

2 PETER

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF 2 PETER

Though there was, among the ancients, a doubt concerning the authority of this epistle, which is first mentioned by Origen^{f1}, and afterwards by Eusebius^{f2} and Jerom^{f3}, yet it prevailed not among the churches, nor hindered the diligent reading and use of it, together with other Scriptures; it appearing to be useful and profitable, as Eusebius declares; and in process of time this doubt was entirely removed, and it was universally received by fathers and councils into the canon of the Scriptures, where it is justly retained, it having plain signatures of its divine original. Nor is there anything in it unworthy of so great an apostle, whose name it bears; but the whole of it is agreeable to the analogy of faith, to the rest of the sacred writings, particularly to the epistle of Jude, between which, and the second chapter of this, there is a great likeness. The only reason of the doubt of the genuineness of this epistle, and whether it was written by the Apostle Peter, is the difference of its style from the former; but the Holy Ghost, the dictator of the sacred writings, is not limited to a man's natural style, but could vary it as he pleased: besides, a man's style is not the same at different times, and when writing on different subjects; add to which, that this objection can only regard the second chapter, for the first and third agree with the former epistle. And some have thought that the second chapter is an extract out of some ancient Hebrew book, describing the characters of the old false prophets; which book Peter and Jude having before them, took the characters of the old prophets, and, under divine direction, applied them to the false teachers of the present age; and if so it is not to be wondered at that the style of the epistle should differ from the former, and even from itself in this part. But that it was written by the Apostle Peter, not only the inscription shows, which, if false, would indeed discredit the genuineness of the book, but the account that is given of the writer of it, as one that was with Christ at his transfiguration, (2 Peter 1:16-18). Now there were only the three following disciples there, Peter, John, and, James. The last of these had been dead some time when this

epistle was written, and it was never ascribed by any to the Apostle John, and therefore it remains that Peter must be the writer of it. As for Simeon, bishop of Jerusalem, that succeeded James, whom Grotius would suggest as the author of it, the character does not agree with him; he was not with Christ on the holy mount, nor heard the voice from heaven, asserting the sonship of Christ, and the divine complacency in him: moreover, this epistle is called a “second epistle”, ([600E](#)-2 Peter 3:1) and supposes a first, and manifestly refers to the former epistle of Peter's, about which there never was any doubt, as the authors before mentioned observe. It was written by the apostle in his old age, when upon the decline of life, just as he was about to put off his tabernacle, ([601B](#)-2 Peter 1:13-15) a little before his martyrdom, in the year 68, though Dr. Lightfoot places it in 66; and it is sent to the same persons as his first, namely, to the believing Jews scattered throughout several parts of Asia, he being the minister of the circumcision; (see [600E](#)-1 Peter 1:1) compared with ([600E](#)-2 Peter 3:1). The scope and design of it are, to put them upon a concern for a larger increase of grace and spiritual knowledge; to confirm and establish them in the present truth of the Gospel; to warn them against false teachers, which he largely describes; and he puts them in mind of the dissolution of all things, and of what will precede and follow it; from whence he draws several useful hints and inferences.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 PETER 1

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle takes notice of gifts of grace bestowed; and exhorts to the exercise of holiness and good works; and gives the reasons why he was so pressing to them; and endeavours to establish the saints in the Gospel that had been preached among them. In the inscription, the writer of the epistle describes himself by his names, the one given him by his parents, the other by his Lord and master, and by his character and office; and the persons to whom he writes are described as having faith, and that of the same kind with the apostles, and which they obtained through the righteousness of Christ, (2 Peter 1:1). The salutation is the same with that in the former epistle, only here is added a wish for an increase of divine knowledge, (2 Peter 1:2) and which might be expected, since, by the power of living grace, everything necessary to a spiritual and godly life had been given them in the effectual calling, through the knowledge of Christ; even exceeding great and precious promises, whereby they partook of the divine nature, and escaped the vices which prevailed in the world, (2 Peter 1:3,4) upon which he exhorts not to rest where they were, but to go on in the exercise of grace, and performance of duties, many of which he enumerates, (2 Peter 1:5-7) to enforce which he adds several arguments, as that through an abounding in these things they would appear not to have a superficial and speculative knowledge of Christ, (2 Peter 1:8) or otherwise it would be evident that they were blind and ignorant, and in an unrenewed state, (2 Peter 1:9) whereas by these things they would make their calling and election sure and manifest to men, and would never fall totally and finally, and in the issue have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Christ, (2 Peter 1:10,11) and then he gives the reasons of his conduct, why he so much urged a regard to these things, and put them in mind of them; namely, the usefulness of them for their establishment, the duty of his office, which required it, the short time he had to live, and the profitableness of such exhortations to them, after his decease, (2 Peter 1:12-15) and in order to establish them in the truths of the Gospel, and particularly in that which concerns the coming of Christ in power and

glory, on which he enlarges in the latter part of this epistle; he observes, that this was not a cunningly devised fable, but was what he and others were eyewitnesses of, even of that which was an emblem and pledge of it; namely, the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, when they saw the glory he received from God his Father, and heard the voice from heaven which declared him to be his well beloved Son, (~~6016~~2 Peter 1:16-18), and besides, they had a surer proof of the certainty of his coming; namely, the prophecies concerning it, which should be regarded and given heed to, being as a lamp to direct in the present state of darkness and imperfection, until the illustrious day of Christ's coming appears, (~~6019~~2 Peter 1:19) and the rather this should be attended to, since no scriptural prophecy is an invention and device of men; nor was it formerly given out at the pleasure of men, but by saints, who were influenced and moved unto it by the Holy Ghost, (~~6021~~2 Peter 1:20,21).

Ver. 1. *Simon Peter, a servant, and an apostle of Jesus Christ*, etc.] The writer of this epistle is described first by his names, Simon Peter; the first of these was the name by which he was called from his infancy by his parents, and by which he was known when Christ called him to be a disciple and follower of him, and is the same with Simeon; and so it is read in most copies; (see ~~4154~~Acts 15:14) a name common with the Jews; the latter is what was given him by Christ at his conversion, (~~6004~~John 1:4), and answers to Cephas in the Syriac language; and both signify a rock or stone, because he was built upon Christ, the rock and foundation, and chief corner stone, and with a view to his future solidity, firmness, and constancy: and he is next described by his character as a servant, not of sin, nor Satan, nor man, but Jesus Christ, whose servant he was, not only by creation, but by redemption and grace; and not merely a servant of his, in common with other believers, but in a ministerial way, as a preacher of the Gospel, which this phrase sometimes designs. The use of it shows the apostle's humility, his sense of obligation to Christ, and acknowledgment of him as his Lord, and that he esteemed it an honour to stand in such a relation to him: but to distinguish him from a common servant of Christ, and an ordinary minister of the word, it is added, “an apostle of Jesus Christ”: one that was immediately sent by Christ, had his commission and doctrine directly from him, and a power of working miracles, in confirmation of his mission and ministry being divine, and an authority at large to go everywhere and preach the Gospel, plant churches, and put them in due order, and place proper persons over them. This is said to give

