

I PETER

Bless God

Bless God Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
I Pet. 1:3

- Ch. 1 - Bless God for a New Body and a New Mansion
- Ch. 2 - Bless God for AA Milk and a Precious Saviour
- Ch. 3 - Bless God for Marital Felicity and Noah's Ark
- Ch. 4 - Bless God for Wilderness: He knows the Way
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This book is full of "things angels desire" to look into... See I Pet. 1:12

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A COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER
CHAPTER I
A CHAPTER BY CHAPTER, VERSE BY VERSE
INTERPRETATION - BOTH BY THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE
AND DETAILED EXPOSITION

An accurate and comprehensive introduction to the book is so easily found in the preface leaf of any standard Bible, until full space is here given to the exegesis of the Epistle proper.

THE NAME—THE OFFICE

VERSE 1.

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ."

Peter opens his epistle and describes himself by:

1. His name - "Peter."

Peter (or Cephas), "which is by interpretation a stone" (little rock) (John 1:42). This name was given to Peter by Christ Himself. His former name was, "Simeon" (Matthew 4:18). This new name, Peter, (or Cephas), was given at the beginning of Peter's ministry to mark him out as one with a firm resolution.

2. By his office, or apostleship. "*An Apostle*"

Peter mentions his apostleship to give the greater weight and authority to his epistle. Notice that he says that he is only "*an*" apostle. He puts himself on an equal basis with the other eleven, and does not fancy himself as the Head of the Church, nor as Christ's Vicar on earth.

STRANGE ONES

"To the strangers."

The word, "strangers," or "dispersed" was the name used in Bible days to mark out the *Jews* that dwelt in Gentile countries. For example: "will He (Jesus) go to the dispersed (Jews) among the Gentiles" (John 7:35). *Literal Jews* are thus indicated in this verse, because, in a special sense they were, at that time unsettled and had no continuing city. They sought one to come (from above), living here as pilgrims, fleeing from persecution.

It is certain, however, that the word, "*strangers*," is also used in this verse to include all believers. We are "strangers" to this world and not to be "conformed" (or molded) after this world's customs and manners (Romans 12:2). Furthermore, all believers, confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13).

These Jews of the text desired "a better country, that is an heavenly." So do we Gentiles.

These Jews had the assurance of a "prepared city". So do we Gentiles.

Therefore, just as the Jews of this verse were called "strangers" so the application applies to all the elect of God, who have been "*called out from the world*" and have thus set their face toward the eternal Canaan Land.

*"Shall ought beguile us on the road,
While we are marching back to God,
For strangers into life we come
And dying is just going home."*

Yes, all Christians are pilgrims now. This vile world is no friend to grace to help us on to God! To paraphrase Paul's statement: "But we converse as citizens of Heaven, considering ourselves as denizens of the New Jerusalem, and only strangers and pilgrims upon earth."

"Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

These names show us that the *power of Pentecost* was conquering and was yet to conquer! Look, sirs, to what *bounds* the Gospel had already spread at this early day (about 60 A. D.) and that, so soon after Pentecost.

In Acts 2:8-11 some of these very nations that Peter specifies here were said to be in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. We are to believe that many were converted and went back to their own countries as believers and missionaries. Here they gave the message of the Gospel (death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord) (I Cor. 15:3-4). They witnessed a soul winning testimony as strangers on earth and citizens of Heaven.

ELECTED ONES

VERSE 2.

"Elect."

This is an *individual* election of persons. Peter, knowing that all of these to whom he wrote were professors of faith in Christ, he, therefore, with great love, assumed that their profession was well grounded in Christ. Therefore, he calls them "elect", as a body. They were, however, individuals, and thus we have *personal* election here.

As surely as the Bible is true, *God has a people* whom he has *chosen* and whom Christ has *redeemed* from among men. These *must*, and *shall*, by sovereign grace, be brought in for not one of them "shall ever perish" (John 10:28).

God *spied* us in the glass of predestination and *saved* us by His elective love.

As to *time*, this happened in the chambers of glory, long ago! God chose us, not because of any good within us, but of His own *Sovereign will* and for reasons best known to Himself (Romans 11:33-34).

There never was a soul that *wanted* to come to Jesus but that he *could* come in the "whosoever" of "John 3:16." There never was such a wanting soul but what *did* come in the "shall come" of John 6:37. In short, wherever there is a longing sinner, there is also a yearning Christ, waiting with punctured side, to be gracious unto him.

I will explain it this way; the impenitent sinner, looking upon the gates of entrance to the New Jerusalem reads in bold relief these words: "WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME" (Rev. 22:17). Believing this, he sincerely repents with his heart" (Romans 10:9), and enters that "door" (Christ) (John 10:9) by faith and is "saved" (John 10:9b).

Upon entrance, the "saved sinner" (I John 1:10) looks back, and blazoned over the inside of the door, he reads these words: "CHOSEN IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD" (Eph. 1:4).

*"None are excluded hence but those
Who do themselves exclude,
Welcome the learned and polite,
The ignorant and rude."*

My friend, *some* people must surely come to Christ, then why should not *you* be among them? This is a sweet suggestion for the help of old *despondency* when she is at her worst, namely: Some men *must* come to Christ, why should not *I* come? When the devil says to you, "You cannot come to Christ" and you, yourself, feel as if you could not come – still it is decreed and determined by divine election that *some* people *must* come, then why not *you*?

Suppose there is a plague in the city but there are some people predestined to be healed. I should be glad to know of that fact because I can press to the physician with full assurance, that *some* must be healed. This being true, why should not *I* be healed? Why not?

There is a famine in the land. I hear that it is revealed by a sure prophet that a *certain number* never shall die in that famine. Then why should not *I* outlive the dreadful days and be among them that *survive*?

I hear someone say, "but suppose I am *not* one of God's elect?" To him I answer, "but suppose you *are*." Better still, just suppose that you leave off supposing, altogether, and go to Jesus Christ and *see*. It is laid down in His blessed Word "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). Start coming, and start, calling as you come! Instead of shutting yourself *out*, as some do, because it is written, "all that the Father giveth me shall come to me" (John 6:37). Shut yourself in and say, "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37)

*"I can but perish if I go
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die."*

"According to the foreknowledge of God the Father."

That is, the personal election of these *individuals*, to whom Peter wrote – election to grace and glory. Peter declares that election had its beginning in God: God gave birth to the act of election, and this was before the world was. It was not because of anything good in us, or anything done by us, but purely a choice of God, "on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory" (Romans 9:23).

"Sanctification of the Spirit".

SAVED ONES

The word "sanctified" as used in this verse means "to be set apart." This setting apart, in regeneration, is the work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, 14, and 16).

The word "obedience" shows that the elected, and saved desire to *obey* all the truth of the Gospel. Not only to submit to the *two ordinances* of the church - *Baptism* and *the Lord's Supper*, but to do all good work in the name and strength of Christ, for to this end were they pre-ordained. (Eph. 2:9) Therefore, at conversion made, 'new creatures in Christ.' (II Cor 5:17).

The saved of the Lord, are, therefore, saved "unto obedience." They, "will love me (Jesus) and keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

One of the commandments of His word (in love and law) is that believers should be baptized, "and he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10 :48). This, of course, is only an act of obedience by those, "which believe" (Acts 10:45.) They (see above) had *already* believed, but nevertheless, were baptized as a Christian duty, and for New Testament Church membership - "added unto them" (church) (Acts 2:41).

"And the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

This means the application of the blood of Christ to the heart, by the Spirit of God, for cleansing, pardon and justification. It is an allusion to the sprinkling of the blood of the *Passover Lamb* (Exodus 12:22, 23). With reference to this sprinkling, at the Passover, it is stated that they should take the blood and "strike" it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts (see a picture of the cross here) "wherein they shall eat it... and they shall eat the flesh in the night, roast *with fire*..." (Ex. 12:7,8). (See the sufferings of Christ on the cross here).

Furthermore, there was nothing to be added to the flesh of the Lamb (a type of Christ) for Moses said, "Eat not of it raw, nor sodden *at all* with water..." (Ex. 12:9).

In other words, if Israel had *mixed* water with the roast and "boiled" it on the fire, there would have been a mixture of the *human element* (water) with the lamb. The lamb was not to have one drop of water added, for this would "sodden it." To do so, it would lose its flavor. This is a *picture* of salvation *wholly* by the grace of God. To the suffering, bleeding body, of the New Testament "passover Lamb slain for us" (I Cor. 5:7), there must be nothing added. Grace and works will not mix any more than oil will mix with water. To put new wine (Gospel truth) in old bottles (Judaism and ceremonial law) is to spoil the *grace plan* of salvation. This can never be, for salvation is wholly of grace, without any mixture of water (or anything of human merit) but solely through the finished work - "IT IS FINISHED" - (John 19:30) of Jesus Christ on the tree.

There came to our home some time ago a representative of a new cooking utensil. He made us a long speech on how, that in his vessel, we could "roast with fire". He went on to say that to put water in the meat would "sodden" it. He informed us that cooking it with water was the *old way* - the way the meat was boiled *before* people became enlightened: We told him that he had his dates mixed up because thousands of years ago, Moses forbade Israel to "boil" the meat of the lamb but to roast it with fire without any water *at all*. I went on to tell him that Moses had said that if you put water in the roast, it would "sodden" it (lose its flavor). That, unlike the modern cooking *utensils*, you were not to put even a *tablespoon* of water in that Old Testament roast. It says "roast not at all (don't put any water at all) but with fire." I think he was the happiest man ever, for when I showed him Exodus 12 :9, he went from my presence with a *new sales talk*, based upon *the best authority* this world has ever known. At length, we

saw: him again, and he had tripled his sales and contributed it, in a large part, to Exodus 12:9 "sodden it not *at all* with water."

John had this thought in mind when he said the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). That is to say, the blood of Christ is just as *potent* now, as when once shed by the Lord, upon Calvary's tree. Notice the "*eth*" of this word "cleans-eth" which means to say, that the blood of Christ not only had power to wash us clean in the blood bath of regeneration, but, by the *prevailing constancy* of His blood we are continuously cleansed.

THE NEW BIRTH

"Hath begotten us again?"

Run your eyes over the blessings of Verse 1 and 2 and then rejoice with Peter that you are born again. This *plan*, and *birth* was wrought out by God, and given to us as a free gift to the repentant believer.

THE NEW HOPE

"Unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Peter had just alluded (verse 2) to a "dead" hope. That is, to the slain, sacrificial lamb, of the Old Testament, wherein they were to "strike" (sprinkle the lintel and the two side posts with the blood)? (Ex. 12:22). He, therefore, makes the contrast that the "Lamb of God," (John 1:29) has shed His blood upon the cross, "and forthwith came there out blood..." (John 19 :34). Furthermore He had *risen*. (verse 3) Our hope, therefore, is a *living* hope, because it is fixed, not on dead works" (Heb 6:1b), but on a living Christ. "I am alive forevermore" (Rev. 1:18). Paul said, Christ... entered into... Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Once more "He (Christ) is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Our hope is based on the empty tomb of our Saviour and Lord, and "because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19b).

The very fact that God "raised him from the dead, and declared him to be the Son of God with power" (Rom. 1:4b) is *proof* that God accepted the sacrifice of Christ "and therefore, hath raised *us* (believers) up together with Christ" (Eph. 2:6b). That is to say, that we were in the *veins* of Christ, and that when *He* died, *we* died (to sin) in Him. When *He* went in the grave, *we* (spiritually) went into the grave with Him. In that grave of death our Saviour was kept as a *kind of hostage* for some three days and three nights. During that time the *world* had no absolute proof, and the *saints*, for a moment, had no living hope. Dark, yet bright, were those hours wherein Christ's body lay in the tomb - lay there but could not "see corruption" (Acts 2:31). However, when God brought Him (Christ) *out* of the grave (physically) *all of His people* came out of the grave (spiritually) with Him, and we are, therefore, as just indicated, "raised up together" with Him. That is, *spiritually* (as to our souls now). What if I say physically too? *So far as God is concerned* the saints are already "glorified" (Rom 8:30). I mean already resurrected.

