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Adam Clarke Commentary 2 Peter 3

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

The apostle shows his design in writing this and the preceding epistle, 2 Peter 3:1, 2 Peter 3:2. Describes the nature of the heresies which should take place in the last times, 2 Peter 3:3-8. A thousand years with the Lord are but as a day, 2 Peter 3:9. He will come and judge the world as he has promised, and the heavens and the earth shall be burnt up, 2 Peter 3:10. How those should live who expect these things, 2 Peter 3:11, 2 Peter 3:12. Of the new heavens and the new earth, and the necessity of being prepared for this great change, 2 Peter 3:13, 2 Peter 3:14. Concerning some difficult things in St. Paul ‹s epistles, 2 Peter 3:15, 2 Peter 3:16. We must watch against the error of the wicked, grow in grace, and give all glory to God, 2 Peter 3:17, 2 Peter 3:18.

Verse 1

This second epistle - In order to guard them against the seductions of false teachers, he calls to their remembrance the doctrine of the ancient prophets, and the commands or instructions of the apostles, all founded on the same basis.

He possibly refers to the prophecies of Enoch, as mentioned by Jude, Judges 1:14, Judges 1:15; of David, Psalm 1:1, etc.; and of Daniel, Daniel 12:2, relative to the coming of our Lord to judgment: and he brings in the instructions of the apostles of Christ, by which they were directed how to prepare to meet their God.

Verse 3

Knowing this first - Considering this in an especial manner, that those prophets predicted the coming of false teachers: and their being now in the Church proved how clearly they were known to God, and showed the Christians at Pontus the necessity of having no intercourse or connection with them.

There shall come - scoffers - Persons who shall endeavor to turn all religion into ridicule, as this is the most likely way to depreciate truth in the sight of the giddy multitude. The scoffers, having no solid argument to produce against revelation, endeavor to make a scaramouch of some parts; and then affect to laugh at it, and get superficial thinkers to laugh with them.

Walking after their own lusts - Here is the true source of all infidelity. The Gospel of Jesus is pure and holy, and requires a holy heart and holy life. They wish to follow their own lusts, and consequently cannot brook the restraints of the Gospel: therefore they labor to prove that it is not true, that they may get rid of its injunctions, and at last succeed in persuading themselves that it is a forgery; and then throw the reins on the neck of their evil propensities. Thus their opposition to revealed truth began and ended in their own lusts.

There is a remarkable addition here in almost every MS. and version of note: There shall come in the last days, In Mockery, $\hat{l}\mu\hat{l}''_2\hat{l}\mu\hat{l}''_3\hat{l}''_4\hat{l}_6\hat{l}''_2\hat{a}_6\hat{l}f$, scoffers walking after their own lusts. This is the reading of ABC, eleven others, both the Syriac, all the Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Vulgate, and several of the fathers. They come in mockery; this is their spirit and temper; they have no desire to find out truth; they take up the Bible merely with the design of turning it into ridicule. This reading Griesbach has received into the text.

The last days - Probably refer to the conclusion of the Jewish polity, which was then at hand.

Verse 4

Where is the promise of his coming? - Perhaps the false teachers here referred to were such as believed in the eternity of the world: the prophets and the apostles had foretold its destruction, and they took it for granted, if this were true, that the terrestrial machine would have begun long ago to have shown some symptoms of decay; but they found that since the patriarchs died all things remained as they were from the foundation of the world; that is, men were propagated by natural generation, one was born and another died, and the course of nature continued regular in the seasons, succession of day and night, generation and corruption of animals and vegetables, etc.; for they did not consider the power of the Almighty, by which the whole can be annihilated in a moment, as well as created. As, therefore, they saw none of these changes, they presumed that there would be none, and they intimated that there never had been any. The apostle combats this notion in the following verse.

Verse 5

For this they willingly are ignorant of - They shut their eyes against the light, and refuse all evidence; what does not answer their purpose they will not know. And the apostle refers to a fact that militates against their hypothesis, with which they refused to acquaint themselves; and their ignorance he attributes to their unwillingness to learn the true state of the case.

