

## THE SPIRITS IN PRISON

1 PET. III. 17—IV. 6

MANY are the interpretations of this Scripture, from the earliest Patristic writers to those of the present day; and it is a question whether any one has given or adopted an explanation with which he is perfectly satisfied. These many interpreters may be ranged in two great classes, viz. those who, on the one hand, see in the words a support for “Purgatory” (or for the Protestant Purgatory, called “the larger hope”), and who believe in some kind of probation for men after death; and those who, on the other hand, hold that the words refer not to anything that occurred between the Saviour’s death and resurrection, but to a preaching which took place either in the days of Noah and through his instrumentality, or to a preaching after Christ’s resurrection through the instrumentality of the Apostles. It is not profitable to go further into the enumeration or description of all the many varieties of these two conflicting views. The fact that no existing interpretation can be held to be wholly satisfactory justifies the conclusion that there is room for another attempt.

Some interpreters have forced words out of their natural meaning and usage; some have disregarded the laws of grammar and construction; some have taken the passage apart from its context; while others have never attempted to bring this Scripture into harmony with the scope and design of the Epistle as a whole.

Now it must be affirmed, and it will be conceded by all Bible students, that an interpretation of this passage which is to be accepted as satisfactory—

1. Must take all the words in their natural meaning and Scriptural usage.
2. Must be uniform and consistent in its translation.
3. Must give due weight to the inexorable laws of grammatical construction.
4. Must give the passage its logical place in the context.
5. Must harmonize it with the general teaching of the whole

Epistle, and not merely cleverly explain it as though it were an isolated passage; but must show that it is absolutely necessary to the argument.

If an interpretation can comply with these demands, and base itself on the fact that the words are indispensable to the argument of the Epistle, then it may challenge criticism, and commend itself to general acceptance.

Our first duty, therefore, is to seek for the design and scope of the Epistle. In doing this we notice that by a general consensus of scholars it was written not earlier than A.D. 63, and not later than A.D. 67. It was written to the Dispersed of Israel, scattered abroad by great persecution; as before, when "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad" (Acts viii. 2). Gentiles also seem to be included, for we read (ii. 10) that those who were addressed, "in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God". This is a reference to Hosea ii. 23, which is quoted in Rom. ix. 25 for the purpose of proving that God would call a people "not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (verse 24).

It must have been written immediately before, or actually during the progress of the first great persecution. For the great persecution under Nero began in November, A.D. 64, and ended with his death in A.D. 68. Mosheim has conclusively shown that this was a general persecution—not confined merely to Rome, but extending more or less over the whole empire.

At the commencement, therefore, of this awful persecution, the Holy Spirit by Peter sends forth the words of this Epistle to prepare the hearts of the Lord's people, to encourage their hope and strengthen their faith. In this fact we have the key to many expressions with which the Epistle abounds:

i. 6. "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness (*λυπηθέντες*, *having been thrown into sorrow*: R.V. *put to grief*) through manifold temptations" (*πειρασμοῖς*, *trials*, R.V. margin).

i. 7. "That the trial (*δοκίμιον*, *test*: R.V. *proof*) of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried (*δοκιμαζομένου*, *tested*: R.V. *proved*) with fire," etc.

ii. 12. "Whereas (marg., and R.V. *wherein*) they speak

against you as evildoers.” κακοπολος is a *doer of some particular evil thing*, the *evil* being prominent. It occurs only in Peter, and John xviii. 30, where it is used of Christ by His enemies. It is worse than κακοῦργος, which is an *evil-worker*, the *action* being prominent. This is the word used by the Holy Spirit of the malefactors, in Luke xxiii. 32, 33, 39.

ii. 19. “This *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God (συνείδησιν Θεοῦ, *conscience of God*. This denotes that consciousness of God, and of one’s relation to Him as a joint heir with Christ which involves suffering and enables one to endure it) endure grief, suffering wrongfully.”

ii. 20, 21. “If, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called.”

iii. 14–17. “If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy (μακάριοι, *blessed*—Matt. v. 11) are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God (R.V. *Christ as Lord*) in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer (ἔτοιμοι πρὸς ἀπολογία, *ready for a defence*—Acts xxii. 1; Phil. i. 7, 17; 2 Cor. vii. 11) to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear: having a good conscience (συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν; *having a clear conscience*, see Acts xxiii. 1; 1 Tim. i. 5, 19; 1 Pet. iii. 21), that, whereas (R.V. *wherein*) they speak evil of you (R.V. *ye are spoken against*), as of evildoers (see above, i. 12), they may be ashamed that falsely accuse (ἐπηρεάζοντος only here, Matt. v. 44, and Luke vi. 28) your good conversation (R.V. *manner of life*) in Christ. For *it is* better, if the will of God be so (εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, *if the will of God were so to will*), that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered (*died*) for sins, the just for the unjust.”

iv. 4. “Speaking evil of *you*.”

iv. 12–19. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial) πυρώσει, *burning*: Prov. xxvii. 21, LXX. *furnace*; see also Ps. lxvi. 10, and Zech. xiii. 9) which is to try you, (lit., concerning the burning which is taking place among you for your trial) as though some strange thing happened (συμβαίνοντος, pres. part. *were happening*) unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding

joy (see i. 6, 7). If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy (μακάριοι, *blessed*) are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evil doer, or as a busybody (R.V. *meddler*) in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf (R.V. *in this Name*). For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? and if the righteous scarcely (μόλις, *with difficulty*) be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, (ἀγαθοποιῶν, the word occurs only in this place in the N.T.) as unto a faithful Creator."

v. 9. "Whom resist (ἀντίστητε, R.V. *withstand*) steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished (ἐπιτελεῖσθαι, pres. inf. *are being accomplished*) in your brethren that are in the world."