Samson slept in Gaza, and was beset by foes, but he arose early in the morning and took upon his shoulders the gates of Gaza - post, bar, and all, and bare them away leaving the Philistine stronghold *open and exposed*. So it has been done to the grave by our Samson-Saviour, who slept (He was dead) out his three days and nights and arose "early on the morning" (Matthew 28:1), and bore away the iron gates of

the sepulcher, tearing every bar from its place. The fort has been stormed and taken! Death's house is now without a door. The saints shall now *pass in*, but they shall not be *shut in*! Not only live, but have a body "fashioned like unto his glorious body," (Phil. 3:21). Thus Paul says: "He hath abolished death and brought light and immortality to life by the gospel" (II Tim. 1:10).

*"When He arose, ascending high
He showed our feet the way,
Up from the grave we, too, shall rise
At that great rising day."*

THE NEW INHERITANCE

VERSE 4.

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

Watch carefully the following statements:

Not only did Peter see, in the resurrection of Christ *his own* resurrection, but the full inheritance, (body and mansion) that the resurrection of Christ brought in its train. *We are heirs apparent*. Heirs apparent to all the blessings of time and eternity.

This inheritance which is heavenly is four-fold:

1. INCORRUPTIBLE

That is, it is not to be enjoyed by corrupt persons – either corrupted with sin or clothed with mortality (fleshly bodies). Therefore, in order to inherit the inheritance "corruption must put on incorruption." (I Cor. 15 :53). Hence, the resurrection of Christ, vouchsafes for us an incorruptible inheritance, with a *new body, and a new mansion* (I Peter 1:3) and a "*new heaven and a new earth*" (II Pet. 3:13).

John went into full detail to make clear the incorruptible nature of our inheritance, and said, "And the nations of them *which are saved* shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it *anything that defileth*, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21:24, 25, 26, 27).

2. UNDEFILED

Our heavenly inheritance, in its own nature, is pure and holy. The Seer on the Isle of Patmos beheld this "Holy City" (Rev. 21:2) and said "it" (its people) was "the Lamb's Wife" (Rev 21:9). He went on (Rev. 22) to give us such details until the description staggers the imagination of mortal man. Even Paul left off to tell us of what beheld in that city far up "in the *third* heaven" (II Cor. 12:2).

3. FADETH NOT AWAY

That is, it fades not away as does the "*glory*" (I Pet. 1:24) of the things of this world.

The words "fadeth not away" as used here literally means "*withers not... dies not*." It was an ancient word used to express *perpetual pleasure*, or *perpetual beauty*.

The ancients often used the word to express the perennial beauty of a rare flower – a flower never withering at any season, but perpetually lifting up its green foliage of beauty, and wafting its rare aroma, upon the southern breeze.

Such, then, O, believer, is our future abode. It was "ready" (I Pet. 1:5), when Peter wrote his first Epistle almost two thousand years ago. Yet, there it stands, on the hills of Zion, until this very day.

THE NEW GARRISON

VERSE 5.

"Who are kept by the power of God."

The word 'kept' as used here is the same as our military word "guard" or to be kept in a *garrison*. Why should not the elect of God be kept when:

1. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them..." (Psalms 34:7).
2. "...salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks" (Isaiah 26:1b)
3. "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about..." (Zech. 2 :5).
4. "...his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks;..." (Isaiah 33:16).

In verse 4, *we* are reserved *for* the mansion, "for you."

In verse 5, the *mansion* is reserved *for us*, "kept by the power of God."

Here is *double* security. The power working on both sides of the veil – preserving the inheritance for the heirs, and (look!) preserving the heirs for the inheritance!

In short, this inheritance will not *fail* them, and they shall not miss it. The same hand that is now preparing the inheritance and making it ready for its owners is clasped round about (the pilgrims) and guarding them until they get home. Yes, he will "keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12b).

If a child of God could be saved, and then be eternally lost, there would have to be a "for rent" sign hung on his inheritance – whether it be a new body or a new mansion – for his individual mansion is already "reserved" for him and no one else can ever get it!

*"Once in Christ,
In Christ forever
Nothing from his love can sever."*

VERSE 6.

"Wherein ye greatly rejoiced."

The word "wherein" refers back to our salvation, and means that we rejoice in it. Salvation is not something to be handed to us when we come to die, but is a present reality, and, if truly born again, we are now in possession of eternal life, "hath everlasting life" (John 5:24). Let us, therefore, rejoice with Peter here, and rejoice with Peter hereafter!

THE NEW TRIAL

"Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation".

The position of the Christian, in this life, is that they are "sorrowful, yet rejoicing" (II Cor. 6:10) The word "manifold temptations" as used in this verse means *persecutions*, and *tribulations*, through which the New Testament Christians were then passing. Indeed, it refers to the sorrows through which any Christian must need pass, until this day. This verse does not teach that God *tempts* his people for "God tempts no man" (James 1:16). God does *try* his people as he tried *Abraham*. (Gen. Chap. 22). God does try His people as He tried the patriarch *Job* (Job Ch. 1).

Peter puts two words together, "heaviness... need be" in order to prove the need of Christian suffering. Sometimes the Christian must bear the blueness of the wound, whereby the soul is made better.

Labor and trouble are the common way to rest, both in the course of nature, and in the course of grace. Do you not travail and toil first, and rest *afterwards*? The day for labor is first, and then follows the *night* for rest. Why should we desire the course of grace to be perverted, any more than the course of nature? It is an established decree that "we must, through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22b). Furthermore, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Christ" (Romans 8:17). Beloved, what are we that God's statutes should be reversed for our pleasure?

Through afflictions, the Christian is made to hold this world with a loose hand. What if I say, he is, by this method, made *homesick* for Heaven?

What warn, affectionate thoughts have we, of this world, until afflictions cool and moderate them all! Afflictions speak convincingly, and will be heard when the preacher's words are void. Many a poor Christian is sometimes bending his thoughts to wealth, or flesh-pleasing, applause, and so loses his relish for Christ and the joy above, until God breaks in upon his riches, or children, or conscience, or health and thus breaks down his mountain which he thought so strong. Poor saint he then lieth in Manasseh's fetters – or is fastened to his bed with pining sickness, and the *world is nothing*, and *Heaven is something*! If our dear Lord did not put these thorns under our heads, we should sleep out our lives *here* and lose our glory *there*.

The Lord placed these "manifold temptations" in the pilgrim's path to keep him from losing his way to the promised rest. Peter says that without the hedge of thorns, on the right hand and on the left, we should hardly keep the way of Heaven. If there be but *one* gap open, how ready we are to find it and turn out at it! When we grow wanton, or worldly, or proud, oh, how affliction reduces us! David said, "before I was afflicted, I went away; but now have I kept thy word" (Psa. 119:67). It is therefore not only the "*green pastures and still waters*" (Psa. 23:2) but the "*rod and staff, they comfort us*" (Psa. 23:4). Though the word of God and the Holy Spirit do the main work, yet suffering so unbolts the door of the heart, that the word can more easily gain the victory at once.

*"Oh for a faith that will not shrink
Though pressed by many a foe,
That will not tremble on the brink;
Of poverty or woe.*

*That will not murmur nor complain,
Beneath the chastening rod,*

*But in the hour of grief and pain,
Can lean upon its God.*

*"A faith that keeps the narrow way,
'Til life's last spark has fled;
And with a cool and Heavenly ray,
Lights up our dying bed.*

*"Lord give me such a faith as this,
And then what e'er may come,
I even now can taste that bliss
Of my eternal home."*

VERSE 7.

"That the trial of your faith be much more precious than a gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire."

Notice here that the *one* essential thing in which God is interested is the *faith* of His children. That is to say, the kind of faith which exemplifies to the world – under testing – that they are the true children of God. Test a man's faith and you have tested that man, for faith is the taproot, the father, of all the children of grace. As gold being tried in the fire is purged from its dross, and is proven to be genuine, and shines all the brighter, so faith being tried in the fire of affliction is purged from unbelief, his dross and sin made to "adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour" (Titus 2:10).

THE NEW VINDICATION

"Might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

This verse speaks of the *vindication* of the believer's faith – vindication at the Second Coming of Christ.

What if I say that here is a hint to the same conditions that existed in the ante-diluvian world (before the flood) during the days of Noah?

Note the suggested comparisons:

1. Noah "*found grace in the eyes of the Lord*" (Genesis 6:8). So we found "*election*" in God. (I Peter 1:2).
2. Noah *prepared* the "ark by faith" (Heb. 11:7) and "*went in*" (Gen. 7:7). So *we prepare our hearts* (by Faith) "*thy faith hath saved thee*" (Luke 18:42) and "*enter in*" (John 10:9).
3. Noah's faith was *vindicated* through the flood and later he "*built an altar unto the Lord*" (Gen. 8:18), so the saints be "*gathered*" (II Thes. 2:1b) unto Christ "*to whom be glory forever and ever.*" Amen (Eph. 3:21).

Just as the unsaved knew when the flood came that Noah's faith in God was vindicated, so shall it be that all the world shall know, *upon the return of Christ*, that the Christian's faith was well grounded in Christ and that he is accepted of Him.

THE NEW GLORY

VERSE 8.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

These saints to whom Peter wrote had never seen the Lord with their natural eyes, yet, through the preaching of the gospel, they had embraced Him and they therefore loved Him, as "begotten again" children of light. Peter goes on to say that they, "joyed" in believing on Him – a joy so deep that no language could express it. He goes on to say that it was "full of glory." He means it is a glory begun here - a kind of a first fruit, or pledge of the "weight of glory," yet to be revealed (II Cor. 4:17b).

VERSE 9.

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of souls."

The word "*souls*" as used here does not mean to neglect the resurrected body – that shall surely be. The thing Peter is discussing is a complete redemption of soul (which has already taken place if we are saved) and *body* (future). He leaps forward to the time when *all* of the elect of God, *soul* and *body*, shall be gathered in Heaven. It is the bringing in of all the "ransomed of the Lord" (Isaiah 35:10a). It is the gathering together in one, (ONE) all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him" (Eph. 1:10). In short, redemption starts here that is the redemption of the soul as appointed from all eternity. Therefore, we have, *even while we live here*, the earnest (foretaste) of that *eternal rest* that remaineth for the people of God. Even now the believer carries the title deed to Heaven in his own breast. Another Heaven awaits us (which is only a part of the soul's heaven here). That will be the "salvation of souls" – the *souls and redeemed bodies of all ages*, gathered together in Him.

BLOOD REDEMPTION ENGROSSED MINDS OF THE PROPHETS

VERSE 10.

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently."

1. Moses "inquired and searched diligently" about Him and spoke of His *virgin birth*, by calling Him "the seed" (Gen. 3:15), singular "seed", even Christ Himself. Notice it is not "seeds" (Gal 3:16). This could not be for there is only one "seed". That is Christ, and salvation is alone found in Him.
2. Micah "inquired and searched diligently" about Him and wrote that He was to be born in "Bethlehem" (Micah 6:2a). Furthermore, Micah said, He was to be a "ruler in Israel."
3. Isaiah "inquired and searched diligently" concerning Christ and wrote of Him bearing our "stripes" and dying a *substitutionary* death (Isa. 53).

Yes, these Old Testament prophets and more, "searched diligently" for a new covenant, based on pardoning grace; circumcision not made with hands; the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost ; the genesis of the church; the equal footing of the Gentile with the Jew - in fact all the blessings of the gospel dispensation.

VERSE 11.

"Seeking what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify."

The prophets made a very diligent inquiry into the *exact time when* Christ should come to work out the salvation of His people. Daniel particularly inquired (Daniel 9:24) of the time the Messiah would be "cut off" (Daniel 9:26).

"the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify"

The word "*signify*" as used here meant "*to make manifest*" or reveal, a matter.