By the word of God the heavens were of old - I shall set down the Greek text of this extremely difficult clause:

ΟÏ...I•ανοι ησαν εκπαλαι, και γÎ∙ εξ ὑΠαÏ"οÏ, και Πι â€~ ὑΠαÏ"οÏ, σÏ...νεσÏ"ωσα, Ï"ῳ Ϊ"ἷ¿Ϊ… Γ̂-ĨμĨ¿Ϊ… λἷ¿Ĩ³á¿³Â⋅ translated thus by Mr. Wakefield: "A heaven and an earth formed out of water, and by means of water, by the appointment of God, had continued from old time.― By Dr. Macknight thus; "The heavens were anciently, and the earth of water: and through water the earth consists by the word of God.― By Kypke thus: "The heavens were of old, and the earth, which is framed, by the word of God, from the waters, and between the waters.― However we take the words, they seem to refer to the origin of the earth. It was the opinion of the remotest antiquity that the earth was formed out of water, or a primitive moisture which they termed ὠλη, (hule), a first matter or nutriment for all things; but Thales pointedly taught αϕχĨ·Ĩ½ Ĩ ε Ï,,ωĨ½ πανÏ,,||%,|, á½ Î Ï%,| • ειναι, that all things derive their existence from water, and this very nearly expresses the sentiment of Peter, and nearly in his own terms too. But is this doctrine true? It must be owned that it appears to be the doctrine of Moses: In the beginning, says he, God made the heavens and the earth; and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Now, these heavens and earth which God made in the beginning, and which he says were at first formless and empty, and which he calls the deep, are in the very next verse called waters; from which it is evident that Moses teaches that the earth was made out of some fluid substance, to which the name of water is properly given. And that the earth was at first in a fluid mass is most evident from its form; it is not round, as has been demonstrated by measuring some degrees near the north pole, and under the equator; the result of which proved that the figure of the earth was that of an oblate spheroid, a figure nearly resembling that of an orange. And this is the form that any soft or elastic body would assume if whirled rapidly round a center, as the earth is around its axis. The measurement to which I have referred shows the earth to be flatted at the poles, and raised at the equator. And by this measurement it was demonstrated that the diameter of the earth at the equator was greater by about twenty-five miles than at the poles.

Now, considering the earth to be thus formed εξ á½Îα΄Î¿Î, , of water, we have next to consider what the apostle means by ÎÎΠ†á½Îα΄Î¿Ï, , variously translated by out of, by means of, and between, the water. Standing out of the water gives no sense, and should be abandoned. If we translate between the waters, it will bear some resemblance to Genesis 1:6, Genesis 1:7: And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of, x'x³x•x*š (bethoch), between, the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters: and God divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; then it may refer to the whole of the atmosphere, with which the earth is everywhere surrounded, and which contains all the vapours which belong to our globe, and without which we could neither have animal nor vegetative life. Thus then the earth, or terraqueous globe, which was originally formed out of water, subsists by water; and by means of that very water, the water compacted with the earth - the fountains of the great deep, and the waters in the atmosphere-the windows of heaven, Genesis 7:11, the antediluvian earth was destroyed, as St. Peter states in the next verse: the terraqueous globe, which was formed originally of water or a fluid substance, the chaos or first matter, and which was suspended in the heavens - the atmosphere, enveloped with water, by means of which water it was preserved; yet, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, was destroyed by those very same waters out of which it was originally made, and by which it subsisted.

Verse 7

From all this it appears that those mockers affected to be ignorant of the Mosaic account of the formation of the earth, and of its destruction by the waters of the deluge; and indeed this is implied in their stating that all things continued as they were from the creation. But St. Peter calls them back to the Mosaic account, to prove that this was false; for the earth, etc., which were then formed, had perished by the flood; and that the present earth, etc., which were formed out of the preceding, should, at the day of judgment, perish by the fire of Godâ€s wrath.

Verse 8

Be not ignorant - Though they are wilfully ignorant, neglect not ye the means of instruction.

thousand years are but a certain indefinite point, or rather the smallest part of a point.― The words of the apostle seem to be a quotation from Psalm 90:4.

Verse 9

The Lord is not slack - They probably in their mocking said, "Either God had made no such promise to judge the world, destroy the earth, and send ungodly men to perdition; or if he had, he had forgotten to fulfill it, or had not convenient time or leisure.― To some such mocking the apostle seems to refer: and he immediately shows the reason why deserved punishment is not inflicted on a guilty world.

But is long-suffering - It is not slackness, remissness, nor want of due displacence at sin, that induced God to prolong the respite of ungodly men; but his long-suffering, his unwillingness that any should perish: and therefore he spared them, that they might have additional offers of grace, and be led to repentance - to deplore their sins, implore God†mercy, and find redemption through the blood of the Lamb.

As God is not willing that any should perish, and as he is willing that all should come to repentance, consequently he has never devised nor decreed the damnation of any man, nor has he rendered it impossible for any soul to be saved, either by necessitating him to do evil, that he might die for it, or refusing him the means of recovery, without which he could not be saved.

Verse 10

The day of the Lord will come - See Matthew 24:43, to which the apostle seems to allude.

