

# CHAPTER 1

In this chapter we have,

- I.** An introduction, or preface, making way for, and leading to, what is principally designed by the apostle (v. 1-4).
- II.** An exhortation to advance and improve in all Christian graces (v. 5-7).
- III.** To enforce this exhortation, and engage them seriously and heartily to comply with it, he adds,
  - 1.** A representation of the very great advantage which will thereby accrue to them (v. 8-11).
  - 2.** A promise of the best assistance the apostle was able to give to facilitate and forward this good work (v. 12-15).
  - 3.** A declaration of the certain truth and divine origin of the gospel of Christ, in the grace whereof they were exhorted to increase and persevere.

## 2 PETER 1:1-4

### INTRODUCTION

The apostle Peter, being moved by the Holy Ghost to write once more to those who from among the Jews were turned to faith in Christ, begins this second epistle with an introduction, wherein the same persons are described and the same blessings are desired that are in the preface to his former letter; but there are some additions or alterations which ought to be taken notice of, in all the three parts of the introduction.

**I.** We have here a description of the person who wrote the epistle, by the name of *Simon*, as well as *Peter*, and by the title of *servant*, as well as that of *apostle*. *Peter*, being in both epistles, seems to be the name most frequently used, and with which he may be thought to be best pleased, it being given him by our Lord, upon his confessing *Jesus to be Christ the Son of the living God*, and the very name signifying and sealing that truth to be the fundamental article, the rock on which all must build; but the name *Simon*, though omitted in the former epistle, is mentioned in this,

lest the total omission of that name, which was given him when he was circumcised, should make the Jewish believers, who were all zealous of the law, to become jealous of the apostle, as if he disclaimed and despised circumcision. He here styles himself *a servant* (as well as an apostle) of *Jesus Christ*; in this he may be allowed to glory, as David does, <sup><4436></sup>Psalm 116:16. The service of Christ is the way to the highest honour, <sup><4426></sup>John 12:26. Christ himself is *King of kings, and Lord of lords*; and he makes all his servants *kings and priests unto God*, <sup><4416></sup>Revelation 1:6. How great an honour is it to be the servants of this Master! This is what we cannot, without sin, be ashamed of. To triumph in being *Christ's servant* is very proper for those who are engaging others to enter into or abide in the service of Christ.

**II.** We have an account of the people to whom the epistle is written. They are described in the former epistle as *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, and here as *having obtained precious faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*; for the faith here mentioned is vastly different from the false faith of the heretic, and the feigned faith of the hypocrite, and the fruitless faith of the formal professor, how orthodox soever he is. It is *the faith of God's elect* (<sup><4411></sup>Titus 1:1), wrought by the Spirit of God in effectual calling. Observe,

**1.** True saving faith is a precious grace, and that not only as it is very uncommon, very scarce, even in the visible church, a very small number of true believers among a great multitude of visible professors (<sup><4424></sup>Matthew 22:14), but true faith is very excellent and of very great use and advantage to those who have it. *The just lives by faith*, a truly divine spiritual life; faith procures all the necessary supports and comforts of this excellent life; faith goes to Christ, and buys the wine and milk (<sup><2511></sup>Isaiah 55:1) which are the proper nourishment of the new creature; faith buys and brings home the tried gold, the heavenly treasure that enriches; faith takes and puts on the white raiment, the royal robes that clothe and adorn, <sup><4438></sup>Revelation 3:18. Observe,

**2.** Faith is alike precious in the private Christian and in the apostle; it produces the same precious effects in the one and in the other. Faith unites the weak believer to Christ as really as it does the strong one, and purifies the heart of one as truly as of another; and every sincere believer is by his faith justified in the sight of God, and that from all sins, <sup><4439></sup>Acts 13:39.

Faith, in whomsoever it exists, takes hold of the same *precious* Saviour, and applies the same precious promises.

**3.** This precious faith is obtained of God. Faith is the gift of God, wrought by the Spirit, who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead.

**4.** The preciousness of faith, as well as our obtaining it, is through the righteousness of Christ. The satisfactory meritorious righteousness and obedience of Christ gives faith all its value and preciousness: and the righteousness of such a person cannot but be of infinite value to those who by faith receive it. For,

**(1.)** This Jesus Christ is God, yea, *our* God, as it is in the original. He is truly God, an infinite Being, who has wrought out this righteousness, and therefore it must be of infinite value.

