

THE AGES DIGITAL LIBRARY
COMMENTARY

**DARBY'S SYNOPSIS OF THE
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE
PART 2: NEW TESTAMENT**

by John Nelson Darby

Books For The Ages
AGES Software • Albany, OR USA
Version 2.0 © 1996, 1997



John Nelson Darby, 1800-1882

AGES Software is indebted to STEM Publishing, UK, for generously granting permission to reproduce their electronic text of Darby's *Synopsis of the Bible*. The Synopsis and the complete works of John Nelson Darby are available on a single CD-ROM, *The Darby Disk*. Contact L. J. L. Hodgett, STEM Publishing, 7 Primrose Way, Cliffs End, Ramsgate, Kent, CT12 5LF., U.K., Tel/Fax: 01843 584686, for information on acquiring this resource. Please contact STEM for publishing rights. The format which follows is copyright 1996 by AGES Software.

1 PETER

The first epistle of Peter is addressed to believers among the dispersed of Israel found in those provinces of Asia Minor which are named in the first verse; the second epistle declares itself to be a second addressed to the same persons: so that the one and the other were destined for the Jews of Asia Minor (that is, to those among them who had the same precious faith as the apostle).

The first epistle is founded on the doctrine of the heavenly calling (I do not say of the assembly on earth,* which is not brought before us here) in contrast with the portion of the Jews on the earth. It presents Christians, and in particular Christians among the Jews, as pilgrims and strangers on earth. The conduct suited to such is more largely developed than the doctrine. The Lord Jesus, who was Himself a pilgrim and a stranger here, is presented as a pattern in more than one aspect. Both epistles pursue the righteous government of God from the beginning to the consummation of all things, in which the elements melt with fervent heat, and there are new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. The first gives the government of God in favor of believers, the second in the judgment of the wicked.

[* I add “on earth” here, because the assembly, as built by Jesus Himself and not yet finished, is spoken of in chapter 2, where the living stones come to Christ.]

Nevertheless, in presenting the heavenly calling, the apostle necessarily presents salvation — the deliverance of the soul in contrast with the temporal deliverance of the Jews.

The following is the description which the Spirit gives of these believers. They are elect, and that according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. Israel was a nation elected on the earth by Jehovah. Here, it is those who were foreknown of the Father. The means by which their election is carried out is sanctification of the Holy Ghost. They are really set apart by the power of the Spirit. Israel was set apart by ordinances; but these are sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ and for the sprinkling of His

blood, that is to say, on the one hand to obey as He obeyed, and on the other to be sprinkled with His blood and thus to be perfectly clear before God. Israel had been set apart for the obedience of the law, and for that blood which, while it announced death as the sanction of its authority, could never cleanse the soul from sin.

Such was the Christian's position. The apostle wishes them grace and peace — the known portion of believers. He reminds them of the blessings with which God had blessed them, blessing God who had bestowed them. Believing Israelites knew Him now, not in the character of Jehovah, but as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That which the apostle presents as the fruit of His grace, is a hope beyond this world; not the inheritance of Canaan, appropriate to man living on the earth, which was the hope of Israel, and is still that of the unbelieving nation. The mercy of God had begotten them again for a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from out of the dead. This resurrection showed them a portion in another world, and the power which brought man into it, although he had been subjected to death: he would enter it by resurrection, through the glorious triumph of the Savior, to share an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The apostle is not speaking of our resurrection with Christ; he views the Christian as a pilgrim here, encouraged by the triumph of Christ Himself in resurrection, which animated him by the consciousness that there was a world of light and happiness before him, and a power which would bring him into this world. Consequently the inheritance is spoken of as "reserved in heaven." In the epistle to the Ephesians we are seated in the heavens in Christ, and the inheritance is that of all things of which Christ Himself is heir. But the Christian is also in fact a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth; and it is a strong consolation to us, in our pilgrimage, to see this heavenly inheritance before us, as a certain pledge of our own entrance into it.

Another inestimable consolation is added. If the inheritance is preserved in heaven for us, we are kept by the power of God all through our pilgrimage that we may enjoy it at the end. Sweet thought! — we are kept here below through all our dangers and difficulties; and, on the other hand, the inheritance there, where there is no defilement or possibility of decay.

But it is by moral means that this power preserves us (and it is in this way that Peter always speaks), by the operation in us of grace, which fixes the heart on objects that keep it in connection with God and with His promise (compare 2 Peter 1:4). We are kept by the power of God through faith. It is, God be praised, the power of God Himself; but it acts by sustaining faith in the heart, maintaining it in spite of all temptations above all the defilement of the world, and filling the affection with heavenly things. Peter, however, always occupied with the ways of God respecting this world, only looks at the share that believers will have in this salvation, this heavenly glory, when it shall be manifested; when God will, by this glory, establish His authority in blessing on the earth. It is indeed the heavenly glory, but the heavenly glory manifested as the means of the establishment of the supreme government of God on earth, for His own glory and for the blessing of the whole world.

It is salvation ready to be revealed in the last times. This word “ready” is important. Our apostle says also that the judgment is ready to be revealed. Christ is glorified personally, has conquered all His enemies, has accomplished redemption. He only waits for one thing, namely, that God should make His enemies His footstool. He has taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, because He has accomplished everything as to glorifying God where sin was. It is the actual salvation of souls — the gathering together of His own, which is not yet finished (2 Peter 3:9, 15); but when once all they who are to share it are brought in, there is nothing to wait for as regards the salvation, that is to say, the glory in which the redeemed will appear;* nor consequently as regards the judgment of the wicked on earth, which will be consummated by the manifestation of Christ.** All is ready. This thought is sweet for us in our days of patience, but full of solemnity when we reflect upon the judgment.

[* The doctrine of the gathering together of the saints to Jesus in the air, when they go to meet Him, forms no part of Peter’s teaching, any more than does that of the assembly on earth with which it is connected. He speaks of the manifestation of the saints in glory, because he is occupied with the ways of God towards the earth, although he is so in connection with Christianity.]

[** See 2 Thessalonians 1:9, 10.]

