

HOMILIES BY R. FINLAYSON

Vers. 1, 2. —

Introduction.

I. ADDRESS.

1. *Writer.* “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.” The name is chosen which was most familiar to the readers. It is also the name which belonged to him as an apostle. He was commissioned by Jesus Christ to do important work for the Church, including the composition of this letter.

2. *Readers.*

(1) *The elect circumstantially.* “To the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” It is in a Jewish mould that the apostle’s thought is cast. “Elect,” “sojourners,” “Dispersion,” derive their meaning from their application to the *Jewish nation*. There was a national election to the occupation of the land of Canaan. Latterly many Jews were resident on foreign soil, while regarding Canaan as their fatherland. In their sojourning condition they were not in close neighborhood, but were scattered among the nations. Christians have inherited the title of the “elect people.” They are in the condition of dwelling on earth and not in the heavenly Canaan. As away from home they are often far separated from each other, and not, as they will be, brought together and gathered round Christ above. The Christians addressed by Peter belonged to *Asia Minor*. In this region there were many Christian communities, in which the preponderating element was Gentile. In Galatia there were Churches founded by Paul, to which he addressed one of his Epistles. In Proconsular Asia were Iconium, Derbe, Lystra, Antioch (Pisidian), Miletus, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossae, Philadelphia, Sardis, Thyatira, Ephesus (the capital), Smyrna, Pergamos, Trees, where (probably) Churches were formed under Paul’s influence, and to three of which he addressed letters. Neither in Pontus, nor in Cappadocia, nor in Bithynia do we read of Christian work (showing how much there is of unrecorded Christian work). We may think of Peter writing to Pauline Churches in Asia Minor *when Paul is dead*.

(2) *The elect fundamentally. Thought connected with the -Father.* “According to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” Our election is *conformed to the foreknowledge of God, i.e. to his thinking of us beforehand for himself*. What led him thus to think of us beforehand was

his being the Father, *i.e.* his being essentially love. *Execution connected with the Spirit.* “In sanctification of the Spirit.” Sanctification points to our being fit for fellowship with the Holy One. This the Father had in his mind when he thought of us beforehand for himself. The Spirit (often called the Holy Spirit) carries out the Father’s thought in commencing, advancing, preserving, the holy life in our souls. *End connected with Jesus Christ.* “Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” The Spirit works in us, on the one hand, not that our wills should be crushed, annihilated, but that they should be brought into a state of *obedience* (which is their true freedom). He works in us, on the other hand, that there should be applied to us the *blood of Jesus Christ*, without which he cannot sanctify those whose starting-point is a state of sin.

II. SALUTATION. “Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” The introduction is constructed so as to throw the description of the readers into prominence as foreshadowing the thought of the Epistle. Like his description of himself, his salutation is brief. Let them be graciously dealt with by God, and, as the blessed fruit of gracious dealing, let them have peace, even under fiery persecutions. They had grace and peace already; let there be not only continuance, but increase. — R.F.

Vers. 3-12. —

Salvation in its completion.

I. THE SUBJECT OF A DOXOLOGY.

1. God praised. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peter may have seen the same form of words in Paul’s opening doxologies in 2 Corinthians and Ephesians. Having called up his readers before his mind and saluted them, he here bursts forth in an ascription of praise to God. To praise God is with becoming feelings to acknowledge what he is or has done. As this is pleasing to God (^{<190102>}Psalm 1:23), so also, if we are much exercised on what God is or has done, it is a relief and delight to us. It is not the God of Christ (as the language might seem to imply) that is here praised, but God generally. It is the exalted Name that is fitted to call forth all sacred feelings. But there is added the *Christian* interpretation. We praise “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We praise *Jesus Christ*, who, according to Divine appointment, did saving work for us. We praise him as *our Lord* who receives our service for God and dispenses to us the Divine blessings of salvation. We praise not only him, but *his Father*, who,