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There are very many such points, which a frequent perusal of Cicero's works for some definite purpose brings to view; but we must forego the presentation of them at present, lest we transcend the limits proper for a review.

‡ 808. *Neque tamen* is, indeed, the ordinary form of expression; but there are places where *non tamen* must stand, and where *neque tamen* would be impossible. So Cic. de Fin. V. 22. 62: *Quis contra in illa aetate pudorem, constantiam, etiamsi sua nihil intersit, non tamen diligit.* *Non tamen*, where this reason does not exist, is more natural in the following passage. Cic. Acad. II. 20. 60.

We conclude with expressing the wish that the author will recognize in our remarks the high respect which we sincerely feel for him. He has effected, and still continues to effect, what few have the power to accomplish. The work contains a real treasure of the nicest observations; it well deserves the correcting hand of its distinguished author to bring it still nearer to perfection.

The translation of Schmitz is reprinted in New-York, corrected and enlarged by Professor Anthon.

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## ARTICLE V.

### THE PREACHING BY CHRIST TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.— REMARKS ON 1 PETER III. 18—21.

By John Brown, D. D. Professor of Exegetical Theology to the United Secession Church,  
Edinburgh, Scotland.

#### PART I.

Ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτωῶν ἔπαθε, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ τῷ πνεύματι· ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι προσωθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν, ἀπεκρίθησάσι ποτε, —.<sup>1</sup>

THE Bible has often been represented as a book full of obscurities and difficulties; by infidels who wish to disprove its divine

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<sup>1</sup> The Author has read with much interest a critical disquisition on this passage, in the American Biblical Repository for April, 1848, by the Rev. Thomas H.

origin; by Roman Catholics who need an argument to prove the necessity of tradition, on which their system rests, and an apology for their apparently impious and paradoxical conduct in withholding a confessedly divine revelation from the unrestrained perusal of the common people and endeavoring to keep it covered by the veil of a dead language; and by mere nominal Christians among Protestants who equally need an excuse, for their habitual neglect of a volume, which they admit to be of divine authority, and profess to regard as the ultimate rule of religious faith and moral duty. And if the Bible was really so full of obscurity and difficulty, if it was the ambiguous and unintelligible book it has been represented, neither the careless Protestant nor the cautious Catholic would be much to be blamed except for inconsistency, and even with this minor fault the infidel would not be greatly chargeable, for if he can make out his premises that the Bible is an unintelligible book, there can be little difficulty in admitting his conclusion that it is not a divine one;—a book full of darkness cannot come from Him who “is light and in whom there is no darkness at all,” and it is certainly useless to read what it is impossible to understand.

But it is not true, that the Holy Scriptures are full of obscurities and difficulties. The Bible, generally speaking, is a very plain book. It would not be easy to find a book of its size, on its subjects, in which there is so much level to the apprehension of ordinary understandings. No person who sits down to its study, with an honest wish to apprehend its statements, will find any great difficulty in discovering what are the doctrines it unfolds, or what are the duties it enjoins. “The commandment of the Lord is pure,”<sup>1</sup> i. e. clear as the light of heaven, “and it enlightens the eyes.” But though the Bible is not *full* of obscurities and difficulties, there are obscurities and difficulties in it. It is with the great light of the moral, as of the natural world, the whole of its disc is not equally lustrous. There are spots in the sun; but he must be very blind or very perverse who should, on that account maintain that the sun is not a luminous body at all; and insist that it gives no light and that if it rays forth anything, it rays forth darkness. On the other hand he who asserts that there are no spots in the sun, and he who asserts that there are no difficul-

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Skinner, D. D., and though led to considerably different results in his analysis, he thankfully acknowledges the advantage derived from the able and in one instance, so far as he knows, the original, suggestions of his predecessor.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm. 19: 8. “Claram dilucidum.”—Rosenmüller.

ties in the Bible, equally prove that they are very superficial observers or very prejudiced judges. That in writings so ancient as the Holy Scriptures, published originally in a state of society so different from that which at present prevails, among a people whose language has long ceased to be spoken, and whose laws and customs and manners have little resemblance to ours, there should be difficulties, was naturally to be expected, and indeed this could not have been prevented without a miracle. But these obscurities attach themselves to comparatively few passages, and the difficulties to which they give origin are gradually diminishing and disappearing as the knowledge of the sacred languages, antiquities and criticism makes progress; and with regard to those which remain, there are two considerations that deserve remark; the first that in no case is there uncertainty cast on any of the leading facts or doctrines of revelation by these obscurities and difficulties, and the second, that in almost every case, though there may be particular words and phrases, the precise import or reference of which it may be difficult or impossible to determine with certainty, these passages are found notwithstanding replete with important instruction.

These remarks are applicable to the passage of Scripture to which our attention is now to be directed. The observation of the apostle Peter respecting his beloved brother Paul is applicable to himself. In his epistles "there are some things hard to be understood which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction,"<sup>1</sup> and this is one of them. Few passages have received a greater variety of interpretation, and he would prove more satisfactorily his self-confidence than his wisdom who should assert that *his* interpretation was undoubtedly the true one. Yet though we should not be able to determine with absolute certainty who these "spirits in prison" are, and when, and where, and how, and for what purpose Christ "went and preached" to them, and whatever opinion we may adopt as most probable on these subjects, no Christian doctrine, no Christian duty is affected by our uncertainty or by our opinion. Even were we holding, what appears to us the least probable opinion, that the words teach us that our Lord during his disembodied state went to the region of separate souls, and made a communication of some kind to its inhabitants, either to such of them as were "in safe keeping" in Paradise, or "in prison" in Gehenna; they would give no countenance to the delusive dreams either of the Roman Catholic re-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 3: 15, 16.

specting purgatory, or of the Universalist concerning the possibility of favorably altering the condition of men after they have left the present state; they would merely mention an isolated fact nowhere else referred to in Scripture, and from which no legitimate consequence can be deduced at all inconsistent with any other portion of revealed truth; and though we should never obtain satisfactory information on the points referred to, how replete with truth and holy influence is the sentence, v. 18—22, of which one or two clauses are obscure, perhaps unintelligible,—how “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness!” It would be very presumptuous to expect that I should be able entirely to remove difficulties which have baffled the attempts of the ablest interpreters, yet I believe that patient, careful, honest, persevering, prayerful study of any portion of God’s word is never unproductive of some good effect, and I must say, after the experience of forty years’ study of the Bible, that in enquiring into the meaning of Scripture, “darkness has often been made light before me; crooked things straight; rough places plain.”<sup>3</sup>

The paragraph of which the subject of this *excursus* forms a part is occupied with a view of the sufferings of Christ,—(their nature, as violent, penal, vicarious, and expiatory,—their design, to bring men to God,—and their consequences more immediate and remote) considered as a source of support and consolation and hope to Christians persecuted for righteousness’ sake. It is to a portion of the consequences of Christ’s sufferings that the whole of the difficult passage before us refers.

“Christ the just one suffered for sins in the room of the unjust, that he might bring them to God;—was put to death in the flesh

<sup>3</sup> Those are well weighed words of the candid and learned Joachim Camerarius, a man every way worthy of being Melancthon’s friend: “Est hic unus ex iis locis sacrarum literarum, de quibus pietas religiosa quaerere amplius et dubitare quid dicatur, sine reprehensione: et de quibus diversae etiam sententiae admitti posse videantur, dummodo non detorqueatur καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, id est, religiosa de fide consensio, neque aberretur ὑπὸ τῆς ἀναλογίας τῆς πίστεως.”—Luther’s remarks, characteristic as they are, do not merit the same eulogium. “Hac tam horribili poena Petrus apostolus quoque motus videtur, ut non aliter quam fanaticus loquatur talia verba, quae ne hodie quidem, a nobis intelligi possunt. 1 Pet. 3: 19, 20. Mirabile profecto iudicium, et vox paene fanatica.”—Luth. Exeg. Opp. Lett. tom. II. p. 221. I do not know that we can make any better apology for the rashness of the great reformer, than to confess with Langé, the worthy father-in-law of the learned and judicious Rambach, “virum optimum aliquid humani passum esse,” and that what he says, “ex affectu potius, quam verbis estimandum esse.”

but quickened by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who sometime were disobedient, and having risen from the dead he went into heaven, where he is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him." The consequences of the penal, vicarious, expiatory sufferings of our Lord plainly divide themselves into two classes,—first, such as took place *not* in heaven, for that is all that we yet consider ourselves as warranted to say of them,—whether *on* the earth or *under* the earth—may perhaps appear in the course of our illustrations. "He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, he by it went and preached to the spirits in prison who sometime were disobedient;" and secondly, such as took place in heaven: "Having risen from the dead he went into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him." It is to the first class of consequences,—those which took place *not* in heaven, that our attention is to be turned.

