

selves by the standard of the sanctuary, the works of the flesh are contrasted with the fruits of the Spirit. In the last chapter, we have chiefly a discussion of the manner in which our duties should be discharged to our fellow Christians; and another exhortation to steadfastness in Christian doctrine. Among the most important of these general directions, is the manner in which we should treat a fallen brother. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness;" where the word restore, means to set a joint that has been dislocated. This injunction implies that believers are members of Christ's mystical body, and that when they fall through the force of temptation, or the power of indwelling corruption, it is like the dislocation of a joint in the human body, which must be carefully set.

The chief doctrine in this epistle, the doctrine of justification by faith alone in the merits of Christ, is more fully illustrated in the epistle to the Romans. But this epistle is not a merely condensed repetition of the chief arguments and illustrations used in the epistle to the Romans. It exhibits the cardinal doctrine of the gospel—the article of a standing or of a falling Church in an independent point of light; and demonstrates that it cannot co-exist with other principles, any more than Jehovah can be worshipped with other gods; but that it must reign without an equal or a rival in the heart, and control the conduct. We have also especially a development of the relation in which man stands to God as a son, by faith in Christ Jesus; and that the believer consequently yields obedience to the law of God, not from a slavish dread of punishment, but from a spirit of filial regard; and in this respect, the epistle to the Galatians, in an essential point of doctrine, completes that to the Romans. This epistle is also of peculiar value, inasmuch as it affords us a development of the apostle's strong feelings and ardent temperament, and thus enables us to form a better estimate of his character. Rückert describes this peculiarity in the following appropriate language. "Other epistles also do this—for example, the epistles to the Thessalonians, to the Philippians, to Philemon, and especially to the Corinthians. But our epistle does so in a much more especial manner. With the communities in Thessalonica and Philippi, as well as with Philemon, he stood in friendly relations, and, when we read those epistles, we find ourselves wonderfully quickened by the spirit of love and tenderness that pervades them. With the Corinthians he had a reason to be dissatisfied; and we see even in that dissatisfaction love proclaiming itself amid the gentle and holy earnestness which he employed. But nowhere did he so energetically exert himself as among the Galatians. Then his person was deeply injured; his moral character was severely calumniated; his apostolic authority had been as good as destroyed, and his sacred work, the dearest object of all his labors and efforts, had been brought to the reign of ruin. Then we see him making the greatest exertions; we see the strength of his feelings; we see the natural warmth of his disposition, while the bursting forth of his emotions cannot be concealed. But even in this point of view, how great and worthy of respect does he stand before us! How strikingly does the whole epistle prove that it was not written for himself, but for a sacred object! How sincere the love that he manifests to his wayward children; how great the inclination to forgive and forget all, would they only return to a sense of duty; how heartily does he extend the hand of fellowship; and how powerfully does he feel impelled to do every thing possible, if it could be accomplished, that Christ might ultimately find a place among them."

TRANSLATION OF CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON
I. PETER.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 7. *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

8. *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*

9. *Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.*

7. *More precious than gold.* The argument is from the less to the greater. For, if we esteem gold, which is a corruptible metal, so highly, that we will have it tried with fire, in order that its value among us may stand; what wonder is it, if God demands the same trial of faith, when it is a thing of such excellence with Him. But although the words have

a different meaning, yet the Apostle compares faith to gold, and pronounces it more precious, that he may thence conclude that it is worthy of being well tried. Moreover it is uncertain to what extent he applies the verb to try, and the noun trial, since in two different ways is gold tried with fire, to wit, when it is purified from the dross; and, when they judge of its purity. Both modes of trial agree very well with faith. For while there are in us many dregs of unbelief, so long are we roasted, as it were, in the furnace of God, and the dross of our faith purged away, that it may appear pure and bright before God. At the same time a trial of our faith is made, whether it is true or pretended. I willingly accept both forms of trial; and of this purport is that which immediately follows. "For as its own excellence is not ascribed to silver before it is purified; so the Apostle declares that our faith will be honorably esteemed and crowned by God, only when it has been well tried.

At the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is added that the faithful may learn to suspend their hopes even to the last day. For now our life is concealed in Christ, and will lie hid, entombed as it were, until he appear from heaven; and the whole course of our life tends to the destruction of the outward man; and whatever things we suffer at present, are but the prelude, as it were, of death. Therefore, it is necessary that we turn our eyes to Christ, if we wish to behold glory and praise in afflictions; for trials in us are full of reproach and shame, while in Christ they are glorious; but that glory is not yet fully beheld in him, because the day of consolation (revelation!) is not yet arrived.

8. *Whom having not seen.* The apostle makes two assertions, to wit, that they love Christ whom they have not seen; and, that they believe in him though they behold him not. But the former assertion springs from the latter. For the cause of love is faith—not only because a knowledge of the benefits which Christ has bestowed on us, leads us to love him in return, but also because he draws us to himself by bestowing upon us perfect happiness. The apostle therefore praises the Jewish Christians, because they believe in Christ whom they do not behold, in order that they may reflect that the very nature of faith is to rest satisfied with blessings which are hidden from the view; for of this very thing they had some experience, although he rather instructs them by praising them. And this is the first part in order of the statement—that faith is not to be measured by sight. For when the life of Christians is wreathed in outward appearance, unless their happiness were placed in hope, they would forthwith fall away. And faith has indeed its own eyes, even those which enter into the invisible kingdom of God, and which are satisfied by the glass of the word. It is the evidence of things not seen, as it is esteemed in the epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 1.) Wherefore the saying of Paul (2 Cor. v. 6,) is true, that we are absent from the Lord so long as we are confined in the flesh; for we walk by faith and not by sight. The second part of the statement is, that faith is not cold, inactive knowledge, but such as inflames our hearts with the love of Christ. For neither (as the sophists wrangle) does faith lay hold of God in a confused and intricate manner, for this were to wander through pathless errors, but has Christ for its object. Besides it seizes not on the bare name, or the mere essence of Christ; but considers what he is to us, and what blessings he brings us; for it cannot but be, that a man's affections are carried away by that on which he has placed his happiness, according to the saying (Mat. vi. 21.) *where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Ye rejoice. Again he sets forth that fruit of faith which he had formerly mentioned, and not without cause; for this blessing is unexampled, because not only are the consciences of Christians thereby pacified before God, but they indeed rejoice securely in the hope of eternal life. He calls it, moreover, *joy unspeakable*; because the peace of God surpasses all understanding. *Full of glory*, which he adds, may be explained in two ways, either that it denotes *splendid and glorious*, or, that it is opposed to *vain and fleeting*, to that of which men soon become ashamed. Thus understood, *full of glory* will have the same force as *firm and steadfast, and out of danger of failure*. Those who are not by this joy exalted above the heavens, so that, being satisfied with Christ alone, they can despise the world, do in vain boast that they have faith.

9. *Receiving the end of your faith.* The apostle sets before the faithful that to which they ought to direct all the powers of their minds, to wit, to their everlasting salvation. For this world holds out affections ensnared in its pleasures: indeed this life and whatever belongs to the