Who can fail to see in all these passages a constant reference to the false accusations and terrible persecutions which were beginning to rage around them? TACITUS, who wrote at the end of Cent. i., describes this persecution as directed against "a set of people who were held in abhorrence for their crimes, called by the common people '*Christians*'. The founder of that name was Christ. . . . This detestable superstition, thus checked for a while, broke out again. . . . A vast multitude were apprehended who were convicted not so much of the crime of burning Rome as of hatred to mankind. Their sufferings at their execution were aggravated by insult and mockery: for some were disguised in the skins of wild beasts and worried by dogs; some were crucified; and others were wrapped in pitched shirts and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights to illuminate the night". (Tacitus, Ann. xv. 44.)

JUVENAL, who wrote at the same period, describes the "Christians" as standing "burning in their own flame and smoke, their head being held up by a stake fixed to their chin, till they made a long stream (of blood and running sulphur) on the ground". (Juvenal, Sat. i. 155.)

SENECA also speaks of their "coats besmeared and interwoven

with combustible materials, good for the flames". (Seneca, Ep 14.) Who can fail to see the wonderful adaptation of the comfort administered by the assurance, repeated again and again, that after the "sufferings", "glory" was to be revealed (i. 11, iv. 13, v. 1)? This is the one, great, all-pervading subject which fills the whole Epistle; and with this ever-present thought all the various parts must agree. Throughout the Epistle we have references to the terribly false accusations which were brought against them. In the "evil-doers" (κακοποιούντες) we see the "*malefici*" of Suetonius, who tells us (Neron. c. 16) that the Christians were punished as "a set of men of a new and mischievous superstition" (*superstitio nova et malefica*). In the term "Christians" we hear the cry, "the Christians to the lions"! (compare with this, v. 8 and 2 Tim. iv. 17). In the references to "fire" and "burning" we see the Christians standing as flaming torches—the "*flammati*" of the Roman historians.

It was in the midst of such scenes that exhortations like these came home to their hearts: "Fear not their terror, but sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts, and be always ready with a defence (ἀπολογία) to every man that asketh an account (λόγον) of the hope that is in you" (iii. 14–16 R.V.). For the opposite of this, compare iv. 5. For a totally opposite condition of things we may compare the other Epistles, where we read: "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same". See also Acts xviii. 14, 15, where the Roman Governor refused to interfere in matters of conscience and religion.

This then is the setting of the passage before us: this is the immediate context in which we find it. Let us now turn to the consideration of its words, and note first, the words "flesh" and "spirit", iii. 18, and iv. 1, 6. We have, five times, the same dative case repeated in precisely the same connection. The renderings, therefore, must be uniform, and they are so in the R.V., being in each case translated "in the flesh", "in the spirit". The A.V. translates σαρκί "in the flesh" (iii. 18); and, reading the article, τῷ, before πνευματί, it renders it "by the spirit". But this article is omitted by all the Critical Greek Texts and the R.V. If it be rendered "in the flesh", then it must be because it is what is called the Dative of "*the Sphere*",

i.e. the sphere in which a certain thing is done. Closely connected with this is the Dative of "*Reference*", denoting that in reference to which any action is done, or any state exists. Especially is this dative used after intransitive verbs; we have many such examples. In this very Epistle we have one in ch. v. 9, "the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren"; i.e. with reference to, or as regards your brethren; the brethren being the sphere in which the afflictions were accomplished; and their persons the sphere in which they were shown or seen.

1 Cor. xiv. 20. "Be not children in (as regards, or in the sphere of, your) understanding".

Rom. iv. 20. "Was strong in (as regards) faith". (R.V. *through faith*.)

Matt. xi. 29. "I am meek and lowly in (as regards the) heart" (i.e. the heart being the sphere in which the meekness and lowliness have their source and root).

Acts vii. 51. "Uncircumcised in (as regards the) heart".

Matt. v. 3. "Poor in (as regards the) spirit", and verse 8, "pure in (as regards the) heart".

Acts xiv. 8. "Impotent in (as regards his) feet", the feet being the sphere in which the impotence was manifested and seen.

Acts xx. 22. "Bound in (as regards the) spirit".

1 Cor. vii. 34. "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in (as regards the) body, and in (as regards the) spirit."

Matt. xxiii. 31. "Ye be witnesses unto (with reference to) yourselves". (R.V. *ye witness to yourselves*.)

Gal. i. 22. "Unknown by (as regards the) face."

Rom. vi. 20. "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from (as regards) righteousness" (here the margin reads "Gr., *to righteousness*": R.V. *in regard of righteousness*).

Rom. xii. 10. "*Be* kindly affectioned one to another with (as to, or as regards) brotherly love (marg. *in the love of the brethren*), in (as to) honour preferring one another."

Col. ii. 5. "Though I be absent in (as regards) the flesh, yet am I with you in (as regards) the spirit."

Eph. iv. 18. "Having the understanding darkened" (lit. *darkened as regards the understanding*. R.V. *darkened in their understanding*).

Eph. ii. 3. "And were by (as regards) nature the children of wrath."

Now, applying this to the passage before us, we arrive at the conclusion that though as regards His flesh, Christ was put to death, yet as regards His spirit, He was quickened or made alive. His being *made alive again* can refer only to the body, in resurrection, for His spirit, of course, could not die, and did not die. As regards His Spirit He was always alive. The quickening, therefore, must relate to the reanimation of the body in resurrection. Even as it is written, Rom. viii. 10, 11, "If Christ *be* in you, [though indeed], the body *is* dead because of sin [yet] the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you".