Yes, as the apostle says, we rejoice greatly in this salvation, which is ready to be revealed in the last times. We are waiting for it. It is a time of rest, of

the earth's blessing, of the full manifestation of His glory who is worthy of it, who was humbled and who suffered for us; the time when the light and the glory of God in Christ will illumine the world, and first bind and then chase away all its evil.

This is our portion: abundant joy in the salvation about to be revealed, and in which we may always rejoice; although, if it be needed for our good, we may be in sorrow through divers temptations. But it is only for a very little while — only a light affliction, which passes away, and which only comes upon us if it be needful, in order that the precious trial of faith may have its result in praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, for whom we are waiting. That is the end of all our sorrows and trials; transitory and light as they are, in comparison with the vast result of the excellent and eternal glory towards which they are leading us, according to the wisdom of God and the need of our souls. The heart attaches itself to Jesus: He will appear.

We love Him, although we have never seen Him. In Him, though now we see Him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It is this which decides and forms the heart, which fixes it and fills it with joy, however it may be with us in this life. To our hearts it is He who fills all the glory. By grace I shall be glorified, I shall have the glory; but I love Jesus, my heart pants for His presence — desires to see Him. Moreover we shall be like Him, and He perfectly glorified. The apostle may well say, “unspeakable and full of glory.” The heart can desire nothing else: and if some light afflictions are needful for us, we endure them gladly, since they are a means of forming us for the glory. And we can rejoice at the thought of Christ's appearing; for in receiving Him, unseen, into our heart we receive the salvation of our soul. This is the object and the end of faith; far more precious than the temporal deliverances that Israel enjoyed, although the latter were tokens of the favor of God.

The apostle goes on to develop the three successive steps of the revelation of this grace of salvation — the full and entire deliverance from the consequences, the fruits, and the misery of sin: the prophecies; the testimony of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; the manifestation of Jesus Christ Himself, when the deliverance that had been already announced should be fully accomplished.

It is interesting to see here how the rejection of the Messiah, according to Jewish hopes, already anticipated and announced in the prophets, necessarily made way for a salvation which brought with it that of the soul likewise. Jesus was no more seen; the earthly portion was not realised by His first coming; salvation was to be revealed in the last times. But thus a salvation of the soul was unfolded, the whole extent of which would be realised in the glory about to be revealed; for it was the spiritual joy of the soul in a heavenly Jesus who was not seen, and who in His death had accomplished expiation for sin, and in His resurrection, according to the power of the life of the Son of God, had begotten again to a living hope. By faith then this salvation was received — this true deliverance. It was not yet the glory and the outward rest; that salvation would indeed take place when Jesus appeared, but meantime the soul already enjoyed by faith this perfect rest, and in hope even the glory itself.

Now the prophets had announced the grace of God which was to be accomplished for believers, and which even now imparts to the soul the enjoyment of that salvation; and they had searched into their own prophecies, which they had received by inspiration from God, seeking to understand what time, and what manner of time, the Spirit indicated, when He testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow. For the Spirit spoke of them both by the prophets, and signified consequently more than a temporal deliverance in Israel; for the Messiah was to suffer. And they discovered that it was not for themselves nor for their own times, that the Spirit of Christ announced these truths with regard to the Messiah, but for Christians. But Christians, while receiving the salvation of the soul by the revelation of a Christ seated in heaven after His sufferings and coming again in glory, have not received those glories which were revealed to the prophets. These things have been reported with great and divine plainness by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven after the death of Jesus: but the Spirit does not bestow the glory itself in which the Lord will appear; He has only declared it. Christians have therefore to gird up the loins of their mind, to be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that (in effect) will be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Such are the three successive steps in God's dealings: the prediction of the events relating to Christ, which went

altogether beyond Jewish blessings; the things reported by the Spirit; the accomplishment of the things promised when Christ is revealed.

That, then, which the apostle presents, is a participation in the glory of Christ when He shall be revealed; that salvation, of which the prophets had spoken, which was to be revealed in the last days. But meantime God had begotten again the believing Jews to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead; and by means of His sufferings had made them comprehend that even now, while waiting for the revelation of the glory, realising it in the Person of Jesus, they enjoyed a salvation of the soul before which the deliverances of Israel faded away and might be forgotten. It was indeed the salvation “ready to be revealed” in all its fullness; but as yet they only possessed it in respect of the soul. But, being detached from the manifestation of the earthly glory, this salvation had a yet more spiritual character. Therefore they were to gird up their loins, while waiting for the revelation of Jesus, and to acknowledge with thanksgiving that they were in possession of the end of their faith. They were in relationship with God.

When announcing these things by the ministry of the prophets, God had Christians in view, and not the prophets themselves. This grace was in due time to be communicated to believers; but meantime, for faith and for the soul, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven bore testimony to it. It was to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, which was the guarantee of the accomplishment of all the promises and the power of life for their enjoyment, had begotten them again unto a living hope; but the right to enjoy the effect of the promise was founded on another truth. To this the exhortations conduct us. They were to walk as obedient children, no longer following the lusts that had led them in the days of their ignorance. Called by Him who is holy, they were to be holy in all their conversation, as it is written. Moreover, if they called on the Father, who, regardless of man’s pretension to respect, judged according to every one’s work, they were to pass the time of their sojourn here in fear.

Observe, here, that he is not speaking of the final judgment of the soul. In that sense “the Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son.” The thing spoken of here is the daily judgment of God’s government in this world, exercised with regard to His children.

Accordingly it says, “the time of your sojourn here.” It is a judgment applied to christian life. The fear spoken of is not an uncertainty as to salvation and redemption. It is a fear founded on the certainty that one is redeemed; and the immense price, the infinite value of the means employed for our redemption — namely, the blood of the Lamb, without blemish and without spot — is the motive for fearing God during our pilgrimage. We have been redeemed at the cost of the blood of Jesus from our vain conversation: can we then still walk according to the principles from which we have been thus delivered? Such a price for our deliverance demands that we should walk with circumspection and gravity before the Father, with whom we desire to have intercourse both as privilege and spiritual relationship.

