

## I. INTRODUCTION AND GREETING 1:1,2

### CHAPTER I

1:1-2 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

#### **Expanded Translation**

Simon Peter, a servant (bondman, slave) and apostle (commissioned messenger sent forth with orders) of Jesus Christ, to those having obtained an equally precious faith with us, in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Grace, favour, and blessing be upon you and peace be increased and multiplied as you acquire a full and accurate knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

#### **Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ**

(See I Pet. 1:1.) This inscription varies from that of the first letter in two particulars:

1. He adds his original name, Simon (Jn. 1:40-42).
2. Besides verifying his apostleship, he adds that he is a *servant* (*doulos*) of Jesus Christ.

What is a *doulos*? This word normally means a bondman, a slave, one who sustains a permanent servile relation to another. (But it sometimes indicates subjection without the idea of bondage.) Jesus employs this very word when he said to his apostles, "... whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister (*diakonos*); and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant (*doulos*) . . ." (See Matt. 20:20-28, also Luke 22:24-27). We become great in God's eyes when we forget our own glory and become servants!

It is significant that most of the epistles were written by men who chose to wear the title of *servant*: Rom. 1:1, Jas. 1:1, Jude 1:1, etc. They were bondmen and slaves of Christ, happy and joyous that they could maintain such a relationship!

#### **to them that have obtained a like-precious faith with us**

The word "obtained" (*lagchano*) means to obtain by lot. They had been allotted a faith that was just as precious and valuable

as the apostle's (if that is who is meant by "us").\*

What is the faith here spoken of? I would refer it to the *life* of faith, or the Gospel with all its privileges (as in Gal. 1:12). It cannot be subjective (belief), for it is given to us by God.\*\*

### **in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ**

Or, "our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Christ is God; Acts 20:28 (some MSS), Jn. 1:1, 10:30, I Jn. 5:20. In the realm or sphere of *his* righteousness (not our own merit) we have obtained our salvation.

### **grace to you and peace be multiplied**

A repetition of I Pet. 1:2.

### **in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord**

The word "knowledge" (*epignosis*) is a very important word in this second epistle, occurring again in 1:3, 8, 2:20, and the verb (*epiginosko*) in 2:21. It will be worth our time to notice a quote from Trench concerning it:

Of *epignosis*, as compared to *ginosis* (knowledge), it will be sufficient to say that *epi* must be regarded as intensive, giving to the compound word a greater strength than the simple possessed . . . a deeper and more intimate knowledge and acquaintance . . . St. Paul, it will be remembered, exchanges the *ginosko*, which expresses his present and fragmentary knowledge, for *epignosomai*, which would express his future intuitive and perfect knowledge (I Cor. XIII. 12) . . . It is bringing me better acquainted with a thing I saw before afar off.\*\*\*

It is thus more than knowledge; it is a precise and correct knowledge. It is more than acquiring a bundle of facts and placing them in the memory; it is *understanding* those facts and their relation to one another. It denotes exact or full knowledge, and expresses a greater care and concern on the part of the knower.

\*I have a hard time believing that the "us" here refers to the *Jews* generally, as some assert. Peter's first epistle was *largely* to Jewish *Christians* and this epistle was to the same group (II Pet. 3:1).

\*\*A careful examination of Eph. 2:8 will also reveal that "the gift of God" in that passage is not faith, but salvation. Belief is something *we* must exercise after the evidence is presented.

\*\*\*Trench, *Synonyms of The N.T.*, p. 285. See also Lightfoot's commentary on Col. 1:9.

## II. THE CHRISTIAN'S GROWTH, 1:3-21

### 1. Exhortations to Grow in the Full Knowledge of Christ 1:3-15

**1:3 seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue;**

#### **Expanded Translation**

We realize\* that his (God's) divine power and ability has given (granted, bestowed) to us all the things which pertain to the (spiritual) life and godliness (piety, true religion), through (by means of) the exact and full knowledge of the one (Christ) who called us by that glory and moral goodness which was uniquely his own.

**seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness**

Cp. Jas. 1:17-18, II Tim. 3:16-17. The word "divine" (*theios*), from *theos*, (God) is used here of God's *power*, and in v. 4 of his *nature*; in both instances it refers to that which proceeds or emanates from God. The "life" here is the *spiritual* life—the life of Christian conduct. "Godliness" (*eusebeia*) is a compound word made up of *eu*, well; good, and *sebomai*, to be devout or religious.

It denotes that piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is pleasing unto him.

