

# THE AGES DIGITAL LIBRARY COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

### **1 Peter**

*by Matthew Henry*

*To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:*

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# AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

## THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF

### PETER

Two epistles we have enrolled in the sacred canon of the scripture written by Peter, who was a most eminent apostle of Jesus Christ, and whose character shines brightly as it is described in the four Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles, but, as it is painted by the papists and legendary writers, it represents a person of extravagant pride and ambition. It is certain from scripture that Simon Peter was one of the first of those whom our Lord called to be his disciples and followers, that he was a person of excellent endowments, both natural and gracious, of great parts and ready elocution, quick to apprehend and bold to execute whatever he knew to be his duty. When our Saviour called his apostles, and gave them their commission, he nominated him first in the list; and by his behaviour towards him he seems to have distinguished him as a special favourite among the twelve. Many instances of our Lord's affection to him, both during his life and after his resurrection, are upon record. But there are many things confidently affirmed of this holy man that are directly false: as, That he had a primacy and superior power over the rest of the apostles — that he was more than their equal — that he was their prince, monarch, and sovereign — and that he exercised a jurisdiction over the whole college of the apostles: moreover, That he as the sole and universal pastor over all the Christian world, the only vicar of Christ upon earth — that he was for above twenty years bishop of Rome — that the popes of Rome succeed to St. Peter, and derive from him a universal supremacy and jurisdiction over all churches and Christians upon earth — and that all this was by our Lord's ordering and appointment; whereas Christ never gave him any pre-eminence of this kind, but positively forbade it, and gave precepts to the contrary. The other apostles never consented to any such claim. Paul declares himself *not a whit behind the very chief apostles*, <sup>¶115</sup>2 Corinthians 11:5 and 12:11. Here is no exception of Peter's superior dignity, whom Paul took the freedom to blame, and *withstood him to the face*, <sup>¶111</sup>Galatians 2:11. And Peter himself never assumed any thing like it,

but modestly styles himself an *apostle of Jesus Christ*; and, when he writes to the presbyters of the church, he humbly places himself in the same rank with them: *The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder*, 5:1. See Dr. Barrow on the pope's supremacy.

The design of this first epistle is,

- I.** To explain more fully the doctrines of Christianity to these newly-converted Jews.
- II.** To direct and persuade them to a holy conversation, in the faithful discharge of all personal and relative duties, whereby they would secure their own peace and effectually confute the slanders and reproaches of their enemies.
- III.** To prepare them for sufferings. This seems to be his principal intention; for he has something to this purport in every chapter, and does, by a great variety of arguments, encourage them to patience and perseverance in the faith, lest the persecutions and sad calamities that were coming upon them should prevail with them to apostatize from Christ and the gospel. It is remarkable that you find not so much as one word savouring of the spirit and pride of a pope in either of these epistles.