weight and authority to his epistle: and further, in this inscription of the epistle, the persons are described to whom it is written, as follows,

to them that have obtained like precious faith with us; they were believers in Christ, who had a faith of the right kind; not a faith of doing miracles, which was not common to all, nor was it saving; nor an historical faith, or a mere assent to truths, nor a temporary one, or a bare profession of faith; but that faith which is the faith of God's elect, the gift of his grace, and the operation of his power; which sees the Son, goes to him, ventures on him, trusts in him, lives upon him, and works by love to him. This is said to be "precious", as it is in its own nature, being a rich and enriching grace, of more worth and value than gold that perisheth, or than thousands of gold and silver; it is not to be equalled by, nor purchased with the riches of the whole world; it is precious in its object, it being conversant with the precious person, precious blood, and precious righteousness and sacrifice of Christ, and is that grace which makes Christ, and all that is his, precious to souls; it is precious in its acts and usefulness; it is that grace by which men go to God and Christ, receive from them, and give all glory to them, and without which it is not possible to please God: to which add the durableness of it; it is an abiding grace, and will never fail, when the most precious things in nature do: and it is "like precious" with that the apostles had; for there is but one faith, and which is called a common faith, even common to all the elect; and which is the same in all, not as to degrees, for in some it is strong, and in others weak; or as to the actings of it, which are not in all alike, nor in the same persons at all times; in some it is only a seeing of the Son, his glory, fulness, and suitableness, and longing for views of an interest in him; in others a reliance on him, and trusting in him; and in others a holy confidence, and full assurance of being his: but then it is alike with respect to its nature, as it is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; and as it works by love to Christ and his people; it springs from the same cause, the love and favour of God, and has the same object, Jesus Christ, and is followed with the salvation; for though it is but as a grain of mustard seed, yet, being genuine, the person that has it shall certainly be saved: wherefore, for the comfort and encouragement of these scattered believers, the apostle assures them, that their faith was the same as their brethren that dwelt at Jerusalem and in Judea, who believed in Christ, and even with them that were the apostles of Christ; and this he says they had obtained, not by their own merits or industry, but by the grace of God; for faith is not of a man's self, it is the

gift of God, and the produce of his grace and power. Some have rendered it, “obtained by lot”; not by chance, but by the all wise, good, and powerful providence of God, ordering, directing, assigning, and giving this grace unto them. And which came to them

through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; or “of our God, and Saviour Jesus Christ”, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; that is, of Christ Jesus, who is our God and Saviour: so that here is a testimony of the deity of Christ, as well as of his character as a Saviour, who is an able and a willing one, a full, complete, suitable, and only Saviour: and the reason why he is so is because he is truly and properly “God”; and why he is so to us, because he is “our” God: wherefore by “righteousness” here, cannot be meant the goodness and mercy of God, as some think, though faith undoubtedly comes through that; nor the faithfulness of God making good his purpose and promise of giving faith to his elect, as others think: but the righteousness of Christ, which is not the righteousness of a creature, but of God; that is wrought out by one that is God, as well as man, and so answerable to all the purposes for which it is brought in. Now faith comes “in”, or “with” this righteousness, as the phrase may be rendered; when the Spirit of God reveals and brings near this righteousness to a poor sensible sinner, he at the same time works faith in him to look to it, lay hold upon it, and plead it as his justifying righteousness with God: or it comes “through” it; hence it appears that faith and righteousness are two distinct things; and that faith is not a man's righteousness before God, for it comes to him through it; as also that righteousness is before faith, or otherwise faith could not come by it; and, moreover, is the cause and reason of it; faith has no causal influence upon righteousness, but righteousness has upon faith: the reason why a man has a justifying righteousness is not because he has faith; but the reason why he has faith given him is because he has a justifying righteousness provided for him, and imputed to him.

Ver. 2. *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you*, etc.] By a multiplication of grace may be meant a larger discovery of the love and favour of God; which though it admits of no degrees in itself, being never more or less in God's heart, yet, as to the manifestations of it, it is different, and capable of being increased, and drawn out to a greater length; or else an increase of the internal graces of the Spirit of God, as to the actings and exercise of them; or a larger measure of the gifts of the Spirit, for greater usefulness among them; or a clearer view, and a more enlarged knowledge of the

Gospel of the grace of God, and the truths of it; and indeed, the word grace may take in all these senses: and by a multiplication of peace, which the apostle in this salutation also wishes for, may be designed an affluence of all kind of prosperity, temporal, and spiritual, external and internal; and more especially an increase of spiritual peace, a fulness of joy and peace in believing, arising from a sense of free justification by Christ's righteousness, and full pardon and atonement by his blood and sacrifice:

through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; which is to be understood, not of a natural, but of a spiritual and evangelical knowledge; of a knowledge of God, not as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace, as in Christ, and a covenant God in him, and of the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and which designs true faith in him, by which means larger discoveries of the grace of God are made, and a greater enjoyment of spiritual peace is had: or it may be rendered, “with the knowledge of God”, etc. and the sense then is, that the apostle prays, as for a multiplication of grace and peace, so along with it, an increase of spiritual and evangelical knowledge; which in the best is imperfect, but may be increased by the blessing of God on those means which he has appointed for that end, such as the word and ordinances. The Syriac version renders this clause, “through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”, leaving out the word “God”, and the copulative “and”, and adding the word “Christ”; and the Ethiopic version reads, “in the knowledge of our God, Christ Jesus our Lord”, without any distinction. After the inscription and salutation begins the epistle, with an account of various special favours bestowed upon these persons; and are mentioned by the apostle to encourage his faith and theirs, in expectation of enjoying what he here wishes unto them, since already such great and good things had been bestowed upon them.