The apostle then applies this truth to the Christians whom he was addressing. The Lamb had been ordained in the counsels of God before the world was made; but He was manifested in the last days for believers: and these are presented in their true character, they believe in God by Jesus — by this Lamb. It is not by means of the creation that they believe: although creation is a testimony to His glory, it gives no rest to the conscience and does not tell of a place in heaven. It is not by means of providence, which, even while directing all things, yet leaves the government of God in such profound darkness. Nor is it by means of the revelation of God on Mount Sinai under the name of Jehovah and the terror connected with a broken law. It is by means of Jesus, the Lamb of God, that we believe; observe that it is not said, in Him, but, “by Him” in God. We know God as the One who, when we were sinners and dead in our trespasses and sins, loved us, and gave this precious Savior to come down even into the death in which we were, to take part in our position as lying under this judgment, and die as the Lamb of God. We believe in God who by His power, when Jesus was there for us — in our stead — raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory. It is in a Savior-God therefore, a God who exercises His power in our behalf, that we believe by Jesus, so that our faith and our hope are in God. It does not say in something before God, but in God Himself. Where then shall any cause for fear or distrust arise as regards God, if our faith and hope are in Himself? This changes everything. The aspect in which we view God Himself is entirely changed; and this change is founded on that which establishes the righteousness of God in accepting

us as cleansed from all sin, the love of God in blessing us perfectly in Jesus, whom His power has raised from the dead and glorified — the power according to which He blesses us. Our faith and our hope are in God Himself.

This places us in the most intimate of relationships with the rest of the redeemed: objects of the same love, washed by the same precious blood, redeemed by the same Lamb, they become — to those whose hearts are purified by the reception of the truth through the Spirit — the objects of a tender brotherly love, a love unfeigned. They are our brethren. Let us then love one another fervently with a pure heart. But this is based on another essentially vital principle. It is a new nature which acts in this affection. If we are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb without spot, we are born of the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which lives and abides for ever. For the flesh is but grass, the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, its flower falls, but the word of the Lord abides for ever. This is the word of the gospel which has been preached unto us. It is an eternal principle of blessing. The believer is not born after the flesh to enjoy temporary rights and blessings, as was the case with a Jew, but of an incorruptible seed, a principle of life as unchangeable as the word of God Himself. The prophet had told them so, when comforting the people of God; all flesh, the nation itself, was but withered grass. God was unchangeable, and the word which by its immutable certainty secured divine blessings to the objects of God's favor, wrought in the heart to beget a life as immortal and incorruptible as the word which is its source.

Thus cleansed therefore and born of the word, they were to put off all fraud, hypocrisy, envy, slander; and, as new-born babes, to seek for this milk of the understanding, in order to grow thereby (for the word is the milk of the child, as it was the seed of its life); and we are to receive it as babes in all simplicity, if in truth we have felt that the Lord is good and full of grace. It is not Sinai (where the Lord God declared His law from the midst of the fire, so that they entreated not to hear His voice any more), to which I am come, or from which the Lord is speaking. If I have tasted and understood that the Lord acts in grace, that He is love towards me, and that His word is the expression of that grace, even as it communicates life, I shall desire to feed on this milk of the understanding, which the believer enjoys in proportion to his simplicity; that good word which announces to

me nothing but grace, and the God whom I need as all grace, full of grace, acting in grace, as revealing Himself to me in this character — a character which He can never cease to maintain towards me, making me a partaker of His holiness.

I now know the Lord Himself: I have tasted that which He is. Moreover this is still in contrast with the legal condition of the Jew, although it is the fulfillment of that which the Psalms and the prophets had declared (the resurrection having plainly revealed in addition a heavenly hope). It was they themselves who were now the spiritual house, the holy priesthood. They came to the Living Stone, rejected indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, and they were built up on Him as living stones. The apostle delights in this word “living.” It was to him the Father had revealed that Jesus was the Son of the living God. No one else had then confessed Him as such, and the Lord told him that on this rock (that is, on the Person of the Son of God in power of life, manifested in the resurrection, which declared Him to be such) He would build His assembly. Peter, by his faith, participated in the nature of this living rock. Here then (chap. 2:5) he extends this character to all believers, and exhibits the holy house built on the Living Stone, which God Himself had laid as the chief corner-stone elect and precious. Whosoever believed in Him should not be confounded.*

[* In this passage, so to speak (as in this alone), Peter meets the doctrine of the assembly, and that under the character of a building, not of a body or a bride; that which Christ built, not what was united to Him So Paul also presents it to us in Ephesians 2:20, 21. In this view, though going on earth, it is Christ’s work and a continuing process; no human instrumentality is referred to: I will build, says Christ; it grows, says Paul; living stones come, says Peter. This must not be confounded with the building into which men may build wood and hay and stubble, as the same thing; though the outward thing which God set up good, left to man’s responsibility, as ever, was soon corrupted. Individuals are built up by grace, and it grows into a holy temple. All this refers to Matthew 16. The responsibility of human service in this respect is found in 1 Corinthians 3, and the assembly is there given in another point of view. The body is another thing altogether; the doctrine is taught in Ephesians 1-4; 1 Corinthians 12, and other passages.]

Now, it was not only in the eyes of God that this Stone was precious, but in the eyes of faith which — feeble as the possessors of it may be — sees as God sees. To unbelievers this stone was a stone of stumbling and of offense. They stumbled at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed. It does not say that they were appointed to sin nor to

condemnation, but these unbelieving and disobedient sinners, the Jewish race — long rebellious, and continually exalting themselves against God — were destined to find in the Lord of grace Himself a rock of offense; and to stumble and fall upon that which was to faith the precious stone of salvation. It was to this particular fall that their unbelief was destined.

Believers, on the contrary, entered into the enjoyment of the promises made to Israel, and that in the most excellent way. Grace — and the very faithfulness of God — had brought the fulfillment of the promise in the Person of Jesus, the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to fulfill the promises made to the fathers. And, although the nation had rejected Him, God would not deprive of the blessings those who — in spite of all this difficulty to faith and to the heart — had submitted to the obedience of faith, and attached themselves to Him who was the despised of the nation. They could not have the blessing of Israel with the nation on earth, because the nation had rejected Him; but they were brought fully into the relationship with God of a people accepted of Him. The heavenly character which the blessing now assumed did not destroy their acceptance according to the promise; only they entered into it according to grace. For the nation, as a nation, had lost it; not only long ago by disobedience, but now by rejecting Him who came in grace to impart to them the effect of the promise.

