

# CHAPTER 3

## INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER 3

In this chapter the apostle instructs wives how to behave towards their husbands, and husbands how to behave towards their wives; and then exhorts to various things common to all Christians, and particularly to suffer patiently for righteousness sake; to which he encourages them from the sufferings of Christ, and the benefits resulting from them, on which he enlarges to the end of the chapter. He begins with the duty of wives to their husbands, even unbelieving ones, which is subjection to them, urged from the profitable effect of it; since hereby they might be won over to the Christian religion, without the use of the word, as a means, by their conversation, which is explained of chastity and fear, (<sup><ARB></sup>1 Peter 3:1,2). And he proceeds to give some advice about their apparel, that they should have a greater regard to internal ornaments; particularly meekness and quietness of spirit, which is highly esteemed of by God, rather than to outward adorning; and which he enforces by the examples of godly women in former times, who were so adorned, and were subject to their husbands, particularly Sarah, the wife of Abraham, (<sup><ARB></sup>1 Peter 3:3-6). And next the apostle directs husbands how to conduct towards their wives, to dwell with them, and honour them, because vessels, and weaker vessels, and also heirs of the same grace of life; and besides, to use them ill would be an hinderance of their praying together, (<sup><ARB></sup>1 Peter 3:7). And then follow various exhortations to unity of judgment, compassion, brotherly love, pity, courteousness, and patience under the reproaches and revilings of men, which is the way to inherit a blessing they are called unto, (<sup><ARB></sup>1 Peter 3:8,9) and that these are incumbent on the saints, and that they shall be blessed, who are helped to regard them, is proved by some passages out of (<sup><SB42></sup>Psalm 34:12-16), which passages are cited, (<sup><ARB></sup>1 Peter 3:10-12). And in order to encourage to the exercise of the above things, the apostle suggests, that they that so behaved should not be hurt by any; and if they did suffer for righteousness sake from wicked men, yet still they would be happy; nor should this deter them from making a public confession of their faith; to which should be added a good conscience and conversation, to the shame and confusion of them that spoke evil of them, and accused them,

(~~4183~~ 1 Peter 3:13-16). And though they were distressed and injured by men, they should not be cast down, nor murmur, since it was the will of God it should be so; and since it was better to suffer for doing well than for doing ill; and especially the example of Christ should animate to patience, since he, an innocent person, suffered for the sins of unjust men, to reconcile them to God; and he is now glorified and happy, and so will his people be, (~~4187~~ 1 Peter 3:17,18). And having made mention of his being quickened by the Spirit, the apostle takes occasion from hence of observing, that by the same Spirit Christ preached in the times of Noah to disobedient persons, whose spirits were now in hell; and he takes notice of the longsuffering of God in that dispensation towards them, and of the goodness of God in saving Noah, and his family, in the ark, which was a figure of baptism; of which some account is given what it is, and is not, and which saves by the resurrection of Christ, (~~4189~~ 1 Peter 3:19-21) who is described by his ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, and dominion over angels, authorities, and powers, (~~4192~~ 1 Peter 3:22).

**Ver. 1.** *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands*, etc.] As well as subjects to princes, and servants to masters; though not with the same sort of subjection, but what is suitable to the relation they stand in to their husbands; (see Gill on “~~4192~~ Ephesians 5:22”). (See Gill on “~~5188~~ Colossians 3:18”).

*that if any obey not the word*; any husband who is an unbeliever, has no love for the Gospel, and gives no credit to it, but despises, disbelieves, and rejects it, the word of truth, of faith, of righteousness, reconciliation, and salvation. The apostle, though he includes all wives, and exhorts them in general to subjection to their own husbands, yet has a particular regard to such as had unbelieving husbands, and who, on that account, were scrupulous of living with them, and of being in subjection to them; and therefore, as the Apostle Paul also did, he advises them to abide with them, and behave well to them, using much the same argument as he does in (~~4170~~ 1 Corinthians 7:10,13,16).

*they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives*; for though the ordinary way and means of conversion is the word, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word; yet it may be sometimes done without it; or however by the agreeable conversation of professors, and so of religious wives, the hearts of such as were averse to Christianity, and the Gospel, as unbelieving husbands, may be so softened, and wrought upon,

as to entertain a better opinion of it, and in process of time be inclined to hear and attend it; the consequence of which may prove their conversion, which is a gaming, or winning of souls; and which, as it is for their good, is for the glory of Christ; for as every soul that is delivered from the power of darkness, and is translated into the kingdom of Christ, is a loss to Satan, it is a gain to Christ, and to his church. The Syriac version, instead of “without the word”, reads, “without labour”; as if the winning of unbelieving husbands was easily obtained by the conversation of their wives.

**Ver. 2.** *While they behold your chaste conversation*, etc.] Cheerful subjection, strong affection, and inviolable attachment to them, and strict regard to the honour of the marriage state, and to the preserving of the bed undefiled with lusts and adulteries:

*coupled with fear*; with reverence of their husbands, giving them due honour, and showing all proper respect; or with the fear of God, which being before their eyes, and upon their hearts, engages them to such an agreeable conversation.

**Ver. 3.** *Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning*, etc.] Or that only and principally; let not that be solely or chiefly attended to, nor anxiously sought after, nor ever in order to allure and ensnare others, or to fill with pride and vanity; nor should it be indecent and luxurious, immodest and immoderate, and unsuitable to the age, character, and station of persons; otherwise clothing is both convenient and necessary; and a decent garb, neat and modest apparel, and what is suitable to the years, rank, and quality of persons, is very commendable: nor are we to suppose that the apostle forbids the use of what follows, but only when used in a luxurious and extravagant manner, and to feed pride and vanity, and encourage, lasciviousness and wantonness:

*of plaiting the hair*; folding it up in curls, tying it up in knots, and putting it into the form of horns and towers, made by their crimping pins, with their cauls and round tires, like the moon, as was the custom of those times, and still is. There were women among the Jews, whose business it was to plait women's hair; Mary Magdalene is thought to have her name from thence, and that to be her business. The Jews often speak of one Miriam or Mary, by whom they seem to mean the mother of our Lord, who, they say<sup>f64</sup> was

ayyçn r [yç al dgm, “a plaiter of women's hair”; (see Gill on “<sup>4175</sup>Matthew 27:56”).

*And of wearing of gold;* or “golden things”; golden ornaments, as bracelets, chains, and rings, or pieces of gold stuck in the plaitings and folds of the hair. The Jewish women used to wear a crown of gold on their head, in the form of the city of Jerusalem, called a golden city <sup>f65</sup>; and which they wore, after its destruction, in memory of it; but with those they might not go out on a sabbath day. R. Akibah, it is said <sup>f66</sup>, made a golden city for his wife, and the wife of Rabban Gamaliel envied her, for it seems this was reckoned a grand dress. Not that the sense is, that every thing of this kind is forbidden, but when used to excess and extravagance; otherwise the daughters of Abraham and Sarah were decked with ear rings, bracelets, and jewels of gold; (see <sup>4122</sup>Genesis 24:22,30,47,53).