Ver. 3. *According as his divine power*, etc.] Meaning either the power of God the Father, to whom belong eternal power and Godhead; and he is sometimes called by the name of power itself; (see ~~166~~ Matthew 26:64) being all powerful and mighty; or rather the power of Christ, since he is the next and immediate antecedent to this relative; and who, as he has the fulness of the Godhead in him, is almighty, and can do all things; and is “El-shaddai”, God all-sufficient, and can communicate all things whatsoever he pleases, and does, as follows: for he

hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness; referring not so much to a temporal life, though he gives that and preserves it, and

furnishes with all the mercies and comforts of it; and which come to us, from him, in a covenant way, as his left hand blessings, and in great love; but rather a spiritual life, which he is the author and maintainer of, all the joys, pleasures, blessings, and supports of it, being given by him; as also eternal life, for that, and everything appertaining to it, are from him; he gives a meetness for it, which is his own grace, and a right unto it, which is his own righteousness; and he has power to give that itself to as many as the Father has given him, and he does give it to them; and likewise all things belonging to “godliness”, or internal religion; and which is the means of eternal life, and leads on to it, and is connected with it, and has the promise both of this life, and of that which is to come; and everything relating to it, or is in it, or it consists of, is from Christ: the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love, which, when in exercise, are the principal parts of powerful godliness, are the gifts of Christ, are received out of his fulness, and of which he is the author and finisher; and he is the donor of all the fresh supplies of grace to maintain the inward power of religion, and to assist in the external exercise of it; all which things are given

through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. The call here spoken of is not a bare outward call, by the ministry of the word, but an internal, special, and powerful one, which springs from the grace, and is according to the purpose of God, and is inseparably connected with justification and glorification; and is either of God the Father, who, as the God of all grace, calls to eternal glory by Christ; or rather of Christ himself, who calls by his Spirit and grace; and hence the saints are sometimes styled, the called of Jesus Christ, (~~ROM~~ Romans 1:6) what they are called unto by him is, “glory and virtue”; by the former may be meant, the glorious state of the saints in the other world, and so answers to “life”, eternal life, in the preceding clause; and by the latter, grace, and the spiritual blessings of grace here, and which answers to “godliness” in the said clause; for the saints are called both to grace and glory, and to the one, in order to the other. Some render it, “by glory and virtue”; and some copies, as the Alexandrian and others, and so the Vulgate Latin version, read, “by his own glory and virtue”; that is, by his glorious power, which makes the call as effectual, and is as illustrious a specimen of the glory of his power, as was the call of Lazarus out of the grave; unless the Gospel should rather be intended by glory and virtue, which is glorious in itself, and the power of God unto salvation, and is the means by which persons

are called to the communion of Christ, and the obtaining of his glory: so then this phrase, “him that hath called us to glory and virtue”, is a periphrasis of Christ, through a “knowledge” of whom, and which is not notional and speculative, but spiritual, experimental, fiducial, and practical, or along with such knowledge all the above things are given; for as God, in giving Christ, gives all things along with him, so the Spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, when he makes him known in the glory of his person, grace, and righteousness, also makes known the several things which are freely given of God and Christ: and this is what, among other things, makes the knowledge of Christ preferable to all other knowledge, or anything else.

Ver. 4. *Whereby are given unto us*, etc.] Or “by which”, that is, glory and virtue; by the glorious power of Christ, or by the glorious and powerful Gospel of Christ; and so the Arabic version renders it, “by both of which”; or “by whom”, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is, by Christ; for as in him are all the promises of God, so they are at his dispose, and by him are given unto the saints:

exceeding great and precious promises; meaning the promises of the new and everlasting covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator, surety, and messenger; and which are “exceeding great”, if we consider the author of them, who is the great God of heaven and earth, and who was under no obligation to make promises of anything to his creatures; and therefore must arise from great grace and favour, of which they are largely expressive, and are like himself; are such as become his greatness and goodness, and are confirmed by his oath, and made good by his power and faithfulness: and they are also great, as to the nature and matter of them; they are better promises than those of the covenant of works; they are not merely temporal ones, nor are they conditional and legal; but as they relate to things spiritual and eternal, to grace here and glory hereafter, so they are absolute, free, and unconditional, and are irreversible and unchangeable; and they answer great ends and purposes, the glory of God, and the everlasting good and happiness of his people; and therefore must be “precious”, of more value and worth than thousands of gold and silver, and to be rejoiced at more than at the finding of a great spoil, being every way suited to the cases of God's people, and which never fail. The end of giving them is,

that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature; not essentially, or of the essence of God, so as to be deified, this is impossible, for the nature, perfections, and glory of God, are incommunicable to creatures; nor, hypostatically and personally, so as the human nature of Christ, in union with the Son of God, is a partaker of the divine nature in him; but by way of resemblance and likeness, the new man or principle of grace, being formed in the heart in regeneration, after the image of God, and bearing a likeness to the image of his Son, and this is styled, Christ formed in the heart, into which image and likeness the saints are more and more changed, from glory to glory, through the application of the Gospel, and the promises of it, by which they have such sights of Christ as do transform them, and assimilate them to him; and which resemblance will be perfected hereafter, when they shall be entirely like him, and see him as he is:

having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; not the corruption and depravity of nature, which is never escaped by any, nor got rid of so long as the saints are in the world; but the corrupt manners of the world, or those corruptions and vices which, are prevalent in the world, and under the power and dominion of which the world lies; and particularly the sins of uncleanness, adultery, incest, sodomy, and such like filthy and unnatural lusts, which abounded in the world, and among some that called themselves Christians, and especially the followers of Simon Magus. Now the Gospel, and the precious promises, being graciously bestowed and powerfully applied, have an influence on purity of heart and conversation, and teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly; such are the powerful effects of Gospel promises, under divine influence, as to make men inwardly partakers of the divine nature, and outwardly to abstain from and avoid the prevailing corruptions and vices of the times.

Ver. 5. *And besides this, giving all diligence*, etc.] “Or upon this”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read, bestow all your labour, diligence, and care; namely, on what follows, and that from the consideration of what goes before; for nothing can more strongly animate, and engage to the diligent exercise of grace and discharge of duty, than a consideration of the high favours, and free grace gifts of God, and the exceeding great and precious promises of his Gospel:

add to your faith virtue; or “with your faith”, so the Arabic version renders it, and the like, in the following clauses. They had faith, even like precious

faith with the apostles, not of themselves, but by the gift of God, and which is the first and principal grace; it leads the van, or rather the “chorus”, as the word rendered “add” signifies; and though it is in itself imperfect, has many things lacking in it, yet it cannot be added to, or increased by men; ministers may be a means of perfecting what is lacking in it, and of the furtherance and joy of it, but it is the Lord only that can increase it, or add unto it in that sense, and which is not the meaning here: but the sense is, that as it is the basis and foundation of all good works, it should not stand alone, there ought to be virtue, or good works along with it, by which it may be perfected, not essentially, but evidentially, or might appear to be true and genuine; for by virtue may be either meant some particular virtue, as justice towards men, to which both the grace and doctrine of faith direct; and indeed pretensions to faith in Christ, where there is not common justice done to men, are of little account; or, as others think, beneficence to men; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “proceed to bounty by your faith”; and faith does work by love and kindness to fellow creatures and Christians; but this seems rather designed by brotherly kindness and charity, in (~~61007~~2 Peter 1:7) or boldness, courage, constancy, and fortitude, which ought to go along with faith. Where there is true faith in Christ, there should be a holy boldness to profess it, and constancy in it, and courage to fight the good fight of faith, and firmness of mind to stand fast in it, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements; or virtue in general here meant, not mere moral, but Christian virtues, which are the fruits of the Spirit of God, and of his grace; and differ from the other, in that they spring from the grace of God, are done in faith, by the assistance of the Spirit of Christ, and by strength received from him, and in love to him, and with a view to the glory of God; whereas moral virtues, as exercised by a mere moral man, spring from nature, and are performed by the mere strength of it, and are destitute of faith, and so but “splendida peccata”, splendid sins, and proceed from self-love, from sinister ends, and with selfish views:

and to virtue, knowledge; not of Christ, mentioned (~~61008~~2 Peter 1:8) and which is included in faith, for there can be no true faith in Christ, were there not knowledge of him; but of the will of God, which it is necessary men should be acquainted with, in order to perform it; or else though they may seem zealous of good works, their zeal will not be according to knowledge; they ought to know what are virtues or good works in God's account, and what are the nature and use of them, lest they should mistake

and misapply them; or of the Scriptures of truth, and of the mysteries of the Gospel, which should be diligently searched, for the increase and improvement of knowledge in divine things, and which has a considerable influence on a just, sober, and godly living; or by knowledge may be meant prudence and wisdom, in ordering the external conversation aright towards those that are without, and in showing good works out of it, to others, by way of example, and for the evidence of the truth of things, with meekness of wisdom.

Ver. 6. *And to knowledge, temperance*, etc.] Avoiding all excess in eating and drinking, and all impure and unclean lusts; for it signifies nothing what a man knows, or professes to know, if his life is a scene of intemperance and debauchery: this seems to be levelled against the followers of Simon Magus, who ascertained salvation to knowledge, though the life was ever so impure. Moreover, this may include abstinence, not only from hurtful lusts, but from the use of things indifferent, when the peace and comfort of a weak brother are endangered; for then to knowledge must be added love, otherwise that knowledge will not be right, at least not rightly used; (see ~~ARH~~ 1 Corinthians 8:1,2,7,10,11),

and to temperance, patience; which is necessary to the running of the Christian race, which is attended with many difficulties and exercises; and under affliction from the hand of God, that there be no murmuring nor repining; and under reproaches and persecutions from men, that they faint not, and are not discouraged by them; and in the expectation of the heavenly glory: this is proper to be superadded to the former, because there may be intemperance in passion, as well as in the use of the creatures; a man may be inebriated with wrath and anger, and overcome with impatience, as well as with wine and strong drink:

and to patience, godliness; either internal, which is distinguished from bodily exercise, or outward worship, and lies in the inward and powerful exercise of grace, as faith, hope, love, fear, etc. and the Syriac version here renders it, “the fear of God”: or rather external, and intends the whole worship of God, as prayer, praise, hearing of the word, and attendance on all ordinances.

Ver. 7. *And to godliness, brotherly kindness*, etc.] Without which, godliness, or external worship, or a profession of religion, is a vain show; for this is both the evidence of regeneration, and of the truth and power of real godliness; and also the beauty, comfort, and security of Christian

society and worship, and without which they cannot be maintained with peace, profit, and honour:

and to brotherly kindness, charity: or “love”; that is, to all men, enemies, as well as to the household of faith; and to God and Christ, to his house, worship, ordinances, people and truths. Charity is more extensive in its objects and acts than brotherly kindness or love. As faith leads the van, charity brings up the rear, and is the greatest of all.

Ver. 8. *For if these things be in you,* etc.] Are wrought in you by the Spirit of God, and exercised and performed by his assistance, who works in his people both to will and do:

and abound; increase in their acts and exercises by the frequent performance of them: they make you; both by way of influence and evidence,

[that ye shall] neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a knowledge of Christ which is barren and fruitless; and those that have it are so in their conversations, and it will be of no avail to them another day: and this is a mere notional and speculative knowledge, such as is not attended with any inward experience and application of Christ to themselves, or any fruits of righteousness in their lives, and is a bare theory of things relating to his person, offices, and works; but there is a knowledge of him that is spiritual and experimental, by which a soul not only approves of Christ, but places its trust and confidence in him, and appropriates him to himself, and practically observes his commands and ordinances in the faith of him; and in love to him he performs the above duties, and exercises the above graces; from whence it appears, that he is neither barren nor unfruitful himself in the profession of his knowledge of Christ; “or in the acknowledgment of him”, as it may be rendered; nor is that a vain, empty, and useless thing: he is not like the barren fig tree, or the earth that bears briars and thorns, and is nigh to cursing and burning, but like a tree planted by a river of water, and is green, flourishing, and fruitful. This is used as an argument to enforce the foregoing exhortation, to add to, that is, to exercise and perform the above graces and duties, in conjunction with each other.

Ver. 9. *But he that lacketh these things,* etc.] Or in, and with whom, they are not; that is, these virtues, as the Arabic version reads, as faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and

charity; where the principles of those things are not, and they are not exercised and performed, such an one

is blind: let him boast ever so much of his light and knowledge, and value himself upon it, and expect to be saved by it, let him live as he will; for he has no true knowledge of God, as in Christ, as the God of all grace, as his covenant God and Father; nor does he know what it is to have communion with him in Christ; he only professes to know him in words, while in works he denies him; nor has he any right knowledge of Christ, only notional and general, not spiritual, experimental, particular, and practical; he does not see the Son, so as truly to believe in him; he has no true sight of his beauty, suitableness, and fulness, and of him for himself; nor any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon his heart, whom he neither receives, sees, nor knows spiritually, any more than the world itself does; nor does he see the plague of his own heart, the corruptions of his nature, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; nor has he any true spiritual light into the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, only a form of godliness, without the power of it: and therefore, whatever natural understanding of things he has, he is spiritually blind,

and cannot see afar off: at least, not the good land that is afar off, the kingdom of heaven; the invisible glories of the other world; things that are not seen, which are eternal, which one that has true faith has a glimpse and sight of; nor Christ, who is in heaven at the right hand of God, and the things of Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, carried within the vail; nor even what is within himself, the sins of his heart, the pollution of his nature, and the evil that dwells there; he sees not that he is poor, and wretched, and miserable, but fancies himself to be rich, and in need of nothing; he sees nothing but outward things, the things of time and sense, worldly and earthly things, which are near him, and all around him, which he minds, on which his heart is set, and he pursues with rigour. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “trying with the hand”, as blind men do, feeling and groping to find the way; (see ^{<4177>}Acts 17:27),

and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins; not by baptism, from the sins committed before it, for that does not purge from any sins, old or new, but that which it leads the faith of believers to, for pardon and cleansing, even the blood of Christ; but this also, and purification by it, is not meant here, though generally interpreters give this as the sense, and understanding it of the sin of ingratitude in such a person, who had