In 1 Cor. xv. 39 the word "flesh" (σάρξ) is used as an equivalent for this "mortal body". So likewise, in 1 Cor. xv. 45, and 1 Peter iii. 18, "spirit" (πνεῦμα) is used for the immortal body. For in 1 Cor. xv. 44-46 it is plainly declared, "It is sown a natural body (σῶμα ψυχικόν); it is raised a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν). There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul (ψυχὴν ζῶσαν); the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit (πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν, a life-giving spirit). Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual (πνευματικόν), but that which is natural (ψυχικόν); and afterward that which is spiritual".

A glorious resurrection, therefore, is the "living hope" to which they had been begotten "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (i. 3). Christ is Himself the source of all hope and encouragement. Though He was put to death as regards the flesh in His human body, yet He was made alive as regards the spirit in His glorious resurrection body. This is the force of the "μὲν . . . δὲ", the former of which is left untranslated in this passage, both in the A.V. and the R.V. But we cannot spare it. These two words express a mutual relation between two opposed, or rather contrasted, clauses: μὲν is *the first thing*, δὲ is *the second*; μὲν is *indeed*, δὲ is *but*; μὲν is *on the one hand*, δὲ is *on the other hand*; μὲν is *though*, δὲ is *yet*. See Matt. iii. 11, ix. 37, xvi. 3, xx. 23, xxii. 8, xxiii. 27, 28, xxvi. 41; Luke iii. 16, x. 2; John xvi. 22, xix. 32, 33; Acts xxi. 39,

xxii. 3; Rom. ii. 25, vi. 11; 1 Cor. i. 18, ix. 24, xi. 14, 15, and many other passages. Also Winer's Greek Grammar (Moulton), 3rd ed., p. 551.

Let us confine ourselves to examples from this very Epistle.

i. 20. "Who *verily* (μὲν) was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, *but* (δὲ) was manifest in these last times for you."

ii. 4. "A living stone, disallowed *indeed* (μὲν) of men, *but* (δὲ) chosen of God," etc.

ii. 14. "For the punishment (μὲν, *indeed*) of evildoers, and (δὲ, *but*) for the praise of them that do well". Here the μὲν is left untranslated, the δὲ is weakened down to "and", thus the argumentative contrast is lost!

iv. 14. "*On their part* (μὲν) he is evil spoken of, *but on your part* (δὲ) he is glorified".

Now when we come to iii. 18 and iv. 6. Why is not the force of these inspired particles to be taken into account? And why are they to be ignored in the translation? In iii. 18 the sense clearly is this: *Though indeed* (μὲν) Christ was put to death as regards the flesh, *yet* (δὲ) He was made alive as regards the spirit, and thus exchanged his flesh, in which alone He could suffer, for a glorious, spiritual, immortal body in which He could no more suffer and die. The argument being, that even so those who were now suffering and being put to death in the terrible persecution then raging, would have a like blessed issue. They had been "begotten again to a living hope *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead* to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (i. 4). When the Holy Spirit "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ", He bore witness also to "the glory that should follow" (i. 11). "Wherefore (these suffering saints were exhorted, i. 13) gird up the loins of your mind, be sober (νήφοντες, *be calm and collected*, see iv. 7, v. 8) and hope to the end (R.V. *set your hope perfectly*) for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

This is the great burden of the whole Epistle. This is the encouragement that was so much needed: and therefore it is the very comfort that was thus sent. But there was more than this. Resurrection was not the only result of Christ's being put to death. There was another "glory" to follow. There was *Triumph* as well! The Holy Spirit goes on to reveal not merely



the glory of resurrection, but the glory of the triumph which Christ immediately received: *He went and preached even to the in-prison spirits.*

In order to understand the nature of this triumph, we must note that the word rendered "preached" is ἐκήρυξεν. Now κήρυξ is a *herald, pursuivant, marshal, crier* (akin to γῆρυς, *a voice*; γηρύω, *to utter a sound, make a noise*); and κηρύσσειν means *to be a herald, to proclaim after the manner of a herald*, "always with a suggestion of formality, gravity, and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed". (Grimm.) Hence it means generally, *to publish, to proclaim openly*, without any reference as to the terms of the proclamation. Used by itself, this is its only meaning. If the subject of the proclamation is not clearly implied in the context, it must be distinctly stated, if we are to know what it is. If it is the proclamation of the Gospel, then it must say so, and the word "Gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) must be added, as it is in Matt. iv. 23, ix. 35, xxvi. 13; Mark i. 14, xiii. 10, xiv. 9, xvi. 15; Gal. ii. 2; Col. i. 23; 1 Thes. ii. 9. From a careful examination of all the passages where the word is used, it is perfectly clear that (when it is used as it is here, alone, without any reference to the terms of the proclamation) in no sense is the Gospel, or Salvation, a necessary part of its meaning. Indeed, the contrast between 1 Pet. iii. 19 and iv. 6, is conclusive; for in the latter passage, where the preaching is to *men*, and for the purpose of salvation, quite a different word is employed (εὐαγγελίζομαι), which means, exclusively, *to preach or carry good news*; hence, *to preach the Gospel*—the word "Gospel" itself being verbalized. This prepares our minds to receive the key to the whole passage.

But we must note one further preliminary point, which is raised by Rotherham (in his *New Testament Critically Emphasized*, edition of 1872) where he calls attention to the marked emphasis of the expression καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν, which he prints thus: "EVEN TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON", and adds, "This clause is made emphatically prominent, as though it were something surprising for our Lord to journey and make proclamation TO THEM:—TO THEM THERE! for additional stress is laid on the place (or state). Literally: 'TO THE IN-PRISON SPIRITS'. Exact exposition should endeavour to account for this".

This is what we propose to do.