Notice that Peter said that "the Spirit of Christ" was in these Old Testament prophets. This is absolute proof that Christ existed in the Old Testament and that He did not, as to existence, begin to live when He was born of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:23). Yes, Christ not only existed in the Old Testament but He existed from *all eternity*. John says, "In the beginning was the Word (Christ) and the Word (Christ) was with God, and the Word (Christ) was God" (John 1:1).

Though the Spirit of Christ was upon these Old Testament prophets, yet the full illumination of the Holy Spirit had not yet come (as at Pentecost, Acts Ch, 2). Even Paul says that all of the Old Testament *figures and types*, including the law, was a "shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10 :1).

Therefore, these Old Testament prophets, though having a certain measure of enlightenment, yet could not grasp the full meaning of the blessings which they prophesied for those "upon whom the ends of the world (age) are come" (I Cor. 10 :11b). That is, *New Testament saints* – end of the age of saints.

"when it testified before hand, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"

The suffering of the Messiah was testified by David, the prophet. (Psa. 22).

It was testified by Daniel. Daniel 9:26.

It was testified by Zechariah. Zechariah 12.10.

By the word "glory" or (glories) "that should follow" Peter means the resurrection of Christ from the dead, His ascension to heaven, His sitting at the right hand of God, His receiving all power from the Father, and as we will see in verse 13, His glorious coming again.

VERSE 12.

"Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you."

This glory, coming to the Messiah, and hence to His followers, was at least revealed, *in part*, to the Old Testament prophets. Peter says, "not unto *themselves*, but unto *us*." That is, *they* did not live to see the *birth of the Messiah* and the attendant blessings wherein all the families of the earth were (had the opportunity) to be blessed. Therefore, these prophets, did not, immediately, "minister unto themselves" (because Christ, of whom they prophesied, had not yet come) but they ministered *unto us* (New Testament Christians), and told us of the blessings we were to receive through the Christ of God.

BLOOD REDEMPTION ENGROSSED THE MINDS OF THE APOSTLES

"by them - that have preached the gospel unto you."

Notice that Peter here speaks of *himself* and the rest of the apostles, and does so by using the word "them." Furthermore, this was true of all the ministers of the early church and is true of every God called minister until this day. They bear good news of salvation and as such messengers are said to have "beautiful feet." (Rom. 10:15).

"with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven"

This is a special reference to *the day of Pentecost*, when the apostles had an extraordinary effusion of the Spirit, qualifying them to preach the Gospel, to which they were called and sent. (Acts 2:1-5)

BLOOD REDEMPTION ENGROSSES THE MINDS OF THE ANGELS

"which things the angels desire to look into."

This was true of the angels at the birth of the Lord Jesus. It seems that *one* angel found the Lord in the manger. "Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them" (Luke 2:9). This angel was soon joined by "a multitude of heavenly hosts" (Luke 2:13a), praising God and giving glory to Him for the birth of the Saviour. Paul speaks of Him being "seen (gazed upon) by angels" (I Tim. 3:16).

This verse "angels desire to look into" not only means that the angels desire to look into Christ but the literal meaning is that they desire to look into what has been *wrought out by Christ in the blood scheme of redemption*. I suppose an angel could know little of the blood of Christ (without special revelation) for an angel never experienced the amazing grace of God.

AS I MUSED

1. The salvation of the cross, "blood" (I Pet. 1:2).
2. The hope of the prophets, 'searched "' (I Pet. 1:10).
3. The confidence of the strangers, "you" (I Pet. 1:10).
4. The amazement of the angels, look into" (I Pet. 1:12).

THE MARATHON RACE FROM EARTH TO GLORY

VERSE 13.

"Gird up the loins of your mind."

This exhortation to "gird up your mind" is a *metaphor* taken from the custom of the eastern nations, who used to wear long garments, which they gathered up close to them in order to gird themselves about for a race – an amphitheater race before teering thousands.

"be sober"

This means intemperance in eating and drinking to be sure, for such excess would disqualify the Christian's "mind" (I Pet. 1:13) to the point where it could not obey the injunction to "gird up" and be in constant readiness for the Christian race.

However, "be sober" means, in the broad sense, that "no man that warreth *entangleth* himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him (government) who hath chosen him to be a soldier." (II Tim. 2:4).

Even so, each saint is, "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3). Therefore, as such, he must "be sober" lest the "care of this world... *choke* the word, and he become unfruitful." (Matt. 13 :22).

THE END OF THE RAINBOW IN SIGHT

"and hope to the end"

Here we have the *duration of that grace* which is bestowed upon us in election and salvation. It is a grace that does, and will remain, "Who (Christ) delivered us from so great a death: (spiritual)... he will yet deliver us" (I Cor. 1:10).

In short, *saving grace* is *persevering grace* – it will persevere (or preserve) "unto the end." If the grace (so called) is not a *persevering grace*, then it was not, and is not, a *saving grace*. Remember saving grace perseveres *on*, and *on*, and *on* "hope unto the end" (I Pet. 1:13).

Peter is careful that the believer should exercise such saving grace - exercise it by "hope." Surely, no better *soul acrobatics* could be indulged in than to meditate upon and conform our conduct to a pure and heavenly hope based on the finished work of Christ on Calvary.

Meditation on the Second Coming of Christ will cause the believer, as John says, to "purify himself even as he is pure" (I John 3:3).

GOD'S BIGGEST LOAD OF GRACE NOW ON THE ROAD

"for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Yes, grace, "is on the road" for this is the meaning of the words, "to be brought." It carries with it the thought that much grace has already arrived - traveled God's road and arrived - but that *much more grace* is on the road and soon to arrive!

As a child, my brother and I used to swing on the old yard gate - swing and look for dad to come home from town where he had taken a bale of cotton to the gin - swing there, and wait for dad to bring us a present. At length, he came into far view (our eyes were keen) and bounding from that old slat gate, we ran to meet him and to get the present he was always sure to bring us. I cannot go on – *heavenly wagons* full of presents are on "old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING

VERSE 14.

"As obedient children not fashioning yourself according to the former lusts in your ignorance."

Peter declares these saints to be "obedient" children, for to that end they were "set apart" by the Holy Spirit (I Pet. 1:2).

They, therefore, as such, are not to live as they once lived *before they were saved*. Notice he calls this "former lusts." That is, before salvation. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I John 2:16,17).

VERSE 15.

"But as he which called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversion."

God, the Father *called us* (in election and fore-knowledge) and He has sent His Holy Spirit (as His agent) to *sanctify* (a progressive growth in holiness) the believer.

God is holy, originally, naturally, and perfectly. This is true of God, in a sense in which it can never be true of men or angels. However, He is also our source of holiness, our pattern of holiness, once and forever.

I remember my daughter once brought from school a *specimen* of handwriting and showed it to me with the remark that she "could never hope to write quite so well." I asked her if she would have been well pleased with a specimen, ill written and not nearly so neat, "Oh, no," she replied, "then I would never have a permanent pattern toward which to strive." Thus it is with God's pattern for His children. He, Himself, is the *specimen* and even though we mortals cannot *attain unto His perfection*, yet to have a less standard would devoid us of a high and holy resolve to seek perfection, as nearly as possible, day by day.

VERSE 16.

"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

This is written in Lev. 11:44, Lev. 19 :2 and Lev. 20:17.

FOUR WAYS TO ENCOURAGE HOLINESS

VERSE 17.

"and if ye call on the Father?"

Here are four methods - and *prayer* leads the van – by which Christians are encouraged to seek a life of holiness:

1. Prayer, "call on the Father" (I Pet. 1:17).

Prayer is the first and foremost reason, and why not for:

*"Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above."*

*"Restraining prayer-we cease to fight,
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright,
And Satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon his knees."*

"who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work".

2. The judgment - "According to works" (I Pet. 1:17). This is encouragement number two: "judgeth according to works."

Though God judges no man – "For the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5 :22). Yet, "He (God) will yet judge *every man*. Yes, he will judge the world in righteousness by that man (Jesus Christ) whom he hath before ordained; whereof he hath given assurance (of resurrection and judgment) unto *all men*, in that he (God) hath raised him (Christ) from the dead" (Acts 17 :31b).

Paul, in most solemn language, has declared that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Again to quote Paul, "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1).

Incidentally, this verse is *pre-millennial* and teaches that Christ does not *now* have a kingdom (Rev. 3:21) but will receive His kingdom at His appearing, or second coming.

"pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" argument number three.

3. We are pilgrims on earth.

Therefore, pilgrims should make this earth a habitat, which they use in preparing for that country where they will no longer be sojourners but forever with the Lord. We are not natives of this world (John 17:11). In other words, "we are *in* the world" (John 17 :11) but "not *of* the world" (John 17:16).

VERSES 18 AND 19.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation renewed by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

Argument number four.

4. Consider God's investment in the Saints, "precious blood of the lamb."

This is a mighty argument – the fourth one – and oh, its depths! The allusion is to the people of Israel and of the first-born by shekels (Ex. 30:12-14) (Num. 3:46-48) The words, "silver and gold" does not mean mere pieces of gold and silver (just pieces of it) but refers here to gold and silver *coined*, for only by *coined* silver or gold could *redemption* of anything be obtained. Even these, if indeed they were coined, would be insufficient for the redemption of a soul. All the coined silver and gold, of the old age, or the new, cannot deliver the soul from the slavery of sin.

Consider, then, to what depths we descended – how sick we were!

Consider, again, the price God did pay (His Lamb) to buy us back and make us "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6).

Let us meditate upon what we cost the Almighty God and exercise our souls unto holiness.

THE NEXT VERSE WILL BE FIRST PETER 2:3

Notice carefully the following words:

In our interpretation of the first Epistle of Peter, we will now go to Chapter 2, verse 3. We will now begin at I Peter 2:3 and use verse 3 as a text by which, and *through* which, we shall interpret all the verses from I Peter 1:20 through I Peter 2:3.

Read the above again – read it slowly and carefully and grasp what I have said.

Now follow me to Chapter 2 - verse 3.

CHAPTER II

FIVE WAYS IN WHICH CHRIST IS SAID TO BE GRACIOUS

VERSE 3.

"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious"

David, of the old covenant was saved, yet, *when he found himself unable* to express his inward felicity, he simply bade others to experience its marrow and fatness, "O taste and see that the Lord (Jesus Christ) is good, blessed are they that put their trust in him" (Psa. 34 :8).

Peter of the *new* covenant did. taste and *see* that the Lord was good and upon writing his First Epistle, felt assured his readers (friends of the dispersion) were saved in the Lord.

*"O, I cannot tell you how precious,
The Saviour is to me,
But I can only ask you,
To come, taste, and see."*

Yes, the Lord is gracious – gracious in so many, many ways.

For example look at chapter 1, verse 20.

1. Gracious in His ancient plan "foreordained" (I Pet. 1:20).
 - a. gracious *wisdom* that thought it "foreordained" (I Pet. 1:20).
 - b. gracious *grace* (Christ's birth) that brought it "was manifest" verse 21.
 - c. gracious *price* that wrought it for you" (verse 21)
 - d. gracious joy to be *taught* it "your faith and hope in God" (verse 21)
2. Gracious to us in the *Resurrection of His Son*.

"raised him up from the dead" (I Pet. 1:21).

To this Paul agrees, "who (Christ) was delivered (death on cross) for our offenses and was *raised* again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

This doctrine was so important until, once more, Paul wrote, and said, "and if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, who he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not, and if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" I Cor. 15:14-17).

Look what a dark picture for the saints – *dark if Christ be not "risen."*

Now, we turn the picture and, look! there is the burst of a noon-day sun: "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept " (I Cor. 15: 20).

3. Gracious in His *ascension* and *intercessory* work. Gave him glory" (I Pet. 1 :20).

Paul, in beautiful language, depicts this triumphant scene and tells us of the high honor and dignity, which Christ took unto Himself (and to us) in that hour.

"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also but that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:19-22). Yes, Christ went ahead to spy out the land – "entered as our fore-runner" (Heb. 6:20).