The heavens shall pass away with a great noise - As the heavens mean here, and in the passages above, the whole atmosphere, in which all the terrestrial vapours are lodged; and as water itself is composed of two gases, eighty-five parts in weight of oxygen, and fifteen of hydrogen, or two parts in volume of the latter, and one of the former; (for if these quantities be put together, and several electric sparks passed through them, a chemical union takes place, and water is the product; and, vice versa, if the galvanic spark be made to pass through water, a portion of the fluid is immediately decomposed into its two constituent gases, oxygen and hydrogen); and as the electric or ethereal fire is that which, in all likelihood, God will use in the general conflagration; the noise occasioned by the application of this fire to such an immense congeries of aqueous particles as float in the atmosphere, must be terrible in the extreme. Put a drop of water on an anvil, place over it a piece of iron red hot, strike the iron with a hammer on the part above the drop of water, and the report will be as loud as a musket; when, then, the whole strength of those opposite agents is brought together into a state of conflict, the noise, the thunderings, the innumerable explosions, (till every particle of water on the earth and in the atmosphere is, by the action of the fire, reduced into its component gaseous parts), will be frequent, loud, confounding, and terrific, beyond every comprehension but that of God himself.

The elements shalt melt with fervent heat - When the fire has conquered and decomposed the water, the elements, $||f||_{n}||_{L^{2}}||f||_{L^{2}}||f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f||_{L^{2}}|f|$

Verse 11

All these things shall be dissolved - They will all be separated, all decomposed; but none of them destroyed. And as they are the original matter out of which God formed the terraqueous globe, consequently they may enter again into the composition of a new system; and therefore the apostle says, 2 Peter 3:13: we look for new heavens and a new earth - the others being decomposed, a new system is to be formed out of their materials. There is a wonderful philosophic propriety in the words of the apostle in describing this most awful event.

What manner of persons ought ye to be - Some put the note of interrogation at the end of this clause, and join the remaining part with the 12th verse, thus: Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be? By holy conversation and godliness, expecting and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, etc. Only those who walk in holiness, who live a godly and useful life, can contemplate this most awful time with joy.

The word σπεÏ...Î Î́¿ÎÿÏ,,αÏ, , which we translate hasting unto, should be tendered earnestly desiring, or wishing for; which is a frequent meaning of the word in the best Greek writers.

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Verse 12

The heavens being on fire - See on 2 Peter 3:10. (note). It was an ancient opinion among the heathens that the earth should be burnt up with fire; so Ovid, Met., lib. i. v. 256.

Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur, adfore tempus, Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia coeli Ardeat; et mundi moles operosa laboret. "Remembering in the fates a time when fire Should to the battlements of heaven aspire, And all his blazing world above should burn, And all the inferior globe to cinders turn.― Dryden.

Minucius Felix tells us, xxxiv. 2, that it was a common opinion of the Stoics that, the moisture of the earth being consumed, the whole world would catch fire. The Epicureans held the same sentiment; and indeed it appears in various authors, which proves that a tradition of this kind has pretty generally prevailed in the world. But it is remarkable that none have fancied that it will be destroyed by water. The tradition, founded on the declaration of God, was against this; therefore it was not received.

Verse 13

We, according to his promise, look for new heavens - The promise to which it is supposed the apostle alludes, is found Isaiah 65:17: Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind; and Isaiah 66:22: For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed, etc. Now, although these may be interpreted of the glory of the Gospel dispensation, yet, if St. Peter refer to them, they must have a more extended meaning.

It does appear, from these promises, that the apostle says here, and what is said Revelation 21:27; Revelation 22:14, Revelation 22:15, that the present earth, though destined to be burned up, will not be destroyed, but be renewed and refined, purged from all moral and natural imperfection, and made the endless abode of blessed spirits. But this state is certainly to be expected after the day of judgment; for on this the apostle is very express, who says the conflagration and renovation are to take place at the judgment of the great day; see 2 Peter 3:7, 2 Peter 3:8, 2 Peter 3:10, 2 Peter 3:12. That such an event may take place is very possible; and, from the terms used by St. Peter, is very probable. And, indeed, it is more reasonable and philosophical to conclude that the earth shall be refined and restored, than finally destroyed. But this has nothing to do with what some call the millennium state; as this shall take place when time, with the present state and order of things, shall be no more.

Verse 14

Seeing that ye look for such things - As ye profess that such a state of things shall take place, and have the expectation of enjoying the blessedness of it, be diligent in the use of every means and influence of grace, that ye may be found of him - the Lord Jesus, the Judge of quick and dead, without spot - any contagion of sin in your souls, and blameless - being not only holy and innocent, but useful in your lives.