Let us bear in mind the object of the illustration which the Holy Spirit by Peter is about to use. The encouragement to suffer, and, if need be, to die for well doing lies in this, that Christ, though (μὲν) He suffered and died as regards the flesh, yet (δὲ) had a glorious resurrection in a spiritual body. And He had more than this! He had a glorious triumph also! For God "raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory" (i. 21). Indeed, His triumph was so complete, and the proclamation of it was so far-reaching that it extended "even to the in-prison spirits".

The question now arises, Who are these in-prison spirits? The answer to this question solves the whole difficulty: and the *structure* of the Epistle gives the key to it. In seeking for the structure it was soon observed that the passage iii. 17—iv. 6 formed one distinct member, complete in itself. But the whole Epistle had to be examined in order to be sure that we were not arbitrarily dividing it to suit a particular purpose. This examination showed that iii. 17—iv. 6 was only a part of a larger member, viz. ii. 11—iv. 6, as will be seen by looking at

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE WHOLE EPISTLE, IN BRIEF

A		i. 1, 2. EPISTOLARY.
B		i. 3—12. INTRODUCTION. Thanksgiving; foreshadowing the subject of the Epistle.
C		D   i. 13—ii. 10. EXHORTATIONS (GENERAL) in view of "THE END," as to Hope in the Fiery Trial.
		E   ii. 11—iv. 6. EXHORTATIONS (PARTICULAR) AS TO SUFFERINGS AND GLORY.
C		D   iv. 7—19. EXHORTATIONS (GENERAL) in view of "THE END," as to Joy in the Fiery Trial.
		E   v. 1—9. EXHORTATIONS (PARTICULAR) AS TO SUFFERINGS AND GLORY.
B		v. 10, 11. CONCLUSION. Prayer; embodying the object of the Epistle.
A		v. 12—14. EPISTOLARY.

An examination of this will show that the whole Epistle partakes of the perfection of all the works of God; and, like the snowflake or the flower, is perfect in all its parts. It is a complex structure in which one member answers to, or corresponds with another the whole being perfectly balanced. We must not stop to explain it, beyond remarking that the letters A., B., C., A., B., C., etc., are arbitrarily used, merely for the sake of convenience, and for reference; and that they are not necessary, beyond this, to the structure itself. It must be remembered

that the subject-matter of A. corresponds with A.; and that of B. with B., etc. The letter in *italic* type always answers to the corresponding letter in *roman* type.

We thus see that the subject of the member marked E. (ii. 11—iv. 6) consists of particular exhortations in connection with “sufferings” and “glory”. All these members are capable of being expanded, having structures of their own, thus:

#### EXPANSION OF D (i. 13—ii. 10)

*General Exhortations in view of “the End”, as to Hope in the Fiery Trial*

D	F	i. 13. Exhortation to sobriety in view of “the end”. (Positive.)
	G	14–17. Comparison, “obedient children”.
	H	18–21. Reason. Because ye are God’s People, and redeemed by the blood of Christ (the Lamb).
	F	ii. 1. Exhortation against malice, etc. (Negative.)
	G	2, 3. Comparison, “new born babes.”
	H	4–10. Reason. Because ye are God’s People and built as “living stones” on Christ (the Stone).

#### EXPANSION OF E (ii. 11—iv. 6)

*Particular Exhortations as to “Sufferings” and “Glory”*

E	I	ii. 11. Exhortations. (Personal.)
	J	12. Calumnies, and how to refute them. “ <i>Having</i> ” (ἐχοντες). “ <i>That whereas, etc.</i> ” (ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν). “ <i>Conversation honest</i> ” (ἀναστροφὴν καλὴν).
	K	13—iii. 7. Submission to man for the Lord’s sake. “ <i>The will of God</i> ” (ii. 15). Reason: and example of Christ (ii. 21–25).
	I	iii. 8–15. Exhortations. (Collective.)
	J	16. Calumnies, and how to refute them. “ <i>Having</i> ” (ἐχοντες). “ <i>That whereas, etc.</i> ” (ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλῶσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν). “ <i>Good conversation</i> ” (ἀναστροφὴν ἀγαθὴν).
	K	iii. 17—iv. 6. Submission to man for the Lord’s sake. “ <i>The will of God</i> ” (iii. 17, iv. 2). Reason: and example of Christ (iii. 18–22).

Here we find, not only what these particular exhortations are, but that they have special reference to the great persecution then raging around those to whom the Epistle was written. The member E. consists of two divisions, each comprising three corresponding members, arranged alternately: In the *first* we have Exhortations to suffer for righteousness’ sake (in I. Personal, and I. Collective); in the *second* we have the Ground of these exhortations, given in almost the same words in J. and J. while in K. and K. we have the Reason why it is better thus to suffer, fortified in each case by the example of Christ (in K.

by His sufferings, and in *K.* by His death and the glory which should follow). This at once tells us that in interpreting any particular verse we must have regard to the structure of the whole passage in which it occurs. The point, for example, of *K.* is this—that *glory and triumph are the reward of suffering at the hands of man for the Lord's sake*. This last member *K.* may be also expanded; for like the others, it has a structure of its own. But as this is the member in which the passage under consideration occurs, it will be necessary for us to see its structure displayed *in full*, that we may the better compare it with its key, which follows on page 154 in *skeleton*. We give the translation of the Authorized Version, with a few alternative renderings in parentheses.

An examination of this structure of *K.* (iii. 17—iv. 6) shows that each smaller member has another member corresponding with it: *L.* corresponding with *L.*; *M.* with *M.*; *N.* with *N.*; *O.* with *O.*: while the subordinate members likewise correspond, *a.* with *a.*; *b.* with *b.*; *c.*<sup>1</sup> with *c.*<sup>1</sup>; *c.*<sup>2</sup> with *c.*<sup>2</sup>, etc.