*or of putting on of apparel;* that is “excellent”, or precious, as the Syriac version adds; or “of great price”, as the Ethiopic; that is beyond a person's ability or rank; the apostle means such apparel as is unbecoming and unsuitable, for he cannot be thought to forbid the putting on of any apparel; but his sense is, that women should not so much regard, and be so intent upon the outward adorning of their bodies, with any sort of clothing, and especially such as does not become them, as the inward adorning of their minds, next mentioned;

**Ver. 4.** *But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart,* etc.] By which is meant internal grace; which gives a beauty and ornament to the soul, far preferable to that which plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold, or any costly apparel, can give to the body: and this is called a man, as it is elsewhere the new man, (<sup>4104</sup>Ephesians 4:24) because it has that which answers to what is in man, to his soul, and the powers and faculties of it: this man, or new creature, has a new heart and Spirit; it has a will to that which is spiritually good, and an understanding of divine things, and affections for Christ, for his Gospel, ordinances, ways, and people, and for things above: it has what answers to all the five senses; there is in it a seeing of the Son of God in the glories of his person and the fulness of his grace, and of the invisible things of another world; an hearing of the word, of the voice of Christ, so as to understand it, and live, and to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; a smelling a sweet savour in the things of God, and of his Spirit, and in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; a tasting that the Lord is gracious, his fruits pleasant, and his word sweeter than the honey, or the

honeycomb; and a feeling of the burden of sin, an handling of the word of life, a laying hold on Christ, and retaining him: and it has what answers to the parts and members of the body; it has eyes to see with, ears to hear with, hands to receive from Christ, and work with, to his glory, and feet to walk with: it has, in short, all the parts of a man, though these are not yet grown up to perfection; and so that is not yet a perfect man, or arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; but a man it is: and “a man of the heart”; it has its seat there; it is an inward principle in the soul; hence it is called the “inner” and “inward man”; and nothing outward is it, as external humiliation for sin, abstinence from it, reformation of life and manners, a profession of religion, and conformity to Gospel ordinances; but it is something inward, as appears from its names, both here and elsewhere; it is called spirit, seed, the root of the matter, and oil in the vessels; and from the seat and subject of it, the heart, the spirit, the understanding and will, the mind, conscience, and affections: and it is the “hidden man”; it is wisdom in the hidden part; it is hidden from the men of the world; they do not know what it is, nor what it means, nor how it is, or can be; the life of it is hidden from them, and the food it lives upon is hidden manna to them, and so are both its joys and sorrows: it is sometimes hidden from the saints themselves; when they walk in darkness, and see no light, they are at a loss to know whether this principle is in them or not; and it is hidden from other believers, till they give an account of it to them, when by comparing it with the word of God, and their own experience, they perceive it is the grace of God in them; and it is hidden from Satan, it is out of his reach, he cannot touch it; though he can touch the old man, and stir up the corruptions of it, yet he cannot touch the new man, that which is born of God, nor hurt or destroy it; but it is not hidden from God; he sees it where men cannot, being covered with a variety of infirmities and sins, and knows it is not where men sometimes think it is. The nature of this hidden man is further expressed by what follows,

*in that which is not corruptible*; it is opposed to corruptible things, as the outward adorning consists of, such as plaited hair, silver and gold, golden chains, rings, etc. and costly apparel; nor is it corrupt in itself; the old man is corrupt according to its deceitful lusts, but this new man, the hidden man of the heart, has no corruption in it, nor cleaving to it: it is the workmanship of God, and is created in righteousness and holiness; though it is as yet imperfect, there is nothing impure in it; nor can it ever perish, or

be lost; it is an incorruptible seed, and will always remain when gold will perish, and the best of garments be moth eaten, and decay:

*[even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit*; this is one, and a principal part of the inward adorning, or hidden man of the heart; and those that are possessed of such a spirit are not easily provoked to anger; patiently bear, and put up with injuries; carry themselves affably and courteously unto all; entertain the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; do not envy the gifts and graces of others, and are willing to be instructed and admonished by the meanest saint; quietly submit to the will of God, in all adverse dispensations of Providence; and ascribe all they have, and are, to the free grace of God, and reckon that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants. This grace of meekness, humility, and quietness, is a fruit of the Spirit, and so a part of the hidden man, and is what is very ornamental to a believer; it is his clothing, his inward adorning, and what makes him lovely in the sight of God, and of his people; (see ~~CHR~~ 1 Peter 5:5) and it is very useful to him in hearing the word, in giving a reason of the hope that is in him, in restoring others, and in showing forth a good conversation; and particularly it greatly becomes, and exceedingly beautifies women professing godliness; who ought to bear much with their husbands, and be in silence, which is what the apostle has a principal regard unto: and to encourage the more to the exercise of it, adds,

*which is in the sight of God of great price*; which may refer to the whole adorning, to the hidden man of the heart, which is incorruptible, in opposition to the outward adorning, which may be esteemed by men, and be precious in their sight; and particularly to the ornament of meekness and quietness of spirit; for God has a great regard to the meek, humble, and quiet souls; he lifts them up, when cast down; he causes glad tidings to be preached to them; he increases their joy in the Lord; he feeds them, when hungry, to their satisfaction; he guides them in judgment, and teaches them his ways; he will rise up in judgment for them, and reprove with equity for their sake; he gives more grace unto them, and beautifies them with salvation, and will cause them to inherit the earth.

**Ver. 5.** *For after this manner in the old time*, etc.] In ages past, the years of many generations, since the time that God created man upon earth; in the times before the flood, and after it; in the times of the patriarchs, judges, kings, and prophets of Israel, under the Old Testament

dispensation. The apostle exhorts and encourages to this inward dress and ornament, from the antiquity of it: for in this way, and after this fashion,

*the holy women also*: who were sanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations, such as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Ruth, Hannah, and others:

*who trusted in God*; that he would send the Messiah, and make good all his promises, judging and believing him to be faithful to his word, and able to fulfil whatever he had promised, as Sarah, (<sup><38111></sup>Hebrews 11:11). Such holy and believing women as these are worthy of imitation in their adorning and dress, and who, in the manner before described by the apostle, adorned themselves; or this was the adorning which they sought after, valued, and chiefly regarded; not what was external, but internal: and which lay in meekness and humility, and in a quiet deportment, and in

*being in subjection unto their own husbands*; according to their original make, and natural relation, and the laws of God, and of creation; which is more becoming and adorning than plaiting of hair, wearing of gold, or costly raiment, and recommends them more, both in the sight of God and men; nothing being a more indecent and uncomely sight than a woman not in subjection to her husband.

**Ver. 6.** *Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham*, etc.] Going along with him wherever he went, as from Chaldea to Canaan, and into Egypt, and the land of the Philistines, saying the words he put into her mouth, (<sup><0125></sup>Genesis 12:5,11,13) and doing the things he bid her do, (<sup><0186></sup>Genesis 18:6) “calling him lord”; or “my lord”, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, and as it appears she did from (<sup><0182></sup>Genesis 18:12). The Jews use this instance to the same purpose the apostle does, saying <sup>f67</sup>,

“the wife ought to take care of the family, to educate her children, to serve and minister to her husband in all things, “calling him her own lord”; which is what we learn from the example of Sarah, who called Abraham her lord, saying, “my lord is old”.”

*Whose daughters ye are*; meaning not by natural descent, though they were, these being Jews the apostle writes to, but by grace, and in a spiritual sense; just as those are the children of Abraham, who walk in the steps of his faith, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; so such are the daughters of Sarah, the children of the free woman, who imitate her in faith and obedience; that is, they appear, and are declared to be so:

*as long as ye do well*: do acts of beneficence and hospitality to strangers, and proper objects, as Sarah did, and all and every good work, according to the will of God, from love, and in faith, and with a view to his glory; and particularly obey and live in subjection to their husbands, as she did: and are not afraid with any amazement; are not deterred from doing well, nor scared by the terrors and menaces of wicked men, either their own husbands, or others; or who with fortitude and intrepidity of mind continue in the discharge of their duty to God and men, and particularly to their husbands, following them, and obeying their lawful commands, as Sarah did in Egypt, and in Gerar, though she exposed herself to great danger: this is said, because women are timorous, and apt to be frightened at everything, from the performance of their duty.