**(2.)** *He is the Saviour of those that believe*, and as such he yielded this meritorious obedience; and therefore it is of such great benefit and advantage to them, because, as surety and Saviour, he wrought out this righteousness in their stead.

**III.** We have the apostolical benediction, wherein he wishes for the multiplication and increase of the divine favour to them, and the advancement and growth of the work of grace in them, and that peace with God and in their own consciences (which cannot be without *grace*) may abound in them. This is the very same benediction that is in the former epistle; but here he adds,

**1.** An account of the way and means whereby *grace and peace are multiplied* — it is *through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ*; this acknowledging or believing in *the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent*, is the great improvement of spiritual life, or it could not be the way to life eternal, <sup><BIB></sup>John 17:3.

**2.** The ground of the apostle's faith in asking, and of the Christian's hope in expecting, the increase of grace. What we have already received should encourage us to ask for more; he who has begun the work of grace will perfect it. Observe,

**(1.)** The fountain of all spiritual blessings is the divine power of Jesus Christ, who could not discharge all the office of Mediator, unless he was God as well as man.

(2.) All things that have any relation to, and influence upon, the true spiritual life, the life and power of godliness, are from Jesus Christ; *in him all fulness dwells*, and it is from him that we receive, *and grace for grace* (<sup><416></sup>John 1:16), even all that is necessary for the preserving, improving, and perfecting of grace and peace, which, according to some expositors, are called here in this verse *godliness and life*.

(3.) Knowledge of God, and faith in him, are the channel whereby all spiritual supports and comforts are conveyed to us; but then we must own and acknowledge God as the author of our effectual calling, for so he is here described: *Him that hath called us to glory and virtue*. Observe here, The design of God in calling or converting men is to bring them to *glory and virtue*, that is, *peace and grace*, as some understand it; but many prefer the marginal rendering, *by glory and virtue*; and so we have effectual calling set forth as the work of the glory and virtue, or *the glorious power, of God*, which is described <sup><419></sup>Ephesians 1:19. It is the glory of God's power to convert sinners; this is the power and glory of God which are <sup><362></sup>seen and experienced in his sanctuary (<sup><362></sup>Psalms 63:2); this power or virtue is to be extolled by all *that are called out of darkness into marvellous light*, <sup><419></sup>1 Peter 2:9.

(4.) In the fourth verse the apostle goes on to encourage their faith and hope in looking for an increase of grace and peace, because the same glory and virtue are employed and evidenced in giving the promises of the gospel that are exercised in our effectual calling. Observe,

[1.] The good things which the promises make over are exceedingly great. Pardon of sin is one of the blessings here intended; how great this is all who know any thing of the power of God's anger will readily confess, and this is one of those promised favours in bestowing whereof *the power of the Lord is great*, <sup><447></sup>Numbers 14:17. To pardon sins that are numerous and heinous (every one of which deserves God's wrath and curse, and that for ever) is a wonderful thing, and is so called, <sup><488></sup>Psalms 119:18.

[2.] The promised blessings of the gospel are very precious; as the great promise of the Old Testament was *the Seed of the woman*, the Messiah (<sup><313></sup>Hebrews 11:39), so the great promise of the New Testament is the *Holy Ghost* (<sup><249></sup>Luke 24:49), and how precious must the enlivening, enlightening, sanctifying Spirit be!

[3.] Those who receive the promises of the gospel *partake of the divine nature*. They are *renewed in the spirit of their mind, after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness*; their hearts are set for God and his service; they have a divine temper and disposition of soul; though the law is *the ministration of death, and the letter killeth*, yet the gospel is *the ministration of life, and the Spirit quickeneth those who are naturally dead in trespasses and sins*.

[4.] Those in whom the Spirit works the divine nature are freed from the bondage of corruption. Those who are, by the Spirit of grace, *renewed in the spirit of their mind*, are translated into *the liberty of the children of God*; for it is the world in which *corruption reigns*. Those who are *not of the Father, but of the world*, are under the power of sin; the world lies in wickedness, ~~☩~~ 1 John 5:19. And the dominion that sin has in the men of the world is through lust; their desires are to it, and therefore it rules over them. The dominion that sin has over us is according to the delight we have in it.