Now a reference to *d.*<sup>2</sup> shows us that its subject-matter is the *subjection of angels* as part of Christ's triumph. Here, then, we have the key to the meaning of the word "spirits" in *d.*<sup>1</sup>; and we learn that the insubjection of the spirits in verse 20 was really the disobedience of angels (or the "fall of the angels") so frequently referred to in other Scriptures. Again, *c.*<sup>1</sup> and *c.*<sup>2</sup> have as their common subject Christ's new life and triumph. In *c.*<sup>1</sup> it is Resurrection, and in *c.*<sup>2</sup> it is Ascension. The word πορευθείς (having gone) in verse 19 (*he went*) answers to the same word repeated in verse 22 (*is gone*; R.V. *having gone*), and proves the perfect correspondence between the two members.

It is indeed strange that, without any warrant whatsoever the word πνεύματα ("spirits") should ever have been understood as applying to *men* in any form, state or condition. It never is so used in the Word of God when standing alone without any qualifying words, as it does here. The only passage which is thought to be adverse is Heb. xii. 23: "The spirits of just men made perfect". But this completely establishes the point in question: for the word "spirits" here, *does not stand alone*, as it does in 1 Pet. iii. 19, and other places: it is followed by certain qualifying words which expressly define these "spirits" as pertaining to "just men". There are no such

EXPANSION OF K. IN FULL (iii. 17—iv. 6)

*Resurrection and Triumph, the reward of suffering for the Lord's sake.*

K	L	a	iii. 17. For <i>it is</i> better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.	
			b	18. For Christ also hath once suffered (died) for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death (indeed) in (as regards) the flesh,
				M N <sup>1</sup> c <sup>1</sup> but quickened by (as regards) the spirit:
			d <sup>1</sup>	19. By (in) which also he went (προεβηλες) and preached (proclaimed) unto (even to) the spirits in prison (the in-prison spirits, i.e. "angels"—see verse 22);
				20. Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing,
			O <sup>1</sup>	wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved (escaped) by (means of) water.
			O <sup>2</sup>	21. The like figure whereunto <i>even</i> 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:
			N <sup>2</sup> c <sup>3</sup>	22. Who is gone (προεβηλες) into heaven, and is on the right hand of God;
			d <sup>2</sup>	angels (i.e. "spirits", see verse 19) and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.
L	b	iv. 1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered in (as regards) the flesh,		
			a	arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered (as regards) the flesh hath ceased from sin;
				M N <sup>1</sup> c <sup>1</sup> 2. That he no longer should live the rest of <i>his</i> time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.
			d <sup>1</sup>	3. For the time past of <i>our</i> life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:
				O <sup>1</sup> 4. Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with <i>them</i> to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of <i>you</i> :
			O <sup>2</sup>	5. Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.
			N <sup>2</sup> d <sup>2</sup>	6. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that (though) they might be judged according to (the will of) men in (as regards) the
			c <sup>2</sup>	flesh, but (yet they might) live according to (the will of) God in (as regards) the spirit.

THE MEMBER K. IN SKELETON (iii. 17—iv. 6)

*Resurrection and Triumph, the reward of suffering for the Lord's sake.*

K	L	a	17. Our suffering as regards the flesh.					
			b	18-. Christ's sufferings as regards the flesh. (Dative of reference.) (περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν . . . θανατωθεὶς σαρκί).				
				M	N <sup>1</sup>	c <sup>1</sup>	-18, 19. Christ's new life and triumph as regards the spirit (ζωοποιηθεὶς . . . πνεύματι) (πορευθεὶς).	
			d <sup>1</sup>	20-. Reference to time past (the days of Noah). The insubjection of "spirits" (angels. Heb. i. 7, 14. Acts viii. 26, 29, 30).				
				O <sup>1</sup>	-20. The salvation of men, then (past). The ark (type). Means (water).			
					O <sup>2</sup>	21. The salvation of "us," (now.) Baptism (antitype). Means (Resurrection of Jesus Christ).		
				N <sup>2</sup>		c <sup>2</sup>	22-. Christ's new life and triumph (πορευθεὶς).	
			d <sup>2</sup>		-22. Reference to time present and future. The subjection of "angels" (spirits).			
				L	b	iv. 1-. Christ's sufferings as regards the flesh. (Dat. of ref.) (παθόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν σαρκί). (R.V. omits ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.)		
			a			-1. Our suffering as regards the flesh.		
M	N <sup>1</sup>	c <sup>1</sup>				2. The saints' new life and triumph as regards the spirit, according to "the will of God".		
d <sup>1</sup>	3. Reference to time past. The flesh working the will of men. (γάρ.)							
	O <sup>1</sup>	4. Men's judgment of "us", (now).						
O <sup>2</sup>		5. God's judgment of men, (future).						
	N <sup>2</sup>	d <sup>2</sup>	6-. Reference to time past. The flesh suffering death according to the will of men. (Dat. of ref.) (γάρ.)					
c <sup>2</sup>			-6. The saints' new life and triumph as regards the spirit, according to the will of God. (Dat. of ref.) (ζῶσιν πνεύματι.)					

Note.—We complete our analysis by giving the following:—

EXPANSION OF D (iv. 7—19).

*General Exhortations in view of "the End", as to Joy in the Fiery Trial.*

D	P <sup>1</sup>	7-. The end of all things.				
	Q <sup>1</sup>	-7—11. Exhortation: in well doing to glorify God in all things.				
	P <sup>2</sup>	12. The Fiery Trial.				
	Q <sup>2</sup>	13—16. Exhortation: in well doing, to glorify God in suffering.				
	P <sup>3</sup>	17—18. The beginning of judgment.				
	Q <sup>3</sup>	19. Exhortation: in well doing to commit their souls to God in suffering.				

defining words in 1 Pet. iii. 19, and we yet wait for one passage where the word “spirits” *standing by itself* refers to *men* in any state or condition. In Heb. xii. 23 we are left in no doubt: the “spirits” there pertain to *men*, and must be either the spirits of the “just men” themselves, or the “*their angels*” of Matt. xviii. 10, i.e. the “ministering spirits” of those just men who have *finished their course* (τετελειωμένων). The expression occurs in verses 22–24, which refer to the *Heavenly* host, in contrast to verses 18–21, which refer to *Earthly* things.