The apostle, therefore, applies the character of “holy nation” to the elect remnant, investing them in the main with the titles bestowed in Exodus 19 on condition of obedience, but here in connection with the Messiah, their enjoyment of these titles being founded on His obedience and rights acquired by their faith in Him.

But, the privileges of the believing remnant being founded on the Messiah, the apostle goes farther, and applies to them the declarations of Hose — a, which relate to Israel and Judah when re-established in the fullness of blessing in the last days, enjoying those relationships with God into which grace will bring them at that time.

“Ye are,” he says, “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a purchased people.” These are almost the words of Exodus 19. He goes on: “Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; who formerly had not obtained mercy, but have now obtained it.” These are the words of

Hose — a 2. This sets before us, in the most interesting way, the principle on which the blessing is founded. In Exodus the people were to have this blessing if they exactly obeyed the voice of God. But Israel had not obeyed, had been rebellious and stiff-necked, had gone after strange gods, and rejected the testimony of the Spirit; yet, after their unfaithfulness, God Himself has laid in Zion a Stone, a chief corner-stone, and whosoever believed in Him should not be confounded. It is grace that, when Israel had failed in every respect, and on the ground of obedience, had lost everything, God should bestow on them by Jesus, through grace, that which was promised them at first on condition of obedience. In this way all was secured to them.

The question of obedience was settled — on Israel's disobedience — by grace, and by the obedience of Christ, the foundation laid by God in Zion. But this principle of grace abounding over sin — by which is shown the inability of disobedience to frustrate the purposes of God, for this grace came after the completion of disobedience — this principle, so glorious and so comforting to the convinced sinner, is confirmed in a striking way by the quotation from Hose — a. In this passage from the prophet, Israel is presented, not merely as guilty, but as having already undergone judgment. God had declared that He would no more have mercy (with regard to His patience toward the ten tribes); and that Israel was no longer His people (in His judgment on unfaithful Judah). But afterwards, when the judgment had been executed, He returns to His irrevocable purposes of grace, and allures Israel as a forsaken wife, and gives her the valley of Achor — the valley of trouble, in which Achan was stoned, the first judgment on unfaithful Israel after their entrance into the promised land — for a door of hope. For judgment is changed into grace, and God begins all afresh upon a new principle. It was as though Israel had again come up out of Egypt, but upon an entirely new principle. He betroths her to Him for ever, in righteousness, in judgment, in grace, in mercy, and all is blessing. Then He calls her “Ruhama,” or, “the object of mercy”; and “Ammi,” “my people.”

These, then, are the expressions which the apostle uses, applying them to the remnant who believed in Jesus, the stumbling-stone to the nation, but the chief corner-stone from God to the believer. Thus the condition is taken away, and instead of a condition we have blessing after disobedience,

and after judgment the full and assured grace of God, founded (in its application to believers) on the Person, the obedience, and the work of Christ.

It is affecting to see the expression of this grace in the term “Achor.” It was the first judgment on Israel in the land of promise for having profaned themselves with the forbidden thing. And there it is that hope is given; so entirely true is it that grace triumphs over justice. And it is this which has taken place in the most excellent way in Christ. The very judgment of God becomes in Him the door of hope, the guilt and the judgment having alike passed away for ever.

Two parts of the christian life — so far as it is the manifestation of spiritual power — result from this, in the double priesthood; of which the one answers to the present position of Christ on high, and the other anticipatively to the manifestation of His glory on earth — the priesthods of Aaron, and of Melchisedec. For He is now within the veil according to the type of Aaron; hereafter He will be a priest on His throne — it will be the public manifestation of His glory on earth. Thus the saints exercise “a holy priesthood” (v. 5) to offer up spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. Sweet privilege of the Christian, thus brought as near as possible to God! He offers — sure of being accepted, for it is by Jesus that he offers them — his sacrifices to God.

This part of the christian life is the first, the most excellent, the most vital, the source of the other (which is its expression here below); the most excellent, because, in its exercise, we are in immediate connection with the divine object of our affections. These spiritual sacrifices are the reflex, by the action of the Holy Ghost, of the grace which we enjoy; that which the heart returns to God, moved by the excellent gifts of which we are the object, and by the love which has given them. The heart (by the power of the Holy Ghost) reflects all that has been revealed to it in grace, worshipping the Author and Giver of all according to the knowledge we have of Himself through this means; the fruits of the heavenly Canaan in which we participate presented as an offering to God; the entrance of the soul into the presence of God to praise and adore Him.

This is the holy priesthood, according to the analogy of the priesthood of Aaron, and of the temple at Jerusalem which God inhabited as His house.

The second priesthood of which the apostle speaks is to show forth the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Its description is taken, as we have seen, from Exodus 19. It is a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood. I only allude to the Melchisedec priesthood to show the character of a royal priesthood. Priests, among the Jews, drew near to God. God had formed the people for Himself: they were to show forth all His virtues, His praises Christ will do this perfectly in the day of His glory. The Christian is called to do it now in this world. He is to reproduce Christ in this world. It is the second part of his life.

It will be noticed that the first chapter of this epistle presents the Christian as animated by hope, but under trial — the precious trial of faith. The second chapter presents him in his privileges as of a holy and royal priesthood, by means of faith.

After this (chap. 2:11), the apostle begins his exhortations. Whatever may be the privileges of the Christian, in his position as such, he is always viewed as a pilgrim, on the earth; and, as we have seen, the constant government of God is the object which presents itself to the mind of the apostle. But he warns them first, with regard to that which is inward, against those sources from which the corruptions spring, that (in the scene of this government) would dishonor the name of God and even bring in judgment.

Their conversation was to be honest among the Gentiles. Christians bore the name of God. The mind of men, hostile to His name, sought to bring disgrace upon it, by attributing to Christians the evil conduct which they themselves followed without remorse, while at the same time complaining (chap. 4:4) that they would not go with them in the same excesses and disorder. The Christian had only to follow the path of faithfulness to God. In the day when God would visit men these calumniators, with their will broken and their pride subdued by the visitation of God, should be brought to confess — by means of the good works which, in spite of their calumnies, had always reached their consciences — that God had acted in these Christians, that He had been present among them.