Verse 15

And account that the long-suffering of our Lord - Conclude that Godâ€s long-suffering with the world is a proof that he designs men to be saved; even as our beloved brother Paul. "This epistle being written to those to whom the first epistle was sent, the persons to whom the Apostle Paul wrote concerning the long-suffering of God were the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Accordingly, we know he wrote to the Ephesians, (Ephesians 2:3-5), to the Colossians, (Colossians 1:21), and to Timothy, (1 Timothy 2:3, 1 Timothy 2:4), things which imply that Godâ€s bearing with sinners is intended for their salvation. The persons to whom Peterâ€s epistles were sent were, for the most part, Paulâ€s converts.― - Macknight.

According to the wisdom given unto him - That is, according to the measure of the Divine inspiration, by which he was qualified for the Divine work, and by which he was so capable of entering into the deep things of God. It is worthy of remark that Paulâ€s epistles are ranked among the Scriptures; a term applied to those writings which are divinely inspired, and to those only.

Verse 16

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things - Paul, in all his epistles, says Dr. Macknight, has spoken of the things written by Peter in this letter. For example, he has spoken of Christâ€s coming to judgment; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Titus 2:13. And of the resurrection of the dead, 1 Corinthians 15:22; Philemon 3:20, Philemon 3:21. And of the burning of the earth; 2

Thessalonians 1:8. And of the heavenly country; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. And of the introduction of the righteous into that country; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Hebrews 4:9; Hebrews 12:14, Hebrews 12:18, Hebrews 12:24. And of the judgment of all mankind by Christ; Romans 14:10.

In which are some things hard to be understood - $\hat{l}''\ddot{l}...\ddot{l}f^{\dagger}\dot{l}'_{2}\hat{l}\dot{\epsilon}\ddot{l}.\ddot{l}+\ddot{l},\hat{l}^{\dagger}\dot{l}'_{2}\hat{l}\dot{\epsilon}\dot{A}$. That is, if we retain the common reading $\hat{l}\mu\dot{l}''_{2}\hat{l}\dot{\epsilon}\dot{a}''_{4}\pm\ddot{l}$, in or among which things, viz., what he says of the day of judgment, the resurrection of the body etc., etc., there are some things difficult to be comprehended, and from which a wrong or false meaning may be taken. But if we take the reading of AB, twelve others, with both the Syriac, all the Arabic, and Theophylact, $\hat{l}\mu\dot{l}''_{2}\hat{l}\dot{\pm}\dot{a}''_{4}\dot{\pm}\ddot{l}$, the meaning is more general, as $\hat{l}\mu\dot{l}''_{2}\hat{l}\dot{\pm}\dot{a}''_{4}\dot{\pm}\ddot{l}$, must refer to $\hat{l}\mu\ddot{l}\ddot{e}\hat{l}'\ddot{l}\ddot{l},\hat{l}\dot{e}\hat{l}'\ddot{l},\hat{l}\dot{e}\hat{l}'\ddot{l}'\ddot{l}$, epistles, for this would intimate that there were difficulties in all the epistles of St. Paul; and indeed in what ancient writings are there not difficulties? But the papists say that the decision of all matters relative to the faith is not to be expected from the Scriptures on this very account, but must be received from the Church; i.e. the Popish or Romish Church.

But what evidence have we that that Church can infallibly solve any of those difficulties? We have none! And till we have an express, unequivocal revelation from heaven that an unerring spirit is given to that Church, I say, for example, to the present Church of Rome, with the pope called Pius VII. at its head, we are not to receive its pretensions. Any Church may pretend the same, or any number of equally learned men as there are of cardinals and pope in the conclave; and, after all, it would be but the opinion of so many men, to which no absolute certainty or infallibility could be attached.

This verse is also made a pretext to deprive the common people of reading the word of God; because the unlearned and unstable have sometimes wrested this word to their own destruction: but if it be human learning, and stability in any system of doctrine, that qualifies men to judge of these difficult things, then we can find many thousands, even in Europe, that have as much learning and stability as the whole college of cardinals, and perhaps ten thousand times more; for that conclave was never very reputable for the learning of its members: and to other learned bodies we may, with as much propriety, look up as infallible guides, as to this conclave.