Man was made, and up to the time of his death he continues to be a “living soul” (ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, 1 Cor. xv. 45, compare Gen. ii. 7); his body is a natural body (σῶμα ψυχικόν, 1 Cor. xv. 44). After death men are still called “souls” (ψυχαί): “I saw under the altar *the souls* of them that were slain for the word of God” (Rev. vi. 9); “I saw *the souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the word of God” (Rev. xx. 4). It is only *after resurrection* that the word “spirit” (πνεῦμα) is used as a brief term for man’s spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν), in 1 Cor. xv. 45.

The word πνεύματα (*spirits*) by itself, without any qualifying description, is used always of supernatural beings, higher than man, and lower than God, without corporeal garb of “flesh and blood”, or “flesh and bones”. Where there is any doubt as to the kind of spirit referred to, some defining word is always employed. For example, we read of “unclean spirits”, “evil” or “wicked spirits”, “a spirit of infirmity” (Luke xiii. 11, πνεῦμα ἁσθενείας, *a spirit causing infirmity*).

“A dumb spirit” (πνεῦμα ἄλαλον, Mark ix. 17, which Jesus calls in verse 25 a “*foul spirit*”).

“A spirit of divination” (Acts xvi. 16, πνεῦμα πύθωνος, *a spirit of Python*).

“Spirits of devils”—i.e. demons—Rev. xvi. 14.

When there is no doubt as to the kind of spiritual being that is spoken of, the word is used alone, without any qualifying description. Thus:

Mark ix. 20. “The spirit tare him”.

Luke ix. 39. “Lo, a spirit taketh him”.

Luke x. 20. “Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you”.

Matt. viii. 16. “He cast out the spirits with his word”.

See especially 1 Tim. iv. 1, 1 John iv. 1.

Of angelic beings, it is distinctly stated (Ps. civ. 4) that God "maketh His angels spirits". This is quoted in Heb. i. 7, "And of the angels he saith, 'Who maketh his angels spirits'." While in verse 14 we read of the angels that they are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister (εἰς διακονίαν, *to do service*) for them who shall be heirs of salvation".

There are other instructive references. In Acts viii. 26 it says that it was "*the angel of the Lord*" who was sent on a special mission to Philip. Immediately afterwards (verse 29) the same being is called a "spirit"—"*the spirit* said unto Philip"; while in verse 39 the same angelic messenger is called "*the spirit of the Lord*" (i.e. the spirit sent by the Lord), who finished his mission by catching Philip away to Azotus. This explains the passages, Rev. i. 4: "The seven spirits which are before His throne", and Rev. iv. 5: "The seven spirits of God". These are evidently angelic beings of some high order or station: either archangels, or the "seven angels" so frequently mentioned in the Apocalypse.

When Jesus appeared to His Apostles after His resurrection "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit" (i.e. a supernatural or angelic being). . . . But he said, "handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have". This was their first experience of a glorified human body (σῶμα πνευματικόν), as distinguished from a purely spiritual being (πνεύμα). (See Luke xxiv. 37, 39.)

It is said of the Sadducees (Acts xxiii. 8) that they believed in "neither angel nor spirit", i.e. neither in angel, nor any other spiritual being. Both words refer to the same kind of being; one the concrete, the other the abstract: "*angel*", defining the office and character; "*spirit*", denoting the nature.

Thus it seems perfectly in harmony with the uniform usage of Scripture to take these "spirits" (πνεύματα) in 1 Peter iii. 19, as *spiritual, or angelic beings*, who at some time, and for some reason, were put "in prison". The *time* we are told: it was once when "the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah". The *reason*, too, we are told: they were "disobedient". What that disobedience was we are not told here, but there are other Scriptures which throw light upon this, and which receive light from it in return.

We offer the following comparison of four passages:



# 1 PETER III. 18, 19, ILLUSTRATED BY A COMPARISON WITH OTHER SCRIPTURES.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

1 PETER iii. 18, 19.

JUDE 6, 7.

Christ was—

Manifested in flesh.

Justified in spirit.

Appeared to angels (ᾠφθη ἀγγέλοις).

Christ was—

Put to death as to the flesh.

Quickened as to the spirit.

Went and preached to the in-prison spirits (angels), which (in the days of Noah) were disobedient.

Angels (in the days of Noah) Sinned. Angels (before Sodom) Kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation

(Therefore “in prison”; see above.)

Cast down to Tartarus. Delivered unto chains of darkness.

Reserved in everlasting chains under darkness. Unto the judgment of the great day.

All but “few” perished.

Spared not the old world. Noah and seven others saved.

Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed. Sodom and Gomorrah not spared.

Men saved now.

Lot delivered. The godly delivered now.

Preached among nations. Believed on in *the* world. Taken up in glory.

Christ went into heaven, “angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” Compare Col. ii. 15, “having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

By comparing these passages, we learn that before the Flood certain angelic beings "sinned". They kept not their first estate (R.V. *their own principality*) but left their own habitation (οἰκητήριον, only here and 2 Cor. v. 2, where it is used of a *spiritual body*!). The nature of their sin is stated; it was "*Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh*". In 2 Peter ii. 2, 10 also, the angels' fall is used with reference to "pernicious ways" (R.V. *lascivious doings*, see 1 Pet. iv. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 7, 14, 18; Jude 4); and is spoken of those who "walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government" (margin and R.V. *dominion*), 2 Pet. ii. 10. Who "defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of (R.V. *rail at*) dignities", Jude 8.