After this general exhortation, brief but important to believers, the apostle takes up the relative walk of Christians in a world where on the one hand

God watches over all, yet where He permits His own to suffer, whether for righteousness sake or for the name of Christ, but where they ought never to suffer for having done wrong. The path then of the Christian is marked out. He is subject for the Lord's sake to human ordinances or institutions. He gives honor to all men, and to each in his place, so that no one shall have any reproach to bring against him. He is submissive to his masters, even if they are bad men, and yields to their ill-treatment. Were he subject only to the good and gentle, a worldly slave would do as much; but if, having done well, he suffers and bears it patiently, this is acceptable to God, this is grace. It was thus that Christ acted, and to this we are called. Christ suffered in this way, and never replied by reproaches or threats to those who molested Him, but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. To Him we belong. He has suffered for our sins, in order that, having been delivered from them, we should live to God. These Christians from among the Jews had been as sheep going astray;* they were now brought back to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. But how entirely these exhortations show that the Christian is one who is not of this world, but has his own path through it: yet this path was the way of peace in it!

[* An allusion, I suppose, to the last verse of Psalm 119. The apostle constantly puts the christian Jews on the ground of the blessed remnant, only making it a soul salvation.]

Likewise, wives were to be subject to their husbands in all modesty and purity, in order that this testimony to the effect of the word by its fruits might take the place of the word itself, if their husbands would not listen to it. They were to rest, in patience and meekness, on the faithfulness of God, and not be alarmed at seeing the power of the adversaries (compare Philippians 1:28).

Husbands were in like manner to dwell with the wife, their affections and relationships being governed by christian knowledge, and not by any human passion; honoring the wife, and walking with her as being heirs together of the grace of life.

Finally, all were to walk in the spirit of peace and gentleness, carrying with them, in their intercourse with others, the blessing of which they were themselves the heirs, the spirit of which they ought consequently to bear ever with them. By following that which is good, by having the tongue governed by the fear of the Lord, by avoiding evil and seeking peace, they

would in quietness enjoy the present life under the eye of God. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who, moreover, would harm them, if they followed only that which is good?

This, then, is the government of God, the principle on which He superintends the course of this world. Nevertheless it is not now a direct and immediate government preventing all wrong. The power of evil still acts upon the earth; those who are animated by it show themselves hostile to the righteous, and act by means of that fear which Satan is able to produce. But by giving the Lord His place in the soul, this fear which the enemy excites has no longer a place there. If the heart is conscious of the presence of God, can that heart tremble at the presence of the enemy? This is the secret of boldness and peace in confessing Christ. Then the instruments of the enemy seek to turn us aside, and to overwhelm us by their pretensions; but the consciousness of God's presence dissipates those pretensions, and destroys all their power. Resting on the strength of His presence, we are ready to answer those who ask the reason of our hope, with meekness and holy reverence remote from all levity. For all this it is necessary to have a good conscience. We may carry a bad conscience to God, that He may pardon and have mercy on us; but if we have a bad conscience, we cannot resist the enemy — we are afraid of him. On the one hand, we fear his malice; on the other, we have lost the consciousness of the presence and the strength of God. When walking before God, we fear nothing; the heart is free: we have not to think of self, we think of God; and the adversaries are ashamed of having falsely accused those whose conduct is unblamable, and against whom nothing can be brought except the calumny of their enemies, which calumnies turn to their own shame.

It may be that God may see it good that we should suffer. If so, it is better that we should suffer for well doing than for evil doing. The apostle gives a touching motive for this: Christ has suffered for sins once for all; let that suffice; let us suffer only for righteousness. To suffer for sin was His task; He accomplished it, and that for ever; put to death, as to His life in the flesh, but quickened according to the power of the divine Spirit.

The passage that follows has occasioned difficulties to the readers of scripture; but it appears to me simple, if we perceive the object of the

Spirit of God. The Jews expected a Messiah corporeally present, who should deliver the nation, and exalt the Jews to the summit of earthly glory. But He was not present, we know, in that manner, and the believing Jews had to endure the scoffs and the hatred of the unbelieving, on account of their trust in a Messiah who was not present, and who had wrought no deliverance for the people. Believers possessed the salvation of their soul, and they knew Jesus in heaven; but unbelieving men did not care for that. The apostle therefore cites the case of Noah's testimony. The believing Jews were few in number, and Christ was theirs only according to the Spirit. By the power of that Spirit He had been raised up from the dead. It was by the power of the same Spirit that He had gone — without being corporeally present — to preach in Noah. The world was disobedient (like the Jews in the apostle's days), and eight souls only were saved; even as the believers were now but a little flock. But the spirits of the disobedient were now in prison, because they did not obey Christ present among them by His Spirit in Noah. The long-suffering of God waited then, as now, with the Jewish nation; the result would be the same. It has been so.

This interpretation is confirmed (in preference to that which supposes that the Spirit of Christ preached in hades to souls which had been confined there ever since the flood) by the consideration that in Genesis it is said, "My spirit shall not always strive with men, but their days shall be a hundred and twenty years." That is to say, His Spirit should strive, in the testimony of Noah, during a hundred and twenty years and no longer. Now it would be an extraordinary thing that with those persons only (for he speaks only of them) the Lord should strive in testimony after their death. Moreover, we may observe that, in considering this expression to mean the Spirit of Christ in Noah, we only use a well-known phrase of Peter's; for he it is, as we have seen, who said, "The Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets."

These spirits then are in prison, because they did not hearken to the Spirit of Christ in Noah (compare 2 Peter 2:5-9). To this the apostle adds, the comparison of baptism to the ark of Noah in the deluge. Noah was saved through the water; we also; for the water of baptism typifies death, as the deluge, so to speak, was the death of the world. Now Christ has passed through death and is risen. We enter into death in baptism; but it is like the ark, because Christ suffered in death for us, and has come out of it in

resurrection, as Noah came out of the deluge, to begin, as it were, a new life in a resurrection world. Now Christ, having passed through death, has atoned for sins; and we, by passing through it in spirit, leave all our sins in it, as Christ did in reality for us; for He was raised up without the sins which He expiated on the cross. And they were our sins; and thus, through the resurrection, we have a good conscience. We pass through death in spirit and in figure by baptism. The peace-giving force of the thing is the resurrection of Christ, after He had accomplished expiation; by which resurrection therefore we have a good conscience.