## ~~☩~~ 2 PETER 1:5-11

### ADVANCEMENT IN HOLINESS

In these words the apostle comes to the chief thing intended in this epistle — to excite and engage them to advance in grace and holiness, they having already obtained precious faith, and been made partakers of the divine nature. This is a very good beginning, but it is not to be rested in, as if we were already perfect. The apostle had prayed that grace and peace might be multiplied to them, and now he exhorts them to press forward for the obtaining of more grace. We should, as we have opportunity, exhort those we pray for, and excite them to the use of all proper means to obtain what we desire God to bestow upon them; and those who will make any progress in religion must be very diligent and industrious in their endeavours. Without *giving all diligence*, there is no gaining any ground in the work of holiness; those who are slothful in the business of religion will make nothing of it; we must strive if we will *enter in at the strait gate*, ~~☩~~ Luke 13:24.

**I.** Here we cannot but observe how the believer's way is marked out step by step.

**1.** He must get *virtue*, by which some understand *justice*; and then the *knowledge, temperance, and patience* that follow, being joined with it, the apostle may be supposed to put them upon pressing after the four cardinal virtues, or the four elements that go to the making up of every virtue or virtuous action. But seeing it is a *faithful saying, and constantly to be asserted, that those who have faith be careful to maintain good works* (<sup><508B></sup>Titus 3:8), by *virtue* here we may understand *strength and courage*, without which the believer cannot stand up for good works, by abounding and excelling in them. The righteous must be bold as a lion (<sup><381></sup>Proverbs 28:1); a cowardly Christian, who is afraid to profess the doctrines or practise the duties of the gospel, must expect that Christ will be ashamed of him another day. “Let not your hearts fail you in the evil day, but show yourselves valiant in standing against all opposition, and resisting every enemy, world, flesh, devil, yea, and death too.” We have need of virtue while we live, and it will be of excellent use when we come to die.

**2.** The believer must add *knowledge* to his virtue, prudence to his courage; there is a knowledge of God's name which must go before our faith (<sup><389B></sup>Psalm 9:10), and we cannot approve of the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, till we know it; but there are proper circumstances for duty, which must be known and observed; we must use the appointed means, and observe the accepted time. Christian prudence regards the persons we have to do with and the place and company we are in. Every believer must labour after the knowledge and wisdom that are profitable to direct, both as to the proper method and order wherein all Christian duties are to be performed and as to the way and manner of performing them.

**3.** We must add *temperance* to our knowledge. We must be sober and moderate in our love to, and use of, the good things of this life; and, if we have a right understanding and knowledge of outward comforts, we shall see that their worth and usefulness are vastly inferior to those of spiritual mercies. Bodily exercises and bodily privileges profit but little, and therefore are to be esteemed and used accordingly; the gospel teaches sobriety as well as honesty, <sup><302D></sup>Titus 2:12. We must be moderate in desiring and using the good things of natural life, such as meat, drink, clothes, sleep, recreations, and credit; an inordinate desire after these is inconsistent with an earnest desire after God and Christ; and those who take more of these than is due can render to neither God nor man what is due to them.

4. Add to temperance *patience*, which must *have its perfect work*, or we cannot *be perfect and entire, wanting nothing* (~~300~~ James 1:4), for we are born to trouble, and must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of heaven; and it is this tribulation (~~488~~ Romans 5:3) which worketh patience, that is, requires the exercise and occasions the increase of this grace, whereby we bear all calamities and crosses with silence and submission, without murmuring against God or complaining of him, but justifying him who lays all affliction upon us, owning that our sufferings are less than our sins deserve, and believing they are no more than we ourselves need.

5. To patience we must add *godliness*, and this is the very thing which is produced by patience, for that works experience, ~~484~~ Romans 5:4. When Christians bear afflictions patiently, they get an experimental *knowledge of the loving-kindness of their heavenly Father, which he will not take from his children, even when he visits their iniquity with the rod and their transgression with stripes* (~~188~~ Psalm 89:32, 33), and hereby they are brought to the child-like fear and reverential love wherein true godliness consists: to this, 6. We must add *brotherly-kindness*, a tender affection to all our fellow-Christians, who are children of the same Father, servants of the same Master, members of the same family, travellers to the same country, and heirs of the same inheritance, and therefore are to be loved with a pure heart fervently, with a love of complacency, as those who are peculiarly near and dear to us, in whom we take particular delight, ~~483~~ Psalm 16:3.