Joseph, you remember, left his brethren and prepared shelter and corn and *later* received them. Joseph went away on *their* behalf, and did for them what he could not have done if he had not gone away. Look: our Joseph, the Lord Jesus, went away, and is filling the granaries of Heaven, and in the covered wagons of experience and grace, we shall go to be with Him in the granary of the skies!

*"Hail the day that sees Him rise,
To His home beyond the skies,
There for Him high triumph waits,
Lift your heads, eternal gates,
He hath conquered death and sin,
Let this King of Glory in."*

4. Gracious to us in the *New Birth* – "being born again" (I Pet. 1:23). Fasten your attention prayerfully upon these words "born again," not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible.

Here, the *new birth* is under discussion, or rather *the incorruptible seed* (nature) which is implanted at the time of the new birth. "being born again." (vs. 23a).

From a *human standpoint*, we are begotten and born of *corruptible seed* "That which is of the flesh is flesh" (Jno. 3:6) - That flesh is born with a "nature" (Eph. 2:3) and with a sentence upon it to die a physical death. (Rom. 5:12).

However, the inplation of the *incorruptible seed*, at conversion, is an eternal work, and is described in II Peter 1:4 as making one to become a "partaker of a divine nature."

5. Gracious in *His Word* "by the word of God" (I Pet. 1:23)

This new birth is said to come *by the word of God*. That is, the word is used as a *channel*. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

The word of God (Bible) is living" (Heb. 4:12). Therefore it begets life – life eternal – in the soul.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24)."

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:" (I Pet. 1:24).

Yes, all flesh is as "grass." They spring up like grass and look beautiful for a while, but are very weak and tender and in a little time, they are *cut down* by death and wither away (Job 14:1-3). The fact is, even

while men live, they are in a good measure, nothing but grass in another form, for what is *the flesh they eat* but grass turned into it?

This is not only the case of unsaved man, but the saved man, as well. Yes, even of the *prophets of the old era* and the *Gospel preachers of the new*. Yet, in contrast to all perishing things:

"But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

PREACH THE WORD

Other books are destructible – this book is indestructible.

Other books fade away and become obsolete – this Book is *never out of date*.

Other books are for a *time* – this Book is for *eternity*.

The word of ministers may be sweet, but the words of God are sweeter. Though original thoughts may have the novelty of freshness, yet the ancient Words of God have the ring and weight and value of precious coins and they shall not be found wanting in the day when God's ministers shall use them.

BIBLE MIRACULOUSLY PRESERVED

Do you know that the catalogue of the books of the Old and the New Testaments, as we have it, is the same catalog that has been coming on down through the ages?

There were *thirty-nine* books of the Old Testament thousands of years ago - there are *thirty-nine now*.

There were *twenty-seven* books of the New Testament sixteen hundred years ago. There are *twenty-seven books now*.

The catalogue *now*, just like the catalog *then*.

They have been assaulted, spat on, torn to pieces and burned - yet enduring – "abideth forever"

All other books are mummified and lying in the tombs of old libraries where, perhaps, once in twenty years some man comes along, picks up one of them, blows the dust off and opens it, many times only to find it the book he does not want.

This old Book, much of it forty centuries old, stands today *and abideth forever*. It is discussed more than any other book, and it challenges the spite and venom and hyper-criticism of earth and hell!

The epidemics which have swept thousands of other books into the *sepulcher* of forgetfulness, have only brightened the fame and timeliness of this Book.

Many publishers will tell you that there will not be more than *one book out of twenty thousand* that will live a century. Yet, here is THE Book with more strength upon it than when it was first put upon the parchment in the long yesterdays.

This book saw the *cradle* of all other books and it will see their *graves*.

*"How precious is the Book Divine
By inspiration given,
Bright as a light, it's doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to Heaven."*

*"It quietly cheers our drooping heart,
In this vile world of tears,
Life, light, and joy it still imparts,
And quells our rising fears."*

*"This Book, through the tedious night,
Of life, has been my stay,
Till I behold a clearer light,
In God's unchanging day."*

SIX WAYS BY WHICH THE CHRISTIAN MAY GROW

1. By the sincere Milk of the Word (I Pet. 2:2).

The child cannot provide for itself, but is *dependent* and trustful for its growth. So we cannot keep ourselves saved (I Pet. 1:5) but are *dependent* for our salvation and sustenance by the food provided in the *milk of the word* of God. We are told, "He is able to build us up in the most holy faith" (Acts 20:32). No wonder some new-born Christians never grow. They neither feed themselves (on the word) or have the privilege of attending a Spirit-filled ministry.

2. Grow by rehearsing our conversions "tasted that the Lord is gracious" (I Pet. 2:3). This has been covered.

3. Grow by constantly coming to Christ, "to whom coming" (I Pet. 2:42). Christians are said to come to Christ, and Christ is here said to be a stone. Peter, by the use of this metaphor, shows that he (Peter) is not the rock on which the Church is built (See Matt. 16:18). Christ is called a stone here because a stone is of great *usefulness in a building* – especially the foundation stone and corner stone. Such a *stone* is Christ to His people. Therefore, He (Christ) is the "chief Cornerstone."

As lively, (living or born-again children) His people "come" to Him (I Pet. 2:4a) and are "fitly framed together" (Eph. 2:21) "for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22b)

4. We grow by "offering up *Spiritual sacrifices*" (I Pet. 2:5).

By spiritual sacrifices is meant – *prayer, praises, giving and living*.

It means all good works done in faith and from a fervent desire to Glorify God. These graces are called "*spiritual*" to distinguish them from *legal* sacrifices and because, offered in a spiritual manner, under the influence of the Spirit of God.

These offered, once and again, are always "acceptable by Jesus Christ" for it is through Him (Christ) they are offered.

With these holy offerings in our *hands* and upon our *lips*, we worship Him. Through such warm-hearted "spiritual sacrifices" we grow in grace – grow into the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus.

5. We grow by being unashamed in our profession, "shall not be confounded" (I Pet. 2:6).

We grow by being unashamed of our profession of Christ, and we have the assurance from Peter that we "shall not be confounded" (I Pet. 1:6b).

He is our foundation - shall the brick of the building be ashamed of its *foundation*?

The believer shall not be confounded by men or devils, neither in this world, nor in that, *which is to come*.

Laid upon the stone, Christ Jesus, the saint shall, through age and grace cement himself to the very foundation (Christ). Thus becoming a part of the foundation he shall never "make haste" (Isa. 28:16). He (the believer) *is not going anywhere* for there is "no one else to whom he can go" (John 6:68). Therefore, since this foundation of the Lord is so "*sure*" (II Tim, 2:19) let the believer not be removed from it. Let him wait – patiently wait and grow – so that He (Christ) will be "unashamed of him (the saint) at His (Christ's) coming."

6. We grow by meditation upon the preciousness of Christ "He is precious" (I Pet. 1:7).

THREE WAYS IN WHICH CHRIST IS PRECIOUS

Words fail me for I cannot depict the preciousness of the Christ of God, for:

1. He is precious in His dual nature.

I say "dual" nature, and by this I mean His human nature and His Divine Nature.

a. Peter brings out His *human* nature in I Peter 1:10 where he uses the word "grace" to refer to the *incarnation* and *humanity* of the Savior. In this verse Peter tells how the Old Testament prophets told of how this "grace" (the human Christ) was coming to the New Testament believers.

Paul also uses the word "grace" to refer to the *birth of Christ*, "For ye know the grace (birth) of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes, he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9).

Therefore we have His *human* nature.

b. Peter brings out the *Divine* nature of Christ in I Peter 1:11, when he said that the "Spirit of Christ" was in the Old Testament prophets. This being true, Christ is therefore God. Here is His deity and His antiquity.

Therefore, we have here His *Divine* nature.

Christ was precious, I say in His dual nature – human and Divine.

He was so *human* that one of the first acts of His public ministry was to go to a marriage in Cana of Galilee – but He was so *Divine* that He turned the water into wine and saved the embarrassment of the hostess.

He who made the seven seas was so *human* until he grew weary and begged for water at Jacob's well - but He was so *Divine* that He gave the fallen woman a drink of water which sprang up into life everlasting.

He was so *human* that He wept with Martha and Mary at the tomb of Lazarus – but He was so *Divine* that He raised Lazarus from the dead and gave him back into the empty arms and aching hearts of his two sisters.

He was so *human* that He went to sleep on the fisherman's boat - yet He was so *Divine* that rising from His slumber, and seeing the storm, He stretched out His hands, soon to be nail-scarred, and said "hush, be still" and the waves crouched down at His feet like a babe asleep on mother's breast.

He was so *human* that in Gethsemane's garden He wept great drops as if it were drops of blood, even threatening to beckon twelve legions of angels to His side - but He was so *Divine* that He walked in the will of His Father and set His face, like a flint, to go to Jerusalem.

He was so *human* that on the cross He said "I thirst" but He was so *Divine* that He refused the vinegar mixed with gall, trod the winepress alone and commended His soul into the hands of His Father.

2. Precious in His attributes, His Spiritual Person.

Here deep calls unto deep. Count the *attributes* of God, the Father and remember, with joy, that Christ, *as God*, possess them all.

Study all the different *names* of God (and of Christ) each of which denotes some special attribute of His majesty – study all these and behold His preciousness.

3. He is Precious to *all* believers.

"To the *artist* He is the *Altogether Lovely*; (Song of Sol. 5:16)

To the *architect* He is the *Chief Cornerstone*; (I Pet. 2:6).

To the *astronomer* He is the *Sun of Righteousness*; (Mal. 4:2).

To the *baker* He is the *Living Bread*; (John 16:35).

To the *banker* He is the *Hidden Treasure*; (Matt 13:44).

To the *biologist* He is the *Life*; (John 14 :6).

To the *carpenter* He is the *Carpenter*; (Mark 6:3).

To the *builder* He is the *Sure Foundation*; (II Tim. 2:19).

To the *doctor* He is the *Great Physician*; (Luke 4:23).

To the *educator* He is the *Great Teacher*; (John 3:2).

To the *engineer* He is the *New and Living Way*; (Heb. 10:20).

To the *farmer* He is the *Sower* and the *Lord of the Harvest*; (Matt. 13:3).

To the *florist* He is the *Rose of Sharon* and the *Lily of the Valley*; (Sol. 2:1).

To the *geologist* He is the *Rock of Ages*; (I Cor. 10:4).

To the *horticulturist* He is the *True Vine*; (John 15:1).

To the *judge* He is the *Righteous Judge* of all men; (II Tim. 4:8).

To the *juror* He is the *Faithful and True Witness*; (Rev. 1 :5).

To the *jeweler* He is the *Pearl of Great Price*; (Matt. 14 :46).

To the *lawyer* He is the *Counselor, the Law-Giver and Advocate*; (Isa. 9 :6).

To the *newspaper man* He is the *Good Tidings of Great Joy*; (Luke 2:10).

To the *oculist* He is the *Light of the Eye*: (Job. 7:8).

To the *philanthropist* He is the *Unspeakable Gift*; (1 Cor. 9:15).

To the *philosopher* He is the *Wisdom of God*; (1 Cor: 1:24).

To the *preacher* He is the *Word of God*: (John 1:1)

To the *sculptor* He is the *Living Stone*; (1 Pet. 2:5.).

To the *servant* He is the *Good Master*; (Luke 10:25).

To the *Statesman* He is the *Desire of all Nations*; (Had. 2:7).

To the *student* He is the *Incarnate Truth*; (Eph. 1:13).

To the *theologian* He is the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*; (Heb. 12 :2).

To the *toiler* He is the “*Giver of Rest*,” (Matt 11:28).

To the sinner He is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" (John 1:29).

To us who trust Him, He is our Saviour, Lord, and Shepherd, High Priest and Coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19 :16).

FOUR CURSES UPON THE UNSAVED

VERSE 8

"And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto they also were appointed."

I will mention the four curses upon the unsaved as based upon verse 8 above.

I will then insert verse 9 and name four blessings upon the saved based on verse 9.