Some interpreters consider only the words rendered "put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit," as descriptive of the result of our Lord's penal, vicarious, expiatory sufferings; what follows they consider as referring to something which he did in or by the same spirit by which he was quickened, on another occasion altogether, at a former period so long gone by as the antediluvian times. They interpret the words descriptive of the consequences of our Lord's sufferings for sins, in the room of sinners, thus, "He was violently put to death in his body, or in his human nature, but he was quickened, restored to life by the Spirit, i. e. either by the Holy Ghost the third person of the Holy Trinity, or by his divine nature "the Spirit of holiness" according to which he is "the Son of God," in contradistinction to his being "the Son of David according to the flesh,"—that Spirit by which he was "justified," that "Eternal Spirit through which he offered himself to God a sacrifice without spot or blemish;" and the remaining part of the statement they consider as equivalent to, "By the Holy Spirit inspiring Noah as a preacher of righteousness, or in his divine nature through Noah's instrumentality, he in the antediluvian times "went and preached"—either a pleonastic expression for *preached*, or came from heaven in his divine influence and operation,—as he came to Paradise in the cool of the day, came down to see the Tower of Babel, came down on Mount Sinai at the giving of the law,—and made known the will of God to the men of that generation who were *then* "spirits in

prison," condemned men, doomed to punishment for their sins, and kept as in a prison till the time of execution when the flood came, or who are *now* spirits in the prison of hell, kept along with the evil angels "under chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day."

The sense thus brought out of the words is self-consistent and not incompatible with any of the facts or doctrines of revelation, but this mode of interpretation seems to us liable to great and indeed insurmountable objections. The words "flesh" and "spirit" are plainly opposed to one another, the prepositions *in* and *by* are not in the original. The opposed words<sup>1</sup> are in the same case; they stand plainly in the same relation respectively to the words rendered "put to death" and "quicken'd;"<sup>2</sup> and that relation should have been expressed in English by the same particle.<sup>3</sup> If you give the rendering "put to death *in* the flesh" you must give the corresponding rendering "quicken'd *in* the Spirit" which would bring out the sense either "quicken'd *in* his human spirit or soul"—a statement to which it is difficult to attach a distinct meaning, for the soul is not mortal,—Christ's spirit did not die,—and *to continue alive* is not the meaning of the original word; or "quicken'd in his divine nature,"—a statement obviously absurd and false, as implying that he who is "the life"—the living one can be quicken'd either in the sense of *being restored from a state of death* or of *being endowed with a larger measure of vitality*. On the other hand if you adopt the rendering of our translators in the second clause "quicken'd *by* the Spirit," then you must render in accordance with it the first clause "put to death *by* the flesh." If by "the Spirit" you understand the divine nature of our Lord, by "the flesh" you must understand his human nature, which makes the expression "put to death by the flesh" an absurdity. On the other hand if you understand by "the Spirit" *the Holy Ghost*, then by "the flesh" you must understand *mankind*—put to death by men but restored to life by God the Spirit. This interpretation though giving a consistent and true sense,—the sense so

<sup>1</sup> Σαρξ, πνεύματι.

<sup>2</sup> Θανατωθεῖς, ζωοποιηθεῖς.

<sup>3</sup> Wiclif is uniform in his rendering "made dede *in* fleisch, but made quyk *in* spirit—he cam *in* spirit," etc. So is Tyndale, so far as the repeated mention of *spirit* is concerned,—*"was kylled as pertayning to the flesshe: but was quyckened in the sprete, in which sprete he also went,"* etc. Cranmer repeats Tyndale—as does the Geneva with some slight orthographical change. The Rhemists in the first part of the rendering are nearer the truth than any of them—*"mortified certes in flesh but quickened in spirit. In the which spirit,"* etc.

forcibly expressed in Peter's words to the Jews, "whom ye crucified,—whom God raised from the dead," is forbidden by the usage of the language. Then there can be no doubt that there does appear something very unnatural in introducing our Lord, in the midst of what is plainly a description of the results of his atoning sufferings, as having, in the spirit by which he was quickened, after he had been put to death, gone many centuries before in the antediluvian age to preach to an ungodly world,—and there is just as little doubt that the only meaning which the words will bear, without violence being done them, is that it was when he had been put to death in the flesh and quickened ~~in~~ the Spirit or *by* the Spirit, whatever that may mean,—he went and preached; and that "the spirits" whoever they be, were "in prison," whatever that may mean, when he preached to them. These are not all the difficulties connected with this interpretation, which may be termed the common Protestant interpretation of the passage; but they are quite sufficient to convince us that it is untenable, and to induce the apprehension that it would never have been resorted to but from its supposed necessity to destroy the shadow of support which another mode of interpretation gives to *some of the errors of Popery* which, by that "deceivableness of unrighteousness" which characterizes the system,—have been turned to great account in fettering the minds and plundering the property of the unhappy victims of that masterpiece of imposture and superstition; or to the *soul-endangering dream of Universalism*, that there are means of grace, of which those who die unforgiven, may avail themselves in the separate state, so as to avoid the natural results of their living and dying in unbelief and impenitence.

Another class of interpreters consider the whole statement before us as referring to what happened subsequent to, and consequent on our Lord's penal, vicarious, expiatory sufferings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A pretty full account of the diversified opinions referred to in this and the following paragraph is to be found in the third Excursus appended to the second fasciculus of Potts' Commentary on the Catholic Epistles, forming the LXth volume of the "Editio Koppiana" of the N. T. It is entitled "Variae interpretum, de descensu J. C. ad inferos, sententiae secundum temporum ordinem enumerantur, et breviter dijudicantur; nostraque interpretatio, copiosius explicatur." Bishop Horsley belongs to the more reasonable portion of this class. His defence of his view of the passage like everything he did bears the marks of power—imaginative, and ratiocinative—but like many things he did is lamentably deficient in sober thinking and conclusive argument. It is a happy thing that Priestley had other confuters, and the divinity of Christ other defenders than the Bishop of Rochester.

Some of these consider the event referred to in the words, "He went and preached to the spirits in prison," as having taken place during the interval between our Lord's death and resurrection; others as having taken place after his resurrection. The first consider the words rendered "having been put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit" as equivalent to "having become dead as to his body"—a fair rendering of the words,—"but continuing alive as to his soul,"—a sense which the original words will not bear,—he in that soul went to the region of separate souls, Hades, the invisible state, and there preached to the spirits in prison who before were disobedient. The second consider the words referred to as equivalent to "being put to death in his human nature, but restored to life by his divine nature or by the Holy Ghost, he in his resurrection-body, (which they conceive was not subject to the ordinary laws of matter) in his new life, went down to the region of separate souls and there preached to the spirits in prison.

These two classes of interpreters, holding in common that our Lord went down to Hades, are considerably divided as to what was his object in going there as described or hinted at in the passage before us; one class holding that he went to hell (Gehenna) the place of torment, to proclaim to the fallen angels who are kept there under chains of darkness, as the "spirits in prison," (though how *they* could be disobedient in the days of Noah does not appear, and these spirits seem plainly to belong to the same class of beings as "the souls" that were saved v. 20,) to proclaim throughout that dismal region his triumph over them and their apostate chief; another class holding that he went to the place of torment to announce his triumph over the powers of darkness, and to offer salvation through his death to those human spirits who had died in their sins; a third class holding that he went to purgatory to deliver those who had been sufficiently improved by their disciplinary sufferings and to remove them to paradise; and a fourth class holding that he went to paradise, the residence of the separate spirits of good men, translating the "spirits in prison"<sup>1</sup>—the spirits in safe keeping, to announce to them the glad tidings that the great salvation which had been the object of their faith and hope was now completed.

Each of these varieties of interpretation is attended with its own difficulties,—difficulties which appear to me insuperable.

<sup>1</sup> Τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι.

Some of them go upon principles obviously and demonstrably false, and all of them attempt to bring much out of the words which plainly is not in them. To state particularly the objections against each of them would occupy a good deal of time, and, I am afraid, would afford little satisfaction and less edification to my readers. There are however common difficulties bearing on them all which seem quite sufficient to warrant us to set them all aside, and which may be stated in a sentence or two. It seems incredible if such events, as are darkly hinted at, rather than distinctly described in these words thus interpreted, had taken place that we should have no account of them, indeed no certain allusion to them, in any other part of Scripture. It seems quite unaccountable why the separate spirits of those who had lived in the days of Noah and perished in the deluge, are specially mentioned as those among the inhabitants of the unseen world to whom the quickened Redeemer went and preached, the much greater multitude before and since that time who had gone down to the land of darkness being passed by without notice; and what will weigh much with a judicious student of Scripture, it is impossible to perceive how these events, supposing them to have taken place, were, as they are represented by the construction of the language to be, the effects of Christ's suffering for sins, in the room of sinners, and how these statements at all serve to promote the apostle's practical object which was to persuade persecuted Christians to submit patiently and cheerfully to sufferings for righteousness' sake from the consideration, exemplified in the case of our Lord, that suffering in a good cause and in a right spirit, however severe, was calculated to lead to the happiest results. No interpretation, we apprehend, can be the right one which does not correspond with the obvious construction of the passage, and with the avowed design of the writer.