received so great a benefit by Christ, and was unmindful of it; since it cannot be thought that one so described as above should ever have had his conscience purged by the blood of Christ from his old sins, or those before conversion, unless it be by profession; and then the sense is, that he has forgotten that he once professed to have been purged from all his sins by Christ; which, if he had, would have made him zealous of good works, and put him upon glorifying Christ both in body and spirit. The Ethiopic version renders it, “and he hath forgot to purge himself from old sins”; which he would have been concerned for, had he had a true and spiritual knowledge of Christ, and his Gospel, and an application of the exceeding great and precious promises of it, or had been made a partaker of the divine nature through them; (see ~~ROM~~ 2 Corinthians 7:1), but the words are better rendered agreeably to the original text, “and hath forgotten the purification of his old, or former sins”; or “sins of old”; as they are rendered by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; that is, he does not consider, nor think of it, that he was a sinner of old, a sinner in Adam, that he was conceived and shapen in sin, and went astray, and was called a transgressor from the womb; he does not think that he stands in any need of being purged from former sins; and is entirely unmindful of, and neglects, the purification of them by the blood of Christ.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence*, etc.] To exercise the afore mentioned graces, and to perform the above duties, since this is the way

to make your calling and election sure; by calling is not meant a call to any office in the church, nor an external call, either by the voice of nature, or by the ministry of the word; but an internal and effectual call by special grace, to grace here, and glory hereafter; instead of “calling”, the Alexandrian copy reads, “comfort”: and by “election” is meant, not a national, nor church election, but a particular and personal one, since scattered saints, and particular believers, are here written to, and each called upon to be diligent to make their own, and not another's, calling and election sure; nor is a choice of persons to an office designed, seeing the apostle writes not to officers of churches in particular, but to believers in common; nor a separation of persons from the world by the effectual calling, since these two are both mentioned here, and as distinct from each other, and to be made sure; but an election of particular persons to eternal life and salvation is here intended, which is an eternal act of God, arises from his free grace and favour, and is according to his sovereign will and

pleasure; and is absolute, and independent of any condition, foreseen, or required in men, as faith, holiness, and good works; all which are fruits and effects, and not causes and conditions of electing grace. These may be made “sure”, not in themselves, or with respect to God, for in this sense they cannot be made surer than they are: effectual calling is according to the purpose of God, which cannot be frustrated, and is, without repentance, irreversible, and irrevocable, and is inseparably connected with eternal glory; and election stands not upon the foot of works, but upon the free grace of God, which cannot be made void, and upon the will of God, which cannot be resisted; and is also closely connected with glorification; (see ⁴⁸¹⁰Romans 8:30) nor are those to be made sure by saints, with respect to themselves; for though they may sometimes be at a loss about them, and may have some scruples and doubts in their minds concerning their interest in them, and an assurance of their being both called and chosen, may be after all attained unto by them; yet this is not their work, but it is the work of the Spirit of God, to certify and make sure unto them, or assure them of their calling and election of God: but the sense is, that diligence is to be used by the saints, to make their calling and election sure to others; not their election by their calling only, which is to themselves; for both are to be made sure, and that to others, and by some third thing; either to their fellow Christians, which they may do by giving them an account of the work of God upon their souls, joined with a testimony of their good lives and conversations; or rather to the world “by good works”, as the Vulgate Latin version and two copies of Beza's read; or “by your good works”, as the Alexandrian copy and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or by the exercise of the graces, and the discharge of the duties before mentioned, whereby the men of the world may be certified and assured, by the best evidence the saints are capable of giving to them, or they of receiving, that they are the called and chosen of God, they profess themselves to be; and which is a reason why those things should be done: and another follows,

for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; or “sin”, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; not that they should never fall at all, or in any sense, for in many things we all offend or fall; or should ever commit any act of sin, or fall into sin, for there is no man that lives, and sins not; or that they should not fall from a degree of the lively exercise of grace, or from a degree of steadfastness in the doctrine of faith, but that they should never sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, or fall totally and finally; for though they fall, they should rise again by faith and repentance, through the

grace and power of Christ, who is able to keep them from falling: and besides, while they were exercising those graces, and doing those duties, they should not fall; for these are the means of final perseverance, and therefore the rather to be regarded. Another argument, strengthening the exhortation, follows:

Ver. 11. *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly,* etc.] An abundant supply of grace and strength shall be freely afforded, to carry you through all the duties and trials of life; and when that shall be ended, an admission will be granted

into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; meaning, not the Gospel dispensation, or the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, but lies among his people, who are called out of it, in whom he reigns by his Spirit and, grace, according to laws of his own enacting; nor his personal kingdom on earth with his saints, which will last only a thousand years, and not be for ever; but the kingdom of heaven, or the ultimate glory, which will be everlasting; and is called a kingdom, to denote the glory and excellency of that state; and an everlasting one, because it will never end; and the kingdom of Christ, because it is in his possession, for his people; it is prepared by him, and he will introduce them into it, when they shall be for ever with him, and reign with him for ever and ever. Some copies read, “the heavenly kingdom”. There is an entrance of separate souls into this kingdom at death; and which may be said to be ministered “abundantly” to them, or “richly” as the word signifies, when they depart out of this world with joy and comfort; triumphing over death, and the grave, in a full view by faith of their interest in the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the glories of another world; and there is an entrance into it at judgment, and which will be abundantly, when all the saints together, in their souls and bodies, shall be introduced by Christ into the full joy of their Lord. As the saints enter the kingdom through many tribulations, the gate is strait, and the way is narrow, and they are scarcely saved, and many of them so as only by fire; but when the abundant grace given unto them by the way to heaven, the great consolation many enjoy in their last moments, and especially the free and full admission of them, both at death and at judgment, to eternal happiness, are considered, the entrance ministered may be said to be abundantly; or, as the Arabic version renders it, “with a breadth”; the entrance is large and broad.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore I will not be negligent*, etc.] The apostle having made use of proper arguments to excite the saints he writes to regard the exhortation he had given, to the diligent exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, proceeds to give the reasons of his own conduct, why he gave such an exhortation to them, and pressed it, and continued to do so, and determined for the future to go on with it, as particularly the usefulness and profitableness of it; and therefore, seeing it would be attended with so many advantages before mentioned, he was resolved that he would not be careless, nor omit any opportunity that should offer:

to put you always in remembrance of these things; of the exercise of the above graces, and the performance of the above duties, which saints are too apt to forget, and therefore should be reminded of; and it is the duty and business of the ministers of the word frequently to inculcate those things:

though ye know them, and be established in the present truth; for those that know the most, know but in part; and may have their knowledge increased; and those that are the most established in the truths of the Gospel, may be confirmed yet more and more. This the apostle mentions as an apology for himself, and to prevent an objection that might be made, as if he had suggested that they were ignorant and unstable; or which might insinuate that there was no necessity of such frequent putting in remembrance; since they were both knowing and stable: by “the present truth” may be meant, either the whole scheme of the Gospel, which was now come by Christ, in opposition to the exhibition of it under the former dispensation, by promise and type; and it being so called, shows that it is always now, and new; that there will be no alteration in it, nor addition to it, it being like the author of it, the same yesterday, today, and for ever, and will not give place to another scheme of things; or else the particular truth of the coming of Christ, either to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, or to judge the world in righteousness, and introduce his own people into the new heavens, and new earth, (~~GRUB~~ 2 Peter 3:1-4,10,12,13).