**Ver. 7.** *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them*, etc.] “With your wives”, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; which not only included dwelling together in the same house, and bedding together in the same bed, but the whole of conjugal conversation, and all the offices and duties incumbent on men in a married state:

*according to knowledge*; of themselves, and their wives, and the duties belonging to the conjugal state, and the laws of God and man respecting it; and according to their knowledge of the Gospel, and the Christian dispensation, which no ways breaks in upon, but strengthens and encourages to the observance of things belonging to natural religion, and civil life; and according to that superior knowledge of things, which, generally speaking, men have to women; as also wisely, prudently, becoming their characters as men and Christians:

*particularly giving honour to the wife*; by speaking well of her, and respectfully to her, and by deeds as well as words; not only by clothing her in a decent and becoming manner, suitable to her station; but by providing everything honest and comely for her, food and raiment, a suitable maintenance, all the necessaries, conveniences, and delights of life, that are laudable and proper; in which sense the word honour is used in (<sup>54RB-1</sup> Timothy 5:3,17) and this was agreeably to the doctrine of the Jews <sup>f68</sup>, who say,

“let a man always take care *wtçā dwbkb*, “of the glory of his wife”; for there is no blessing found in a man’s house, but for the sake of his wife, as it is said, (<sup>0126</sup>Genesis 12:16) “and he entreated

Abraham well for her sake”: and Rabba used to say to the citizens, **wkyçnl wryqwa**, “honour your wives”, that ye may be rich.”

And indeed this is what they promised in their marriage contract, which runs thus <sup>f69</sup>:

“be thou unto me for a wife, according to the law of Moses and Israel, and I, by the word of heaven, or God, will worship, **ryqwaw**, “and honour”, and nourish, and take care of thee, according to the custom of the Jews, who worship, and “honour”, and nourish, and take care of their wives.”

*As unto the weaker vessel*; so in (Th 4:4) the wife is called a vessel, (see Gill on “~~304~~1 Thessalonians 4:4”), and here “the weaker”; being so for the most part, both as to strength of body, and endowments of mind; and therefore to be used gently and tenderly, and not be treated with neglect and contempt, or with inhumanity and severity; but as, in every state and condition, the strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak; so a man should bear with, and accommodate himself to the infirmities of his wife, and hide them as much as he can, and not expose them, nor despise her on account of them. It is a saying of the Jews <sup>f70</sup>,

“if thy wife be short of stature, bow thyself, and whisper to her.”

The meaning of the proverb is, that he ought to suit himself to her capacity and weakness:

*and as being heirs together of the grace of life*; not of a natural life, and the good things of it; though husbands and wives partake of the same kind of life, and have a right unto, and share in the same necessaries of life; so Adam and Eve were partakers of the same life, and sharers of the same benefits; and which is a reason indeed why they ought to live lovingly together: but something more is intended; not the external gifts of the Spirit, which, unless in some few instances, are bestowed on men, and not on women; nor the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which are the means of grace and life; though men and women, called by grace, have an equal right to them, and enjoy them; (see ~~418~~Galatians 3:28) but grace here, and glory hereafter, are here meant. Some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, read, “heirs together of the manifold grace of life”; God's own people, without any difference as to sex, as men and women, equally share in grace, as it signifies the love and favour of God; which is the same to all

the objects, as to the date of it, which is from everlasting, one not being loved before another; and as to the quality of it, which is free, sovereign, special, discriminating and unchangeable, one being loved not with one sort of love, another with another; and as to the quantity of it, it not admitting of more or less; and as to the duration, which is for ever: and so they are heirs of it, as it denotes the blessings of grace; being equally heirs of, and sharers in electing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace: and as it may intend the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love; which as to their principles are the same in all the saints, though different as to the degree of the exercise of them: and which may be called “the grace of life”; or “living grace”, as some copies and the Complutensian edition read, and so the Arabic version, because by it men and women, who were dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened; and in distinction to counterfeit grace, which differs as much from true grace, as the picture of a man from a living man; and because it lives for ever, and never dies, and gives a meetness for eternal life, which it springs up to, issues in, and is inseparably connected with. Moreover, by it may be meant eternal life and salvation, of which the saints, without any difference as to sex, are heirs of: so some copies read, “heirs of manifold grace, and life”; by the former, meaning grace here, and by the latter, glory hereafter; which is a life of vision of God, and uninterrupted communion with him; of perfection and pleasure, and which will last for ever; and may be called

*the grace of life*, because it is the free gift of God's grace: and agreeably the Syriac version renders it, “the gift of eternal life”; and the Ethiopic version, glorious life: and this is represented as an inheritance, being what belongs only to the children; and which they have not by their own works, as an acquisition of theirs, but by the free grace of their heavenly Father, and as his gift and bequest unto them. Now all the saints, of whatever state, condition, or sex, are equally heirs of this inheritance; for there is but one inheritance, one kingdom, one crown of glory, which all shall enjoy; and whatever disparity there may be, particularly between husband and wife, in their natural relation, there is none in the things of grace, and with regard to the kingdom of glory; and which is an argument why husbands should dwell peaceably and comfortably with their wives, and give all due honour to them, since they are upon a par in spiritual things, there being neither male nor female in Christ Jesus, and because they are now joint heirs of, and shall equally share in eternal life and happiness.

*That your prayers be not hindered:* as they would be were they not to dwell together; or should not the husband give honour to his wife, and take care of her as he ought to do: hence would arise strifes and quarrels, when they could not cordially, and to edification, join together in prayer; nor would such prayers, put up in wrath, be acceptable unto God, who requires that men should lift up holy hands everywhere, whether in public, or in private, in God's house, or in their own houses, without wrath and doubting. From hence we may observe, that family prayer is a duty incumbent on professors of religion, and great care should be taken that it be not neglected and hindered.

**Ver. 8.** *Finally, be ye all of one mind,* etc.] Not that the apostle was about to conclude his epistle; but having finished his exhortations respecting the obedience of subjects to magistrates, and of servants to their masters, and the duties incumbent on husbands and wives, he proceeds to sum up what he had further to say, in general rules; which regarded all sorts of Christians, magistrates and subjects, masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children, old and young, rich and poor, of whatsoever state, age, sex, or condition; and so the Arabic version renders it, “the sum of the commandment is”; and the Ethiopic version, “the sum of all is this”; namely, what follows; “be ye all of one mind”; whatever difference there might be in their natural and civil relation and character; and which is to be understood not of the sameness of affection to one another, or of an humble and condescending spirit, disposition, and carriage to each other, for these are expressed in some following exhortations; but of sameness of judgment with respect to the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, in which saints should be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; for as the church is but one body, of which Christ is the head, there should be but one mind in it; even as there is but one Spirit of God, who convinces, enlightens, and leads into truth; and but one heart and way, given to fear the Lord; and there is but one hope of our calling, or to which we are called; and one way to it, and therefore ought to agree in everything respecting the way, the truth, and the life; though in things which do not, should bear with one another; and there is but one Lord, who gives the same laws and ordinances to one as to another, and which are to be kept alike by all; and there is but one faith, one doctrine of faith, which is uniform and all of a piece, and but one rule and standard of faith, the sacred Scriptures, and but one baptism, to be administered in the same way, and upon the same sort of subjects, and in the same name of the