Keeping these general principles steadily in view, I proceed now to state as briefly and as plainly as I can, what appears to me the probable meaning of this difficult passage,—“a passage” as Leighton says, “somewhat obscure in itself, but as it usually falls, made more so by the various fancies and contests of interpreters aiming or pretending to clear it.”

The first consequence noticed here of those penal, vicarious, expiatory sufferings which Christ the Just One endured by the appointment of his Father the righteous judge, for sins, in the room of the unjust, is that he “was put to death in the flesh.”<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> θανατωθεῖς μὲν σαρκί.

unjust in whose room he stood were doomed to death, and he, in bearing their sins submitted to *death*—to a violent death—to a form of violent death which by a divine appointment marked him as the victim of public justice.<sup>1</sup> He was with wicked hands crucified, hung on a tree,—and he that was hanged on a tree was declared to be *accursed* or to have died as a victim of sin by the hand of public justice. The idea here however seems not to be so much the violent nature of the infliction, as its effect,—the entire privation of life and consequently of power. The word seems used as in Romans 7: 4, “ye are dead.”<sup>2</sup> He became dead in the flesh,—he became bodily dead,—he died *σαρκικῶς*,—he lay an inanimate, powerless corpse in the sepulchre.

But his becoming thus bodily dead and powerless was not more certainly the effect of his penal, vicarious, expiatory sufferings, than the second circumstance here mentioned, his “being quickened in the spirit.” If this refers to his resurrection we must render it “quickened by the Spirit,”—but we have already seen that without misinterpretation it cannot be so rendered. Besides, the resurrection is expressly mentioned in the twenty-first verse in connection with the ascension to heaven. To be “quickened *in the spirit*” is to be quickened spiritually, as to be put to death in the flesh is to become dead bodily. Thus *πορὶν ἐν πνεύματι*, i. e. *πνευματικῶς*;<sup>3</sup> waxed strong in spirit, *ἠκραταιώθη ἐν πνεύματι*, i. e. *πνευματικῶς*;<sup>4</sup> rejoiced in spirit, *ἠγαλλιάσατο ἐν πνεύματι*, i. e. *πνευματικῶς*.<sup>5</sup> The word rendered to be “quickened,” *ζωοποιέσθαι*, literally signifies to be made alive or living. It is used to signify the original communication of life, the restoration of life to the dead, and the communication of a large measure of life to the living. A consequence of our Lord's penal, vicarious and expiatory sufferings was that he became spiritually alive and powerful, in a sense and to a degree in which he was not previously, and in which but for these sufferings he never could have become,—full of life to communicate to dead souls,—“mighty to save.” He was thus spiritually quickened. “The Father gave him to have life in himself” that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him,—to all coming to the Father through him.” “All power,” even the power of God, “was given to Him” who had been crucified in weakness, and by this power he lives and gives life. “The second

<sup>1</sup> Dent. 21: 23; Gal. 3: 13.

<sup>2</sup> *ἔθανατώθητε τῷ νόμῳ*, not “ye have been put to death by the law.”

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 5: 3.

<sup>4</sup> Luke. 1: 80.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 10: 21.

Adam" thus "became a quickening spirit." He became as it were the receptacle of life and spiritual influence, out of which men were to "receive and grace for grace." As a divine person, all life, all power necessarily adhered in his nature; but as Mediator, that spiritual life and energy which makes him powerful to save are gifts bestowed on him by the Father as rewards of his obedience to death, and as the means of gaining the ultimate object of his atoning sufferings. "He asked" of the Father this "life," and "He gave it him." It was the consequence of his penal, vicarious, expiatory sufferings. It is to this that our Lord refers when he says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," or rather falling into the ground, being dead, "it abideth alone, but if it die,"—if it be dead, "it bringeth forth much fruit." Had Christ not died bodily as the victim of sin, he could not have "lived forever" as our all successful Intercessor,— "able to save to the uttermost"—forever. "I if I be lifted up," said he,—lifted upon the cross, "for this he said signifying what death he should die," "I if I should be lifted up will draw all men unto me."<sup>1</sup> "The captain of our salvation was perfected by his sufferings." "Because he humbled himself, God highly exalted him, and gave him" all "power over all flesh," "all power in heaven and in earth."

The spiritual life and power conferred on the Saviour as the reward of his disinterested labors in the cause of God's honor and man's salvation, was illustriously manifested in that wonderful quickening of his apostles by the communication of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and in communicating through the instrumentality of their ministry spiritual life and all its concomitant and following blessings to multitudes of souls "dead in sin."

It is to this, I apprehend, that the apostle refers when he says *by which* or *whereby*<sup>2</sup>—by this spiritual quickening, or *wherefore* being thus spiritually quickened "he went and preached to the spirits in prison who before time were disobedient." If our general scheme of interpretation is well founded there can be no doubt as to who those spirits in prison are. They are not human spirits confined in bodies like so many prisons as a punishment for sin in some previous state of being. That is a heathenish doctrine to which Scripture rightly interpreted gives no sanction. They are sinful men righteously condemned, the slaves and captives of Satan, shackled with the fetters of sin. These are the captives to whom Messiah, "anointed by the Spirit of the Lord,"

<sup>1</sup> John 12: 24, 32.

<sup>2</sup> *ἐν ᾧ*.

—i. e. just in other words, "quicken'd in the Spirit," was to proclaim liberty,—the bound ones to whom he was to announce the opening of the prison. This is no uncommon mode of representing the work of the Messiah. "Thus saith the Lord God, he that created the heavens and stretched them out, he that spread forth the earth and that which cometh out of it, he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein; I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee and will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house."<sup>1</sup> "He said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves; they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my high-ways shall be exalted. Behold these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim."<sup>2</sup>

It is not remarkable then that guilty, depraved men should be

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 42: 5, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 49: 3—12.

represented as captives in prison, but the phrase "spirits in prison" seems a strange one,—for spiritually captive men. It is so; but the use of *it* rather than the phrase *men in prison* or *prisoners* seems to have grown out of the previous phrase "quickened in spirit," "congruens sermo," as Bengel has it. He who was quickened in spirit had to do with the spirits of men, with men as spiritual beings. This idea seems to have given a color to the whole passage; the eight persons saved from the deluge are termed "eight souls."

But then it seems as if the spirits in prison to whom our Lord, quickened in spirit, is represented as coming and preaching were the unbelieving generation who lived before the flood, "the spirits in prison who aforetime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noe." This difficulty is not a formidable one; this stumbling-block may easily be removed. "Spirits in prison" is a phrase characteristic of men in all ages. We see nothing perplexing in the statement "God sent the gospel to the Britons, who in the days of Caesar were painted savages;" the persons to whom God sent the gospel were not the same individuals who were painted savages in the days of Caesar, but they belonged to the same race; neither should we find anything perplexing in the statement, Jesus Christ came and preached to spiritually captive men who in former times and especially in the days of Noah had been hard to be convinced.<sup>1</sup> The reason why there is reference to the disobedience of men in former times and especially in the days of Noah will probably come out in the course of our future illustrations. The statements in v. 20 and 21 are substantially parenthetical and will be considered at greater advantage by themselves.

Having endeavored to dispose of these verbal difficulties, let us now attend to the sentiment contained in the words, 'Jesus Christ spiritually quickened came and preached to the spirits in prison, who in time past were disobedient.' The coming and preaching describe not what our Lord did *bodily*, *σαρκικῶς* or *σωματικῶς*, but what he did spiritually *πνευματικῶς*, not what he did personally, but what he did by the instrumentality of others. The apos-

<sup>1</sup> *Quales animi olim Noe temporibus non obtemperarunt. Loquitur, quasi iidem fuissent: et fuerunt iidem, spiritus, sive animi, non iidem in ἁριθμῷ ut Aristoteles loquitur, sed genere.*—Grotius. It is the fashion in certain quarters to speak slightly of the great Dutchman. While mourning that the spiritual element of the interpreter was not more abundant in him, for it was not wanting, I regard Grotius as one of the first interpreters of Scripture. In two lines he often throws more light on a passage than many interpreters of high name in two pages.

the Paul has explained the meaning of the apostle Peter when in the second chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, he represents Christ as "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, coming and preaching peace to those who were afar off and to them who were nigh," that is, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. Another very satisfactory commentary may be found in the gospels. "All power is given unto me," said our Saviour after being "quickenened in the spirit," "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, Go ye therefore and *teach* all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always even to the end of the world. So then after the Lord had *thus* spoken to them, he was received into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God, and they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following." To the apostle Paul who was born as one out of due time, the commission was, "I send thee to the Gentiles to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ," and whatever Paul did effectually in the discharge of that commission, it was not *he* but *Christ* by him.<sup>2</sup> This then is Christ quickened in consequence of his suffering, the just one in the room of the unjust, going and preaching to the "spirits in prison."