The first curse pronounced upon the unsaved is that:

1. Christ is a stone of stumbling unto them.

Peter, in this statement, was referring back to the prophet, Isaiah, where this very prophet had prophesied of the coming Messiah and had foretold, over seven hundred years before, the coming of Christ and had said that, when He (Christ) did come, the spiritually blind and unregenerate would stumble over Him. That is, over His virgin birth, and His poor parentage (Joseph was only his foster father). The Jews, and the world expected that the Messiah would spring from kingly parentage and present Himself in the pomp of a warrior. It is true Isaiah had prophesied the very opposite of this (Isaiah 53) but their eyes were blinded and they would not see. Therefore, when He came "there was no room for Him" (Luke 2:7).

This remains true of the blind and unregenerate until this very day. Just as there was no room for Christ in the heart, in the home, or in the government of that day, so He is pushed aside by this present unbelieving world. Therefore, all man-made peace treaties must ultimately fail. The power of the new birth upon

persons, the ceasing to stumble over God's Messiah – is the only way for peace on earth. I mean peace in the sinner's own heart and conscience, peace with himself, peace with God, and peace with his fellowmen.

2. To the unsaved He was a rock of offense.

A part of the world, at the Messiah's birth, accepted Him historically. That is, they looked upon Him as a stone, or leader that would cover the earth with his ecclesiastical kingdom, and that, without Calvary. They, therefore, stumbled at His death on the cross, and counted it foolishness. (I Cor. 1:18).

3. The unsaved stumble at the word.

That is, they stumble at that part of the word which holds forth the free doctrine of justification. Paul gives us a life-sized picture of the unsaved and self-righteous sinner and throws a great light upon this very verse. (Rom. 10 :3-5):

"For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

For Christ is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

4. Being disobedient.

That is, being disobedient to the gospel revelation, seeking to explain Christ and His miraculous power by human means. Isaiah spoke of this very thing, and I will paraphrase it thus: "If ye obey not, his word shall be among you for revenge, and for a stone smiting, and for a rock of offense..." (Isa. 8:14).

FOUR BLESSINGS UPON THE SAVED

VERSE 9a.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."

I. A chosen generation.

The Jews were a chosen generation only in an *external* way. This verse points out that this fact can only be true, in a spiritual sense, of those who are not only chosen. (among either Jew or Gentile) but who are *called* and *regenerated* by the blood of Christ (I Peter 1:2).

2. A royal priesthood:

In Exodus 19 :6, the Israelites were called "a kingdom of priests." That is, they were a kingdom of priests along *natural* lines. This verse goes much further than that and shows the necessity of the new birth. No man can be a royal priest in the *spiritual* sense, until he has, by faith, become a subject of the great High Priest, even Christ Himself. The Seer on the Isle of Patmos declared that, in the new covenant, every saint of God belongs to a spiritual kingdom and that each individual makes up a part of the whole kingdom (saved). "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:6). Therefore, we are called *priests* and *kings*.

3. A holy nation.

Referring to an *inward* holiness and has to do with the spirit of God dwelling in the believer and constantly "setting him apart" (I Pet. 1:2) so that, in connection with other believers, he may make up, in a *spiritual* sense, a Holy nation. That is, just as innumerable Jews, simply Jews, and without the new birth, made up a holy nation (that is they were the chosen of God, as a people) in the Old Testament.

4. A peculiar people.

This has reference to the fact that Israel was called a peculiar treasure in Exodus 19 :5. So God's elect of this age, (Jew or Gentile), are a peculiar people, and a people to whom God bears a peculiar love. God's people live a peculiar life to the world, for they are strangers and pilgrims here. God's people have peculiar blessings and peculiar care thrown around them, in this life. They are unlike the self-sown tree, that grows upon the dry and craggy hilltops, which tree begs for the rain and moans the destructive worms that shade in its branches. Furthermore it lives in constant fear, because no special provision protects it from the forked lightning from the skies, "not so the ungodly, not so" (Psa. 1:4).

God's peculiar people, however, are like the *planted* tree – planted hard by the rivers, planted by the heavenly Husbandman. He is not dependent upon the meager thunderheads above for his moisture, but his taproot goes down to a perennial supply of the "rivers" of God's grace. The heavenly Husbandman *spades* this tree and *prunes* its every bough. This tree shall not wither, and his leaves shall possess a glorious hue. His fruit shall not fall off the vine, ere it is ripened, for no larvae is allowed to haunt its bough. It is true, that even this tree goes through terrible storms, at times, but the winds cannot move it, and the shafts cannot touch it, because it is a peculiar tree and visited by the peculiar mercies of God.

SEVEN WAYS BY WHICH THE CHRISTIAN CAN SHOW FORTH THE EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

The above statement is *based on I Peter 2:9, through I Peter 3:21*.

I am now going to take up, in outline form, the six ways that Peter points out by which the born-again Christian can show forth to the world, the (praises) excellencies of Christ, which dwelleth within them.

You will notice that I am not taking *each one* of these verses *separately* (as I have done in the past) but I am picking out the *high points* of Peter's argument, according to the *particular* verse, in which I find the point, and treating each point separately.

When I have covered the rest of Chapter 2, and all of chapter 3, according to this method, I will then *go back to* the most *difficult passages* (which I have not covered in the outline), and give a *full interpretation* of passages of special interest.

We will now study the *six ways* which Peter pointed out by which the Christian is "to work out his salvation" (Phil. 2:12) to the world.

We will give I Pet. 2:9 in *full* to show how Peter introduces his argument from this very verse.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew FORTH THE PRAISES of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;"

Note that Peter speaks of how God called us out of *darkness* into his marvelous *light*. He called us out (saved us) in order that we might show forth (to the world) the excellencies (praises) of God's grace. Peter

then enumerates, through the rest of *chapter two, and chapter three*, the points by which this may be done:

VERSE 12a.

1. An honest conversation – or manner of life – "having your conversation honest among the Gentiles" (I Peter 2:12).

This means to live and walk honestly before all men and do those things which are right in the sight of God, and in the sight of men.

This, then, is the first way, by which we (as Christians) are to prove to the world the excellencies of Christ, namely: a life of deep piety and holiness. This *does not suppose sinless perfection*, which can never be this side of eternity. Paul even tells us that these very bodies, in which we now live, will be, even at death, "sown in corruption" (I Cor. 15).

Salvation never did mean that when once you were saved, you never would make another mistake. However, *salvation does mean*, that when once you are saved, it will become a *moral impossibility* to ever enjoy sin anymore. In other words, the *bend of the spring will be upward* – the trend of the life will be Godward.

It reminds me of what a colored divine preached to his congregation: He kept telling them on the matter of sin, not to "get down". Three times he repeated it until the wail of his congregation had become likened unto the first night in Egypt. Finally, he stopped abruptly and *fixed it all up* by saying "brethren, if you get down, *please don't wallow*." This is what John taught. (I John 3:9-10). This is what Peter taught when he said having your conversation honest among the gentiles (I Pet. 2:12).

The second way – and Peter argues – that a Christian is to show forth the excellencies of God is by:

VERSE 12b

2. Winning lost souls to Christ.

"They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Pet. 2:12b)

This verse is rich with meaning. It means that when wicked men (before they are saved) take notice of the good works (manner of life) of the saints, they shall that account, come to desire to be a partaker of the same gracious life, that they have found so evident in their neighbor. A sinner will not read his Bible, but a consecrated saint is his living epistle. "Our epistle... known and read of all men" (II Cor. 3:2)... "read by the unsaved.

Peter, then, pictures *Christ coming back*, at length and calls it "a day of visitation." Peter says that the sinner, who was born again (from a human standpoint he saw the good life of the saint) shall *glorify* God, in the day (judgment) of *visitation*. This is the very argument exactly that Jesus used. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

VERSE 13.

The third way that a Christian may show forth the praises, or excellencies of God is by:

3. Being loyal to the government.

The proof: "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man... king... governors" (Verses 13 through 17 inclusive). Please read them.

These verses are omitted here, but the reader must study them very carefully with *open Bible*. Peter is not discussing here the *right* or *wrong* of different forms of government. He is rather discussing the fact that *God does approve human government*. Paul carries out the same thought in Romans 13 :1, when he says "let every soul be subject unto the higher powers... the powers that be, are ordained of God." That is, *God approves human subjects being ruled over by human leaders*. This, He says is ordained of God.

Therefore, Peter argues, that the Christian, in order to show both the excellences of God to a lost world, is to be a loyal subject of human government. This is a practical thought, for what Christian could have any influence with the world, and, especially along soul winning lines, if that Christian is constantly, by word of mouth and by willful act finding fault and even seeking the downfall of the government, under which he, by the grace of God, is allowed to live in the pursuit of his wellbeing and happiness?

The fourth way that a Christian may show forth the excellencies of God is:

VERSE 19.

4. Through suffering wrongfully.

Look at the statement: "Endure grief, suffering wrongfully" (I Pet. 2:19).

Notice very carefully these two words, "suffer wrongfully." That is, for the saint to suffer, when he has done nothing within *himself* to cause the suffering. It means to suffer for righteousness sake in order that, on some occasions, the wicked may behold the suffering saint and see how well he *bears up* under it. He may therefore, be led to think much of the grace of Christ that sustains this saint who is suffering through no fault of his own, but only for the glory of God.

Read of the sufferings of the *heroes* and *heroines* of faith as found in Hebrews 11:32-38. Read the history of the *early church*, and you will find that the Christians of the first three centuries suffered unspeakable torture at the hands of pagan emperors. They were thrown into the arena to be devoured by wild beasts. They were dragged naked through the streets. They were "sawn asunder" (sawed in two pieces while yet alive). Why did God permit these early Christians to become martyrs of the Cross?

It is said of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, that great winner of souls, that toward the close of his ministry, he never knew a day without physical pain. On the rostrum of his church in London, there was a couch, where he lay during the preliminary services, praying for strength and power from on high to preach the Gospel. Then, having given out the message, back to the couch he went.

Yes, sometimes, for the glory of God, devout Christians suffer. Assisted by great grace, they bear up under it "suffer wrongfully" but in so suffering, testify of God's amazing grace.

Read carefully the following words:

We are now going to I Peter Chapter 3. We have already covered *four* ways by which the Christian may show forth the praises of God. Do not let the fact that we are going to Chapter three confuse you about *point five* and other points, which are to follow. In other words, we will go right on with our 5th point, (based on Chapter 3, verse 1) as if the figure three (of the chapter heading) was there. This will help the reader in centering his thoughts directly on the *seven* points of Peter's argument. The *figures* of the

chapter are not inspired and here is one place, where the meaning was broken and Peter's argument chopped to pieces.

CHAPTER III

Going on, here is the 5th way, by which a Christian can tell forth to the world his inner experience of grace.

VERSE 1.

5. The wife is to be in subjection to her own husband.

"likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your husbands" (I Pet. 3:1).

I have just told you that the figure three for a chapter heading broke Peter's argument and here is the definite proof in the very first word of Chapter three. The word is "likewise" and refers back to the argument that he has been making all along from I Pet. 2:9 up until this very verse. (Ch. 3, Verse 1).

Peter here includes *all wives*, and exhorts them, in general, to be in subjection to their own husbands. However, he has a particular regard for such wives as have *unbelieving husbands* "if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives" (I Pet. 3:1b).

Peter argues, as does Paul in I Cor. 7:10, 13 and 16, that they should not voluntarily separate themselves from such unbelieving husbands (or the other way around) but that they should abide with them in order that they may "without the word (the written word, or preaching of the gospel) be won by the conversation (Godly life) of the wives."

To make this perfectly clear, a godly woman is to show forth the excellencies of Christ by the way she, as a Christian, conducts herself to, and before, her own husband. By the quiet godliness on her part, the unsaved husband is softened toward the Lord, so that he has a better opinion of Christ and salvation. After a time, he may be inclined toward the gospel (because of his wife's testimony) and, at length, may come to be soundly saved in Christ. This would make the wife (I speak as a man) the savior of her husband. Therefore, she would not only tell out the praises of the Lord to her *own husband*, but he, being saved, would join her in spreading the good news of regeneration and consecration to others.