Now this is what the Jews had to learn. The Christ was gone up to heaven, all powers and principalities being made subject to Him. He is at the right hand of God. We have therefore not a Messiah on earth, but a good conscience and a heavenly Christ.

CHAPTER 4. From the beginning of this chapter to the end of verse 7, the apostle continues to speak of the general principles of God's government, exhorting the Christian to act on the principles of Christ Himself, which would cause him to avoid the walk condemned by that government, while waiting for the judgment of the world by the Christ whom he served. Christ glorified, as we saw at the close of the previous chapter, was ready to judge; and they who were exasperated against the Christians, and who were led by their own passions, without caring for the coming judgment, would have to give account to that Judge whom they refused to own as Savior.

Here, it will be observed, it is suffering for righteousness sake (chap. 2:19; 3:17) in connection with the government and judgment of God. The principle was this: they accepted, they followed the Savior whom the world and the nation rejected; they walked in His holy footsteps in righteousness, as pilgrims and strangers, abandoning the corruption that reigned in the world. Walking in peace and following after good, they avoided to a certain extent the attacks of others; and the eyes of Him, who watches from on high over all things, rested upon the righteous. Nevertheless, in the relations of ordinary life (chap. 2:18), and in their intercourse with men, they might have to suffer, and to bear flagrant injustice. Now the time of God's judgment was not yet come. Christ was in heaven; He had been rejected on the earth, and the Christian's part was

to follow him. The time of the manifestation of the government of God would be at the judgment which Christ should execute. Meanwhile His walk on earth had furnished the pattern of that which the God of judgment approved (chap. 2:21-23; 4:1 and following verses).

They were to do good, to suffer for it, and to be patient. This is well-pleasing to God; this is what Christ did. It was better that they should suffer for doing well, if God saw fit, than for doing ill. Christ (chap. 2:24) had born our sins, had suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust, in order that we, being dead to sins, should live for righteousness, and in order to bring us unto God Himself. Christ is now on high; He is ready to judge. When the judgment shall come, the principles of God's government will be manifested and shall prevail.

The beginning of chapter 4 requires some rather more detailed remarks. The death of Christ is there applied to practical death unto sins; a state presented in contrast with the life of the Gentiles.

Christ on the cross (the apostle alludes to verse 18 of the preceding chapter) suffered in the flesh for us. He died in fact as regards His human life. We must arm ourselves with the same mind, and allow of no activity of life or passions according to the will of the old man, but suffer as to the flesh, never yielding to its will. Sin is the action in us of the will of the flesh, the will of the man as alive in this world. When this will acts, the principle of sin is there; for we ought to obey. The will of God ought to be the spring of our moral life; and so much the more, because now that we have the knowledge of good and evil — now that the will of the flesh, unsubject to God, is in us, we must either take the will of God as our only motive, or act according to the will of the flesh, for the latter is always present in us.

Christ came to obey, He chose to die, to suffer all things rather than not obey. He thus died to sin, which never for a moment found an entrance into His heart. With Him, tempted to the uttermost, death was preferred rather than disobedience, even when death had the character of wrath against sin and judgment. Bitter as the cup was, He drank it rather than not fulfill to the uttermost His Father's will, and glorify Him. Tried to the uttermost and perfect in it, the temptation which ever assailed Him from without and sought entrance (for He had none within) was always kept

outside; was never entered into, nor found a movement of His will towards it; drew out obedience, or the perfection of the divine thoughts in man; and by dying, by suffering in the flesh, He had done with it all, done with sin for ever, and entered for ever into rest, after having been tried to the uttermost, and tempted in all things similarly to us,* as regards the trial of faith, the conflict of the spiritual life.

[* It is not, as in the Authorised Version, “yet without sin,” true as that may be, but “sin apart.” We are tempted, being led away by our own lusts. Christ had all our difficulties, all our temptations, on the way, but had nothing in Himself which could lead Him wrong — far surely from it — nothing which answered to the temptation.]

Now it is the same thing with respect to ourselves in daily life. If I suffer in the flesh, the will of the flesh is assuredly not in action; and the flesh, in that I suffer, is practically dead — I have nothing more to do with sins.* We then are freed from it, have done with it, and are at rest. If we are content to suffer, the will does not act; sin is not there, as to fact; for to suffer is not will, it is grace acting in accordance with the image and the mind of Christ in the new man; and we are freed from the action of the old man. It does not act; we rest from it; we have done with it, no longer to live, for the remainder of our life here below in the flesh, according to the lusts of man, but according to the will of God, which the new man follows.

[* Peter rests on the effect; Paul, as ever, goes to the root, Romans 6.]

It is enough to have spent the past time of our lives in doing the will of the Gentiles (he still speaks to Christians of the circumcision), and in committing the excesses to which they addicted themselves, while they wondered at Christians for refusing to do the same; speaking evil of them for this reason. But they would have to give account to Him, who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The Jews were accustomed to the judgment of the living, for they were the center of God’s government on the earth. The judgment of the dead, with which we are more familiar, had not been definitely revealed to them. They were liable nevertheless to this judgment; for it was with this object that the promises of God were presented to them while living, in order that they might either live according to God in the spirit, or be judged as men responsible for what they had done in the flesh. For the one or other of these results would be produced in every one who heard the promises.

Thus, in regard to the Jews, the judgment of the dead would take place in connection with the promises that had been set before them. For this testimony from God placed all who heard it under responsibility, so that they would be judged as men who had to give account to God of their conduct in the flesh, unless they came out of this position of life in the flesh by being quickened through the power of the word addressed to them, applied by the energy of the Spirit; so that they escaped from the flesh through the spiritual life which they received.

Now the end of all things was at hand. The apostle, while speaking of the great principle of responsibility in connection with the testimony of God, draws the attention of believers to the solemn thought of the end of all these things on which the flesh rested. This end drew near.

Here, observe, Peter presents, not the coming of the Lord to receive His own, nor His manifestation with them, but that moment of the solemn sanction of the ways of God, when every refuge of the flesh shall disappear, and all the thoughts of man perish for ever.