There are two subsidiary ideas in reference to this preaching of Christ "quickenened in the spirit" to the "spirits in prison" that are suggested by the words of the apostle. These are the *success* of his preaching and the *extent of that success*. These "spirits in prison" had "aforetime been disobedient." Christ had preached to them not only by Noah, but by all the prophets, for the Spirit in the prophets was the "Spirit of Christ;" but he had preached in a great measure in vain. He had to complain in reference to his preaching by his prophets, in reference to his own personal preaching previously to his "suffering the just in the room of the unjust," saying, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain, all day long I have stretched out my hands to a stiff-necked and rebellious people,—Who hath believed our report?" But now Christ, being quickened by the

<sup>1</sup> Eph. 2: 13, 17. Matt. 28: 18, 19. Mark 16: 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 26: 16—18. Rom. 15: 18.

Spirit and quickening others by the Spirit, the consequence was, "the disobedient were turned to the wisdom of the just" and the "spirits in prison" appeared "a people made ready, prepared for the Lord." The word attended by the Spirit in consequence of the shedding of the blood of the covenant, had "free course and was glorified," and "the prisoners were sent forth out of the pit wherein there was no water." "The prey was taken from the mighty; the captives of the terrible one were delivered." The sealed among the tribes of Israel were 144,000, and the converted from among the nations, "the people taken out from among the Gentiles to the name" of Jehovah was an innumerable company, "a multitude which no man could number, out of every kindred, and people, and tribe, and nation." It was not then as "in the days of Noah when few, that is eight, souls were saved." Multitudes heard and knew "the joyful sound," the shackles dropped from their limbs, and they walked at liberty, keeping God's commandments. And still does the fountain of life spring up in the quickened Redeemer's heart and well forth, giving life to the world; still does the great Deliverer prosecute his glorious work of spiritual emancipation; still is he going and preaching to the "spirits in prison," and though all have not obeyed, yet many have obeyed, many are obeying, many more will yet obey.

The connection of this increased spiritual life and vigor in Christ as the Redeemer and Saviour of men, and its blessed consequences in the extensive and effectual administration of the word of his grace, with his penal, vicarious, expiatory sufferings, is stated here, but not here only. It is often brought forward in Scripture: "Christ has redeemed men from the curse of the law, having become a curse in their room, that the blessing of Abraham,"—a free and full justification, "might come upon the Gentiles, and that men might receive the promised Spirit through believing." "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I go away I will send him to you." The Spirit is given because Jesus is glorified, and Jesus is glorified for he has "finished the work which the Father had given him to do" in "laying down his life for the sheep," in "giving his flesh for the life of the world."

The connection between the atoning death of Christ and his being quickened, with his quickening men may be readily apprehended. The truth respecting it may be stated in a sentence or two. The power of dispensing divine influence formed an im-

portant part of our Lord's mediatorial reward, and it is impossible to conceive of any reward more suitable to his holy, benevolent character, and there was an obvious propriety that the work should be accomplished before the reward was conferred. The truth respecting Christ's dying, the just in the room of the unjust, is the grand instrument which the Holy Spirit employs for converting men, for quickening dead souls. This is the great subject of efficient preaching. Till the atonement was made, the revelation of it could be but obscure, for the history could not be written, till the events had taken place. It was meet that the great preacher should have a clear, full message to proclaim before he came and preached to every nation under heaven; and that the great spiritual agent should be furnished with the fittest instrumentality for performing all the moral miracles of the new creation.

The view, which we have endeavored to establish, of this much disputed passage has the advantage,—an advantage not possessed by most other expositions of it,—of preserving both the grammatical and logical connection. The words of the apostle thus explained plainly bear on his great practical object. "Be not afraid, be not ashamed of suffering in a good cause in a right spirit." No damage comes from well-doing or from suffering in well-doing. Christ in "suffering the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God," suffered for well-doing, and though his sufferings ended in his dying *bodily*, they ended also in his being spiritually quickened, and, through the effectual manifestation of the truth, becoming "the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey him." Nor is this all, even his mortal body has in consequence of these sufferings been raised from the grave, and in that body he is "gone into heaven and sat down on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him."

I am farther confirmed in this view of the passage, by observing that in one very important part of it I have the support of archbishop Leighton. In the *text* of his commentary he interprets the passage according to the usual Protestant mode of exposition, but in a note he observes, "Thus I then thought; but do now apprehend another sense as more probable, The mission of the Spirit, and preaching of the gospel by it after his resurrection; preaching to sinners and converting them according to the prophecy, which he first fulfilled in person, and after more amply in his apostles; that prophecy I mean, Isaiah lxi. The Spirit was

upon him, and was sent from him to his apostles to preach to 'spirits in prison,' to preach liberty to the captives,—*captive spirits*, and therefore called '*spirits in prison*' to illustrate the thing the more by opposition to that spirit of Christ,—the spirit of liberty setting them free; and this to show the greater efficacy of Christ's preaching than of Noah's, though he was a signal preacher of righteousness, yet only himself and his family—eight persons—were saved by him, but multitudes of all nations by the Spirit and preaching of Christ in the gospel."

I conclude with a few reflections suggested by the subject we have been considering.

How deplorable is the condition of fallen men, "spirits in prison"—"dead souls!" There is something monstrous here, for there is nothing naturally so free as *spirits*, nothing so full of life as *souls*. How deplorable to see bondage and death where there originally was nothing but liberty and life! We may be disgusted but we are not surprised at seeing a loathsome reptile crawling on the earth, but we are at once amazed and shocked when we see the bird of the sun with blinded eyes, broken pinions and soiled feathers moving awkwardly and with difficulty along the ground instead of sailing majestically through the depths of ether. Alas, what a captivity!—condemned,—waiting the hour of the execution of the sentence,—no possibility of effecting their escape,—nor man, nor angel can open the door of their prison-house. Yet are they, blessed be God, prisoners of hope. There is a Saviour and a great one, Jesus who "saves his people from their sins" and who in doing so "delivers them from the wrath to come."

How well fitted is He for performing all the functions of a deliverer! This is the second reflection suggested by our subject. He has become "perfect through sufferings." He has all the merit,—all the power both as to external event and internal influence,—all the authority, all the sympathy, that is necessary to enable him effectually to liberate the prisoners of divine justice, the captives of infernal power. He has suffered for sins, the just for the unjust; so as to become dead as the victim of human transgression; and the atonement made by these sufferings is an atonement of infinite value; and he has been spiritually quickened,—endowed with such a superabundance of life as to enable him to give eternal life to innumerable dead souls,—and endowed with an infinity of energy so that he can vanquish the enslavers, level the prison walls, and loose the fetters of innumerable spirits in prison.

Prisoners of hope, turn the eye of faith and desire towards your all accomplished Deliverer. Remember "*now* is the accepted time." Yet a little longer and ye will be prisoners more than ever, but no longer prisoners *of hope*. To borrow the earnest expostulation of a pious divine: "Oh do not destroy yourselves; you are in prison, he proclaims you liberty. Christ proclaims you liberty and will you not accept it? Think though you may be pleased with your present thralldom and prison, it reserves you (if you come not forth) to another prison which will not please you. These chains of spiritual darkness in which you now are, unless you be freed by him, will be exchanged not for freedom, but for the chains of everlasting darkness wherein the hopeless prisoners are kept to the judgment of the great day. Accept his offer of deliverance. Life, liberty, blessedness are yours,—yours forever. The Son makes "you free and ye are free indeed." The eternal life which was with the Father gives you life, and you have life, you have it abundantly."