Father, Son, and Spirit; and but one God and Father of all; all belong to the same family, and therefore should preserve a unity of spirit and mind, and speak the same things; which is necessary to carry on the worship of God, honourably and regularly, to the glorifying of him, and for the peace, comfort, and safety of the churches of Christ:

*having compassion one of another*; or sympathizing with each other, both in prosperity and adversity, whether in temporal or spiritual things; rejoicing with them that rejoice in Christ, make their boast of him, and have communion with him, and who are also blessed with health of body, and a competency of the good things of this life; and weeping with them that weep for the loss of goods, relations, etc. and being in bonds and afflictions; or because of sin, the absence of Christ, and the temptations of Satan; and being concerned also for such who are fallen into immorality, or error, and heresy; endeavouring to restore them out of the one or the other, in a spirit of meekness and tenderness: to all which they should be engaged by the example of Christ, the sympathizing high priest; by the consideration of the divine compassion to them, both in a providential way, and in a way of grace; and on account of their union and relation to each other, as members of the same body:

*love as brethren*; not in a natural and civil, but in a spiritual relation, being children of God, and brethren of Christ, and in a Gospel church state; and whose love to each other ought to be universal, fervent, without dissimulation, and as Christ has loved them; and which should show itself in praying for each other, in bearing one another's burdens, in forgiving each other, in admonishing in love, and building up one another on their most holy faith, and communicating to each other both in temporals and spirituals: and of a very excellent nature is it; it is the bond of perfectness, and evidence of regeneration; the glory and ornament of a profession, and without which it is nothing; and what renders the communion of the saints with each other pleasant and profitable, comfortable to themselves, and honourable in the eyes of others; and to which they should be induced from the consideration of the love of God and Christ unto them, and from their relation to each other, as brethren:

*be pitiful*; to those that are in distress; put on bowels of mercy, and relieve and succour them, distributing cheerfully to their necessities:

*be courteous*; gentle and affable, carrying it friendly to one another, seeking those things which may be most agreeable to each other, shunning

all moroseness, stiffness, and incivility. The Vulgate Latin version renders it by two words, “modest, humble”: not proud, haughty, and overbearing, but condescending to each other, and to men of low estates; and so the Syriac version renders it, “kind and meek”.

**Ver. 9.** *Not rendering evil for evil*, etc.] Doing an ill thing in return to one that has done ill to you, and in a way of revenge for it; which is contrary to what is before advised to, and which is taking God's prerogative and work out of his hands, whose vengeance is, and which is to be overcome of evil:

*or railing for railing*; returning ill language to such as have given it, but rather should imitate Christ, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, (<sup>(4123)</sup>1 Peter 2:23) and whose advice is, instead of returning injuries, blows, or words, to turn to him that smites on the right cheek the other also and to bless them that curse, do good to them that hate, and pray for them that persecute, (<sup>(4123)</sup>Matthew 5:39,44) and which is here directed to:

*but contrariwise blessing*; praying for a blessing on them; for if we are to do so for our enemies, for them that hate us, despitefully use and persecute us, as did Christ, Stephen the protomartyr, and the apostles, then much more our fellow Christians who may do us an injury or speak evil of us, or to us: who seem to be chiefly intended: the argument to persuade to it follows,

*knowing that ye are thereunto called*; referring either to what goes before being called by grace to the discharge of all the above duties exhorted to, and particularly to suffer patiently all injuries and affronts; and instead of making returns in the same way, to bless and pray for those that have hurt us, either by words or deeds; (see Pe 2:20,21) or to what follows, that ye should inherit a blessing; temporal blessing or blessings; for godliness has the promise of this life and godly persons shall not want any good thing; and even while the blessings of others are cursed they have their outward mercies with a blessing, and they are blessings indeed to them; wherefore, the little they may have is better than the large affluence of others: and also spiritual blessing, or blessings; such as peace of conscience, the pardon of all their sins a justifying righteousness adopting grace, all supplies of grace from Christ, his presence and communion with him: and also an eternal one, even life for evermore; called so, because it springs from the free favour, good will, and blessing of God, and which its being an inheritance also shows; and because such that enjoy it are eternally and unspeakably happy.

**Ver. 10.** *For he that will love life,* etc.] This, with what follows here and in the two next verses, are taken out of (<sup><13812></sup>Psalm 34:12-16) and are produced as a proof of what is before said; that it is a good man's duty not to do or speak evil in return for what is done or said to him; but on the contrary, it becomes him to avoid evil, do good, and seek peace as much as possible, and leave it with a righteous God to vindicate him and his cause, who will not fail to do it; and that such shall inherit the blessing both here and hereafter: in the psalm, these words are put by way of question, “what man is he that desireth life?” that wills it with pleasure, that loves it with a love of complacency and delight? and which is to be understood, not of natural life; for what man is there that do not love that? love of a natural life is natural to men; it is a first principle in nature to desire life, and a preservation of it, and to a great length; a man will give all that he has for it, as Satan said, (<sup><8114></sup>Job 2:4), but both of a spiritual life, a life of faith on Christ, communion with him, and holiness from him; the life of God, or to live soberly, righteously, and godly, which carnal men are alienated from, and enemies to, and cannot desire, only spiritual men; and of an eternal one; and so some of the Jewish interpreters <sup>f71</sup> understand by life and good days, in the psalm, such as are both in this world, and in that which is to come:

*and see good days;* not the days of this life, which are evil, even the days of a good man, (<sup><1479></sup>Genesis 47:9) and the more so, the longer he lives; for the days of old age are evil days, in which there is no pleasure, (<sup><2111></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:1), unless such days are meant, in which much good is done to the honour and glory of God, and in which gracious souls enjoy much of God, and see and taste of his grace and goodness in the land of the living; though, rather, the good days of eternity, even length of days for ever and ever, which holy men of God shall see, and enjoy in the other world, when they shall be possessed of fulness of joy, and of pleasure for evermore: in the psalm it is, “and loveth [many] days, that he may see good”; desires a blessed eternity of good things:

*let him refrain his tongue from evil;* bridle that unruly member, which has a world of iniquity in it; let him keep it as with a bit, from the vices incident to it; from all obscene words, filthy and corrupt communication, whatever is unsavoury and unedifying; from lying, cursing, swearing, and particularly from railing and evil speaking, in return for such language, which is chiefly meant; as well as from belching out blasphemies against God, and damnable heresies among men; for whoever would be thought a religious

man, and lays no restraint on his tongue, his religion is a vain thing, (~~SOLES~~ James 1:26) and his lips that they speak no guile; as flatterers do, who speak that with their mouth which does not agree with their heart, and so beguile and deceive persons; and as false teachers, who use dishonest arts, walk in craftiness, handle the word of God deceitfully, use ambiguous phrases, and words of double meaning, and with their good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple but such things do not become persons that seek for glory, honour, and immortality; that profess to be Israelites indeed; in these guile should not be found in their lips, nor in their lives.