As regards the relations of God with the world in government, the destruction of Jerusalem, although it was not “the end,” was of immense importance, because it destroyed the very seat of that government on the earth in which the Messiah ought to have reigned, and shall yet reign.

God watches over all things, takes care of His own, counts the hairs of their heads, makes everything contribute to their highest good; but this is in the midst of a world which He no longer owns. For not only is the earthly and direct government of God set aside, which took place in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and, in a certain sense, in those of Saul; but the Messiah, who ought to reign in it, has been rejected, and has taken the heavenly place in resurrection, which forms the subject of this epistle.

The destruction of Jerusalem (which was to take place in those days) was the final abolition of even the traces of that government, until the Lord shall return. The relations of an earthly people with God, on the ground of man’s responsibility, were ended. The general government of God took the place of the former; a government always the same in principle, but which, Jesus having suffered on the earth, still allowed His members to suffer here below. And, until the time of judgment, the wicked will persecute the

righteous, and the righteous must have patience. With regard to the nation, those relations only subsisted till the destruction of Jerusalem; the unbelieving hopes of the Jews, as a nation, were judicially overthrown. The apostle speaks here in a general way, and in view of the effect of the solemn truth of the end of all things, for Christ is still “ready to judge”; and if there is delay, it is because God wills not the death of the sinner, and that He prolongs the time of grace.

In view of this end of all that we see, we ought to be sober, and watch in order to pray. We ought to have the heart thus exercised towards God, who changes not, who will never pass away, and who preserves us through all the difficulties and temptations of this passing scene until the day of deliverance which is coming. Instead of allowing ourselves to be carried away by present and visible things, we must bridle self and will and commune with God.

This leads the apostle to the inner position of Christians their relations among themselves, not with God’s general government of the world. They follow, because they are Christians, Christ Himself. The first thing that he enforces on them is fervent charity; not merely long-suffering, which would prevent any outbreak of the anger of the flesh, but an energy of love, which by stamping its character on all the ways of Christians towards each other, would practically set aside the action of the flesh, and make manifest the divine presence and action.

Now thus love covered a multitude of sins. He is not speaking here with a view to ultimate pardon, but of the present notice which God takes — His present relations of government with His people; for we have present relationships with God. If the assembly is at variance, if there is little love, if the intercourse among Christians is with straitened hearts and difficult the existing evil, the mutual wrongs, subsist before God: but if there is love, which neither commits nor resents any wrongs, but pardons such things, and only finds in them occasion for its own exercise, it is then the love which the eye of God rests upon, and not the evil. Even if there are misdeeds — sins — love occupies itself about them, the offender is brought back, is restored, by the charity of the assembly; the sins are removed from the eye of God, they are covered. It is a quotation from the book of Proverbs 10:12: “Hatred stirreth up strife, but love covereth all

sins.” We have a right to forgive them — to wash the feet of our brother (compare James 5:15, and 1 John 5:16). We not only forgive, but love maintains the assembly before God according to His own nature so that He can bless it.

Christians ought to exercise hospitality towards each other with all liberality. It is the expression of love, and tends much to maintain it: we are no longer strangers to each other.

Gifts come next after the exercise of grace. All comes from God. As every one had received the gift, he was to serve in the gift, as a steward of the varied grace of God. It is God who gives; the Christian is a servant, and under responsibility as a steward, on God’s part. He is to ascribe all to God, in a direct way to God. If he speaks, he is to speak as an oracle of God; that is, as speaking on God’s part, and not from himself. If any one serves in things temporal, let him do it as in a power and an ability that come from God, so that, whether one speaks or serves, God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To Him, the apostle adds, be praise and dominion.

After these exhortations he comes to suffering for the name of Christ. They were not to view the fiery persecutions that came to try them, as some strange thing that had befallen them. On the contrary, they were connected with a suffering and rejected Christ; they partook therefore in His sufferings, and were to rejoice in it. He would soon appear, and these sufferings for His sake should turn to their exceeding joy at the revelation of His glory. They were therefore to rejoice at sharing His sufferings, in order to be filled with abounding joy when His glory should be revealed. If they were reproached for the name of Christ, it was happy for them. The Spirit of God rested on them. It was the name of Christ that brought reproach on them. He was in the glory with God; the Spirit, who came from that glory and that God, filled them with joy in bearing the reproach. It was Christ who was reproached — Christ who was glorified — reproached by the enemies of the gospel, while Christians had the joy of glorifying Him. It will be observed, that in this passage, it is for Christ Himself (as it has been said) that the believer suffers; and, therefore, the apostle speaks of glory and joy at the appearing of Jesus Christ, which he

does not mention in chapters 2:20; 3:17 (compare Matthew 5:10 and v. 11, 12 of the same chapter).

As an evil-doer then the Christian ought never to suffer; but if he suffered as a Christian, he was not to be ashamed, but to glorify God for it. The apostle then returns to the government of God; for these sufferings of believers had also another character. To the individual who suffered, it was a glory: he shared the sufferings of Christ, and the Spirit of glory and of God rested on him; and all this should turn to abounding joy when the glory was revealed. But God had no pleasure in allowing His people to suffer. He permitted it; and if Christ had to suffer for us when He who knew no sin did not need it for Himself, the people of God have often need on their own account to be exercised with suffering. God uses the wicked, the enemies of the name of Christ, for this purpose. Job is the book that explains this, independently of all dispensations. But in every form of God's dealings, He exercises His judgments according to the order He has established. He did so with Israel; He does so with the assembly. The latter has a heavenly portion; and if she attaches herself to the earth, God allows the enemy to trouble her. Perhaps the individual who suffers is full of faith and devoted love to the Lord; but under persecution, the heart feels that the world is not its rest, that it must have its portion elsewhere, its strength elsewhere. We are not of the world which persecutes us. If the faithful servant of God is cut off from this world by persecution, it strengthens faith, for God is in it; but they from the midst of whom he is cut off, suffer and feel that the hand of God was in it: His dealings take the form of judgment, always in perfect love, but in discipline.