In what a dignified light does this passage represent the ministry of divine truth! It is the work of the perfected Saviour. Having suffered to the death for sins in the room of the unjust, and having been spiritually quickened, he comes and preaches to the "spirits in prison." He preaches "peace to them that are afar off and to them who are nigh." The voice is on earth, the speaker is in heaven. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke to the father by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath received by inheritance a more excellent name than they." He that neglecteth and despiseth the word of reconciliation despiseth not man but God,—God in Christ reconciling the world to himself,—wonderful,—most wonderful!—beseeching men to be reconciled to him. Surely we should see that "we refuse not him, speaking thus to us from heaven. Surely we should give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard,—which we now hear from him, lest at any time we let them slip, for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation which at the

first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them who heard him, God also bearing witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will." The exalted Redeemer is the great, the only effectual preacher. His ministers preach with effect only when he speaks and works in them and by them. It is an advice full of wisdom as well as of piety, which the good archbishop gives those who are anxious to derive saving advantage from the ministry of the word. "Ye that are for your own interest, be earnest with this Lord of life,—this fountain of Spirit,—to let forth more of it upon his messengers in these times. You would receive back the fruit of your prayers. Were ye busy this way you would find more life and refreshing sweetness in the word of life, how weak and worthless soever they were that brought it. It would descend as sweet showers upon the valleys and make them fruitful." "Brethren" for your own sakes as well as ours, "pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." His word is "quick and powerful;" it is "spirit and life;" it "converts the soul; it makes wise the simple; it rejoices the heart; it enlightens the eyes." It is as powerful now as in the primitive ages. It "brings down high imaginations" and while it emancipates the imprisoned spirit from the thralldom of depraved principle, Satanic power, and human authority, "it brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." O that through his preaching many may be thus at once emancipated and made captive—freed from the fetters of earthliness and sin and bound in the chains of holy principle and divine love,—may at once cease to be "spirits in prison" and become inhabitants of that High Tower, that impregnable fortress" in which all obedient to his call are "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."

In conclusion, I remark that the subject we have been considering brings before the mind in a very striking form some of the great motives and encouragements to missionary exertion. The state of the unenlightened part of mankind as "spirits in prison" calls for our sympathy, and since their imprisonment is not hopeless, it calls for our exertions to procure their emancipation. Had there been no atoning sacrifice,—no quickening Spirit,—it would have been godlike to mourn their servitude and condemnation, but it would have been madness to have attempted their deliverance. But there has been an all perfect, an infinitely valuable, atoning sacrifice offered up, Christ the just one has died

in the room of the unjust for the express purpose that enslaved, condemned men, might be brought to forgiveness and liberty by being brought to God. No legal bars lie in the way of the emancipation of the "spirits in prison," for the offered sacrifice has been accepted, the righteous Judge is well pleased with it and ready to demonstrate that he is just in justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus. He has shown this by bringing from the dust of death and seating on his own right hand him who "gave himself a ransom for many." As there is a law satisfying atonement, so there is also a powerful quickening Spirit who gives life and liberty. He who was put to death in the flesh, is spiritually quickened by that Spirit, and having that Spirit given him without measure, he in the word of the truth of the gospel not only proclaims liberty to the captives, but by that Spirit actually breaks their fetters and gives them at once the power and the disposition to walk at liberty keeping the commandments of God. Yes, he who died the just in the room of the unjust, he, who to make atonement for sin was crucified in weakness" and "became dead in the flesh," having been "quickened in the spirit," "lives by the power of God" and has come preaching to the "spirits in prison," making the perverse, "willing in the day of his power," and bringing the "disobedient to the wisdom of the just."

The great work of the emancipation of the "spirits in prison" is not then a hopeless one. Many have been delivered. Multitudes more will be delivered. Jesus Christ has not died in vain. The life which the Father has given him to have in himself shall not remain dormant and inoperative. It was so ordained that he might be a fountain of life to spiritually dead men and might quicken whom he would. This great work of the emancipation of the "spirits in prison" is, strictly speaking, the work of the divine Deliverer. He only could make atonement. He only can give the Spirit. He has, however, most kindly and wisely so arranged the method of emancipation, that a place is afforded for the active, willing services of those whom he has delivered, in accomplishing the actual enfranchisement of their brethren who still remain "spirits in prison." The gospel which announces the atonement, and in connection with which the Spirit is given, is to be diffused not by miraculous means, not by angelic agency, but by the voluntary exertions of spiritually emancipated men. Their exertions are, as it were, the triumphal chariot in which the Redeemer "rides forth prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness," taking the captivity captive, wreat-

ing his slaves from the mighty, his prey from the terrible one. We are the angels by which the everlasting gospel is to be preached to them who dwell on the earth and to every nation, and kindred and tongue and people. It is in the gospel, thus propagated, that we are to look for Him who is "quickened in the Spirit" to preach effectually to the "spirits in prison." Let then these considerations, that mankind are in a state of condemnation and spiritual slavery, that an all-perfect atoning sacrifice has been offered up, suited to them all, sufficient for them all, offered to them all,—that by that sacrifice an honorable channel has been opened for the life-giving, liberty-giving spirit,—that a plain, well accredited record has been given forth, a record fitted and intended to be the Holy Spirit's instrument of putting the individual sinner in possession of the saving results of the atonement, and of filling the heart with the energies and joys of spiritual life and liberty,—and that that record is put into *our* hands for the purpose of being universally made known, that wherever there are "spirits in prison," liberty may be proclaimed to them. Let these considerations make their due impression on us, and then instead of wearying in well doing, allowing our zeal to abate or our exertions to diminish, we shall be "steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," counting it a high honor that we are permitted to take a part, however humble, in carrying forward to complete accomplishment the mighty enterprise in which God makes known the depth of his wisdom, the greatness of his power, and the riches of his grace, and for which, the incarnate Son died on earth and reigns in heaven.

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## PART II.

—, *Ἀπειθήσασι ποτε, ὅτε ἀπαξ ἐξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε, κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ, εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι (τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὀκτώ) ψυχαὶ διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος. Ὡς, καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀντίτυπον τῶν σωζομένων βάπτισμα, (ὃν σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπον, ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερωτήριον εἰς θεόν, δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.*

THE Jewish Scriptures form an important and valuable portion of the volume of inspired truth. To those who lived previously to the Gospel revelation, they contained the only authentic and satisfactory account of the divine character and will, in reference

to man as a fallen creature; they were the sole trustworthy guides to truth, duty and happiness. They were accordingly highly valued by the wise and pious under the ancient economy. "The law of thy mouth," said the Psalmist,—and he expressed the common sentiment and feelings of the body of the faithful,— "The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver," "more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, yea than the honey comb." "Even to us, to whom the mystery which had been kept secret from former ages and generations has been made manifest," the Jewish Scriptures are calculated to answer many important purposes. Though the Mosaic dispensation has "become old and vanished away," the writings of the prophets have not become obsolete. The pure radiance of apostolical doctrine has not extinguished the dimmer light of ancient history and prophecy; on the contrary, these, borrowing new splendor from the full risen sun of righteousness, cheer us with a brighter and warmer beam, than they ever reflected on those who but for them must have walked in darkness. In the great edifice of revealed truth, the Old Testament Scriptures are not the scaffolding which, when the building is finished, ceases to be useful and is removed as an unsightly incumbrance; they are the foundation and lower part of the fabric, forming an important constituent partition of the "building of God" and are essentially necessary not only to the beauty but also to the safety of the superstructure.

It is possible indeed to demonstrate the divinity of Christianity and the truth of New Testament doctrine and history on principles which have no direct reference to any former revelation of the divine will, but it is at the same time true that one of the most satisfactory proofs of these truths is founded on the admission of the divinity of the Jewish sacred books, and consists in the minute harmony of Old Testament prediction with the New Testament history and doctrine. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Few exercises are better fitted at once to enlarge the information and strengthen the faith of the Christian than a careful perusal of the Old Testament Scriptures with a constant reference to *Him* who is the "end of the law"—the substance of all its shadowy ceremonies; *Him* of whom "Moses in the law, and the prophets do write."

This is, however, by no means the only way in which the Old Testament Scriptures are calculated to minister to our improvement. They contain an extensive collection of instructions

and warnings, counsels and consolations suited to mankind in every country and age. The man of piety, wherever or whenever he may live, finds in the sacred odes of David at once a perfect pattern for his devotional exercises and a fit vehicle for his devotional feelings; the maxims of Solomon are found equally suitable for the guidance of our conduct as of that of his contemporaries, and though many of the writings of the prophets bear plain marks of being *occasional* in their origin and reference, relating to events, which at the time of their publication excited general interest among the people to whom they were given, yet it is amazing how *few* the passages are which are not obviously calculated to convey instruction, universal and permanent,—fitted to all men, in all time.