**Ver. 11.** *Let him eschew evil*, etc.] Avoid all kinds of evil, hate it, abstain from the appearance of it, and have no fellowship with it; and particularly should avoid rendering evil for evil, or taking revenge on persons for doing him ill:

*and do good*; everything that is good, all good works, according to the will of God, in the exercise of faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; and without trusting to them, and depending upon them for life and salvation; and particularly do good for evil; do good to all men, acts of kindness and beneficence, even to enemies, and especially to them that are of the household of faith. The Jewish interpreters<sup>172</sup> on the psalm from whence these words are taken observe, that in the first of these clauses are contained all the negative precepts, whose number with them is three hundred, sixty, and five; and in the latter of them, all the affirmative precepts, which amount to two hundred and forty eight:

*let him seek peace and ensue it*: “or pursue it”; let him seek after it, in the world, and with all men, as much as possible, yea, with his very enemies; and live a peaceable and quiet life, in the kingdom, city, town, and neighbourhood where he is; and particularly in the church of God, and with the saints; which he should seek with all diligence and eagerness, and pursue with all rigour to the utmost of his power; and endeavour to cultivate all he can, and follow the things which make for it. The note of one of the Jewish commentators<sup>173</sup> on this passage is, “seek peace”, in thine own place; “and pursue it”, in another place.

**Ver. 12.** *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous*, etc.] Who are so not merely in the sight of men, but of God; nor in their own account, and by their own works, but in the esteem of God, through the imputation of the righteousness of his Son unto them: and because he loves this

righteousness, and is well pleased with it, seeing by it his law is magnified and made honourable, therefore his countenance beholds with pleasure and delight those righteous ones who are clothed with it; his eyes of omniscience, love, care, and protection, are always upon them, watching over them, delighting in them, running to and fro in the earth on behalf of them; he sees every injury done them, and in his own time and way will do them justice; which is a reason why they should not take vengeance themselves, but leave it with him, whose it is:

*and his ears are open to their prayers*; or “prayer”; in the Hebrew text, “to their cry”; he is a God hearing prayer, and his righteous ones have his ear; he hears them while they are speaking, and will sooner or later answer, and avenge his elect, who cry unto him day and night; for as he has an ear to hear their cries, which is not heavy, he has an arm to save them, which is not shortened; and this is another reason why they should behave as before directed, and which is still strengthened by what follows;

*but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*; it is added in the psalm, “to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth”: by “the face of the Lord” is meant, as the Jewish writers<sup>f74</sup> interpret it, the anger of the Lord; it intends, not his kind, pleasant, and loving countenance, but his angry one with the former he beholds the upright, and with it he looks upon his righteous ones; but the latter is upon and against the wicked, and is dreadful and intolerable, and the consequence of it is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

**Ver. 13.** *And who is he that will harm you*, etc.] Or “can harm you”. God will not; for his eyes are upon the righteous, to protect and defend them, and, his ears are open to their cries, to avenge them; he is on their side, and he is the only lawgiver that is able to save, and to destroy. Christ will not; for when he came the first time, it was not to condemn, but to save; and when he comes a second time, though he will rule the wicked with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter’s vessel; yet his people, who are his jewels, he will spare, as a man spares his only son. Good angels will not; these rejoice at the conversion, and in the salvation of sinful men, encamp about the saints, and are ministering spirits to them: nor the devil; though he would devour, he cannot; for greater is he that is in the saints, than he that is in the world: nor can sin; for though it wars against them, it shall not have the dominion over them; and though it often breaks in upon

their peace and comfort, it cannot damn and destroy their souls: nor the law; for though it pronounces guilty, and curses those that are under it, and are of the works of it, yet since Christ has fulfilled it for his people, by obeying its precepts, and bearing its penalty, the curse, it lies not against them, nor can it inflict any punishment on them: nor the men of the world; who hate and persecute the saints; these can do them no real harm; they cannot hurt their grace, which shines the brighter, being tried and proved in the furnace of affliction; they cannot destroy their peace and comfort by all the trouble they give them; all the harm they can do them is to their bodies; they can do none to their souls; and even all the evil things they do to their bodies work together for their good; and they must be very wicked men that will do harm in any respect to such as behave well in states, cities, towns, or neighbourhoods:

*if ye be followers of that which is good*; of God, who is essentially, originally, and infinitely good, and does good to all his creatures, by imitating him in holiness and righteousness, in kindness, mercy, and beneficence; and of Christ, the good Shepherd, following him in the exercise of grace, as of humility, love, patience, etc. and in the discharge of duty; and of good men, the apostles of Christ, the first churches, faithful ministers, and all such who through faith and patience have inherited the promises, and that both in doctrine and practice; and of all good things, whatever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, particularly righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, read, “zealots”, or “zealous of good”; of good works, as in (<sup>3124</sup>Titus 2:14) and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

**Ver. 14.** *But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake*, etc.] For the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which was the great stumbling block to the Jews, and on account of which they persecuted the Christians; it being not after man, nor according to the carnal reason of men, and was contrary to the method they had fixed on, and what excluded boasting in them, and was thought to be a licentious doctrine; and for a righteous cause, for professing Christ and his Gospel; for vindicating both which, whoever did must expect to suffer persecution; and also for living soberly, righteously, and godly; for by a religious life and conversation the saints are separated from the world, and are distinguished from them, which in effect sets a mark of infamy and reproach upon them; and saints, by an agreeable life, reprove others, and condemn them; all which irritate

and provoke them to hate and persecute them: now these words prevent an objection that might be made to what is before said; that none can, or will harm such as are followers of good; whereas it is a clear case, that saints for righteousness sake are hurt, and do suffer in their persons, characters, and estate; they are reproached and reviled, and often suffer confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and even death itself; to which the apostle answers, by granting it, and supposing that this should be the case, as it sometimes is; yet no hurt is done them, they are still happy persons: happy are ye; since suffering on such an account is a gift of God, even as believing in Christ itself is, and is a real honour done to a person, and to be so accounted; moreover, such generally enjoy much of the presence of God, and the comforts of his Spirit; the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon them; hereby the graces of the Spirit of God in them are exercised, tried, and proved, and shine out the brighter; the faith and hope of other Christians are strengthened, and God is glorified; and besides, the kingdom of heaven, the crown of life, and eternal glory, with which their sufferings are not to be compared, are theirs, and which they shall certainly enjoy: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; referring to a passage in (<sup>-231B2</sup>Isaiah 8:12) and the meaning is either, be not afraid with the same sort of fear as wicked men are; with a worldly slavish fear of men, and of the loss of worldly things, and of life itself: or, afraid of them, as the Syriac version renders it; who inject fear into you; do not be afraid of their revilings and reproaches, of their threatenings and menaces, and even of death itself by them, which is the utmost they can do; do not be troubled at anything they say or do to you; since nothing can harm you, since God is on your side, Christ has delivered you from this present evil world, and saved you out of the hands of every enemy; and since the love of God, which casteth out fear, is shed abroad in your hearts, and you are encompassed with it, and nothing can separate you from it.