Ver. 13. *Yea, I think it meet*, etc.] Or “just”. This is the apostle's other reason for his conduct, taken from the duty of his place and office; judging it to be what became him as an apostle and elder, and the minister of the circumcision, and was what was due to God and Christ, whom he served, and the souls of men under his care:

as long as I am in this tabernacle: or “body”, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, and so some copies; for the body is as a tabernacle for the soul to dwell in, pitched for a time, and, ere long, to be taken down; (see Gill on “~~4701~~2 Corinthians 5:1”),

to stir you up; to the lively exercise of grace, and constant performance of duty: by putting you in remembrance: of the said things; for saints are apt to be forgetful of their duty, and backward to it, and sluggish and slothful in it.

Ver. 14. *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle*, etc.]

Which is another reason why the apostle was so pressing in this case, and so much urged the exhortation, and was so diligent in reminding the saints of it, and stirring them to observe it, because he knew he had but a little time to live, and which therefore he was willing to improve for their good. He sets forth his death in a very easy and familiar way, it being not at all terrible and distressing to him; it was but like the putting off of a garment, or unpinning of a tabernacle, or a removing from a tent to a palace. Saints are pilgrims here, they dwell in tents or tabernacles, at death they remove to their own country, and Father's house. Death is not a destruction of man, an annihilation of him, neither of his soul nor body: the soul is not mortal, it dies not with the body; it only removes from this world to another, from a cottage to a kingdom; and the body though it dies, it is not reduced to nothing, it is only like a tabernacle put off, or taken down, which will be put together again in better order than now it is.

Even as our Lord Jesus hath showed me; by some special revelation lately made to him; or by some strong impulse upon his mind; just as the Apostle Paul knew that the time of his departure was at hand, (~~5047~~2 Timothy 4:7) or this may have respect to the words of Christ to Peter, above thirty years before, in (~~4218~~John 21:18), which both signified what kind of death he should die, and when it should be; namely, when he was old, as now he was.

Ver. 15. *Moreover, I will endeavour*, etc.] He signifies, that he should not only use all diligence to stir them up to, and put them in remembrance of the necessary duties of their calling while he was alive, but should make it his study to concert some measures, and take some steps,

that you may be able after my decease: or Exodus, meaning his going out of this world by death, in allusion to the Israelites going out of Egypt, and

marching for Canaan's land; this world being, like Egypt, a place of wickedness, misery, and bondage; as heaven, like Canaan, a place and state of rest and happiness.

To have these things always in remembrance; by which they might be always put in mind of them, or by recurring to which they might have their memories refreshed; and what he means is, to leave these exhortations and admonitions in writing, which they might read, and be of use to them when he was dead and gone; and indeed by this, and his former epistle, though being dead, he yet speaketh.

Ver. 16. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables*, etc.] Such as Jewish fables, cautioned against (³⁰¹⁴Titus 1:14) which their traditionary and oral law, their Talmud, and other writings, mention; as concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, the sumptuous feast, and carnal pleasures and entertainments, of that state, with many other things; some of which indeed are not very cunningly put together, but weak enough: or Gentile fables concerning the theogony and exploits of their deities; and which may be meant by fables and endless genealogies in (⁵⁰⁰⁴1 Timothy 1:4), and especially reference may be had to the metamorphoses of their gods, and their fables relating to them, devised by Ovid, and others, since the apostle is about to speak of the metamorphosis, or transfiguration of Christ; and also other fables with which their poets and histories abound; and likewise the prophecies of the Sibyls, and the oracles at Delphos, and elsewhere: or the fabulous accounts of the followers of Simon Magus concerning God, angels, the creation of the world, and the several Aeones; or the more artful composures of the false teachers, set off with all the cunning, sophistry, wit, and eloquence they were masters of. Now in order to set forth the nature, excellency, and certainty of the doctrine the apostle taught, especially that part of it which respected the coming of Christ; and to show that it was worth his while to put them in mind of it, and theirs to remember it; he observes, that he and his fellow apostles did not proceed in their account of it on such a foundation, but upon an evidence which they had received, both with their eyes and ears, and also on a word of prophecy surer than that:

when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; not his first coming, though that, and the benefits arising from it, were the subject of their ministry; and that was attended with divine power, which appeared in the incarnation of Christ itself, which was owing to the

power of the Highest; and was seen in his doctrine and ministry, which were with great authority; and in the miracles which he wrought, which proved him to have power equal with God, his Father; and in the work of redemption, which he came about and finished; in doing which he made an end of sin, and saved his people from it, redeemed them from the curse of the law, overcame the world, destroyed Satan, and abolished death; and especially in his resurrection from the dead, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power: but notwithstanding his first coming was in great humility, in much meanness and imbecility, he grew up as a tender plant, and was encompassed with infirmities, and at last was crucified through weakness. This therefore was to be understood of an after coming of his, which the apostle had wrote of, and made known in his former epistle, (~~1~~1 Peter 1:7,13 4:5) and which he puts them in mind of in this, (~~2~~2 Peter 3:1-4,10,12,13), nor is the word *παρουσία*, used of any other coming of Christ, and this will be with power; and it designs his more near coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, and deliver his people from the afflictions and persecution they laboured under, and which was with great power; (see ~~14~~Matthew 14:3,30 ~~9~~Mark 9:1), or more remote, namely, at the last day, when there will be a great display of power in raising the dead, gathering all nations before him, separating them one from another, passing the final sentence on each, and executing the same in the utter destruction of the wicked, and the complete glorification of the saints.

But were eyewitnesses of his majesty; meaning, not of the glory of his divine nature by faith, and with the eyes of their understanding, while others only considered him as a mere man; nor of the miracles he wrought, in which there was a display of his glory and majesty, of all which the apostles were eyewitnesses; but of that glory and greatness which were upon him, when he was transfigured on the mount before them; then his face was as the sun, and such a glory on his whole body, that it darted through his clothes, and made them glitter like light, and as white as snow, and so as no fuller on earth could whiten them; at which time also Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious forms: and now this was a prelude and pledge of his power and coming, of his kingdom coming with power, and of his coming in his own, and his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels. This was a proof that notwithstanding his meanness in his incarnate state, yet he was glorified, and would be glorified again; and this was a

confirmation of it to the apostles, and might be to others: (see ^{<4167>}Matthew 16:27,28 17:1 ^{<4188>}Mark 8:38 9:1 ^{<4126>}Luke 9:26-28).