Even the historical books of the Old Testament are fitted in various ways to promote the improvement of the Christian and on this account have strong claims on our attentive study. Like every true history, and indeed in a much higher degree than any other history, they convey to us in the most engaging form much information regarding the character and government of God, and respecting the state, dispositions and duty of man. They contain an account of the origin and progress of that system of divine dispensation which found its accomplishment in the redemption of mankind by the death of the incarnate Son of God—an account, without which, much of the Christian revelation would have been obscure, if not unintelligible. They suggest numerous proofs and illustrations of the characteristic principles of the Christian revelation, and thus at once enable us more fully to understand and more firmly to believe them. The minds of the writers of the New Testament were full of the facts and imagery of the earlier revelation, and they can be but very imperfectly understood,—they are constantly in danger of being misunderstood by those readers who have not acquired a somewhat similar familiarity, by carefully studying the Old Testament Scriptures.

Of the manner in which the New Testament writers employ their familiarity with the Old Testament for the illustration of the subjects which come before them, we have a striking instance in that portion of Scripture to which the attention of the reader is now to be directed.

The paragraph, of which these verses, 20 and 21, form a part, is, as was observed in the former communication, a statement of the truth with regard to the sufferings of Jesus Christ, in their

nature, design, and consequences,—a statement made for the purpose of affording instruction and support to the followers of Jesus when exposed to suffering in his cause. In the course of this statement, the apostle notices certain facts in antediluvian history recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures as bearing on the facts respecting Jesus Christ which he states, or on the object for which he states these facts. To ascertain distinctly what are the facts in antediluvian history to which the apostle refers and to show if possible what is his object in referring to them,—what bearing they have on the obvious general design of the whole paragraph,—are the two objects which I shall endeavor to gain in the remaining portion of these remarks.

The passage which is to form the subject of exposition, though not *formally*, it is plain, *substantially* parenthetical, and is contained in these words: "The spirits in prison sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight, souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The first thing we have to do then is to bring before our minds the facts in the history of the antediluvian world to which the apostle here refers. "The spirits in prison sometime were disobedient when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing wherein a few, that is eight, souls were saved by water." I have already endeavored to show that the most probable meaning which has been given to the somewhat remarkable phrase "spirits in prison," is, that which considers it as a descriptive appellation of mankind in their fallen state. *Captives* and *prisoners* are figurative expressions not unfrequently used in Scripture to denote the condemned state, miserable circumstances, and degraded character of fallen men. Our Lord having obtained by his atoning death a mighty accession, in his official character, to his spiritual life and energy, went and, through the instrumentality of his apostles, preached with remarkable success to those miserable captives, those spirits in prison,—vast multitudes of them becoming obedient to his call. But it had not always been so. Communications of the divine will had often been made in former ages to fallen men, without such effects. In particular, in a very remote age, at a period preceding the general deluge, a divine message was sent to those

condemned criminals, those willing captives of Satan and of sin, those "spirits in prison,"—for although not *the same individuals* to whom our Lord "came and preached," they were *individuals of the same race* and therefore designated not improperly by the same name,—but they, with very few exceptions, despised the remarkable manifestation of divine forbearance of which they had been the subjects, they disregarded the message, and in consequence of their disobedience they were destroyed by the deluge. A very small minority were obedient and in consequence of their obedience were saved in the ark, "saved by water." These are the facts respecting the antediluvians which are either explicitly stated or necessarily implied in the words before us.

We have but detached fragments of the history of mankind previous to the deluge,—a period of nearly seventeen centuries. This we know, that at the time which our text refers to, they had with very few exceptions become decidedly irreligious and excessively depraved. The language of the sacred historian is very striking. "God saw the wickedness of man that it was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The earth was corrupt,"—*putrid*, "before God, and the earth was filled with violence, and God looked on the earth and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way on the earth."

If man was thus irreligious and corrupt, it was not because he had not the means of being otherwise. If the primitive revelation through the faith of which Abel obtained salvation was forgotten, disregarded, or perverted, the fault was in man. Besides "God never left men without a witness, in that he gave them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness." This goodness was calculated, was intended, "to lead them to repentance, to change their minds respecting God, whom they had learned to "think of as such a one as themselves." "The heavens," before the flood as well as afterwards, "declared the glory of God, and the firmament showed forth his handy-work." "The invisible things of God were from the creation of the world clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead," so that when the antediluvians, having the means of knowing God, "glorified him not as God, neither were thankful," but gave themselves up to work wickedness with all greediness, they were "without excuse."

Nor was this all. It is reasonable to suppose that during these seventeen centuries direct divine communications were made to the fallen race. It is certain that "Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied," warning his contemporaries of the destruction which would ultimately overtake the ungodly, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints or holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Thus had God by his Spirit striven with men for more than fifteen hundred years. "Sentence against men's evil works was not executed speedily and the hearts of men were fully set in them to do evil." Yet was he not "slack concerning his declaration as some men count slackness." "His wrath loses nothing by sleeping. It becomes fresher by repose." "The impenitent abusers of his patience pay interest for all the time of their forbearance in the increased weight of the judgment when it comes on them." "The end of all flesh was come before God and he was about to destroy them with," or from "the earth."

But "surely the Lord God will do nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets." There was but one in all that generation to whom that name could be given. "Noah had found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Noah "by faith had become an heir of the justification by faith." He was "a just man and perfect in his generation and walked with God." This is the good report he has obtained: "THEE," said Jehovah, i. e. "*thee alone* have I seen righteous before me in this generation." As God testified his regard to Abraham by telling him of the approaching destruction of Sodom, so he showed his peculiar favor to Noah by announcing to him the coming destruction of his contemporaries. He said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." There shall still be an hundred and twenty years of "striving with him." It would seem that Noah was commissioned not only to build the ark, but also to announce the approaching deluge during its building, and to call men to repentance. We know that he was "a preacher of righteousness" and that he "condemned the world" by his preaching, as well as practically by his conduct, telling them of their sins, warning them of their danger.

This is the revelation of the divine will referred to in the text, and as the spirit in the prophets was the Spirit of Christ, "the

*Word*" from the beginning being the great revealer of God and making his revelations by his Spirit,—Christ who went in Spirit to the "spirits in prison" by his apostles, may be considered as having gone in Spirit by his servant Noah to the same class of persons. For one hundred and twenty years Noah proclaimed to a doomed world "Repent," as Jonah in after ages proclaimed to the doomed city, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." Had Noah's preaching been as successful as Jonah's we have no reason to doubt that, as in that case, God, "seeing their works that they turned from their evil way, would have repented of the evil that he had said he would do to them and would not have done it." These "one hundred and twenty years" were years of peculiar trial. They were the last opportunity to be afforded to that race to escape from final ruin. They were a period during which "God's long suffering waited," i. e. God waited in the exercise of his long-suffering. It was long-suffering, it was patience which prevented the immediate infliction of the threatened vengeance, for the iniquities of that generation were full. Come the vengeance when it might, it could not come undeserved. But judgment is God's "strange work." They shall have one warning more. He is "not willing that they should perish."

There was something peculiarly striking in the warnings during the closing period of the term of forbearance. "Noah by faith being instructed by the divine oracle concerning things not yet seen, moved with fear prepared an ark." When we consider the size of the ark and the time and labor necessary for collecting the animals which were to be saved in it, (for we have no reason to think that their gathering together was entirely miraculous,) it is obvious that it must have afforded him employment for a considerable period. This was a striking proof that Noah believed his own communication. It was an appeal through the eye as well as through the ear to that wicked and rebellious generation. But they looked on with a thoughtless eye as well as listened with a careless ear. They were disobedient. Noah to the men of his generation like Lot to his sons-in-law "was as one who mocked." "They believed him not." When they saw the ark building, their sentiments probably found language in such words as these, "What does the old dotard mean, where does he intend to sail to in this strange hulk? He will find some difficulty in launching it." When he told them of the coming ruin at the end of 120 years they were likely to say, "You look far be-

fore you. Shall we perish and you alone escape? We will take our chance."

But God cannot be mocked. His established law, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," will at the appointed time take effect. "He is not slack concerning" his threatenings any more than his promises "as men count slackness," though "he is long-suffering." O how long-suffering! Down to the period of the execution of his threatenings, the rebellious men of Noah's generation seem to have been saying, "Where is the declaration of his coming? All things continue as they were." "They ate and drank, they married and were given in marriage." But the season of forbearance long as it has been, has passed away. The ark is finished. Noah and his family have entered into it. "In that same day all the fountains of the great deep,"—the abyss of subterranean waters,—"were broken up," and the "windows of heaven were opened" to discharge the immense body of water held in solution by the atmosphere. The rains continued without intermission for forty entire days, and the eruptions of subterranean waters for 160 days, until at length the inundation came to its height and covered all the high hills which were under the whole heaven, fifteen cubits upward above the highest hills. "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth both of fowl and of cattle, and of beast and of every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth,—and every man." All, all with the exception of Noah and his family had been disobedient, and all, all with that exception perish. The waters covered the enemies of God, not one of them was left."

