**comely** (as over against the *vain behaviour* of the Gentiles, ch. i. 18. Compare  
ch. iii. 16), **that** (aim of the preceding) **in  
the matter in which** (not ‘*whereas,*’ as  
A.V. The sense is, “that that conduct,  
which was to them an occasion of speaking  
against you as evil-doers, may by your  
good works become to them an occasion of  
glorifying God.” And “*that, in which,*”  
will be in fact your whole Christian life)  
**they speak against you as evil-doers** (often  
the Christians would be compelled to diverge from heathen customs and even to  
break human laws, and thus would incur  
the imputation of malefactors), **they may,  
on the ground of your good works, being  
spectators of them** (contrast to the ignorance assumed below, ver. 15), **glorify God  
in [the] day of visitation** (i. e. the day  
when God visits,—Luke i. 68, 78; Acts xv.  
14,—mankind with His offers of mercy and  
grace: our Lord says of Jerusalem, Luke  
xix. 44, “*Thou knewest not the day of thy  
visitation.*” The word has been variously  
understood: the Fathers generally, and  
some moderns, explain it as above: others  
that the day of *inquisition before  
earthly magistrates* is meant. Bede and  
others understand it of the day of judgment. But the former sense is far preferable ou account of usage, and for its  
fitness in the context).

**13–17.]** *Exhortation to subjection to  
secular rule.*

**13.]** **Be subjected** (so  
literally: be in a condition of having been  
subjected) **to every human institution**  
(such, and not “*every human creature,*”  
as some hold. The latter would stultify  
what follows: for it is not to the king as a  
man, but to the king as a human institution, that we are to be subject. It is no objection to this command, that all powers  
are ordained of God: for that consideration  
does not come into notice in these words,  
but in those which follow, “*for the Lord’s  
sake.*” *Here,* it is the *lower side* of such  
institutions, the fact of their being ordained  
and upheld by men, that is brought into  
sight) **for the Lord’s sake** (i. e. Christ’s:  
“*the Lord*” with St. Peter, except in Old  
Test. citations, is always our Lord. And  
here there is additional reason, for that He,  
the Head of all principality and power, is  
yet in us his members subject to them,  
until the day when all shall be put under  
His feet): **whether to king** (general,—but,  
from the nature of the ease as regarded  
those to whom the Epistle is addressed,  
here the Roman Emperor) **as supereminent**  
(not ruled by any other human power), **or  
to governors** (of the provinces, sent by  
Caesar) **as to men sent** (*in the habit of  
being sent*,—sent from time to time)  
**through him** (*the king,* not *the Lord,* as  
some, and Calvin very positively. But  
there can be little doubt that he is wrong.  
For first the analogy of the clauses shews  
that the grounds of obedience in each case,  
all being alike *for the Lord’s sake*, belong  
to the actually existing rights of power in  
that case. The king is supreme, in his own  
right: governors rule by delegation from  
the king. Then the right understanding  
of “*for the Lord’s sake,*” as applying to  
all, forbids this view. For thus we should  
obey the king as *eminent,* no mention of  
the Lord being made, whereas rulers are  
to be obeyed as sent by the Lord) **for** (to  
bring about) **vengeance on evil-doers,  
and praise of well-doers.**

**15.]** **For**  
(ground of the submission enjoined : correlative with, but not going so far as, the