Ver. 17. *For he received from God the Father honour and glory*, etc.] Not as an inferior from a superior, for he was equal in glory with the Father, and was, and is, the brightness of his Father's glory; nor essentially, having the same glory as his Father, and to which nothing can be added; but declaratively, God the Father testifying of his glory, declaring the honour that belonged to him, as the Son of God, at the same time that an external glory was put on him, and received by him, as the son of man:

when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory; from the bright cloud which overshadowed Jesus, Moses, and Elijah and was a symbol of the glory and presence of God, as the cloud in the tabernacle and temple were, (^{<1245>}Exodus 40:35,36 ^{<1080>}1 Kings 8:10,11), or from heaven, the habitation of the holiness and glory of God, and where he displays the glory of his being and perfections; or from himself, who is the God and Father of glory, and is glorious in himself, in all his attributes and works. So **dwbk**, “glory”, with the Cabalistic Jews, signifies the Shechinah, or divine presence ^{f4}; and every number in the Cabalistic tree is called by the name of “glory”; the second number, which is “wisdom”, is called “the first glory”; and the third number, “understanding”, is called [^]wyl [**dwbk**, “the supreme”, or “chief glory” ^{f5}: so the first path, which is the supreme crown, is sometimes called the first glory, as the Father is here the most excellent glory; and the second path, which is the understanding enlightening, the second glory ^{f6}. And this voice was not that at his baptism; for though that was from heaven, and from God the Father, and expressed the same words as here; yet it was not on a mount, nor from a cloud, nor was it heard by the apostles, who, as yet, were not with Christ, nor called by him; nor that of which mention is made in (^{<4128>}John 12:28), for though that also was from God the Father, and from heaven, and which declaratively gave honour and glory to Christ, yet did not express the words here mentioned; but that voice which came from the cloud, when Christ was transfigured on the mount, and which was heard by his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, when the following words were articulately pronounced, “this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”: (see Gill on ^{<4175>}Matthew 17:5”). The Vulgate Latin version adds here, as there, “hear ye him”.

Ver. 18. *And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard*, etc.] Peter, who wrote this epistle, and James and John, the favourite disciples of

Christ; and who were a sufficient number to bear witness of what they then saw and heard:

when we were with him; and saw his glory, and the glory of Moses and Elias, and were so delighted with his company, and theirs, and with communion with him, that Peter, in the name of the rest, desired to stay there:

in the holy mount; the Ethiopic version reads, “in the mountain of his sanctuary”; and so Grotius understands it of Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built, called the holy hill, and the holy hill of Zion; and supposes that this voice was heard in the temple, and that it refers to (^{<4128>}John 12:28), but without any foundation; for the mount on which Christ was transfigured is here meant; and which was either, as is generally said, Tabor, a mountain in Galilee; or it may be Lebanon, which was near Caesarea Philippi, in the parts of which Christ then was: and it is called “holy”, from his presence or transfiguration on it, who is the Holy One; just as the land on which Moses was, and the city and temple of Jerusalem, and Mount Sion, and Sinai, are called “holy”, from the presence of the holy God there, (^{<4085>}Exodus 3:5 ^{<4085>}Matthew 4:5 ^{<4085>}Psalm 2:6 68:17). Now such a declaration of the honour and glory of Christ, as the Son of God, being made by God the Father, in a voice from heaven, which the apostles heard with their ears, at the same time that they saw with their eyes his human body glorified in an amazing manner, was to them a confirming evidence that he would come again in power and glory; and upon this evidence they declared, and made known to the saints, the power and coming of Christ; though not on this evidence only, but also upon the more sure word of prophecy, which entirely agrees with it.

Ver. 19. *We have also a more sure word of prophecy*, etc.] Though this word of prophecy is generally understood of the writings and prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Christ, yet different ways are taken to fix the comparison: some think the sense is, that they are more sure than the cunningly devised fables, (^{<4016>}2 Peter 1:16) but as these have no certainty nor authority in them, but are entirely to be rejected, the apostle would never put the sacred writings in comparison with them: and it is most clear, that the comparison lies between this word of prophecy, and the testimony of the apostles, who were eye and ear witnesses of the majesty and glory of Christ; but how prophecy should be a surer evidence of Christ, and the Gospel, than such a testimony, is difficult to understand; and is a sense

which all agree to reject, by different methods: some think that a comparative is used for a positive, and that the meaning is, that besides the testimony of the apostles, prophecy is a very sure evidence; and this is countenanced by the Syriac version, which renders it, “and we have also a firm”, or “true word of prophecy”; to which the Arabic agrees, “and we have a word of prophecy very true”: others choose to retain the comparison, and which indeed ought not to be thrown out; but these are divided about it; some are of opinion that it is to be understood of the Jews to whom the apostle writes, and he himself was one, and the sense to be this; not that prophecy in itself was surer than an apostolical testimony, but that it was surer to the Jews, and more valid with them, who had been trained up in, and long used to the prophetic writings; and who had a greater esteem for the prophets of the Old Testament than for the apostles of the New; but it is scarcely credible that the apostle, who had been an eye and ear witness in the holy mount, would put himself in among them, and say, “we have”, etc. for whatever prophecy was to them, it could not be surer to him than what he had seen with his eyes, and heard with his ears. Others suppose that the meaning is, that prophecy was “now” surer to the Christians than it was “before”, it being confirmed and established by facts and events, and also by miracles, and even by the attestation of this voice heard on the mount, and by the majesty of Christ seen there; but if this had been the sense of the apostle, he would have used these words, “now” and “before”; and besides, this puts the comparison quite out of its place, which manifestly stands between former prophecy, and the present testimony of the apostles: but the truth of the matter is, that this word of prophecy is not to be understood of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament; for though these are the word of God, and do testify of Christ, and are to be taken heed, and attended to, as proofs and evidence of Gospel truths, and are a light to direct and guide in matters both of faith and practice, yet they are not the only light, and are far from being the clearest, and what are only to be attended to; for the Gospel that came by Christ, and is preached by his apostles, and is contained in the writings of the New Testament, is a much clearer light, and at least equally to be attended to: nor are the prophecies of the Old Testament, which particularly relate to Christ, designed; there are many of this kind, which, put together, may very well be called the word of prophecy, and which were to the Jews a light in a dark place, until Christ came in the flesh; and though they are to be attended to, and compared with facts, to show the truth of the divine revelation, yet they are not a surer evidence, nor so sure an evidence, as

the evangelical testimony is, which is of facts, and these supported by miracles; for now the dayspring from on high hath visited us, and Christ, the bright and morning star, has appeared: but the word of prophecy, concerning Christ's second coming, is here intended, whether it lies in the words of the prophets of the Old Testament, as in (⁴⁹⁶¹³Psalm 96:13 ²⁰⁰Daniel 7:9,10,13) or in the words of Christ, (⁴⁰⁶²Matthew 16:27,28 24:3,30,44), which latter is most likely. The Ethiopic version understands this of some particular prophecy, and as if the words were a citation of some prophet, rendering the words thus, “and we have a voice more ancient than this of a prophet, saying, ye do well who take heed”, etc. Sir Isaac Newton is of opinion, that the apostle refers to the book of the Revelation of St. John, which would not be unlikely, could it be proved that it was then written. Now this prophecy or prediction, concerning Christ's coming again with power and great glory, was a surer evidence of it than what the apostles saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears upon the mount; nothing was surer to them, nor could anything make it surer to them, that he was honoured and glorified, than what they saw and heard: but then this did not so certainly prove that he would hereafter be glorified, or come again in glory. What they saw and heard was a presumptive proof that it “might” be so, and was a confirming pledge and evidence to them that so it “would” be, and was a glorious representation of it; but Christ's prophecy or prediction, that so it “should” be, more strongly ascertained it, since he said it, to whom all things were known from the beginning, and whose counsel shall stand, and not one word of his shall ever fail.

Whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. The prophecy concerning Christ's second coming is as “as a light”; it is a revelation of that which was in the dark, lay hid as a secret and mystery in the heart of God; and which could not be known by men, had it not been foretold by God; and it is made as prophecy in all other cases is, by throwing light, as to this affair, into the mind of him, or them, to whom it is revealed; and is a light to them to whom it is delivered, and which they should attend unto, as to a lamp or torch to guide and direct them; though in some sense it is but a feeble one, and is as a light “that shineth in a dark place”; meaning not the world, which is a place of darkness, ignorance, and error; nor merely the state of the saints in general in this life, who, at most and best, see but through a glass darkly; but has a particular respect to the

darkness which attends the saints, concerning the second coming of Christ, and which will especially attend them a little before that time. Prophecy holds out clearly that Christ will come again; that he will come in great glory, in his Father's, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels, and with great power, to raise the dead, and judge mankind; and though it gives hints, that, upon this, the saints shall be with Christ in the air, on earth, and in heaven; and that there will be new heavens, and a new earth; and that the saints shall reign here with Christ a thousand years, after which the Gog and Magog army will attack them without success; yet these are not so clear, as for saints to be agreed in the sense of them; and much more are they in the dark about the time of his coming. Now prophecy is the surest evidence and best light the saints have concerning this matter, “until the day dawn”; not the Gospel day, so much spoken of by the prophets, that had dawned already; rather a more clear knowledge of Christ, and Gospel truths, which will be in the spiritual kingdom and reign of Christ hereafter; or else the latter day glory, at the personal coming of Christ, when the light of the moon shall be as that of the sun, and that of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days; yea, when there will be no need of sun or moon, but Christ shall be come, and be the light of his people; (see ^{<231B>}Isaiah 30:26 60:1,2 ^{<621Z>}Revelation 21:23,24) after which will follow the everlasting day of glory, when all darkness will be gone, and saints shall see face to face, and know as they are known:

and the day star arise in your hearts; or “the sun”, as the Syriac version renders it; not Christ, the morning star, the dayspring from on high, and the sun of righteousness, who was already risen upon them; nor the grace of God implanted in their hearts, by which they were already called out of darkness, and made light in the Lord; but as the day star is the bringer of light, as the word used signifies, or the forerunner of the day, so it here intends the immediate signs and forerunners of the coming of Christ; which when observed in their hearts, and by their understandings, as being come to pass, they may lift up their heads with joy, because their redemption draws near, (^{<421Z>}Luke 21:28) and so the Ethiopic here renders it, “and redemption, arise for you in your hearts”. Now till this time the sure word of prophecy concerning Christ's second coming is to be “taken heed unto”, as a lamp, light, and torch, to direct us to it, to encourage us to love it, long for it, and hasten to it: and in so doing we shall “do well”; it will be well for the glory of God and Christ, this being setting our seals to them as

true; and well for ourselves to keep up our faith, hope, and expectation of it, unmoved.

Ver. 20. *Knowing this first*, etc.] Especially, and in the first place, this is to be known, observed, and considered;

that no prophecy of the Scripture, that is contained in Scripture, be it what it will,

is of any private interpretation: not that this is levelled against the right of private judgment of Scripture; or to be understood as if a private believer had not a right of reading, searching, examining, and judging, and interpreting the Scriptures himself, by virtue of the unction which teacheth all things; and who, as a spiritual man, judgeth all things; otherwise, why are such commended as doing well, by taking heed to prophecy, in the preceding verse, and this given as a reason to encourage them to it? the words may be rendered, “of one's own interpretation”; that is, such as a natural man forms of himself, by the mere force of natural parts and wisdom, without the assistance of the Spirit of God; and which is done without comparing spiritual things with spiritual; and which is not agreeably to the Scripture, to the analogy of faith, and mind of Christ; though rather this phrase should be rendered, “no prophecy of the Scripture is of a man's own impulse”, invention, or composition; is not human, but purely divine: and this sense carries in it a reason why the sure word of prophecy, concerning the second coming of Christ, should be taken heed to, and made use of as a light, till he does come; because as no Scripture prophecy, so not that, is a contrivance of man's, his own project and device, and what his own spirit prompts and impels him to, but what is made by the dictates and impulse of the Spirit of God; for whatever may be said of human predictions, or the false prophecies of lying men, who deliver them out how and when they please, nothing of this kind can be said of any Scripture prophecy, nor of this concerning the second coming of Christ; and this sense the following words require.

Ver. 21. *For the prophecy*, etc.] The whole Scripture, all the prophetic writings; so the Jews call the Scriptures *hawbnh*, “the prophecy”¹⁷, by way of eminence, and from the subject matter of the sacred word:

came not in old time by the will of man; was not brought into the world at first, or in any period of time, as and when man would, according to his pleasure, and as he thought fit: neither Moses, nor David, nor Isaiah, nor

Jeremiah, nor Ezekiel, nor Daniel, nor any other of the prophets, prophesied when they pleased, but when it was the will of God they should; they were stirred up to prophesy, not by any human impulse, but by a divine influence: with this agrees what R. Sangari says,

“that the speech of the prophets, when the Holy Spirit clothed them, in all their words was directed by a divine influence, and the prophet could not speak in the choice of his own words,”

or according to his will:

but holy men of God; such as he sanctified by his Spirit, and separated from the rest of men to such peculiar service; and whom he employed as public ministers of his word: for so this phrase “men”, or “man of God”, often signifies, (^{<BIB7>}1 Samuel 2:27 ^{<BIB7>}2 Timothy 3:17)

spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; who illuminated their minds, gave them a knowledge of divine things, and a foresight of future ones; dictated to them what they should say or write; and moved upon them strongly, and by a secret and powerful impulse stirred them up to deliver what they did, in the name and fear of God: which shows the authority of the Scriptures, that they are the word of God, and not of men; and as such should be attended to, and received with all affection and reverence; and that the Spirit is the best interpreter of them, who first dictated them; and that they are to be the rule of our faith and practice; nor are we to expect any other, until the second coming of Christ.