ending in perdition): **for by what [ever]  
a man is overcome, by the same he is  
also enslaved** (compare John viii. 34:  
Rom. vi. 6. These passages were certainly  
in the Apostle’s mind).

**20–22.]** *Further description of these  
deceivers, as apostates from Christ, and  
designation of their terrible state as such.*  
**For if, having escaped** (it might seem at  
first sight as if the *escapers* of ver. 18 were  
meant: but on close inspection it is plain  
that this is not so, but that we are continuing the description of the *slaves of corruption*, viz. the deceivers themselves) **the  
pollutions of the world, in** (element and  
condition of their escape) **knowledge** (genuine  
and accurate knowledge: shewing  
that he is treating of men who have not  
been mere professors of spiritual grace, but  
real possessors of it) **of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** (expressed at length, to  
set forth more solemnly that from which  
they fall), **but having again become entangled in these, they are overcome, their  
last state is** (literally, **has become:** but  
we cannot say this in English, for we  
thereby convey an idea that it was not  
always so, but has undergone a change)  
**worse than the first** (the saying is our  
Lord’s own: see Matt. xii. 45 and the  
parallel in Luke).  
  
**21.]** *Reason of these last words*. **For  
it were better for them not to have known  
the way of righteousness** (viz. the Christian life: *the way of truth*, as in ver. 2)  
**than, having known it, to turn back from**(out of, as out of a way) **the holy commandment** (the moral law of the gospel:  
here so designated, because it is of moral  
corruption that the Apostle is treating)  
**delivered to them** (compare Jude 3, “*the  
faith once [for all] delivered to the  
saints*”).

**22.]** *Further description of their state  
by two proverbial expressions*. **There  
hath happened to them that of the true  
proverb, The dog gone back** (i. e. “*which  
has gone back*”) **to his own vomit**(in ref. Prov. we have something very  
like this. 1t may seem however somewhat  
doubtful, whether the proverbs, as here  
cited, be meant to be taken from Scripture, or rather not both of them from  
the popular parlance): **and, The sow  
after washing to** (*gone back*, or *returned* is generally understood before *to*.  
But it seems better, with Huther, to understand the proverb as self-contained, and  
elliptical, as in “Sweets to the sweet:” so,  
“The washed sow to the mire”) **wallowing  
in the mire.**

**CHAP. III.]** The general subject: THE