

St. Peter, like the two other chief apostles, uses language bordering on an identification of the Word and the words. But the term here used indicates rather the oral and written oracles which the Son of God has made the vehicle of His communications to men. And the immutability of that word has in this chapter a twofold light thrown upon it. Viewed in itself, the abiding word has lived through its changing forms, and stamped upon them its own permanence. Viewed from without, and in relation to the words of men, it has maintained its stability in the midst of all the fluctuations of human tradition.

1. It has been one unchanging word from the beginning, preserving in a wide variety of forms the unity of life.

The methods have been various by which the Spirit of revelation, to whom all the avenues of human nature are known, has found access for Divine truth to the minds and hearts of men. And the Bible, containing the history of God's education of mankind, is at once the record of that large variety and the witness of that essential unity. In its earliest pages we have the simplest revelation. We hear the voice of God speaking to His new creature in that pavilion of His presence from which sin had not yet made man an alien. Then we hear the same voice—changed, indeed, and yet not changed—at the gate of paradise and threshold of a fallen world, dooming the transgressor to the penalty of his sin, and yet preaching to him the Gospel of a glorious redemption; in His justice *turning man*, the first sinner, *to destruction*, but in His mercy crying, to him and all his unnumbered descendants, *Come again, ye children of men!* From that time for thousands of years, and throughout the entire Old-Testament Scriptures, revelation is the narrative of the “sundry times and divers manners” in which it pleased the wisdom of God to foreannounce the unuttered