7. *Charity*, or a love of good-will to all mankind, must be added to the love of delight which we have for those who are the children of God. God has made of one blood all nations, and all the children of men are partakers of the same human nature, are all capable of the same mercies, and liable to the same afflictions, and therefore, though upon a spiritual account Christians are distinguished and dignified above those who are without Christ, yet are they to sympathize with others in their calamities, and relieve their necessities, and promote their welfare both in body and soul, as they have opportunity: thus must all believers in Christ evidence that they are the children of God, who is good to all, but is especially good to Israel.

**II.** All the forementioned graces must be had, or we shall not be *thoroughly furnished for all good works* — for the duties of the first and

second table, for active and passive obedience, and for those services wherein we are to imitate God as well as for those wherein we only obey him — and therefore to engage us to an industrious and unwearied pursuit of them, the apostle sets forth the advantages that redound to all who successfully labour so as to get these things to *be and abound in them*, v. 8-11. These are proposed,

**1.** More generally, v. 8. The having *these things make not barren* (or slothful) *nor unfruitful*, where, according to the style of the Holy Ghost, we must understand a great deal more than is expressed; for when it is said concerning Ahaz, the vilest and most provoking of all the kings of Judah, *that he did not right in the sight of the Lord* (~~2~~ 2 Kings 16:2), we are to understand as much as if it had been said, He did what was most offensive and abominable, as the following account of his life shows; so, when it is here said that the being and abounding of all Christian graces in us will make us neither inactive nor unfruitful, we are thereby to understand that it will make us very zealous and lively, vigorous and active, in all practical Christianity, and eminently fruitful in the works of righteousness. these will bring much glory to God, by bringing forth much fruit among men, being *fruitful in knowledge, or the acknowledging of our Lord Jesus Christ*, owning him to be their *Lord*, and evidencing themselves to be his servants by their abounding in the work that he has given them to do. This is the necessary consequence of adding one grace to another; for, where all Christian graces are in the heart, they improve and strengthen, encourage and cherish, one another; so they all thrive and grow (as the apostle intimates in the beginning of v. 8), and wherever grace abounds there will be an abounding in good works. How desirable it is to be in such a case the apostle evidences, v. 9. There he sets forth how miserable it is to be without those quickening fructifying graces; for he who has not the forementioned graces, or, though he pretends or seems to have them, does not exercise and improve them, *is blind*, that is, as to spiritual and heavenly things, as the next words explain it: *He cannot see far off*. This present evil world he can see, and dotes upon, but has no discerning at all of the world to come, so as to be affected with the spiritual privileges and heavenly blessings thereof. He who sees the excellences of Christianity must needs be diligent in endeavours after all those graces that are absolutely necessary for *obtaining glory, honour, and immortality*; but, where these graces are not obtained nor endeavoured after, men are not able to look forward to the things that are but a very little way off in



reality, though in appearance, or in their apprehension, they are at a great distance, because they put them far away from them; and how wretched is their condition who are thus blind as to the awfully great things of the other world, who cannot see any thing of the reality and certainty, the greatness and nearness, of the glorious rewards God will bestow on the righteous, and the dreadful punishment he will inflict on the ungodly! But this is not all the misery of those who do not *add to their faith virtue, knowledge*, etc. They are as unable to look backward as forward, their memories are slippery and unable to retain what is past, as their sight is short and unable to discern what is future; they forget that they have been baptized, and had the means, and been laid under the obligations to holiness of heart and life. By baptism we are engaged in a holy war against sin, and are solemnly bound to fight against the flesh, the world, and the devil. Often call to mind, and seriously meditate on, your solemn engagement to be the Lord's, and your peculiar advantages and encouragements to lay aside *all filthiness of flesh and spirit*.

**2.** The apostle proposes two particular advantages that will attend or follow upon diligence in the work of a Christian: stability in grace, and a triumphant entrance into glory. These he brings in by resuming his former exhortation, and laying it down in other words; for what in v. 5 is expressed by *giving diligence to add to faith virtue*, etc., is expressed in v. 10 by *giving diligence to make our calling and election sure*. Here we may observe,

**(1.)** It is the duty of believers *to make their election sure*, to clear it up to themselves that they are the chosen of God.

**(2.)** The way to make sure their eternal election is to make out their effectual calling: none can look into the book of God's eternal counsels and decrees; but, inasmuch as *whom God did predestinate those he also called*, if we can find we are effectually called, we may conclude we are chosen to salvation.