Take a vote from the people of the world and let them tell you who, in their opinion, is a saved woman. They will point directly to the refined, but quiet wife, who being independent, and losing none of her identity, yet, "she openeth her mouth with wisdom: and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not of the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (Prov. 31:26, 27, 28 and 29).

There is a story about four clergymen who were discussing the demerits of the various translations of the Bible. One liked the *King James* version best because of its simple, beautiful English. Another liked the *American Revised* version best because it is more literal and comes nearer to the original Greek and Hebrew. Still another liked *Moffatt's* translation best because of its up-to-date vocabulary.

The fourth minister was silent. When asked to express his opinion, he replied, "I like my *mother's translation* best." The other three expressed surprise. They did not know his mother had translated the Bible. "Yes, she did," he replied, "she translated it *into life*, and it was the most convincing translation I ever saw."

VERSE 7.

The sixth way a Christian may show forth God's excellences is by:

6. The husband loving (honoring) his wife.

"ye husbands giving honor unto the wife" (I Pet. 1:7).

That is, by speaking well of her – speaking well by *deeds* as well as *words*. This would include her clothing, food – *all the delights of life*. Let the husband recognize that his wife is:

a. "The weaker vessel" (I Pet. 1:7). She is physically and therefore to be treated tenderly, as becomes the *stronger* of the race. As in every condition of life, 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.

An old ancient Jewish book says, in proverb, "If thy wife be short of stature, bow thyself and whisper to her." The meaning of the proverb, is, that the husband ought to suit himself to her capacity and weakness.

b. Let the husband recognize that both are heirs together of the grace of life (living grace).

That is, they are heirs here and will be heirs *hereafter*. It means that in salvation, and inheritance, God has made no distinction of sex. *Here* the husband and the wife are on *equal footing* since both were *chosen* in the *same election*, called by the *same means of grace* (Gospel) and saved by the same propitiation. They dwell together *here* as heirs of every good grace promised to the believer and shall dwell together *there* (that is, in the same heaven) as heirs together of all the graces of that world.

Therefore, let the husband not be always boasting his authority (for by such a man usually means his superiority) over his wife. Rather let him look upon her as a Christian – the beloved of his bosom – "loving her as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

Does Christ go prating Himself upon His Church like Diotrephes upon the saints? (III John 1:10).

Does He parade the weakness of a church like a first Adam upon an Eve? (Gen. 3:12).

Shall he prate his *masculine liberty* upon his wife, seeing that both are heirs together of life eternal?

Shall he parade *her weakness* because he is the stronger of the two – and only that by the grace of God – in order that he might defend her and provide for her?

Therefore, by tender behavior, let the husband tell out to the world the praises of God. Let him show he is indeed a child of God by his tenderness toward his own wife.

The seventh way that a Christian is to praise the Lord on earth, and show forth the fact that he is saved by:

7. Baptism. "Even baptism. . .the answer of a good conscience toward God" (I Pet. 3:21).

VERSE 20.

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ " (I Pet. 3:21).

Therefore, there is something in the *ark* and in *baptism* which correspond to each other.

1. The ark was *God's* ordinance and *not* man's invention.

So is baptism. It is of *Heaven* and *not* of men.

2. As the *ark*, while it was being prepared, was the *scorn* and *derision* of men. So is *baptism*, as an ordinance, sometimes *scorned* and derided by men.

3. When once Noah and his family were shut up in the ark, it represented a *burial*, and they seemed, as it were, to be buried in the ark, yea, in the waters!

This is an emblem of baptism, which is expressed by a "burial" (Rom. 6:4). Hence Noah and his family, once in the ark, had the great deep broken *under* them, and the windows of Heaven opened *over* them. This double deluge caused them, as it were, to be *immersed* in, and covered over with water. I say this fitly represents New Testament baptism by immersion.

4. No one but *believers* entered the ark.

So none should be baptized but believers. "There they that gladly received (accepted Christ from hearing the word preached) were baptized" (Acts 2:42). Remember that Noah was not saved (his soul was not saved) by entering the ark. We read in Gen. 6:8 that he, before the flood "found grace" (was accepted) in the "eyes of the Lord." So the sinner is first made a "disciple" *then* (afterward) he is baptized (Matt. 28:18-20).

Noah went out of a *spiritually dead* world and entered the Ark. In the deluge of water, he, therefore, floated out of a *dead world* (old) and floated into a *living world* (the world after the flood). In this new world Noah gave testimony of the grace of God.

This is a picture of believer's baptism. The believer finds grace (is saved) before baptism (as Noah before the ark) and therefore in the *act* of baptism, he (the believer) gives his testimony of having left the old life (world) and hence, his determination to give a *living* testimony henceforth in a new life (world) as did Noah.

Peter goes on to say that baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." That is, baptism cannot take away either the *original* or *actual* sins. This can only be done by the blood of Christ. Thus Peter says that baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God." This means that when baptism is rightly accepted (immersion), by a person conscious of what baptism means (testimony) and for the purpose of glorifying God, he will, beyond question, have a good conscience toward God.

HELP ON A SEEMINGLY DIFICULT PASSAGE – (I PET. 3:18-20).

I want to go back and insert I Peter 3, verse 18, in order to clear the way for the interpretation of verse 19.

VERSE 18.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit," (I Pet. 3:18).

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins."

This does not mean that he suffered for his *own* sins, for He was *sinless*. It means He suffered for the *sins of His people* in order to obtain for them the remission of sins - remission and reconciliation.

"the just for the unjust."

I have just said that He suffered to take away the sins of His people, and to reconcile them to God. We now find, in this verse, that it was a substitutionary death - the innocent (Christ) dying for the guilty (man). God "laid upon him? (made to meet upon him) the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

"put to death in the flesh."

This means "even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). It is a common notion that the Jews, assisted by the Gentiles, crucified Christ and thus salvation came. As a matter of fact, salvation was wrought out, even before the stars sang together, and *the death of Christ originated in the heart of God* "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; he hath put him to grief" (Isaiah 53 :10).

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, accused his Jewish hearers of crucifying "a man (Christ) approved of God" (Acts 2:20). That is, they (the Jews) in the course of human events, nailed Christ to the cross. However, Peter hastens to say, that this they could *not* have done, if it had not been given unto them "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). That is, the death of Christ originated in the heart of God.

"but quickened by the Spirit."

In the former phrase, Christ was, "put to death in the flesh" (by wicked men). In this verse, He is "*quickened*" (made alive) by "the Spirit." Paul says that Christ was "raised from the dead" by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11). Furthermore, Paul goes on to say that Christ was "justified *in, or by, the Spirit*" (I Tim. 3:16). That is, in His resurrection His claims were vindicated and He was "declared to be the Son of God" (Rom. 1:4).

VERSE 19.

"By which also he went and preached unto the Spirits in prison."

Notice carefully the first two words of the above verse, which read as follows: "by which." That is, by the Holy Spirit, as we have just discussed in verse 18.

That is, the Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead in verse 18. By this Holy Spirit, He (Jesus), went in the power of the Spirit, (Spirit resting upon Noah) and *preached by Noah* and *through Noah*, unto the souls of disobedient sinners that were living in Noah's day.

The plain and easy sense of the words is, that Christ, by His Spirit (the Holy Spirit), by which He (Christ) was quickened, went in the personal ministry of Noah and by Noah's preaching and by the building of the ark, preached the gospel to sinners who at that time were living on the earth. These, being disobedient, and impenitent died in their sins.

This verse, then, does not teach that Christ went into this prison (Satan's prison of Rev. 20:6), or preached in it. Christ in *his Spirit* (the Holy Spirit) resting upon Noah (in Noah's day) did preach to sinners of Noah's day. These sinners being disobedient, until the time of their death, *their separate souls* were at *death* put into prison. THERE THEY WERE WHEN PETER WROTE AND SAID "SPIRITS" (SOULS) IN PRISON (Verse 28).

Again, we learn that Christ existed in His Divine, nature before He was incarnate. He was before Abraham. He was in the days of Noah, even *before* Noah. Hence this teaches that Christ, also, under the Old Testament, acted the part of a Mediator. In His divine nature, and by the Spirit, He discharged that branch of it, namely: by preaching the gospel through (and by) Noah before he appeared in human nature.

VERSE 20.

"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water" (I Pet. 3:20).

"Which sometime were disobedient."

That is, to all the instructions and warning which God gave to sinners *before* the flood. To all the strivings of His (Christ's) Spirit, (which essentially is the Holy Spirit) and to the ministry of Christ, by Noah. They continued in their profaneness, impiety, and corrupted their ways. They filled the earth with violence and wickedness, notwithstanding that they were threatened with a flood that would destroy them (Gen. 6 and 7).

This "sometime" refers to the time of these very sinners being upon the earth. However, when Peter wrote his Epistle their souls were "in prison." The same prison as Satan was then in. These unsaved souls were there with him (Rev. 20 :6).

"When once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah,"

That is, when God, who is always long suffering and patient, waited in Noah's day for a long period of time – perhaps one hundred and twenty years. During this time (when the ark was being prepared) Noah was preaching to sinners about coming judgment. God, in patience, was withholding such a judgment until Noah could complete the ark.

AS I MUSED

As I mused upon Chapter three, verse 20, I thought of:

SIX THINGS (AMONG MANY) THAT IT TAKES TO CONSTITUTE NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM:

1. Water, "in Jordan" (John 1:9).
2. "Much water" (John 3 :23).
3. Both the candidate and the administrator "in the water" (Acts 8:88).
4. A "burial" in the water. (Romans 6:24).
5. A "rising" from the water (Col. 2:12).
6. A coming "straightway up out of the water" (Matt. 3:16).

As I mused upon the ark as found in I Peter 3 :20, I thought of:

NINE BLESSED FACTS ABOUT THE ARK

1. The ark was of Divine origin.

Gopher wood and pitch. Gopher wood is the most durable of all woods, representing the humanity of Jesus. The pitch has reference to the atonement (at-one-ment). So the origin of our salvation was in God.

New Testament proof: "Hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world – according to the good pleasure of His will." (Eph. 1:4 and 5).

2. There was only one ark for a shelter.

So there was *one* divine conception (Matt. 1:20). One Bethlehem' manger (Luke 2:15). One Calvary's cross (Luke 23:33). *One* open grave (Matt. 28:6). One intercessory work (Heb. 7:25).

3. The ark had one door.

Every creature entered at the *one* door. This is the *only* safety; namely one way into Christ Jesus by personal faith, for He is "the door" ... "shall be saved." (Jno. 10:9).

4. How did Noah and his family enter in? Answer:

They believed three things:

- a. They believed that sin was a fact and disobedience needed to be punished.
- b. They believed that *there would be a flood*, based upon the Word of God.
- c. They believed the ark was safe, and the safe place, (apply).

5. All were lost that were not in the ark.

Lost because they were not in the ark. So, the sinner is condemned, "Ye are condemned already because ye have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

6. The security of the ark.

The door was closed. Who closed it? Answer: God closed it. "The Lord shut him in." (Gen, 7:16). The door kept the world *out*, but it kept Noah in. So when a man enters the "door" of salvation through Jesus Christ, God closes all doors behind him, and he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him..." (II Tim 1:12)

7. Fellowship in the ark.

God was in the ark. Every wave that beat upon the ark and every wind that tested its strength was felt by Jehovah, and because of His presence, Noah had no cause for alarm, but the sweet fellowship of safety. The *mouse* was as safe as the *elephant*, and the *chigger* as safe as the *rhinoceros*. The *terrapin* was as safe as the *eagle*. Not because of what they were, but because of *where* they were; namely in the ark.

So all of God's children have fellowship and safety in the New Testament Ark, Christ Jesus. The only Ark which starts floating with the signboard reading: "No condemnation" (Rom. 8:1); and enters the "desired haven" (Psa. 107:30) with the signboard reading, "No separation" (Rom. 8:35).