We pronounce no judgment as to the eternal state of all the antediluvians. It is possible that some of them in a right spirit sought mercy amid the rising waters of the deluge, and if they did who dare say, who dare think, that it was refused them? Nevertheless whether we look on earth or beyond it, without doubt this day was "a day of the perdition of ungodly men."

While the great body of the "spirits in prison" in the days of Noah were disobedient and reaped the fruit of their disobedience, all were not impenitent and unbelieving. Noah was at once believing and obedient. His family were so far obedient that they availed themselves of the appointed means of deliverance. We have but too good reason to conclude that in the *best* sense of the word *all* of them were not obedient. They to the number of "eight souls," i. e. persons, Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives entered into the ark, and were "saved by water."

"The Lord said to Noah, Come thou and all thy house," i. e. thy family, "into the ark; and Noah went in and his sons, and his wife and his sons' wives with him into the ark, and the Lord shut them in; and when the waters increased they bare up the ark, and it was lift above the earth, and when the waters prevailed and were increased greatly on the earth, the ark went on the face of the waters. And God remembered Noah and those who were in the ark with him," and after five months' floating on a shoreless ocean, the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. After having been tenants of the strange mansion for a year and ten days, Noah and his family went forth at the command of God to take possession of a world already smiling in vegetable beauty, whose solitudes were soon again to be peopled by the various animal tribes the utter extinction of which had been in so strange a way prevented amid the general destruction.

These "few, that is eight, souls" are said to have been "saved by water." Various meanings have been attached to these words, some considering them as equivalent to "*saved amid the water,*" others "*saved notwithstanding the water,*" others "*saved by being conducted through the water.*" The meaning that the words most naturally suggest seems the true one, they were "*saved by means of the water.*" The water which destroyed those out of the ark saved those who were in it. The words of the sacred historian are the best commentary on the apostle's words. "The waters bore up the ark and it was lift up above the earth, and it went on the face of the waters." As by means of the art of navigation the ocean, which seems calculated to separate completely the inhabitants of countries distant from each other, unites them, becoming the great highway of nations,—so the waters of the deluge which were in their own nature fitted to destroy Noah and his family, by means of the ark saved them.

Such then are the facts of antediluvian history which this passage brings before us. Let us now enquire into the object of the apostle in referring to those facts and show how they gain that object. It must be acknowledged that the design of the reference is by no means self-evident or even very readily discernible. It does seem strange that in the midst of a description of the results of our Lord's penal, vicarious, expiatory sufferings, there should be introduced a statement of what took place more than two thousand years before. It is plain, however, to the careful student of the apostle Peter's writings that he was accustomed to think of the antediluvian world and the postdiluvian world as

of two orders of things which had such strong analogies of resemblance and contrast that events in the one naturally called up in his mind what may be named the corresponding events in the other. Thus in the third chapter of his second epistle he contrasts the two worlds. Of the one he says, "By the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water perished;" and of the other he says, "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." In the second chapter of the same epistle we find him saying, "God who spared not the old world but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly, knoweth (in this new world) how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." Both worlds appeared to him peopled by fallen men, doomed to punishment, "spirits in prison;" both privileged with a divine revelation proclaiming danger and offering deliverance to these "spirits in prison;" both destined to be destroyed by a deluge as a manifestation of the divine displeasure, the first by a deluge of water, the second by a deluge of fire. Taking this view of the subject it does not seem strange that the mention of Christ "quickenened in the spirit" going and preaching by his apostles to the "spirits in prison" as one of the results of his atoning sufferings, should have suggested to Peter's mind his having in his preincarnate state gone in spirit by the ministry of Noah to the same class of persons in the antediluvian world.

But what is his object in this reference? His primary object is, if we mistake not, that to which we have already alluded, to illustrate by contrast the blessed effects of our Lord's going and preaching to the spirits in prison, after that he had been quickened in spirit. When in the days of Noah he went and preached to the spirits in prison, "they were disobedient," all but universally disobedient, and "few," i. e. "eight souls were saved" out of probably many millions; but now while many are unbelieving and impenitent, still multitudes both of Jews and Gentiles have become obedient to the faith, and before he finishes his preaching to the spirits in prison much greater multitudes yet will become obedient. "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the people shall worship before him, for the kingdom is the Lord's and he is the governor among

the nations." "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." Though many shall perish in the deluge of fire, yet still the saved shall not be counted by human numbers. There will be "*nations* of the saved," and those set free by the word of God, the truth which makes free indeed, from among the spirits in prison shall be a "multitude which no man can number out of every kindred and people and tribe and nation."

A subsidiary, yet still an important, object in making the reference seems to have been to bring those truths before the mind; first, that if Christ's preaching is disregarded and disobeyed, when "quickened in spirit" he comes by the apostolic ministry, a more dreadful destruction will befall the unbelieving and impenitent, than that which overwhelmed the antediluvians who were disobedient to the revelation made by Noah; and secondly, that there is no escape from the destruction to which we are already doomed but by availing ourselves now as then of the only divinely appointed mode of deliverance." "If they who despised" the preaching of Noah who was a mere man and who does not seem even to have been a worker of miracles, "died without mercy," received in the waters of the deluge a "just recompense of reward," "of how much sorer punishment shall they be counted worthy who trample under foot the Son of God, and do despite to the Spirit" in whom he comes to them, "neglecting so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken to us by the Lord and was confirmed to us by them that heard him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will?"

There was no mode of escape from the deluge of water but the divinely appointed ark. It is not improbable that in the day of penal visitation various plans were resorted to. No doubt trees were climbed, mountains ascended, possibly boats of some kind or other resorted to, but all in vain. All with the exception of the eight in the ark are engulfed in the deep and wide-spreading inundation agitated with fearful tempest from the air, and heaved up into tremendous billows by internal commotions shaking the earth. And there is no mode of escape for men from the coming fiery deluge which is to destroy the wicked but in the redemption that is in Christ. There is no name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved "but the name of Jesus." He and he only saves from the wrath to come. To them who reject him "there remains no more sacrifice for sin but a cer-

tain fearful looking for of judgment to destroy them as the adversaries of God."

It only remains now that we endeavor to ascertain the object of the apostle's reference in noticing the particular manner in which Noah and his family were saved. They were, says he, "saved by water,"—the water of the deluge was the means of their deliverance. The apostle himself has in the twenty-first verse informed us what is the point he meant to illustrate by this reference, although it must be acknowledged that it is not easy to extract a very clear and definite explanation from his words. "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

It is rather remarkable that both those who deny the perpetuity of water baptism as an ordinance, like that denomination of Christians so estimable on many accounts, the Friends, and those who insist on the necessity and efficiency of water baptism for salvation if administered by properly qualified persons, like the Papists and Puseyites, seek for support to their opposite views in this passage, the one class insisting that it teaches that the baptism that saves, Christian baptism, is not that which removes external pollution, i. e. is not the application of water to the body, is not an external rite at all; the other class insisting that it teaches that baptism, which means here just what it means elsewhere, the religious rite known by that name, does save—is necessary and effectual to salvation. We shall find that the passage rightly interpreted gives no support to either of these *equally erroneous*, though by no means *equally dangerous* opinions.

It has been doubted whether the apostle meant to compare baptism with the *water of the deluge* or with the *ark*, or to compare generally the way in which Christians are saved with the way in which Noah and his family were saved, but when the words are carefully examined there is no room for those doubts. The translation of the words in our version is strictly literal from the reading adopted, but it is not very intelligible. To the question what does the expression, "*the like figure whereunto even baptism*," mean, I can give no answer. The words may be rendered with perfect accuracy "which was a type or figure of the baptism which saves us," i. e. which water of the deluge was a type of baptism which saves us. By the term "*type*" we mean a *significant resemblance*, for that it was a type in the strict sense

of the word as a *foreshowing dimly to the antecedents of Christian baptism or its meaning*, is a principle utterly without support.

It is however right to say that there is another reading which, since the MSS. of the New Testament have been more carefully collated than they had been when our excellent version was made, has been generally preferred by the most learned and judicious scholars and which gives this rendering, "which," referring to water, "which also saves us,—baptism which is the antitype— which corresponds to, or is figuratively represented by, the water of the deluge." It is as if the apostle had said, "water saved the family of Noah and, it may be said, water also saves us;—I refer to baptism which IN THIS RESPECT resembles the waters of the deluge, both being connected by divine appointment with salvation or deliverance."