**(3.)** It requires a great deal of diligence and labour to make sure our calling and election; there must be a very close examination of ourselves, a very narrow search and strict enquiry, whether we are thoroughly converted, our minds enlightened, our wills renewed, and our whole souls changed as to the bent and inclination thereof; and to come to a fixed certainty in this requires the utmost diligence, and cannot be attained and kept without divine assistance, as we may learn from <sup><H23></sup>Psalm 139:23; <sup><H16></sup>Romans

8:16. "But, how great soever the labour is, do not think much of it, for great is the advantage you gain by it; for,"

[1.] "By this you will be kept from falling, and that at all times and seasons, even in those hours of temptation that shall be on the earth." When others shall fall into heinous and scandalous sin, those who are thus diligent shall be enabled to walk circumspectly and keep on in the way of their duty; and, when many fall into errors, they shall be preserved sound in the faith, and stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

[2.] Those who are diligent in the work of religion shall have a triumphant entrance into glory; while of those few who get to heaven some are scarcely saved (~~4018~~ 1 Peter 4:18), with a great deal of difficulty, *even as by fire* (~~4018~~ 1 Corinthians 3:15), those who are *growing in grace*, and *abounding in the work of the Lord*, shall have an *abundant entrance into the joy of their Lord*, even that everlasting kingdom where Christ reigns, and they shall *reign with him for ever and ever*.

## ~~4012~~ 2 PETER 1:12-15

### SPITITUAL EXERTIONS

**I.** The importance and advantage of progress and perseverance in grace and holiness made the apostle to be very diligent in doing the work of a minister of Christ, that he might thereby excite and assist them to be diligent in the duty of Christians. If ministers be negligent in their work, it can hardly be expected that the people will be diligent in theirs; therefore Peter *will not be negligent* (that is, at no time or place, in no part of his work, to no part of his charge), but will be exemplarily and universally diligent, and that in the work of a remembrancer. This is the office of the best ministers, even the apostles themselves; they are *the Lord's remembrancers* (~~2316~~ Isaiah 62:6); they are especially bound to make mention of the promises, and put God in mind of his engagements to do good to his people; and they are the people's remembrancers, making mention of God's precepts, and putting them in mind of the doctrines and duties of Christianity, that they may remember God's commandments, to do them. And this the apostle does, though some persons might think it needless, inasmuch as they already knew those thing that he writes about, and were established in the very truth that he insists upon. Observe,

**1.** We need to be put in mind of what we already know to prevent our forgetting it, and to improve our knowledge, and reduce all to practice.

**2.** We must be established in the belief of the truth, that we may not be shaken by every wind of doctrine, and especially in that which is the present truth, the truth more peculiarly necessary for us to know in our day, that which belongs to our peace, and which is more especially opposed in our time. The great doctrines of the gospel, *that Jesus is the Christ, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, that those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, and all that believe in God must be careful to maintain good works* — these are truths the apostles insisted on in their day; *these are faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptance* in every age of the Christian church. And, as these must be constantly affirmed by ministers (<sup>5688</sup>Titus 3:8), so the people are to be well instructed and established therein, and yet must, after all their attainments in knowledge, be put in mind of such things as cannot be too clearly known nor too firmly believed. The most advanced Christians cannot, while in this world, be above ordinances, nor beyond the need of those means which God has appointed and does afford. And, if the people need teaching and exhortation while they are in the body, it is very meet and just that ministers should, as long as they are in this tabernacle, instruct and exhort them, and bring those truths to their remembrance that they have formerly heard, this being a proper means to stir them up to be diligent and lively in a course of gospel-obedience.

**II.** The apostle, being set upon the work, tells us (v. 14) what makes him earnest in this matter, even the knowledge he had, not only that he must certainly, but also that he must shortly, *put off this tabernacle*. Observe,

**1.** The body is but the tabernacle of the soul. It is a mean and movable structure, whose stakes can be easily removed, and its cords presently broken.

**2.** This tabernacle must be put off. We are not to continue long in this earthly house. AS at night we put off our clothes, and lay them by, so at death we must put off our bodies, and they must be laid up in the grave till the morning of the resurrection.

**3.** The nearness of death makes the apostle diligent in the business of life. Our Lord Jesus had shown him that the time of his departure was at hand, and therefore he bestirs himself with greater zeal and diligence, because

the time is short. He must soon be removed from those to whom he wrote; and his ambition being that they should remember the doctrine he had delivered to them, after he himself was taken away from them, he commits his exhortation to writing. The apostle had not any great opinion of oral tradition. This was not so proper a means to reach the end he was in pursuit of. He would have them always to remember these things, and not only to keep them in mind, but also to make mention of them, as the original words import. *Those who fear the Lord make mention of his name*, and talk of his loving-kindness. This is the way to spread the knowledge of the Lord and this the apostle had at heart: and those who have the written word of God are thereby put into a capacity to do this.