8. God Put His Bow in the Skies.

This was *His* rainbow. For whom was this bow? Answer: For the ark people. The world of that day, who refused the ark, had no rainbow, but were dead (drowned) when it appeared.

So the "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), have no covenant with God now, no rainbow of mercy, no risen Lord, no intercessor in the heavens.

9. The Lesson of the Rainbow.

Only *half* of the natural rainbow was ever seen, either then or now. However, John saw the saved gathered home, in the book of Revelation, and beheld the *complete* circle of a rainbow, "round about the throne" (Rev, 4:3). This is complete knowledge!

CHAPTER IV

VERSE 1.

"Forasmuch, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh"

Peter has now finished his discussion concerning Christ's preaching in and *through* the ministry of Noah – preaching to men who were then alive, but whose spirits were in prison when Peter wrote this Epistle.

Having also discussed how Noah and his family entered the ark, he now returned to a discussion of the sufferings of Christ which he had previously mentioned in first Peter 2:24 and in first Peter 3:18.

I was reading a statement the other day – a statement in what was purported to be a religious book – and in this book the author was wondering when Christ became the Messiah, or to put it in his modernistic terms, when did Christ become conscious of His Messiahship. The author had forgotten that Christ was the Messiah from eternity past and eternity to come. At the age of twelve Jesus denied Joseph was his father: "Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business" (Luke 2:40). Furthermore, Christ being "equal with the Father" (Phil. 2:6b), He therefore, was conscious of His Messiahship before His birth, in conception, at birth, after His birth, during his baby days, during His boy-hood, during His manhood, and up until His 33rd birthday, even until death.

I, therefore, call your attention to the blessed thought that Christ, not only in eternity before the world was, but from earliest childhood *lived an anticipated death*. Christ knew when he was thirty-three that He would never see His thirty-fourth birthday. The spikes that were to be driven through His hands had already been dug from the bowels of the earth, and the tree upon which He was to hang dying had already been felled in the forest.

He lived in the shadow of Calvary.

Holman Hunt, the master painter, has a picture in which he represents Jesus Christ in the Nazarene carpenter shop. Around Him are the saws, the hammers, the axes, the drills of carpentry. The picture represents Christ as rising from the carpenter's working bench and wearily stretching out His arms, as one will after being in contracted or uncomfortable posture, and the light of that picture is so arranged that the arms of Christ, wearily stretched forth, together with His body, throw on the wall the shadow of a cross. At the bottom of that picture were these words, **IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS**.

Oh, my friends, that shadow was on everything in Christ's lifetime! Shadow: of a cross on the Bethlehem swaddling clothes; shadow of a cross on the road over which the three fugitives fled into Egypt; shadow of a cross on lake Galilee as Christ walked its mosaic floor of opal and emerald and crystal; shadow of a cross on the road to Emmaus; shadow of a cross on the brook Kedron; shadow of the cross on the door of the temple, and on the side of Olivet. Shadows from the cradle to the grave!

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO HOLY LIVING

VERSE I.

"Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind."

That is the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:6). A mind to suffer joyfully for righteousness sake.

"For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."

That is, the believer who is reckoned (counted) "dead unto sin" (a life of sin)) but "alive unto righteousness" (a life of righteousness) (Rom. 6:11).

Such a believer, by virtue of the death of Christ, "is dead" (Col. 2:3) to the "dominion" of sin (Rom. 6:4).

Such a believer has therefore had the "old man" crucified and through the help of the Holy Spirit has been able to "mortify" (eradicate by deterioration) "the deeds of the body" (Rom, 8:13).

VERSE 3.

"For the time past of our life may suffice."

He refers to "the time of your past life" (before regenerated unto a new life). He means that the flesh has already had enough of time granted to it in the sins mentioned above, even *before* conversion. Since conversion, God has a right to all the rest of the time the Christian lives. Let the *past* life with its sins, in the unregenerated days "suffice" and look *forward* now to the new life in Christ.

"When ye walked in lasciviousness, lusts."

By the statement "walked" he means that the course of their lives, before conversion, was a course which led them into all kinds of uncleanness.

"Excess of wine, revellings, banquetings."

This refers to intemperance of every kind.

a. "wine"

He means wine drunk to excess and therefore turned into drunkenness.

b. "revellings"

He means gluttony in eating at pagan gatherings.

e. "banquetings"

He means the after meeting – after the wine and revellings. For example the obscene songs of the pagan banqueting hour.

The devil, too, has a banqueting house and his banner is HATE.

Suggestion: The *Lord*, too, has a "banqueting house" (Song of Solomon 2 :4) Waving over the Lord's banqueting house is the banner of LOVE (Song of Solomon 2:4).

Suggestion; "it is better to go to the house of *mourning* (the Lord's banquet) than to go the house of *feasting*" (Devil's banquet). (See this verse, sure. Eccl. 7:2).

"And abominable idolatries"

Notice a wonderful lesson:

In the first part of verse 3 we have:

1. Uncleanliness in life.
2. Intemperance in act.

What is the next step? Answer:

3. Answer idolatry.

The point, is, that if an unconverted man leads a life of uncleanliness he is, therefore, a much more *easy prey* to false cults, heresy, or downright idolatry, along any line. By such a life (before saved) his moral stamina is broken, his mind twisted, and he, to satisfy his conscience, then invents his own god.

CHRIST'S DEATH AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO ENDURE PERSECUTION BY WICKED MEN

VERSE 4.

"Wherein they think it strange,"

Notice he says "they" (the unsaved men of the world) think "it" (a changed life) strange.

Here is a tender thought. Peter knew that these new converts would meet with all kinds of slurs from the world of the unsaved and he encourages them not to be discouraged when they meet it. Remember in (I Pet. 4:1) he told these saints to "arm" themselves. Well, he here gives them a word of love before they go any further in the bath of fire.

"they think it strange."

Yes, thank God, it is strange! Behold what God hath wrought!

They no longer live to the "lusts of men" (I Pet. 4:2). That is, no longer grovel and crawl in the slime to which unregenerated men are as much at home as a sow in her "wallow of mire" (2 Pet. 2:22) They are now God's lambs (Jno 21:15) and God's sheep" (Jno. 21:16 and 17b).

1. Strange! Yes, lasciviousness (I Pet, 4:3) has gone out the window. It went out the window as Christ came in at the door.
2. Strange! Yes, "excess of wine" has left off, and a pure and serene soberness and decency has come (I Pet. 4:3)
3. Strange! Yes, "idolatry" (I Pet. 4:3) has been dethroned from the heart and they, like the Thessalonians, have turned from their idols to serve the true and living God and to wait for his Son from heaven (I Thes. 1:9).

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AN INCENTIVE TO LEAVE VENGEANCE IN THE HANDS OF GOD

VERSE 5.

"Who will give account to him."

Who does Peter say will give account?

Answer: These wicked men who "think it strange" and persecute the new convert by word and deed.

"To him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

By the "quick" he means the living, by the "dead" he means all who have died or will yet die – all these will be raised and judged.

Who judges? Answer: Christ, "to him" (verse 5a).

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO SAINTS TO SEEK REWARD

VERSE 6.

"For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead."

The Gospel has been preached to men in every age – Old Testament as well as New. The Gospel, (I know, is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ) yet as such it is good news. This good news - either looking *forward* to Christ or looking *back* to Christ - has always been preached to men while they were living.

1. The Gospel was preached by Noah, in Noah's days before the flood - preached in order to make men without an excuse when, at last Christ comes back to this world to judge the living and the dead.
2. The Gospel was preached by the *prophets* even after the days of Noah - preached for the same purpose. Namely, to save men, or, if rejected to make men without excuse.
3. The Gospel was preached in *Peter's* day - preached some who lived in his very lifetime, but who died without personally trusting the Christ of that Gospel. The Gospel, was nevertheless, preached to them both by Peter the Apostles and the early Church. Furthermore, it. was preached for the same purpose as it has always been preached - to make men ready for the judgment, or if rejected, to leave men without excuse at the judgment of the "living and the dead." That is, the Gospel was preached to them while they were living. It was preached to them for the purpose of turning *them to God while they lived*, in order that men during their life time, might judge them to be Christians because of their conduct.

These men referred to here, were, of course, dead (physically) when Peter wrote these words but the argument was rehearsed to the living Christians the all-time fact that the Gospel in all ages, is the measuring rod of salvation, Judgment, and reward.

In short, however, these men did live before they died, they were judged in the world by man, and were, at Peter's writing, judged in *Heaven or Hell* by God the Father. Peter was arguing that this same thing would soon be true of those living during the time of his writing and to whom he wrote this epistle. The incentive, then, is to live righteously.

THE READER WILL NOTE CAREFULLY THAT WE ARE NOW GOING TO I PETER 4:17.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AN INCENTIVE TO SUFFER CHASTISEMENT OF THE LORD

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."

By "judgment" is meant not punishment for sin, strictly speaking, for Christ has endured this judgment in our room and stead. Therefore, in justice eternal judgment cannot be inflicted on the people of God. I would rather use the word "chastisement" and even though it may have its origin in the devil and the devil may mean it for evil, yet, God will limit the devil's bounds (See Job 1) and will take such would-be persecution of the devil and turn it into the glorification of His own Son.

Here, I will insert a verse to show you exactly what I mean "but when we are judged (chastised) we are chastened of the Lord (in this life) that we should not be condemned (go to hell at last) with the world" (I Cor. 11:31).

In other words, the first century or two of Christianity and the preaching of the Gospel was such a time of persecution by the wicked (God allowing) until Paul said that the lives of the other church members (Corinth) were in *jeopardy* every hour (I Cor. 15 :80). Just as it was necessary that the Gospel should be confirmed by "signs and wonders," (miracles) (Mark 16:20), so the sustaining power of this Gospel, in the saint, should be tried and proved by their sufferings.

You will notice that Peter says "judgment" (chastisement) must begin at the house of God. By this he meant the *local independent Church*. For example like the "church in God at Thessalonica" (I Thes. 1:1). On the other hand, I will liken it unto the local church of, which Paul spoke when he wrote to Timothy and said "these things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly : But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God fest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory " (I Tim, 3:16).

"If the righteous scarcely be saved."

We have found that this does not refer to any lack of atonement (At-One-ment) for that work is complete once for all (Heb. 10:10). What then does these words "scarcely saved" mean? Answer: It means that the saint's enjoyment, in this life, is fraught with many difficulties by reason of the *corruption* of a natural world that is going to hell all around them. Furthermore, by a *law in their own members* warring against the law of their minds. Not only so but they must constantly "wrestle with principalities and powers" (I Eph. 6 :12) which are above their match.

Therefore, summing up, once more, the true meaning of this verse, it is this : By reason of various afflictions and persecutions and many trials (in this life) which make the saints' way to eternal life a *straight* way – in fact so straight until they are almost tempted to give up hope and fall by the way-side (and indeed they would if not soundly saved, but being soundly saved) they are given grace to "hope unto the end" (I Pet. 1:13).

"Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear"

All men are sinners in themselves - sinners by nature. (Eph. 2:2). However, this verse means such sinners as are wholly destitute of the sanctifying grace of the Spirit.

Peter had made out a terrible indictment against these very sinners (Chapter 4). Now he proceeds to ask, in view of this indictment, where will such sinners stand in the last day?

He makes out his case against them on five counts:

1. "Christ hath suffered " (I Peter 4-1).

Christ suffered in the flesh during his earthly ministry, at the conclusion of which he was shamefully crucified on the cross. These sinners had a part in causing Christ to suffer, and in nailing the prince of Glory to the tree. Therefore, they are guilty of the murder of the Son of God. Where will they stand in the judgment day!

2. These very sinners lived "in the flesh to the lusts of men" (I Peter 4:2).

Some of the sinners that also lived to the lusts of men and "walked in lasciviousness" (2 Peter 4:3) had been saved, and no longer walked. They left these destitute sinners still "walking in sin." Therefore, under such a course of sin – living and dying so – where will they appear in the judgment day?