Now, we ask, may not this refer to Genesis vi. 2, 4? Have we in Genesis vi. the historical account of these Divine references? May not this be the very sin recorded when "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose . . ." and "when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men, which *were* of old, men of renown". The term "sons of God" (בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים) is, in the Old Testament, *always used of angels* (see Job ii. 1, xxxviii. 7; Ps. xxix. 1, lxxxix. 6; Dan. iii. 25 in the singular). And the Codex A. of the Septuagint in Gen. vi. 2 reads ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ, *angels of God*. Philo, Josephus, most of the Rabbinical writers, Clemens Alexandrinus, Justin, Cyprian, Ambrose, Lactantius, Luther, and many modern scholars, Kürtz, Delitzsch, Stier, etc. hold this view; while Tertullian and Augustine also explain 1 Cor. xi. 10 by a reference to this passage in Genesis vi. 2, 4.

It may have been in this way, therefore, that these "sons of God", angels, or spirits, sinned. That such a sin was quite *possible* is clear from the fact that these angels *left* (ἀπολείπω, *to forsake, desert*) *their own proper* (ἰδιος) *spiritual body* (οἰκητήριον, 2 Cor. v. 2). What is certain is, that, if not in this way, then in some other way they sinned, and for their sin were put "in prison", "cast down to Tartarus": and "reserved unto the judgment of the great day". This is some special place of "darkness" (ζόφος, a word used only in 2 Pet. ii. 4, 17 and Jude 6, 13). "Tartarus" is never used with reference to men,

and only in 2 Pet. ii. 4 of these fallen angels. In the R.V. we read "*Cast them down to hell and committed them to pits of darkness*". In the margin, "*Cast them into dungeons, Gr. Tartarus*". What are these "dungeons" but the "prison" of 1 Pet. iii. 19?

But (for this is the argument)—so complete was Christ's triumph, that He "led captivity captive" (Eph. iv. 8): so complete that, "having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. ii. 15): so completely were "angels, and authorities, and powers made subject unto Him", that His triumphal proclamation reached even to Tartarus—even to these "in-prison spirits".

Hence the argument is continued in the next chapter (iv. 1); "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered as regards the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind" (ἐννοίαν, occurs only here and Heb. iv. 12, where it is rendered "*intents*". It means *the act of thinking, consideration*). Consider Christ! God "raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (i. 21). See! what a like glorious triumph awaits those who are Christ's, and suffer in like manner for righteousness' sake, according to the will of God! Be armed against all these trials by the consideration that as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, so ye shall be also of the glory which Christ received as His reward! Keep this in your mind, and thus be armed against all the assaults of your enemies! This is the logical conclusion of the whole argument.

Those who still cling to the popular interpretation that the preaching spoken of refers to a gospel-preaching to *men* who sinned in the days of Noah, are bound to show in what way the passage is a *reason* on which to base such an exhortation. It commences with the word "FOR" (ὅτι, *because*, iii. 18), and it is introduced for the express purpose of establishing the statement of verse 17, viz. that "it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing—FOR Christ *also* hath once suffered", etc. Note the incongruity and inconsequence of the popular explanation, which is to this effect: "Christ also suffered; and, after He died, He went and preached the Gospel to the greatest evil-doers the world has ever seen: so great that their sins brought down the judgment of the Flood"! We ask, What has this to do with the argument of the Holy Spirit in the context? What *reason* is this, why it

is good to suffer for the Lord's sake? What encouragement is there in this for them, or for us to suffer for well doing? Apart from the inexplicable supposition that these greatest of sinners are singled out for special mercy, this interpretation is really at variance with the argument! It would be, indeed, rather an argument for evil doing than for well doing! For why should we suffer for well doing when, even if we do evil, Christ Himself gives us the hope of salvation after death? If the word "FOR" were not there, and if the passage stood perfectly isolated, apart from all reference to any context, then we might grant that we have here a revelation of some peculiar mystery, provided that it did not clash with the general analogy of Bible truth, or with any of the clear statements of Scripture. But this is not the case. The whole interpretation hangs on the word "FOR". And yet, in the popular view, this word is utterly ignored; while the word *μὲν* (*though*) is twice untranslated; the word "Hades" is gratuitously introduced, notwithstanding the fact that "Tartarus" is the place distinctly named in the corresponding passage (2 Pet. ii. 4); the word "preach" (κηρύσσειν) and the word "spirits" are taken in senses which they do not necessarily bear; and all this is done in order to introduce the new doctrine of probation for men after death, which is foreign to the Word of God; which is repugnant to Scripture truth; which has no relation to the context; and, moreover, is utterly destitute of all logic, being no reason whatever for the statement, which it is expressly introduced in order to prove and establish!

There is a parenthetical thought in the members marked O.<sup>1</sup> and O.<sup>2</sup>; just as there is in 2 Pet. ii. 5, 7—a thought that heightens the "living hope" which was being so powerfully set before these suffering saints, viz. that even at the very time when God spared not angels, He delivered Noah. Scripture connects these two events together. But it is quite silent as to any such fall of the angels before the creation of man. When He spared not Sodom and Gomorrah, he delivered Lot! Still more will He save "us" out of these sufferings which man is bringing upon us.

Note the accuracy of the words, and the difference between *διεσώθησαν* used of Noah in verse 20, and the *σώζει* used of "us", in verse 21. The former, *διασώζειν*, is always used of getting free from, or getting safely through, bodily danger. See Matt. xiv. 36, "Were *made* perfectly *whole*." Luke vii. 3,

“*Heal.*” Acts xxiii. 24, “*Bring him safe unto Felix*”; xxvii. 43, “*Willing to save Paul*”; 44, “*They escaped all safe to land*” (see Jonah i. 6, LXX.); xxviii. 1, “*When they were escaped*”; 4, “*Though he hath escaped the sea.*” So here in the only other occurrence of the word, 1 Pet. iii. 20, “eight souls were saved (*i.e.* escaped) through (διὰ, *by means of*) water.”