## ~~6016~~ 2 PETER 1:16-18

### EVIDENCE OF THE GOSPEL

Here we have the reason of giving the foregoing exhortation, and that with so much diligence and seriousness. These things are not idle tales, or a vain thing, but of undoubted truth and vast concern. The gospel is not a *cunningly devised fable*. These are not the words of one who hath a devil, nor the contrivance of any number of men who by cunning craftiness endeavour to deceive. The way of salvation by Jesus Christ is eminently the counsel of God, the most excellent contrivance of the infinitely wise Jehovah; it was he that invented this way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, whose power and coming are set forth in the gospel, and the apostle's preaching was a making of these things known.

1. The preaching of the gospel is a making known the power of Christ, that he is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him. He is the mighty God, and therefore can save from both the guilt and the filth of sin.
2. The coming of Christ also is make known by the preaching of the gospel. He who was promised immediately after the fall of man, as in the fulness of time to be born of a woman, has now come in the flesh; and whosoever denies this is an antichrist (~~6048~~ 1 John 4:3), he is actuated and influenced by the spirit of anti-christ; but those who are the true apostles and ministers of Christ, and are directed and guided by the Spirit of Christ, evidence that Christ has come according to the promise which all the Old-Testament believers died in the faith of, ~~8113~~ Hebrews 11:39. Christ has

come in the flesh. Inasmuch as those whom he undertakes to save *are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself also took part of the same*, that he might suffer in their nature and stead, and thereby make an atonement. This coming of Christ the gospel is very plain and circumstantial in setting forth; but there is a second coming, which it likewise mentions, which the ministers of the gospel ought also to make known, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with all his holy angels, for he is appointed to be Judge both of quick and dead. He will come to judge the world in righteousness by the everlasting gospel, and call us all to give account of all things done in the body, whether good or evil.

**3.** And though this gospel of Christ has been blasphemously called a *fable* by one of those wretches who call themselves *the successors of St. Peter*, yet our apostle proves that it is of the greatest certainty and reality, inasmuch as during our blessed Saviour's abode here on earth, when he took on him the form of a servant and was found in fashion as a man, he sometimes manifested himself to be God, and particularly to our apostle and the two sons of Zebedee, who *were eye-witnesses of his divine majesty, when he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, exceedingly white, as snow, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them*. This Peter, James, and John, were eye-witnesses of, and therefore might and ought to attest; and surely their testimony is true, when they witness what they have seen with their eyes, yea, and heard with their ears: for, besides the visible glory that Christ was invested with here on earth, there was an audible voice from heaven. Here observe,

**(1.)** What a gracious declaration was made: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* — the best voice that ever came from heaven to earth; God is well pleased with Christ, and with us in him. This is the Messiah who was promised, through whom all who believe in him shall be accepted and saved.

**(2.)** This declaration is made by God the Father, who thus publicly owns his Son (even in his state of humiliation, when he was in the form of a servant), yea, proclaims him to be his beloved Son, when he is in that low condition; yea, so far are Christ's mean and low circumstances from abating the love of the Father to him that his laying down his life is said to be one special reason of the Father's love, ~~ROM~~ John 10:17.

(3.) The design of this voice was to do our Saviour a singular honour while he was here below: *He received honour and glory from God the Father*. This is the person whom God delights to honour. As he requires us to give honour and glory to his Son by confessing him to be our Saviour, so does he give glory and honour to our Saviour by declaring him to be his Son.

(4.) This voice is from heaven, called here *the excellent glory*, which still reflects a greater glory upon our blessed Saviour. This declaration is from God the fountain of honour, and from heaven the seat of glory, where God is most gloriously present.

