meaning as **the dead** in ver. 5: i.e. that of  
*dead men,* literally and simply so called:  
men who have died and are in their graves.

This at once rids us of all the Commentators who interpret this second **dead** of the  
*dead in trespasses and sins,* as well as  
those who to gain this meaning here, distort **dead** in ver. 5 from its constant reference in that connexion to mean the spiritually dead, or the Gentiles. A second  
principle which we may lay down is this:  
that **dead** in ver. 6 must be kept as wide in  
its *reference* as dead in ver. 5: i.e. that it  
must not be interpreted as applying merely  
to the blasphemers of the Christians who  
should have died before the judgment, or  
merely to such blasphemed Christians  
themselves, as shall have then died, or  
merely to the spirits in prison of ch. iii. 19,  
but must be treated as a general assertion  
in the literal meaning of the word. It is  
quite impossible to put before the English  
reader the discussion on the different interpretations which have been given, as it  
mainly turns on considerations of the construction of the sentence in the original,  
but I may just say this much, that dead cannot mean “*now dead,*” nor can **the gospel  
was preached** point to the time when the  
gospel was preached to them, before they  
died: nor again, can the Apostle’s view be  
to comfort his readers in persecution and  
slander, by the thought that bodily death  
would not exempt their adversaries from  
the divine judgment. The view here  
adopted is, the persons pointed at are  
those spirits in prison to whom our Lord  
went and preached, ch. iii. 19. Our Lord  
is ready to judge the dead ; and with reason; for even they have not been withont  
opportunity of receiving his gospel: as the  
example which was adduced in ch. iii. 19  
shews. For this end the gospel was preached  
even to the dead,—that they might—not  
indeed escape the universal judgment on  
human sin, which is physical death,—but,  
*that they might be judged* [be in the state  
of the completed sentence on sin, which is  
death after the flesh] *according to* [as]  
*man as regards the flesh, but* [notwithstanding] *might live* [of a state to continue] *according to God* [a life with God,  
and divine] *as regards the spirit.* And  
this interpretation I adopt, believing it to  
he the only one which satisfies the conditions of the sentence: which justifies the  
**for** as accounting for the judging the **dead:**  
the **also,** as taking up, and bringing into  
prominence and climax the *dead:* the term  
**dead,** as used in precisely the same sense as  
in the last verse, and contemporary with  
the verb which governs it: the statement, that **the gospel was preached,** as  
grounded on a previously-announced fact,  
ch. iii. 19: the aim and end introduced by  
the **that,** which on this, and on no other  
rendering, receives meaning and perspicuity. And so, in the main, with minor  
deviations, the more accurate of the modern  
Commentators.

**7–V. 11.]** *General exhortations with  
reference to behaviour within the Christian  
body, in contemplation of the approaching  
end.* This portion of the Epistle falls into  
three sections: 7–11, *Christian and social  
duties,* in consideration of the end being at  
hand: 12–19, *Christian bearing of suffering,* in the same consideration: v. 1–11,  
*ecclesiastical and general mutual ministrations:* passing off into fervent *general exhortations and aspirations.*

**7.]** **But**  
(the connexion is close with what had gone  
before: the *being ready* of ver. 5 is in  
the Apostle’s mind: and he passes, with it  
before him, from considerations external to  
the church, to those affecting its internal  
condition) **the end of all things is at hand**  
(on this being the constant expectation of  
the apostolic age, see Acts i. 7, note: 1 Thess.  
iv. 15, note): **be therefore of temperate  
mind** (see note on 1 Tim. ii. 9), **and be sober  
unto** (with a view to) **prayers,**

**8.]** **above  
all things** (not placing love above prayer,  
but because all social life and duty must  
presuppose love as its necessary bond and  
condition) **having your love towards one  
another intense** (sec ch. i. 22. He presupposes their love, and enjoins that it be  
fervent or intense)**: because love covereth  
a multitude of sins** (from ref. Prov. x. 12,