How the water of the deluge was connected with the salvation of Noah's family we have already seen; how baptism is connected with our salvation we are now to inquire. The apostle has answered the question both negatively and positively, but before entering on the consideration of his answer, it deserves remark that the very comparison shows that baptism has but an *indirect* influence on our salvation, an influence which is emblemized not by the *ark*, but by the *water* which in itself was rather fitted to destroy than to save.

Let us now hear the apostle. He first tells us how baptism does not save. It does not save as it is a "putting away of the filth of the flesh." That is the physical effect of the application of water to the body. It removes whatever soils the body and thus produces cleanliness. This is all that it can do as an external application. It does not, it cannot save us. The idea that the external rite of baptism can save, can communicate spiritual life, can justify and regenerate is equally absurd, unscriptural and mischievous. Moral effects must have moral causes. It has been justly said, "even the life of a plant or an animal, far more the life of thought, taste, affection and conscience, cannot be produced by the use of mere lifeless matter. He who should assert this would be considered as little better than a madman, but is not the statement still more irrational and unintelligible, that the life of the soul, by which it is united to God and secured of salvation, is produced by sprinkling or pouring water on an individual or by immersing him in it." A man must be "given up to strong delusion before he can believe a lie" like this.

The positive part of the apostle's answer is however the most

important part of it. Baptism saves us as it is "the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Before entering on the exposition of this statement, which is encumbered with some verbal difficulties, it will, I am persuaded, serve a good purpose, to state in the fewest words, *to whom and to what salvation is attributed in the New Testament.* God is said to save us. "All things" in the new creation "are of him." He is the Saviour of all men especially of them who believe." We are said to be saved by "grace," by God's grace. *Christ* is said to save us. "All things" in the new creation "are by him." One of his most common names is "our Saviour." *The blood of Christ* is said to save us. "Redemption" is "through his blood." *The resurrection of Christ* is said to save us. "We are saved by his life." *The Holy Spirit* is said to save us. "We are saved by the renewing of the Holy Ghost." *The gospel* is said to save men. The words which Peter was to speak to Cornelius were words which were to "save him and his family." We are said to be saved by *faith*. "By grace are ye saved through faith." "Thy faith," said our Lord on numerous occasions, "hath saved thee." "He that believeth shall be saved." Men are said to be saved by *confession of the truth* in connection with faith. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," i. e. justification, "and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Men are said to be saved by *baptism* in connection with faith. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and here "baptism saves us."

These statements are all perfectly consistent with each other, and he alone understands how sinful men are saved who sees the meaning and apprehends the consistency of these statements. Here they are in one sentence,—God in the exercise of sovereign grace saves men through the mediation of his Son who died as an atoning victim, and rose again to the possession of all power in heaven and in earth, that he might save all coming to the Father by him, who being led by the operation of the Holy Ghost to believe the gospel of salvation become personally interested in the blessings procured through the mediation of the Son; and wherever men are made really to believe the gospel, they, as the natural result of that faith and in obedience to the divine command, make a profession of that faith, the commencement of which profession is, in the case of those who in mature life are brought from a false religion to the knowledge and belief of the gospel, baptism or the "being washed with pure water."

If this statement is understood there is little difficulty in answering the question, "how does baptism save?" It is an emblematical representation of what saves us, viz. the expiating, justifying blood of Christ, and the regenerating, sanctifying influence of the Spirit, and a corresponding confession of the truth thus represented. Let us look at the apostle's answer and see if it is not substantially the same as that to which we have been led. I have stated that there are verbal difficulties. The principal of these are two, the first referring to the meaning of the word rendered "*answer*," and the other referring to the connection of the concluding clause "*by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*." The word rendered "*answer*"<sup>1</sup> occurs nowhere else either in the New Testament or in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. From its etymology and its use in classic writers we should say its meaning is "*question*" not "*answer*." Many interpreters suppose that there is a reference to an ancient custom of making the baptismal profession in reply to questions put by the administrator, but we have no evidence that this practice existed in the apostles' time, and supposing that it did, the fact would not account for a word meaning "*question*" being used to signify "*answer*." Others have rendered the word "*inquiry*," "*application to*," the application of a good conscience to God for salvation, the sincerely seeking salvation from God. I am persuaded that the word is here employed as equivalent to *expression, confession* or *declaration*.

Some interpreters connect the concluding clause with the word "save," thus "baptism saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" others with the phrase "*a good conscience towards God*;" others with the whole expression, "*answer of a good conscience towards God*." The second of these seems the most natural mode of connection. What the apostle's words bring before the mind is this: A man has a good conscience, he has obtained this good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, he makes a declaration of this good conscience in his baptism, and it is in this way, the apostle declares, that baptism saves.

"*A good conscience*" is a right and happy state of thought and feeling in reference to our relations and duties to God,—confidence in God, love to God. This is obtained by a man's conscience being sprinkled with the atoning blood of Jesus, or in other words, by his experiencing the power of Christ's atoning blood to pacify the conscience and purify the heart through the faith of the truth respecting it,—by his being transformed through

<sup>1</sup> ἐπερώτημα.

"the renewing of the mind" produced by the "Holy Ghost shed forth abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

This good conscience is said to be "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The resurrection of Christ is the grand proof of the divinity of his mission, the truth of his doctrine, and especially of the efficacy of his atoning sacrifice. It is truth regarding these, apprehended in its meaning and evidence under the influence of the Holy Spirit which produces the good conscience towards God. "I trust in God, seeing he has brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus; I love him who gave his Son for my offences and who raised him again for my justification."

Of this good conscience, of a mind at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a heart with the love of God shed abroad in it, the converted Jew or Pagan made a profession when in obedience to the command of Christ he submitted to baptism. Thus confessing by an external act what he believed in his heart that God had raised Christ from the dead, he was saved. In this way, in this way alone can it be said that "baptism saves us."

Much ingenuity has been discovered in attempting to trace the analogy between the waters of the deluge saving Noah's family, and the water of baptism saving those who in it make an enlightened profession of a "good conscience towards God through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ." I apprehend we are not to seek anything more than that general analogy which we have already illustrated. The following illustration is at any rate ingenious and the sentiment it conveys indubitably true and fearfully important. "The flood of waters displayed the divine indignation, and executed the threatened vengeance against the wickedness of an ungodly world while they yet bore up in safety the eight persons enclosed in the ark, so the blood of Christ shed for sin emblematically represented in baptism, while it has effected the eternal redemption and salvation of all in Him, 'the remnant according to the election of grace,' is at the same time the most dreadful manifestation of the righteous judgment of God, as well as the surest pledge of its execution against the world which lieth under the wicked one."<sup>1</sup>

Though I do not think we have been able to clear the difficult passage we have been considering of all its obscurity, I think we have succeeded to a considerable extent, and I am sure we have made it plain enough, that what Paul says of *all* Scripture given by divine inspiration is true of this. "It is profitable for doctrine,

<sup>1</sup> John Walker.

for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." I shall notice only *one* very important practical conclusion to which it very directly leads us,—the folly and danger of trusting in the mere external rite of baptism or in anything that is external. Happily *we* are not taught the soul-deluding doctrine of the efficacy of the sacraments, as they are called, and of baptismal regeneration as a part of the general dogma. On the contrary *we* are taught that "the sacraments become effectual means of salvation not from any virtue in those, or in them who administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them," and that no baptism saves but that which is connected with "engrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace," and that it is an "engagement to be the Lord's."<sup>1</sup>

But though we are thus taught, and I believe few of us would call these principles in question, yet there is a natural tendency in the human mind to rest in what is external. Let us beware then of supposing that we are safe because we have been baptized, whether in infancy or on our personal profession of faith. The apostle Paul's declaration respecting circumcision and Judaism is equally true of baptism and Christianity. 'He is not a true Christian who is one outwardly, neither is that saving baptism which consists merely in the application of water to the body. He is a Christian who is one inwardly, who has a good conscience towards God, and saving baptism is the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Let all remember, that if they would be saved, if they would "enter in the kingdom of God," they "must be born again," "born not of water only but of the Spirit;" and let all who have profession of a good conscience remember that where there is a *good conscience* there will be a *good conversation*, and that if a "man is in Christ a new creature" he will "put off the old man who is corrupt in his deeds, and put on the new man who after Christ Jesus is renewed in knowledge and in true holiness." Professing to be saved from the fiery deluge which is coming on the unbelieving, disobedient world, by the blood of Christ represented in baptism, he will show that he is delivered from that world's power; redeemed by the same "precious blood" from the "vain conversation" received by tradition from his fathers, and freed from spiritual captivity, he will walk at liberty; brought into a new world, "all old things will pass away," and "all things will become new."

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Shorter Catechism.