(5.) This voice was heard, and that so as to be understood, by Peter, James, and John. They not only heard a sound (as the people did, <sup><428></sup>John 12:28, 29), but they understood the sense. God opens the ears and understandings of his people to receive what they are concerned to know, when others are like Paul's companions, who only heard a sound of words (<sup><407></sup>Acts 9:7), but understood not the meaning thereof, and therefore are said not to hear the voice of him that spoke, <sup><429></sup>Acts 22:9. Blessed are those who not only hear, but understand, who believe the truth, and feel the power of the voice from heaven, as he did who testifieth these things: and we have all the reason in the world to receive his testimony; for who would refuse to give credit to what is so circumstantially laid down as this account of the voice from heaven, of which the apostle tells us,

(6.) It was heard by them *in the holy mount*, when they were with Jesus? The place wherein God affords any peculiarly gracious manifestation of himself is thereby made holy, not with an inherent holiness, but as the ground was holy where God appeared to Moses (<sup><1885></sup>Exodus 3:5), and the mountain holy on which the temple was built, <sup><1801></sup>Psalms 87:1. Such places are relatively holy, and to be regarded as such during the time that men in themselves experience, or may, by warrant from the word, believingly expect, the special presence and gracious influence of the holy and glorious God.

## 2 PETER 1:19-21

### INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

In these words the apostle lays down another argument to prove the truth and reality of the gospel, and intimates that this second proof is more strong and convincing than the former, and more unanswerably makes out that the doctrine of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a mere fable or cunning contrivance of men, but the wise and wonderful counsel of the holy and gracious God. For this is foretold by the prophets and penmen of the Old Testament, who spoke and wrote under the influence and according to the direction of the Spirit of God. Here note,

**I.** The description that is given of the scriptures of the Old Testament: they are called a *more sure word of prophecy*.

**1.** It is a prophetic declaration of the power and coming, the Godhead and incarnation, of our Saviour, which we have in the Old Testament. It is there foretold *that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*. His power to destroy the devil and his works, and his being made of a woman, are there foretold; and the great and awful Old Testament name of God, *Jehovah* (as read by some), signifies only *He will be*; and that name of God (<sup>Exodus 3:14</sup>) is rendered by many, *I will be that I will be*; and, thus understood, they point at God's being incarnate in order to the redemption and salvation of his people as what was *to come*. But the New Testament is a history of that whereof the Old Testament is a prophecy. *All the prophets and the law prophesied until John*, <sup>Matthew 11:13</sup>. And the evangelists and the apostles have written the history of what was before delivered as prophecy. Now the accomplishment of the Old Testament by the New, and the agreeableness of the New Testament to the Old, are a full demonstration of the truth of both. Read the Old Testament as a prophecy of Christ, and with diligence and thankfulness use the New as the best exposition of the Old.

**2.** *The Old Testament is a more sure word of prophecy*. It is so to the Jews who received it as the oracles of God. Following prophets confirmed what had been delivered by those who went before, and these prophecies had been written by the express command, and preserved by the special care, and many of them fulfilled by the wonderful providence of God, and

therefore were more certain to those who had all along received and read the scriptures than the apostle's account of this voice from heaven. *Moses and the prophets* more powerfully persuade than even miracles themselves, <sup>(-16)</sup>Luke 16:31. How firm and sure should our faith be, who have such a firm and sure word to rest upon! All the prophecies of the Old Testament are more sure and certain to us who have the history of the most exact and minute accomplishment of them.

**II.** The encouragement the apostle gives us to search the scriptures. He tells us, *We do well if we take heed to them*; that is, apply our minds to understand the sense, and our hearts to believe the truth, of this sure word, yea, bend ourselves to it, that we may be moulded and fashioned by it. The word is that form of doctrine into which we must be cast (<sup>(-17)</sup>Romans 6:17), *that formulary of knowledge* (<sup>(-18)</sup>Romans 2:20) by which we are to regulate our thoughts and sentiments, our words and confessions, our whole life and conversation. If we thus apply ourselves to the word of God, we certainly do well in all respects, what is pleasing to God and profitable to ourselves; and this indeed is but paying that regard which is due to the oracles of God. But, in order to this giving heed to the word, the apostle suggests some things that are of singular use to those who would attend to the scriptures to any good purpose.

**1.** They must account and use the scripture as a light which God hath sent into and set up in the world, to dispel that darkness which is upon the face of the whole earth. The word is a lamp to the feet of those who use it aright; this discovers the way wherein men ought to walk; this is the means whereby we come to know the way of life.

**2.** They must acknowledge their own darkness. This world is a place of error and ignorance, and every man in the world is naturally without that knowledge which is necessary in order to attain eternal life.

**3.** If ever men are made wise to salvation, it is by the shining of the word of God into their hearts. Natural notions of God are not sufficient for fallen man, who does at best actually know a great deal less, and yet does absolutely need to know a great deal more, of God than Adam did while he continued innocent.