Besides, as it is only the unlearned and the unestablished (that is, young Christian converts) that are in danger of wresting such portions; the learned, that is, the experienced and the established in the knowledge and life of God, are in no such danger; and to such we may safely go for information: and these abound everywhere, especially in Protestant countries; and by the labors of learned and pious men on the sacred writings there is not one difficulty relative to the things which concern our salvation left unexplained. If the members of the Romish Church have not these advantages, let them go to those who have them; and if their teachers are afraid to trust them to the instruction of the Protestants, then let them who pretend to have infallibly written their exposition of these difficult places, also put them, with a wholesome text in the vulgar language, into the hands of their people, and then the appeal will not lie to Rome, but to the Bible, and those interpretations will be considered according to their worth, being weighed with other scriptures, and the expositions of equally learned and equally infallible men.

We find, lastly, that those who wrest such portions, are those who wrest the other scriptures to their destruction; therefore they are no patterns, nor can such form any precedent for withholding the Scriptures from the common people, most of whom, instead of wresting them to their destruction, would become wise unto salvation by reading them. We may defy the Romish Church to adduce a single instance of any soul that was perverted, destroyed, or damned, by reading of the Bible; and the insinuation that they may is blasphemous. I may just add that the verb $\|f\|_{N}\|^{2}\|_{N}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2}}\|_{L^{2$

Verse 17

Fall from your own steadfastness - From that faith in Christ which has put you in possession of that grace which establishes the heart.

Verse 18

But grow in grace - Increase in the image and favor of God; every grace and Divine influence which ye have received is a seed, a heavenly seed, which, if it be watered with the dew of heaven from above, will endlessly

increase and multiply itself. He who continues to believe, love, and obey, will grow in grace, and continually increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as his sacrifice, sanctifier, counsellor, preserver, and final Savior. The life of a Christian is a growth; he is at first born of God, and is a little child; becomes a young man, and a father in Christ. Every father was once an infant; and had he not grown, he would have never been a man. Those who content themselves with the grace they received when converted to God, are, at best, in a continual state of infancy: but we find, in the order of nature, that the infant that does not grow, and grow daily, too, is sickly and soon dies; so, in the order of grace, those who do not grow up into Jesus Christ are sickly, and will soon die, die to all sense and influence of heavenly things.

There are many who boast of the grace of their conversion; persons who were never more than babes, and have long since lost even that grace, because they did not grow in it. Let him that readeth understand.

To him - The Lord Jesus, be glory - all honor and excellency attributed, both now - in this present state, and for ever, $\hat{l}\mu\hat{l}^{\dagger}\hat{l}$, $\hat{a}^{\dagger}\hat{l}_{i}\hat{l}^{\dagger}\hat{l}^{$

Amen - So let it be! and so it shall be! Though this word is wanting in some reputable MSS., get it should be retained, as it has here more than usual authority in its support.

Subscriptions to this epistle in the Versions:

The end of the Second Epistle of Peter the apostle. - Syriac.

The Second Epistle of Peter the apostle is ended. - Syriac Philoxenian.

Nothing in the printed Vulgate.

The end of the epistles of blessed Peter the apostle, the rock of the faith. - Arabic.

The Second Epistle of Peter is ended; and glory be to God for ever and ever! - Aethiopic.

Nothing in the Coptic.

The end of the Second catholic Epistle of St. Peter. - Complutensian Polyglot.

The end of the Second Epistle of St. Peter. - Bib. Lat., edit. antiq.

Subscriptions in the Manuscripts;

Of the second of Peter. - Codex Alexandrius, and Codex Vaticanus.

Of the catholic epistle of Peter. - Codex Ephrem.

The Second Epistle of the holy Apostle Peter. - Other MSS.

We have now passed over all the canonical writings of Peter that are extant; and it is worthy of remark that, in no place of the two epistles already examined, nor in any of this apostleâ€s sayings in any other parts of the sacred writings do we find any of the peculiar tenets of the Romish Church: not one word of his or the popeâ€s supremacy; not one word of those who affect to be his successors; nothing of the infallibility claimed by those pretended successors; nothing of purgatory, penances, pilgrimages, auricular confession, power of the keys, indulgences, extreme unction, masses, and prayers for the dead; and not one word on the most essential doctrine of the Romish Church, transubstantiation. Now, as all these things have been considered by themselves most essential to the being of that Church; is it not strange that he, from whom they profess to derive all their power, authority, and influence, in spiritual and secular matters, should have said nothing of these most necessary things? Is it not a proof that they are all false and forged; that the holy apostle knew nothing of them; that they are no part of the doctrine of God; and, although they distinguish the Church of Rome, do not belong to the Church of Christ? It is no wonder that the rulers of this Church endeavor to keep the Scriptures from the common people; for, were they permitted to consult these, the imposture would be detected, and the solemn, destructive cheat at once exposed.