**Ver. 15.** *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts*, etc.] Still referring to (<sup>-231B3</sup>Isaiah 8:13) not by making him holy, which need not, nor cannot be, he being essentially, infinitely, and perfectly holy; but by declaring and proclaiming his holiness, as the seraphim in Isaiah's prophecy, and the four living creatures in the Revelation did; and by glorifying of him, praising and applauding all his perfections, and among the rest, this of his holiness, and giving thanks at the remembrance of it; which he has so much displayed in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace; hence the Arabic version renders it, bless the Lord God in your hearts: the Lord God is

sanctified by his people externally, when they regard his commands, attend his ordinances, and call upon his name, and praise him; but here an internal sanctification of him, a sanctification of him in their hearts, is intended, and what is opposed to the fear of men, and unbelief, and lies in the exercise of the grace of fear upon him; (see <sup><2183></sup>Isaiah 8:13) and which has for its object his goodness, and is a fruit of the covenant of his grace, and is a child like and godly fear; and in the exercise of faith upon him, upon his covenant and promises, his faithfulness, and power to help, assist, and preserve; whereby glory is given to him, a witness borne to his truth, and he is sanctified: some copies, as the Alexandrian, and one of Stephens's, read, sanctify the Lord Christ; and so read the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and certain it is that he is intended in (<sup><2183></sup>Isaiah 8:13) as appears from (<sup><1184></sup>1 Peter 3:14) compared with (<sup><803></sup>Romans 9:33 <sup><118></sup>1 Peter 2:8)

*and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear;* by the hope that is in the saints, is not designed the grace of hope itself, which is given to them, and implanted in them in regeneration; the reason, ground, and foundation of which are, the love, grace, and mercy of God, through Christ, and his person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and redemption; but the Gospel, the whole Christian doctrine, the doctrine of faith, and which the Syriac version here calls the “hope of faith”; and the profession of Christianity, called in (<sup><303></sup>Hebrews 10:23), the profession of hope; in which persons profess their hope of eternal life and happiness through Christ, as doctrine of the Gospel directs them to. Now, a “reason” of this is to be given; not that they are to account for the Gospel, upon the foot of carnal reason; for that is not of men, nor according to the carnal reason of men; nor is it to be thought that every Christian should be capable of defending the Gospel, either in whole, or in part, by arguments and reasons, in a disputatious way, or to give a reason and argument for every particular truth; but that he should be well acquainted with the ground and foundation of the Christian religion; at least, with the first principles of the oracles of God, and be conversant with the Scriptures, and be able to point out that in them, which is the reason of his holding this and the other truth, though he is not able to give a gainsayer satisfaction, or to stop his mouth: and this is to be done with meekness and fear; with meekness, before men; in an humble modest way; not with an haughty air, and in a morose and surly manner, which serves only to irritate and provoke: and with fear; either of God, and so the Ethiopic Version renders it, with the fear of the

Lord; considering the subject of the argument, and the importance of it, and how much the honour of God is concerned in it; and taking care lest the answer should be delivered in a light, trifling, and negligent manner, and that no part of truth be dropped or concealed, in order to please men, and be screened from their resentments; or with all due reverence of, and respect to men, to superiors, to the civil magistrates, who may ask the reason; for they are to be treated with honour and esteem, and to be answered in an handsome and becoming manner, suitable to the dignity of their persons and office; as the sanhedrim was by Stephen; and as Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, by the Apostle Paul: and this answer, or reason, is to be given to every man; that has authority to ask, and that asks in a modest manner, and with a reverence suitable to the subject; for the phrases, “with meekness and fear”, may respect him that asks the reason, as well as him that gives the answer; for that which is holy is not to be given to dogs, to impudent persons, mockers and scoffers, nor are pearls to be cast before swine, filthy and irreverent persons; (see <sup>f75</sup>Matthew 7:6) the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and so the Vulgate Latin version, read, “but with meekness and fear”; for if it is not asked in such a way, there is no obligation to give an answer: and this is to be given “always”; whenever it is asked in such a manner, and by proper persons; when there is a necessity of it, and as opportunity offers: and saints should be always “ready to” give and therefore it becomes them daily and diligently to search the Scriptures, meditate on them, and get all the help and assistance they can, to lead them into an acquaintance with them, that they may be so; for though the apostles had extraordinary assistance promised them, and therefore were bid not to consider beforehand what they should say, when brought before kings and princes; yet this is not to be expected by ordinary persons, nor in ordinary cases. Agreeably to this is the advice of R. Eleazar <sup>f75</sup>;

“be diligent to learn the law, and know what thou shouldest answer to an Epicure,”

or heretic: says R. Jochanan <sup>f76</sup>,

“in every place where the Sadducees object, <sup>dyxb</sup> <sup>tbwqt</sup> their answer is at their side,”

or ready; that is, in the same Scriptures on which they form their objections.

**Ver. 16.** *Having a good conscience*, etc.] Meaning not the faculty of the conscience itself, which is naturally evil, and defiled with sin, and is only made good by the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, by which the heart is sprinkled from it, and that itself purged from dead works; but a life and conversation according to the dictates of such a conscience, in the uprightness and sincerity of it, and by the grace of God, and according to the Gospel, and whereby the doctrines of it are adorned; for, as besides internal sanctification of God, or a fearing of him, and believing in him with the heart, there must be a profession of him with the mouth, and a reason of faith and hope given verbally, when there is an occasion for it; so to both must be added a conscientious discharge of duty, both to God and men, which is one way of defending and recommending the doctrines of the Gospel:

*that whereas they speak evil of you as of evildoers*; as vain, proud, haughty, and arrogant persons, as seditious men, enemies to order and civil magistracy; as such that speak evil of dignities, and despise government; when they shall see your modest and humble deportment in the world, and before them, and with what reverence and esteem you treat them:

*they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ*; which was in consequence of their being in Christ, and made new creatures by him, and was as became his Gospel, and by and under the influence of his grace and Spirit.

**Ver. 17.** *For it is better, if the will of God be so*, etc.] For all things are ordered by the will of God, even all the sufferings and afflictions of the saints; and which is a reason why they ought to be patiently submitted to, and bore: and “better” it is, more honourable and profitable,

*that ye suffer for well doing*; for believing in Christ, professing him and his Gospel, giving a free and open reason for so doing, and for exercising a good conscience, and living godly in Christ Jesus:

*than for evil doing*; as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a busy body in other men's matters, (<sup>4015</sup>1 Peter 4:15,16).

**Ver. 18.** *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins*, etc.] Not his own, for he committed none, but for the sins of his people; in order to obtain the remission of them, to make reconciliation for them, and to take and put them away, and finish and make an end of them; which sufferings of his, on account of them, were many and great: he suffered much by bearing the

griefs, and carrying the sorrows of his people, whereby he became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, from his cradle to his cross; and from the temptations of Satan, being in all points tempted, as his members are, though without sin; and from the contradiction of sinners against him, in his name, credit, and character, abusing him as the worst of men; and he suffered in his soul, from the wrath of God, and curses of the law, which lay upon him; and in his body, by many buffetings, scourges, wounds, and death itself, even the death of the cross; and which being the finishing part of his sufferings, is chiefly here meant. The Alexandrian copy reads, “died for you”; and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, “died for our sins”; and this he did once, and but once; he died once, and will die no more; he was offered up once, and will be offered up no more; there is no more offering, or sacrifice for sin; the reason is, because his one offering is sufficient to take away sin, which the legal sacrifices were not, and therefore were often offered; and the reason why this his one offering, or once suffering and dying, is sufficient, is, because of his divine nature, or eternal Spirit, by which he offered himself, and gave infinite virtue to his sacrifice and satisfaction: now, this is an argument for suffering patiently; since Christ, the head, has also suffered, and therefore, why not the members? and since he has suffered for their sins, therefore they should not grudge to suffer for his sake; and seeing also their sufferings are but once, in this life only, and as it were but for a moment, and not to be compared with his sufferings for them; and especially when it is considered what follows:

*the just for the unjust*; Christ, the holy and just one, who is holy in his nature, and righteous in his life and actions, which were entirely conformable to the righteous law of God, and upright and faithful in the discharge of his office, and therefore called God's righteous servant; he suffered, and that not only by unjust men, by the Jews, by Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, but for and in the room and stead of unjust men, sinners, and ungodly, who were destitute of righteousness, and full of all unrighteousness; and since he did, it need not be thought hard, or strange, that sinful men should suffer at the hands of others; and still it should be borne with the greater patience, since Christ not only suffered for them, but since an end is answered by it, as is here suggested:

*that he might bring us to God*; nigh to God, who, with respect to communion, were afar off from him; and in peace and reconciliation with him, who were enemies to him by wicked works; and that they might have

freedom of access, with boldness, unto God, through his precious blood, and the vail of his flesh; and that he might offer them unto God, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; as a sacrifice acceptable unto God, presenting them to him unblamable and unreprouceable in his sight; that he might bring them into his grace and presence here, and, as the great Captain of their salvation, bring them to him in glory hereafter:

*being put to death in the flesh*; in the human nature: flesh includes the whole of human nature, both body and soul; for though the body only dies, yet death is the dissolution of the union between them both; and such was Christ's death; for though the union between the two natures continued, yet his body and soul were disunited; his body was left on the cross, and his soul, or Spirit, was commended to God, when his life was taken from the earth, and he was put to death in a violent manner by men:

*but quickened by the Spirit*; raised from the dead by his divine nature, the Spirit of holiness, the eternal Spirit, by which he offered himself, and by virtue of which, as he had power to lay down his life, so he had power to take it up again; when he was also justified in the Spirit, and all the elect in him. Now, as the enemies of Christ could do no more than put him to death in the flesh, so the enemies of his people can do no more than kill the body, and cannot reach the soul; and as Christ is quickened and raised from the dead, so all his elect are quickened together, and raised with him, representatively, and shall, by virtue of his resurrection, be raised personally, and live also; which is no inconsiderable argument to suffer afflictions patiently, and which is the design of this instance and example of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ.

**Ver. 19.** *By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*] Various are the senses given of this passage: some say, that Christ, upon his death, went in his human soul to hell; either, as some, to preach to the devils and damned spirits, that they might be saved, if they would; and, as others, to let them know that he was come, and to fill them with dread and terror; but though hell may be meant by the prison, yet the text does not say that he went unto it, or preached in it; only that the spirits were in it, to whom he sometimes went, and preached; nor is his human soul, but his divine nature meant, by the Spirit, by which he went and preached to them: and as for the ends proposed, the former is impracticable and impossible; for after death follows judgment, which is an eternal one; nor is there any salvation, or hope of salvation afterwards; and the latter is absurd, vain,

and needless. Others, as the Papists, imagine the sense to be, that Christ, at his death, went in his human soul, into a place they call “Limbus Patrum”, which they suppose is meant by the prison here, and delivered the souls of the Old Testament saints and patriarchs from thence, and carried them with him to heaven; but this sense is also false, because, as before observed, not the human soul of Christ, but his divine nature, is designed by the Spirit; nor is there any such place as here feigned, in which the souls of Old Testament saints were, before the death of Christ; for they were in peace and rest, in the kingdom of heaven, in Abraham's bosom, inheriting the promises, and not in a prison; besides, the text says not one word of the delivering of these spirits out of prison, only of Christ's preaching to them: add to all this, and which Beza, with others, observes, the apostle speaks of such as had been disobedient, and unbelievers; a character which will not agree with righteous men, and prophets, and patriarchs, under the former dispensation: others think the words are to be understood of Christ's going to preach, by his apostles, to the Gentiles, as in (~~40217~~ Ephesians 2:17) who were in a most miserable condition, strangers to the covenants of promise, and destitute of the hope of salvation, and sat in darkness, and the shadow of death, and, as it were, at the gates of hell; were in the bonds of iniquity, and dead in sin, and had been for long time past foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, to which they were in bondage. This is, indeed, a more tolerable sense than the former; but it will be difficult to show, that men, in the present state of life, are called “spirits”, which seems to be a word that relates to the souls of men, in a separate state from their bodies; and especially that carnal and unconverted men are ever so called; and besides, the apostle is speaking of such who were disobedient in the times of Noah; and therefore not of the Gentiles, in the times of the apostles: add to which, that the transition from the times of the apostles, according to this sense, to the days of Noah, is very unaccountable; this sense does not agree with the connection of the words: others are of opinion, that this is meant of the souls of the Old Testament saints, who were *εν φυλακη*, “in a watch”, as they think the phrase may be rendered, instead of “in prison”: and said to be in such a situation, because they were intent upon the hope of promised salvation, and were looking out for the Messiah, and anxiously desiring his coming, and which he, by some gracious manifestation, made known unto them: but though the word may sometimes signify a watch, yet more commonly a prison, and which sense best suits here; nor is that anxiety and uneasiness, which represents them as in a prison, so applicable to souls in a state of happiness; nor such a

gracious manifestation so properly called preaching; and besides, not believers, but unbelievers, disobedient ones, are here spoken of; and though it is only said they were sometimes so, yet to what purpose should this former character be once mentioned of souls now in glory? but it would be tedious to reckon up the several different senses of this place; some referring it to such in Noah's time, to whom the Gospel was preached, and who repented; and though they suffered in their bodies, in the general deluge, yet their souls were saved; whereas the apostle calls them all, "the world of the ungodly", (~~GEN~~ 2 Peter 2:5) and others, to the eight souls that were shut up in the ark, as in a prison, and were saved; though these are manifestly distinguished in the text from the disobedient spirits. The plain and easy sense of the words is, that Christ, by his Spirit, by which he was quickened, went in the ministry of Noah, the preacher of righteousness, and preached both by words and deeds, by the personal ministry of Noah, and by the building of the ark, to that generation who was then in being; and who being disobedient, and continuing so, a flood was brought upon them which destroyed them all; and whose spirits, or separate souls, were then in the prison of hell, so the Syriac version renders it, **ܠܘܥܒ**, "in hell", (see ~~REV~~ Revelation 20:7) when the Apostle Peter wrote this epistle; so that Christ neither went into this prison, nor preached in it, nor to spirits that were then in it when he preached, but to persons alive in the days of Noah, and who being disobedient, when they died, their separate souls were put into prison, and there they were when the apostle wrote: from whence we learn, that Christ was, that he existed in his divine nature before he was incarnate, he was before Abraham, he was in the days of Noah; and that Christ also, under the Old Testament, acted the part of a Mediator, in his divine nature, and by his Spirit discharged that branch of it, his prophetic office, before he appeared in human nature; and that the Gospel was preached in those early times, as unto Abraham, so before him.

