falling, (3) Pity those who have fallen, but be afraid of being contaminated by them.

Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Show your loathing for 'all that bears traces of the sin' (Mayor²).

24. **Before the presence of his glory.** Before Him, in the glorious manifestation of His power at His Second Coming (1 Thess. i. 9, 10).

25. God the Father is asserted to be 'the only God' in opposition to the heathen who worshipped many Gods, and 'our Saviour' in opposition to the heretics who, rejecting the Law, tended also to reject the God who gave it. The last words affirm the pre-existence and eternity of Christ, whose mediatorial work began before time and lasts for ever.

¹ *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1896, Appendix, p. 107.

² *Op. cit.* p. 51.

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