God judges everything according to His own nature. He desires that all should be in accordance with His nature. No upright and honorable man would like to have the wicked near him, and always before him; God assuredly would not. And in that which is nearest to Him, He must above all desire that everything should correspond to His nature and His holiness — to all that He is. I would have everything around me clean enough not to disgrace me; but in my own house I must have such cleanness as I personally desire. Thus judgment must begin at the house of God: the apostle alludes to Ezekiel 9:6. It is a solemn principle. No grace, no privilege, changes the nature of God; and everything must be conformed to that nature, or, in the end, must be banished from His presence. Grace can

conform us, and it does. It bestows the divine nature, so that there is a principle of absolute conformity to God. But as to practical conformity in thought and deed, the heart and the conscience must be exercised, in order that the understanding of the heart, and the habitual desires and aspirations of the will, should be formed upon the revelation of God, and continually directed towards Him.

Now if this conformity should so fail that the testimony of God is injured by its absence, God, who judges His people, and who will judge evil everywhere, does so by means of the chastisements which He inflicts. Judgment begins at the house of God. The righteous are saved with difficulty. It is evidently not redemption or justification that is here intended, nor the communication of life: those whom the apostle addresses were in possession of them. To our apostle “salvation” is not only the present enjoyment of the salvation of the soul, but the full deliverance of the faithful, which will take place at the coming of Christ in glory. All the temptations are contemplated, all the trials, all the dangers, through which the Christian will pass in reaching the end of his career. All the power of God is requisite, directed by divine wisdom, guiding and sustaining faith, to carry the Christian safely through the wilderness, where Satan employs all the resources of his subtlety to make him perish. The power of God will accomplish it; but, from the human point of view, the difficulties are almost insurmountable. Now, if the righteous — according to the ways of God, who must maintain His judgment conformable to the principles of good and evil in His government; and who will in nowise deny Himself in dealing with the enemy of our souls — if the righteous were saved with difficulty, what would become of the sinner and the ungodly? To join them would not be the way to escape these difficulties. In suffering as a Christian, there was but one thing to do — to commit oneself to Him who watched over the judgment that He was executing. For, as it was His hand, one suffered according to His will. It was this that Christ did.

Observe here, that it is not only the government of God, but there is the expression, “as unto a faithful Creator.” The Spirit of God moves here in this sphere. It is the relationship of God with this world, and the soul knows Him as the One who created it, and who does not forsake the work of His hands. This is Jewish ground — God known in His connection with the first creation. Trust in Him is founded on Christ; but God is known in

His ways with this world, and with us in our pilgrimage here below, where He governs, and where He judges Christians, as He will judge all others.

CHAPTER 5. The apostle returns to christian details. He exhorts the elders, himself an elder; for it appears that among the Jews this title was rather characteristic than official (compare v. 5). He exhorts them to feed the flock of God. The apostle designates himself as one who had been a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and who was to be a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. It was the function of the twelve to be witnesses of the life of Christ (John 15), as it was that of the Holy Ghost to testify of His heavenly glory. Peter places himself at the two ends of the Lord's history, and leaves the interval devoid of all except hope, and the pilgrimage towards an end. He had seen the sufferings of Christ; he was to share His glory when he should be revealed. It is a Christ who puts Himself in relation with the Jews, now known only by faith. During His life on earth, He was in the midst of the Jews although suffering there and rejected. When He shall appear, He will again be in relation with the earth and with that nation.

Paul speaks differently, while at the same time confirming these truths. He only knew the Lord after His exaltation; he is not a witness of His sufferings; but he seeks for the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. Paul's heart is bound to Christ while He is in heaven, as united to Him above; and, although he desires the Lord's appearing for the restitution of all things of which the prophets had spoken he rejoices to know that he shall go with joy to meet Him, and shall return with Him when He is revealed from heaven.

The elders were to feed the flock of God with a ready mind and not as by constraint, nor for gain, nor as governing an inheritance of their own, but as ensamples to the flock. Loving care was to be lavished upon it, for the sake of Christ, the chief Shepherd, with a view to the good of souls. Moreover it was the flock of God which they were to feed. What a solemn as well as sweet thought! How impossible for anyone to entertain the notion of its being his flock, if he has laid hold of the thought that it is the flock of God, and that God allows us to feed it!

We may observe that the heart of the blessed apostle is where the Lord had placed it. "Feed my sheep" was the expression of the Lord's perfect

grace towards Peter, when He was leading him to the humiliating but salutary confession that it needed the eye of God to see that His weak disciple loved Him. At the moment that He convinced him of his utter nothingness, He entrusted to him that which was dearest to Himself.

Thus we see, here, that it is the apostle's care, the desire of the heart, that they should feed the flock. Here, as elsewhere, he does not go beyond the Lord's appearing. It is at that period that the ways of God in government — of which the Jews were the earthly center — shall be fully manifested. Then shall the crown of glory be presented to him that has been faithful, that has satisfied the chief Shepherd's heart.

The young were to submit themselves to those who were older, and all to one another. All were to be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. These are still the principles of His government. Under His hand they were therefore to humble themselves; they should be exalted in due time. This was to commit themselves to God. He knew what was needful. He who loved them would exalt them at the right time. He cared for them; they were to rest on Him, commit all their cares to Him.

On the other hand, they were to be sober and vigilant, because the adversary sought to devour them. Here — whatever may be his wiles, however he may lie in wait for Christians — it is in the character of a roaring lion, one who excites open persecution, that the apostle presents him. They were to resist him, stedfast in the faith. Everywhere the same afflictions were found. Nevertheless the God of grace is the Christian's confidence. He has called us to participate in His eternal glory. The apostle's desire for them is, that, after they had suffered for a time, the God of grace should make them perfect, complete — should stablish and strengthen them, building up their hearts on the foundation of an assurance that cannot be shaken. To Him, he adds, be glory and dominion.

We see that the Christians to whom he wrote were suffering, and that the apostle explained these sufferings on the principles of the divine government, with regard especially to the relation of Christians with God, as being His house, whether those sufferings were for righteousness' sake, or for the name of the Lord. It was but for a time. The Christian's hope was elsewhere; christian patience was well-pleasing to God. It was their

glory, if it was for the name of Christ. Besides which, God judged His house, and watched over His people.