INTRODUCTION. | 2 PETER. (on. xvin,   
   
   
   
   
 CHAPTER XVIII   
 SHE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.   
   
   
   
 SECTION I.   
 OBJECT, CONTENTS, AND OCCASION OR THE EPISTLE.   
   
   
 1. I THINK it best to approach the difficult question of the genuine-   
 ness of this Epistle, by a consideration of the internal characteristics   
 of the writing itself.   
 2. Its general object is nowhere so distinctly declared, as that of   
 1 Peter in v, 12 (ch. iii. 1, 2 being special). But the two concluding   
 verses contain in them the double aim which has been apparent through   
 the whole. In ii. 17 we read, “Knowing before, take heed lest ye being   
 led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness,”   
 and in. iii, 18, “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and   
 Saviour Jesus Christ.” These two, the prohibitory and the hortatory,   
 are the objects of the Epistle. The former is the introduction to the   
 latter, which, as might be expected, is the main and ultimate aim.   
 3. And this ultimate aim is apparent from the very beginning. Ch. i.   
 1—11 is devoted to fervent enforcing of it. Then i. 12—21, laying   
 down the grounds on which the “knowledge” rests, viz. apostolic testi-   
 mony and prophetic announcement, forms a transition to the description,   
 ch. ii., of the false prophets and teachers who were even then coming in,   
 and should wax onward in activity and influence. Then in ch. iii., the   
 further error of fulse teachers in scorning and disbelieving the promise   
 of the coming of the Lord is stigmatized and refuted, and the Epistle   
 concludes with a general reference to the Bpistles of St. Paul, as teach-   
 ing these same truths, and as being perverted like the other Scriptures   
 by the ignorant and unstable.   
 Throughout all, one purpose and one spirit is manifest. The “ know-   
 ledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” is ever the condition of   
 salvation (ch. i. 8; ii. 20; iii. 18). Sometimes we have it on the side   
 of knowledge of the Father who hath called us (i. 2, 3), sometimes on   
 that of knowledge of the gospel as the way of righteousness (ii. 21:   
 compare ii. This knowledge is the central point of the Christian   
 life, both theoretically and practically considered: it is the vehicle of the   
 divine agency in us, and ¢o of our highest participation of God (i. 3, 4):   
 it is the means of eseape from the pollutions of the world (ii, 20),—the   
 crowning point of Christian virtues (i. 8),—the means of access into   
 Christ’s kingdom (i. 11).   
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