**4.** When the light of the scripture is darted into the blind mind and dark understanding by the Holy Spirit of God, then the *spiritual day dawns and the day-star arises in that soul*. This enlightening of a dark benighted



mind is like the day-break that improves and advances, spreads and diffuses itself through the whole soul, till it makes perfect day, <sup><2048></sup>Proverbs 4:18. It is a growing knowledge; those who are this way enlightened never think they know enough, till they come to know as they are known. To give heed to this light must needs be the interest and duty of all; and all who do truth come to this light, while evil-doers keep at a distance from it.

**III.** The apostle lays down one thing as previously necessary in order to our giving heed to, and getting good by, the scriptures, and that is the knowing that all prophecy is of divine origin. Now this important truth he not only asserts, but proves.

**1.** Observe, No scripture prophecy is of private interpretation (or a man's own proper opinion, an explication of his own mind), but the revelation of the mind of God. This was the difference between the prophets of the Lord and the false prophets who have been in the world. The prophets of the Lord did not speak nor do any thing of their own mind, as Moses, the chief of them, says expressly (<sup><0463></sup>Numbers 16:28), *I have not done any of the works (nor delivered any of the statutes and ordinances) of my own mind.* But false prophets *speak a vision of their own heart, not out of the mouth of the Lord,* <sup><2236></sup>Jeremiah 23:16. The prophets and penmen of the scripture spoke and wrote what was the mind of God; and though, when under the influence and guidance of the Spirit, it may well be supposed that they were willing to reveal and record such thing, yet it is because God would have them spoken and written. But though the scripture be not the effusion of man's own private opinion or inclination, but the revelation of the mind and will of God, yet every private man ought to search it, and come to understand the sense and meaning thereof.

**2.** This important truth of the divine origin of the scriptures (that what is contained in them is the mind of God and not of man) is to be known and owned by all who will give heed to the sure word of prophecy. That the scriptures are the word of God is not only an article of the true Christian's faith, but also a matter of science or knowledge. As a man not barely believes, but knows assuredly that that very person is his particular friend in whom he sees all the proper, peculiar, distinguishing marks and characters of his friend, so the Christian knows that book to be the word of God in and upon which he sees all the proper marks and characters of a

divinely inspired book. He tastes a sweetness, and feels a power, and sees a glory, in it truly divine.

**3.** The divinity of the scriptures must be known and acknowledged in the first place, before men can profitably use them, before they can give good heed to them. To call off our minds from all other writings, and apply them in a peculiar manner to these as the only certain and infallible rule, necessarily requires our being fully persuaded that these are divinely inspired, and contain what is truly the mind and will of God.

**IV.** Seeing it is so absolutely necessary that persons be fully persuaded of the scripture's divine origin, the apostle (v. 21) tells us how the Old Testament came to be compiled, and that,

**1.** Negatively: *It came not by the will of man.* Neither the things themselves that are recorded, and make up the several parts of the Old Testament, are the opinions of men, nor was the will of any of the prophets or penmen of the scriptures the rule or reason why any of those things were written which make up the canon of the scripture.

**2.** Affirmatively: *Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* Observe,

**(1.)** They were holy men of God who were employed about that book which we receive as the word of God. If Balaam and Caiaphas, and others who were destitute of holiness, had any thing of the spirit of prophecy, upon occasion, yet such persons were not employed to write any part of the scriptures for the use of the church of God. All the penmen of the scriptures were holy men of God.

**(2.)** *These holy men were moved by the Holy Ghost* in what they delivered as the mind and will of God. The Holy Ghost is the supreme agent, the holy men are but instruments.

**[1.]** The Holy Ghost inspired and dictated to them what they were to deliver of the mind of God.

**[2.]** He powerfully excited and effectually engaged them to speak (and write) what he had put into their mouths.

**[3.]** He so wisely and carefully assisted and directed them in the delivery of what they had received from him that they were effectually secured from any the least mistake in expressing what they revealed; so that the

very words of scripture are to be accounted the words of the Holy Ghost, and all the plainness and simplicity, all the power and virtue, all the elegance and propriety, of the very words and expressions are to be regarded by us as proceeding from God. Mix faith therefore with what you find in the scriptures; esteem and reverence your Bible as a book written by holy men, inspired, influenced, and assisted by the Holy Ghost.