INTRODUCTION. ] l PETER. (en. xvu,   
   
 meaning in detail. The “ exhorting” portion of it involves no difficulty.   
 The frequent exhortations in the Epistle, arising out of present cireum-   
 stances, are too evident to be missed as being referred to by this word.   
 And when we come to the “testifying” portion, our difficulty is not   
 indeed to find matter in the Epistle to which this may refer, but to   
 identify the meaning of this, to which, as being the “true grace of God,”   
 the Apostle’s testimony is given. The testimonies in the Epistle are   
 plainly those constant references of practice to Christian doctrine with   
 which every exhortation terminates: being sometimes Old Test. citations,   
 sometimes remindings of facts in the evangelie history, sometimes   
 assertions of the great hope which is reserved for God’s elect.   
 38. Here there can be but little doubt: exhortation and testimony   
 alternate with and interpenetrate one another throughout the whole.   
 It is only when we come to assign a meaning to the word this, further   
 specified as it is by the expression “in which ye stand,” that the real   
 definition of the object of the Epistle comes before us, and with it, all its   
 uncertainty and difficulty. What is this grace of God in which the readers   
 were to stand—or rather, into which they had been introduced as   
 their safe standing ground? Obviously in the answer to this question   
 is contained the Apostle’s motive for writing.   
 4, And as obviously, this answer is not to be found within the limits   
 of the Epistle itself. For no such complete setting forth of Christian   
 doctrine is found in it, as might be referred to in such terms: only a   
 continual reminding, an additional testimony (so the word literally   
 means), a bearing testimony to something previously known, recived,   
 and stood in, with such expressions as “ knowing that,” and such asser-   
 tions as “whom not having seen ye love,” and frequent repetitions of   
 because and for, as falling back on previously known truths.   
 5. And this is further shewn by the words “in which ye stand,”   
 referring to a body of doctrinal teaching in which the readers had been   
 grounded. Compare the parallel, which surely is not fortuitous, in   
 1 Cor. xv. 1: “The Gospel which I preached unto you, which ye also   
 received, in which ye also stand,’—and our assurance that such a   
 reference is intended will be further confirmed.   
 6. But to what body of doctrine does the Apostle refer? Clearly   
 not to one imparted by himself. There is not the remotest hint in the   
 Epistle of his ever having been among the “ elect sojourners” whom he   
 addresses, As clearly again, not to one fortuitously picked up here and   
 there: the allusions are too marked, the terms used throughout the   
 Epistle too definite for this to be the case. It was not merely the   
 Pentecostal message in its simplicity which these readers had received,   
 nor are they to be sought in the earlier and less definite times of Chri:   
 tian teaching,—nor was the object of writing only general edifieatio!   
 there had been a previous building of them up, a general type of Chris   
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