3. These sinners persecuted the saints of God "speaking evil of you" (2 Peter 4 :4).

Yes, these sinners spoke evil of the saints then, and they speak evil of the saints now. Where shall they appear on the judgment day?

4. These sinners will have to give account to him (God) on the morning of their resurrection – the resurrection of the wicked " (I Peter 4:5).

In view of the fact that God "is ready to judge" where shall the sinner appear in that day?

5. These sinners had the gospel preached also to them " (I Peter 4:6).

In view of the fact that they heard the gospel, and turned it down, where will they appear in the judgment?

CHAPTER V

VERSE 1a.

"The elders which are among you"

By "elders" he means men in office whose business it was to feed the flock" (I Pet. 5:2). It would be better if we would use the term "pastors," or bishops, or overseers, for these are synonymous names and belong to persons in the same office.

HOW TO PASTOR A CHURCH - GOD'S 9 DIRECTIONS

1. Pastors should have their *residence* in the midst of the flock. "*which are among you*" (I Pet. 5:1a).

This is certainly a practical point for where else should pastors be but *among* their flocks? In the nature of the case, this is sometimes impossible, but nevertheless it is God's ideal plan and direction. It should be as nearly adhered to as possible. This is evident, and for a thousand reasons which could not here be given.

2. Pastors are to "*feed the flock of God*" (I Pet. 5:2a).

This is descriptive of a *certain* flock which is to be fed. Peter points out and distinguishes this flock from all other flocks. He says that the pastor should have a particular regard for this local flock is "among you"

Each flock was committed to a *certain* pastor's care (a pastor over each church) and each were so made "overseers" by the Holy Ghost (Acts 20:28). To *this* flock the pastor is to stand in a special relation, and under a certain *responsibility*, more than to any other distinct or local flock.

By "the flock of God" is meant the *church of God* over which each pastor was set by the Spirit. Each church consisted of Christ's *sheep* and *lambs*. He so told Peter to feed both (John 21: 15-18) and now Peter, under Divine inspiration, passes the admonition on to his fellow pastors,

Note that this flock is to be fed by the pastor. It is not to be fed with "every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14) which blows up the pride of human nature, and swells men with "vain" conceit, nor with the "doctrines of Men" (Col. 1:8). *This* flock should be fed with Divine and *evangelical truths*, with the "words of faith and sound doctrine" (Titus 1:9)

Summing it all up, they should be fed with the Gospel of the grace of God, which contains "*milk*" (I Pet. 2:2) for babes and *meat* (Heb. 5:14) for strong men. Yes, with a crucified Christ, himself, (John 12 :32) who is the Bread of life, (John 6:48). Thus taught, the saint will feast upon the doctrines of "peace" (Rom. 5:1) and "pardon" (Isa. 55 :6) and rest upon a complete salvation by His "obedience and death" (Phil. 2:8).

In fine, feeding includes the *ministry of the word*, the *administration of ordinances*, and the rule and government of the church, for the word "feed" signifies to rule.

3. The pastor is to take "oversight" of the church "taking the oversight thereof."

That is, he is to take *spiritual* oversight and take it in a spiritual *manner*. He is to look diligently after the members of the church and to show the same interest as a careful shepherd shows over the animal sheep of the shepherd's own pasture.

4. The pastor is to lead and not drive the sheep "*not by constraint*."

That is, *force* and in a severe manner. They are not to force or over drive their flock. This would be cruelty unbecoming to a shepherd. This cruelty and over driving is complained of by (Ezekiel 34:4).

Notice that I said the pastor was to *lead* the flock. He certainly must do this or else he will not long be the shepherd of any flock. Once more, I say he must not over drive them – over drive just because he is in a position of God given authority.

5. The pastor should labor whole heartedly and joyously, "*willingly*."

This word "*willingly*" as used here means that the pastor should do his work *whole heart* and soul. Furthermore, his motive for such work should be *pure love* to Christ for no man is fit to feed Christ's lambs and sheep but those who sincerely love Him. I have already covered it before, but I call your attention to the fact that the Lord *first* asked Peter "lovest thou me" and *later* when Peter had answered in the affirmative he gave to Peter the injunction "feed my sheep" (John 21:15 and 17).

I have said in the *sub head* above that the pastor was to feed the flock with great joy. Yes, he must delight in the work *for the work's sake*. He must labor with an affectionate concern for the good of souls. This is all important for if a pastor does not do his work with relish and holy abandon, his sermons will be mere *talk* and a burden both to *himself* and the *sheep* of his local pasture. Sheep do not follow a grouchy shepherd who is always in the objective mood, nor a *stranger* whose voice they do not know. They always know who owns them, and who leads them, tenderly, into green pastures. The application is evident.

6. The pastor is not to be mercenary "*not for filthy lucre*."

In this verse, *covetousness*, is called *filthy*. Therefore, a pastor is not to oversee his local flock *just* for the sake of gaining money and amassing wealth, as the false prophets in Isaiah's time, who were never satisfied. Some of the false teachers, in the apostles' time, were never satisfied but always *preying* upon the saints of God and using their *would-be* office as a matter of religious racketeering. It is amazing to what extent the work of Christ has thus fallen in this very day. They tell us (these religious racketeers) that the world is not *like it used to be* and that *modern* methods should be used to get money from the sheep to support these would be pastors of the flock of God. This is an admission on their part that the *old* time Gospel has lost its power and that God did not know what He was talking about in (I Pet. 5:2).

7. Pastors labor as examples of the flock "*being examples to the flock*" (I Pet. 5:3).

That is, the pastor is to go before the flock and set an example to believers in work, life, in love, in spirit, in faith and thus recommend the doctrines they preach and the duties they urge upon others. This has been fully covered in some of the other heads just mentioned.

8. Pastors to be crowned with the flock (I Pet. 5:4).

They are to receive this crown "when the chief Shepherd shall appear." Christ is referred to here as the "*chief Shepherd*" for here His second coming is in full view.

THE SHEPHERD CHRIST

1. He was the "*good Shepherd*" (John 10:11).

In this connection with our Lord Himself speaking He says "the good Shepherd giveth his life (on the cross) for the sheep" Christ, then, during His earthly ministry and more especially in his death upon the tree was the good Shepherd of the sheep.

2. The "*great Shepherd*" (Rom. 13:20).

He is so called in that matchless description of His resurrection in these words "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." (Heb. 13 :20). Notice the word here, "everlasting covenant." (Heb. 13:20). If Christ was brought out "everlastingly" to die no more, then His saints were brought out with Him, "everlastingly" to die no more and Christ "hath swallowed up death in victory" (Isa. 25:8).

3. In the verse before us He is "*the chief Shepherd*," Here the English language fails me for Christ is the chief Shepherd in so many different ways, until, like Abraham was unable to compute the stars I cannot name them!

It is enough to say that this verse refers, primarily, to *Christ's second coming* and it means when He comes to reign He will be the chief Shepherd and the "whole earth will have one Lord and His name one" (Zech. 14:9). This, I say, refers to the time when "a stone shall be cut out of the mountain" (Dan. 2 :34) and shall break in pieces all gentile powers and shall "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea " (Isa. 11:9).

I return to our closing theme – Christ is coming again. A few more years and He that *will come shall* come and will not tarry. He shall reign as *chief* Shepherd from pole to pole. No strife shall vex Messiah's reign. They shall hang their helmets high and study war no more. Yes, the Chief is coming. Therefore, fret not yourself because of the false doctrines that roam through the world today. Worry not, oh saint, as if Christ were defeated. He is clad in shining armour through which no dart of error can ever pierce. He lingers for a little while upon the hills, surveying the battlefield with eagle's eye. He leaves his poor servants here to prove how *weak* they are as they almost turn their backs in the day of battle. Yes, He lets heaven and earth see the weakness of an arm of Post-Millennial flesh. Courage, my brethren. The Prince Emmanuel hastens. The white horse of Revelation is soon to come and even now his hoofs are upon the celestial roads. He is near to come. We shall, yet, see "the king in his beauty" (Isa. 23 :17).

Look, on white horses shall His chosen ones follow Him for the battle is the Lord's and He will deliver the enemy into our hands.

He was once the *good* Shepherd. He was *once* the great Shepherd. He is *soon to come* the chief Shepherd. This will be our marriage day – a day for which all other days were made!

*"I am looking for the coming
Of that bright and blissful day
When this darksome night of sorrow
Shall have vanished far away.*

*"When forever with my Saviour
Far beyond this veil of tears
I shall swell the songs of worship
Through the everlasting years.*

*"I am looking at the brightness
See it shineth from afar*

*Of that bright and glorious beaming
Of the bright and morning star.*

*"Through the dark gray mist of morning
Do I see its glorious light
Then away with every shadow
Of this sad and awful night.*

*"I am looking for the coming of the Lord who died for me.
Oh, His words have thrilled my spirit, I will come again for thee.
I can almost hear his foot fall on the threshold of the door,
And my heart is ever longing to be with Him evermore."*

9. Pastors, with the sheep are on the road to "eternal glory" (I Pet. 5:10),

This scripture reads thus: "*But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*" (I Pet. 5:10). Let pastors shepherd well now for the *heavenly shepherd* is coming to pastor us *forever*.

I have just spoken of the second coming of Christ and called it a day for which all other days were made. This is true but only because on that day we will be gathered home.

I have to tell you that gates of Jasper, Capstones of Amethyst, thrones of dominion, do not affect my soul! – like the thought of *home*. Once, there let earthly sorrows howl like storms and roll like seas. Home! Let thrones rot and empires wither. Home! Let the world die in earthquake struggles and be buried amid procession of planets and dirge of spheres. Home! Let everlasting ages roll in irresistible sweep. Home! No sorrow, no crying, no tears, no death but home. Sweet Home! Beautiful home! Glorious home! Everlasting home! Home with loved ones! Home with God!

Do you want a picture of the *new body* and the *new house* into which you will move? Here it is, wrought with the hand of a Master. "We know that if our earthly house were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens," (II Cor. 5:1).

How much *rent* will we have to pay for it? Answer: We are going to *own* it. How much *cash* down? and how much left on mortgage? Our father is going to *give* it as a free gift. When are we going to *move* into it? Answer: We are moving *now*. Heads of families are very apt to stay in the *old* house until they have seen everything off. They send ahead the *children*, and they send ahead the treasures and the valuables. Then, after a while, they will come themselves.

I remember that in the country, in my boyhood days, moving was a jubilation. On almost the first load, we the children, were sent on *ahead* to the *new* house and we arrived with shout and laughter, and in an hour we ranged through every room in the house, the barn and the granary. Toward *night*, and perhaps in the last wagon, *father* and *mother* would come, looking very tired, and we children would run down to the foot of the lane to *meet* them and tell them of all the *wonders we discovered in the new place*. Then the last wagon unloaded, the candles lighted, our neighbors who had helped us to move – for in those days neighbors helped each other – sat down with us at a table groaning with the unrationed luxury of that horse and buggy day.

Well, my dear Lord knows that some of *us* have been *moving for a good while*. We have sent our *children* ahead. Some of us have sent our *fathers* and *mothers* ahead. We have sent many of our valuables ahead. We cannot go yet. There is work for us to do; but after awhile it will be *toward night* and we will be very

tired and we will start for our *new heavenly home*. Look! those who have gone ahead of us, will see our approach, and they will come down the lane to meet us, and they will have much to tell us of what they have discovered in the "house of many mansions," and of how large the rooms are and how bright the fountains.

Finally, then, the last load unloaded, the table will be spread, and our celestial neighbors will come in to sit down with our reunited families. The cups will be full, not with the wine that sweats in the vat of earthly intoxication but with the "new wine of the Kingdom". There, for the first time, we will realize what fools we were on earth when we feared to die, since death has turned out to be only the moving from a smaller house into a larger one and the exchange of a pauper's hut for a prince's castle, and the going up stairs from a miserable kitchen to a glorious parlor. Oh, house of God not made with hands eternal in the heavens!