Whereas σώζειν, though it may be used of physical things, has its more frequent and special reference to things spiritual.

This salvation is part of the great encouragement to these saints in their “fiery trial”; it was the reason why they were not to be ashamed if called to suffer “as Christians”; and why they were to commit the keeping of *their souls* to their faithful Creator.

But now we come to the corresponding member *M.*, which answers so remarkably to *M.* which we have just been considering. By a reference to the structure it will be seen that *c.*<sup>1</sup> and *c.*<sup>2</sup> both refer to the *Saints’ new life and triumph in Christ*; also that *d.*<sup>1</sup> and *d.*<sup>2</sup> both refer to *Past time*; while *O.*<sup>1</sup> and *O.*<sup>2</sup> refer to *Men*, as do *O.*<sup>1</sup> and *O.*<sup>2</sup> above. The conclusion of the argument is reached in iv. 6: “For, for this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead”. Here, the word “preached” is not the word for a mere indefinite proclamation, such as was used with reference to the fallen angels in iii. 19, but it is εὐαγγελίζομαι, *to evangelize, to preach the Gospel*—the word Gospel being contained in, and forming an integral part of, the word. And this verb is here, in the first aorist tense, indicating a past, indefinite act; while the word “dead” (νεκροῖς) necessarily refers to the then present condition of those to whom the Gospel had at some previous time been preached. If the words νεκροῖς εὐηγγελισθη (*preached to the dead*) stood alone, there would be nothing to tell us whether the persons were alive or dead at the time when the preaching took place. But the words that follow leave the matter in no doubt. The object of that very preaching is definitely stated, and stated in the most emphatic manner. We have the words “for this cause” (εἰς τοῦτο) in the first clause, strengthened by the word “that” (ἵνα, *in order that*) in the second clause. “For, for this cause . . . that. . . .” (Or as the R.V., “For, unto this end . . . that . . .”). That is to say, it was with this special and definite object that the Gospel was preached to them. Indeed, the two clauses of iv. 6 correspond so perfectly, and are so

wonderfully balanced, as to leave us in no doubt **whatever** as to the sense:

First Clause.	Second Clause.
for this cause (εἰς τοῦτο)	.. that (ἵνα)
might be judged (κριθῶσιν)	.. might live (ζῶσιν)
[untranslated] μέν, <i>though</i>	.. but (δέ)
This word μέν, on which so much depends, is inexplicably left <i>untranslated</i> both in the A.V. and R.V. The popular exposition does not know what to do with it; but a correct interpretation cannot do without it.	
acc. to men (κατὰ ἀνθρώπους)	.. acc. to God (κατὰ Θεόν)
as regards the flesh (σαρκί)	.. as regards the spirit (πνεύματι)
So also there is a correspondence between	
iv. 6	and iii. 18:
might be judged (κριθῶσιν)	.. put to death (θανατωθείς)
as regards the flesh (σαρκί)	.. as regards the flesh (σαρκί)
live (ζῶσιν)	.. quickened (ζωοποιηθείς)
as regards the spirit (πνεύματι)	.. as regards the spirit (πνεύματι)

We thus learn that the “dead” must have been alive when the Gospel was preached to them, because we are expressly told that it was preached for this very purpose, viz. that though (μέν) they might be judged by man’s tribunal (κατὰ ἀνθρώπους, *according to the will of man*) and put to death as regards the flesh, yet (δέ) they shall live according to the will of God (κατὰ Θεόν,) and enjoy a glorious triumph like unto Christ’s. The word (in the accusative) governed by κατὰ *measures* and *characterizes* the *action* of the *verb* connected with it, not the subject of the action. Compare Rom. viii. 27, xv. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 8, xv. 32; 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10, 11, xi. 17; Gal. i. 11; Eph. ii. 2; Col. ii. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 14. Here, the *act of judging* is measured and characterized as being that of mortal men who were the judges. It does not refer to those who were the subjects of that judgment. Note the structure of 1 Pet. iv. 2–6 (pages 153, 154), where “the will of man” and the judgment of man are seen to be in marked contrast to “the will of God” and the judgment of God.

True—they might be called to stand in the flesh before human tribunals and be condemned to deaths of the most horrible kind; yet, the Gospel had been preached to them for this purpose, in order that they might—having the blessed hope of a glorious resurrection—commit the keeping of their souls to Him who had created them, and glorify God by a martyr’s death!

Observe, it does not say that the Gospel was preached to them "that they might be judged", but that *though* they might be judged. This is the true force of the untranslated μέν, which is thus preserved. This preaching is specially referred to in 1 Pet. i. 12, 25. "The God of all grace" (v. 10) sent His blessed Gospel to them with its "living hope" of a joyful resurrection from the dead, and its news of an incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven (i. 3, 4). He "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (i. 11). He sent the cheering exhortation, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (iv. 13.)

Thus our exposition of the special passage (iii. 17—iv. 6) preserves the great design of the Holy Spirit in the Epistle as a whole; it harmonizes also with the immediate context; it gives a uniform rendering to the similar words in the various clauses; it balances the clauses according to their peculiar structure; it throws light on other difficult passages, e.g. Gen. vi. 2, 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Pet. ii. 4-9; Jude 6, 7; 1 Cor. xi. 10; Rev. i. 4, iv. 5; it rescues the passage from those who would wrest it to support the heresy of the so-called "larger hope", or probation after death; while it saves those who would combat that error from resorting to inaccurate and untenable expositions.