THE SECOND EPISODE OF THE APOSTLE

PETER.

The object of the Divine Promises.

1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those equally honoured with us to share a faith in righteousness from our God and Saviour Jesus Christ:
2 May blessing and peace be abundant to you, with knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.
3 Seeing that His Divine power has presented to us everything for the purpose of life and piety, through the knowledge of Him who called us to
4 His own majesty and virtue; through which He has endowed us with the greatest and most honourable promises; so that through these you might become participators of a Divine nature, having escaped from that corruption which exists in the world
5 owing to depraved desire. Therefore, for this reason, use every effort, having enlisted, to drill yourselves by the faith in virtue, and by the virtue in
6 intelligence; and by the intelligence in self-restraint; and by the self-restraint in obedience; and by the
7 obedience in piety; and by the piety in brotherly kindness; and by the bro-
8 therly kindness in love. For if you possess and progress in these, you will neither be dilatory nor ineffective when reviewed by our Lord Jesus
9 Christ. For whoever is not disci-
10 plined in these, is blind, short-sighted, choosing to forget the pruning he has received from his old errors.
11 Consequently, brothers, earnestly
12 work to make your calling and enrol-
13 ment sure: for having done these things, you will never at any time
14 falter; for thus you will be fully equipped for your march into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and
15 Saviour Jesus Christ.

Reiterated Admonitions.

16 I will in consequence be careful at all times to remind you about these things, although you are instructed and stand firm in the revealed truth.
17 Yet I consider it right, as long as I am in this little tent, to arouse you
18 into a remembrance; knowing that the striking of my tent is near, as our Lord Jesus Christ disclosed to me. Therefore, I will also endeavour to have each one of you, after my departure, to be made to remember these matters.
19 Because we were not following cunningly-devised fables when we informed you of the power and revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; but, on the contrary, we were eye-witnesses of His grandeur. For having received from God His Father honour and splendour, a Voice was sent to Him from the Supreme Majesty, declaring, "This is My Son, My Beloved, in Whom I have delighted!" And we heard this Voice coming from heaven when we were with Him upon the holy hill. And we possess in this prophetic message a firm support, to which you will do well to pay attention, as to a lamp shining in a gloomy place, until the day dawns, and the Morning Star arises in your hearts; recognising, in the first place, that no prophecy of Scripture is of a single meaning. For prophecy was never a result of human design; on the contrary, men spoke under the influence of a Holy Spirit sent from God.

The Certain Doom of the Wicked.

But false prophets also came among the people, just as there will be false teachers among yourselves, who will shuffle in destructive errors, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing speedy destruction upon themselves. Many also will follow them in their debaucheries, on account of whom the Way of the truth will be defamed; and in greed they will trade upon you with a fine flow of delusive reasons. Their conviction, long recorded, will not be deferred; and their destruction will not be postponed. For if God did not spare sinning angels, but remitted them to chains of blackness of darkness, to await judgment; and did not
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sparing the ancient world—but preserved Noah, the eighth man, a herald of righteousness—crushing a world of the wicked by a downrush from above; and overwhelmed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by ashes of fire, leaving them as a warning to future iniquity; and rescued righteous Lot, who was agonized by the conduct of those men of unbridled prodigality—for that righteous man, by seeing and hearing when living among them, had his blameless soul tortured from day to day by reason of their lawless doings: but the Lord knows how to rescue the pious from trial; but He keeps the wicked for a day of judicial punishment, but especially those who seek after sensuality, in a rage for pollution despising restraint. Audacious, self-willed, they are not even afraid to libel glories; whereas angels, who excel in might and power, do not bring a railing indictment against them. But these, like unreasoning animals produced naturally for capture and destruction, abusing what they do not understand, will also be destroyed in their own corruptions, receiving the due reward of their prodigality. These delight to revel in the luxury which lasts but a day—spots and blemishes, luxuriating in their deceits, while they share your hospitality. They have eyes full of adultery, and unrestrained sin; alluring unsteady souls, they have a heart practised in greed; they are wandering children of a curse; having left the straight path, following in the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness: but he was convicted by his own misdeeds; a speechless animal speaking with a human voice, restrained the madness of the prophet. These are waterless wells; tempest-tossed fogs; for whom the gloom of darkness is reserved. For they speak inflated with folly, seducing into profligate desires—their former error—those who were almost escaping from them; promising them liberty, while they are themselves the slaves of corruption. For by whoever a man is overpowered, he must slave to him. If, however, having escaped from the defilements of the world through the comprehension of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again recaptured, then their last condition has become worse than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have comprehended the path of righteousness, than, having known it, to turn back from the holy command delivered to them. It has come to this, as the true proverb describes them:

A DOG RETURNS TO HIS OWN VOMIT; and a washed pig to its wallowing in the mire.

The Irrepressible Word of God.

Now then, friends, I have written this second letter to you, in which I stir you up to remember with clear intelligence to be mindful of the statements previously uttered by the holy prophets, and of your apostles, of the commands of the Lord and Saviour. You should first recognize this, that during the latter times deceivers will come with deception, gratifying their own passions, and asking, "Where is the promise of His appearing? for since the forefathers went to sleep, everything continues the same from the beginning of the creation." For they willingly suffer to be hid from them this reason, that by the intention of God the skies existed from of old, and the earth with water above and water below, arranged for the purpose of God, by means of which the then existing world perished, by the water having rushed down. But the present earth and skies are treasured up by His intention, reserved for fire at a period of judgment and destruction of wicked men.

But do not allow this one fact to escape you, friends, that with the Lord a single day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a single day. The Lord does not delay His promise, as some regard delaying; but extends His patience towards you, desiring that none should be lost, but that all should come to a change of mind. But the day of the Lord will approach like a thief, when the skies will pass away with a crash, and their constituents will be dissolved by heat; while the earth and what is upon it will be re-organized. All having to be thus dissolved, what ought you to be like in regard to pure conduct and piety.

1 Prov. xxvi. 11.
2 Some of the old MSS. read, "will be made-known," "burnt up," "laid bare."
II. JOHN.

12 expecting and hastening on the appearance of the Day of God!—during which the burning skies will be dissolved, and their constituents melted by heat; yet according to His promise, we look for new skies and a new earth, in which righteousness will dwell.

13 Consequently, friends, seeing that you are expecting these, be in earnest to be found in peace by Him, spotless and blameless; and you will secure the enduring salvation from our Lord. As also our dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom granted to him, has written to you; as, indeed, in many letters he has spoken about these subjects—in which are some things difficult to understand, which the ignorant and the fickle distort, as also they do the other scriptures to their own destruction.

17 You therefore, friends, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard; lest, being misled by the error of the lawless, you fall away from your own standard. But progress in goodness and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. With Him is the rectification both now and in eternal life. Amen.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE JOHN.¹

1 The old man to the Chosen Lady and her children, whom I love in truth—and not myself alone, but also all those who recognise the truth—for the sake of the truth which dwells in us, and will exist with us in eternity: Where will be with us blessing, mercy, peace with God the Father, and with Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

2 I was greatly delighted at having found some of your children walking in truth, as fully as we received instruction from the Father. And now I beg of you, Princess, not as if writing a new command to you, but that which we possessed from the beginning—that we should love one another.

3 And this is love—that we should conduct ourselves according to His commands. That is the command which you learnt from the first, so that you should walk by it. Because many misleaders have gone out into the world, some not acknowledging Jesus Christ to have come bodily. This is the misleader and the antagonist of Christ.

4 Take care of yourselves, so that you may not lose what we are working out, but may receive a perfect reward. Whoever assumes the lead among you, and continues in the teaching of the Messiah, possesses not God. Whoever continues in that teaching, he possesses both the Father and the Son. If any one comes to you, and does not bring this doctrine, neither admit him to your house nor wish him success; for whoever wishes him success, himself participates in his wicked doings.

5 Having a great deal to communicate to you, I have decided to do so not by paper and ink; but I hope to come to you, and speak by word of mouth, so that your pleasure may be complete.

6 The children of your chosen sister sends you regards.

¹ Note.—For the First Epistle of St. John, see the end of his Gospel, where I have restored it to its proper place; it being really the Concluding Address of that Evangelist to his readers.—F. F.