**Ver. 20.** *Which sometime were disobedient*, etc.] To all the instructions and warnings which God gave them, to all the strivings of his Spirit, and to the ministry of Christ, by Noah; they continued in their profaneness and impiety, and to corrupt their ways, and fill the earth with violence and wickedness; not believing what they were threatened with, or that ever a flood would come upon them, and destroy them: and this "sometime" refers to the time of their being upon earth, who were now in hell; "to the days of Noah"; hereafter mentioned; and which the Syriac version connects with this clause, reading it thus, "who of old were disobedient in the days

of Noah”; at which time it was, that Christ, by his Spirit in Noah, went and preached to them: when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah: that is, when God, who is longsuffering and patient, waited on these disobedient ones, in Noah's time, for the space of an hundred and twenty years:

*while the ark was preparing*; by Noah, according to the directions which God gave him, (<sup><0064></sup>Genesis 6:14-22) and which, as R. Tanchuma says <sup>f77</sup>, was fifty two years a building; others say <sup>f78</sup> an hundred years; but Jarchi says <sup>f79</sup> it was an hundred and twenty; and which seems most likely, that being the term of time in which God's longsuffering waited on them; during which time Noah was preaching to them, and building the ark:

*wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water*; the eight persons were, Noah, and his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their three wives. It is a common tradition with the Jews <sup>f80</sup>, that besides these, Og, king of Bashan, escaped the flood; and who, they say, is the same that escaped, and told Abraham of Lot's being carried captive by the kings <sup>f81</sup>; the manner of his escape at the flood they relate thus <sup>f82</sup>;

“Og came, who was delivered from the men that died at the flood; and he rode upon the ark, and he had a covering upon his head, and was fed with the food of Noah; but not for his worthiness was he delivered, but that the inhabitants of the world might see the power of the Lord;”

and elsewhere <sup>f83</sup>, after this manner, citing those words, “and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark”, (<sup><0073></sup>Genesis 7:23) they add,

“except Og, king of Bashan, who sat on a certain piece of wood which belonged to the scaffolding of the ark, and he swore to Noah, and his sons, that he would be their servant for ever. What did Noah do? he bored an hole in the ark, and every day reached out food to him, and he remained alive, according to what is said, (<sup><0081></sup>Deuteronomy 3:11) “only Og, king of Bashan”, etc.”

But this is all a mere fiction; and equally fabulous is the account the Arabians give, who say <sup>f84</sup> that eighty persons, together with Noah, were taken into the ark, among whom was Jorham, their father; for there were no more than eight persons saved; and this is the apostle's sense; and

agreeably the Syriac version renders it, “and eight souls” *dwj l b*, “only entered into it, and were saved by water”; and we are told by some of the eastern writers <sup>f85</sup>, that when these eight went out of the ark, they built a city, which they called Themanin, which, in the Arabic language, signifies “eight”, according to their number. The ark was a type of Christ, into whom whoever enters by faith, or in whom whoever believes, shall be saved; but as they that entered into the ark were but few, so are those that enter in at the strait gate, or believe in Christ; and they that went into the ark were saved by the water bearing up the ark, even by that by which others were destroyed; as the very same thing, for different reasons, is the cause or means of destruction and salvation; so Christ is set, for the fall and rising of many, is a stumblingblock to some, and the power and wisdom of God to others; and the Gospel, and the ministers of it, are the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others. This instance of the dispensation of the providence of God to the old world is very appropriately, though by way of digression, introduced by the apostle; showing, that in times past, as then, God's usual method has been to afford the outward means to ungodly men, and to bear with them long, and then bring down his vengeance upon them, and save his own people; and this suffering saints might depend upon would be their case, and therefore should bear their afflictions patiently.

**Ver. 21.** *The like figure whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us,* etc.] The ark, and deliverance by it, as it was a type of Christ, and salvation by him, so it was a figure of baptism, and baptism was the antitype of that; or there is something in these which correspond, and answer to, and bear a resemblance to each other: as the ark was God's ordinance, and not man's invention, so is baptism, it is of heaven, and not of men; and as the ark, while it was preparing, was the scorn and derision of men, so is this ordinance of the Gospel; it was rejected with disdain by the Scribes and Pharisees, as it still is by many; and as the ark, when Noah and his family were shut up in it by God, represented a burial, and they seemed, as it were, to be buried in it, it was a lively emblem of baptism, which is expressed by a burial, ( ~~ROM~~ Romans 6:4 ~~COL~~ Colossians 2:12) and as they in the ark had the great deep broke up under them, and the windows of heaven opened over them, pouring out waters upon them, they were, as it were, immersed in, and were covered with water, this fitly figured baptism by immersion; nor were there any but adult persons that entered into the ark, nor should any be baptized but believers; to which may be added, that

as the one saved by water, so does the other; for it is water baptism which is here designed, which John practised, Christ gave a commission for, and his disciples administered: it saves not as a cause, for it has no causal influence on, nor is it essential to salvation. Christ only is the cause and author of eternal salvation; and as those only that were in the ark were saved by water, so those only that are in Christ, and that are baptized into Christ, and into his death, are saved by baptism; not everyone that is baptized, but he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, (<sup><4166></sup>Mark 16:16), for baptism

*is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh*; the design of it is not to take off the sordid flesh, as circumcision did; or in a ceremonious way, outwardly, to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, as the Jewish baptisms did; (see <sup><3900></sup>Hebrews 9:10,13), or to take away either original or actual sin; this only the blood of Christ can do; and it is not a mere external cleansing of the body:

*but the answer of a good conscience towards God*; the Vulgate Latin renders it, “the interrogation of a good conscience”; referring, it may be, to the interrogations that used to be put to those who desired baptism; as, dost thou renounce Satan? dost thou believe in Christ? (see <sup><4036></sup>Acts 8:36,37), others render it, “the stipulation of a good conscience”; alluding also to the ancient custom of obliging those that were baptized to covenant and agree to live an holy life and conversation, to renounce the devil and all his works, and the pomps and vanities of this world; and baptism does certainly lay an obligation on men to walk in newness of life; (see <sup><3104></sup>Romans 6:4,5), the Ethiopic version renders it, “confession of God”; and to this the Syriac version agrees, rendering it, “confessing God with a pure conscience”; for, to baptism, profession of faith in Christ, and of the doctrine of Christ in a pure conscience, is requisite; and in baptism persons make a public confession of God, and openly put on Christ before men: the sense seems plainly this; that then is baptism rightly performed, and its end answered, when a person, conscious to himself of its being an ordinance of Christ, and of his duty to submit to it, does do so upon profession of his faith in Christ, in obedience to his command, and “with” a view to his glory; in doing which he discharges a good conscience towards God: and being thus performed, it saves,

*by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*; being a means of leading the faith of the baptized person, as to the blood of Christ, for pardon and cleansing, so

to the resurrection of Christ, to justification; (see ~~4128~~ Acts 2:38 22:16 ~~8145~~ Romans 4:25), moreover, the sense of the passage may be this, that baptism is a like figure as the ark of Noah was; that as the entrance of Noah and his family into the ark was an emblem of a burial, so their coming out of it was a figure of the resurrection; and just such a figure is baptism, performed by immersion, both of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and of the resurrection of saints to walk in newness of life. The Arabic version renders the whole verse thus; “of which thing baptism is now a type saving us, not by removing the filth of the flesh only, but by exhilarating a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”.

**Ver. 22.** *Who is gone into heaven*, etc.] After he had been risen forty days, where he is received, and will remain, until the restitution of all things; and where he appears in the presence of God for his people, and ever lives to make intercession for them; and is entered as their forerunner, and is preparing mansions of glory for them; and will come again, and take them to himself, to be for ever with him, and from hence they expect him:

*and is on the right hand of God*; where Stephen saw him; and which is an honour never conferred on any angel, or man; and shows that Christ had done his work, and that in a way acceptable to God; the Vulgate Latin version here adds “swallowing up death, that we might be made heirs of eternal life”; but is not supported by any copy or version:

*angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him*; by “angels” may be meant angels both good and bad, who are all in subjection to Christ; and by authorities and powers, the kings, princes, and governors of this world, who hold their dominions from and under the Lord Jesus Christ; and which is an argument why believers should patiently bear all their sufferings and afflictions, since Christ has the government in his hands, and he rules and overrules all things for good; and when he pleases, he can put a stop to the rage and persecutions of men; and so the apostle returns to his former argument, in the following chapter.