To live the Christ-like life, our Father has provided every need—"all things." It is well to remember that God has given us *all*—mankind cannot improve upon it, nor can he rightfully add any more necessary things. What he supplies for the spiritual life cannot be improved upon.

**through the knowledge**

(*epignosis*, see comments, v. 2.)

**of him that called us by his own glory and virtue**

When the real knowledge of Christ is ours, and when it is carefully preserved and cultivated, the blessings which enable us to live a full, rich and prosperous Christian life shall be ours!

Christ called us by his *own* (*idios*) glory and virtue—not ours! But by living in close union with him, we shall be sharers in the divine nature (v. 4).

\**hos* with the genitive absolute presents the matter spoken of (Thayer) and in this case a truth is stated, hence an "editorial 'we'" seems appropriate.

Notice that the grace and peace Peter wishes upon his readers is granted *through this type of knowledge concerning God and Christ*. Friend, do you *know* your Saviour, or are you only casually acquainted? This verse should not only cause the Christian to see his need of studying the Scriptures, but of cultivating his friendship with this "Friend of friends" in *every* way.

**1:4 whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust.**

### **Expanded Translation**

Through which (glories and virtues) he has freely given us the precious (properly, held as of great price) and very great promises, in order that through them you might become sharers (partakers, fellowshippers) in the divine nature, having fled and escaped from the (moral, spiritual) corruption and destruction that is in the world through lust (strong passions of the flesh).

#### **whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises**

Promises it is well for us to stop and enumerate frequently. The word *doreomai* ("hath granted") which also occurred in verse 3, means to give freely, present, bestow; conveying the idea of generosity. In its only other New Testament appearance it is used, strangely enough, of the Roman procurator Pilate, when he *granted* the corpse of Jesus to Joseph of Arimathaea (Mk. 15:45).

God always fulfills his promises, for he cannot lie (see Titus 1:2). Solomon could say in his prayer as he dedicated the temple, "Blessed be Jehovah, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised; *there hath not failed one word of all his good promise*, which he promised by Moses his servant" (I Kings 8:56).

#### **that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature**

Peter had previously stated that he was "a *partaker* of the glory that shall be revealed" (I Pet. 5:1). The word *koinonos* means basically to be a partner or fellow (so *koinonia*, fellowship); then, to be a sharer, partaker, participant. We, as God's children, should partake in the nature of our Father, becoming like him in holiness (I Pet. 1:14-19).

**having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust**

The word *apopheugo* is an emphatic form of the common word *pheugo* (to flee, seek safety by flight). It is used only by Peter in the New Testament (here, 2:18, 20), always with reference to those who have fled from the world, its people, or its defilements. Many, alas, are still behind Satan's Iron Curtain and have never escaped to the freedom that is in Christ.

**CORRUPTION**—*phthora*, signifies a bringing or being brought into a worse condition, a destruction or corruption. Mankind has deteriorated in its morals and spiritual character. But how? Through its lusts—its strong cravings for evil, its submission to the desires of the fleshly mind. We either become degenerate or regenerate!

*God's Children* are those who have fled from and *escaped* the corruption of this world. They are no longer dominated by the flesh. Some, however, have *claimed* to be partakers of the *divine* nature, but have never escaped the lusts of their *human* nature. The strong desires for admiration, prestige, excessive food, strong drink, fornication, and material possessions are still within their hearts and minds. They have not yet escaped; they are still in bondage!

**1:5-7** *Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love.*

**Expanded Translation**

And, indeed, for this very reason (that is, that you might be partakers of the divine nature) having added to your life all diligence and earnest application, you must in your faith and trust supply (furnish, present) moral goodness; and in your moral goodness knowledge (intelligence, understanding); and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control enduring fortitude, and in your enduring fortitude godliness (piety, devotion); and in your godliness brotherly-kindness; and in your brotherly-kindness love.

**Yea, and for this very cause**

We have been granted great promises and escaped from the corruption of the world (v. 4), that we might be sharers in God's divine nature. *For this same reason*, we must make the virtues listed here our own.

**adding on your part all diligence**

“Adding on your part” being one word in the original (*pareisphero*). The King James Version’s “giving” does not provide an adequate meaning. It means, literally, to bring in besides (*para*, beside; *eis*, in; and *phero*, bring), hence to superinduce, add, exhibit in addition. In addition to what? To what God has *already* done (vs. 3-4). As Woods well remarks, the term indicates the comparative unimportance of man’s participation in his salvation, by showing that his part is only *contributory* to God’s work. Yet our part is very essential, for God’s part is not fulfilled in our lives *if we do not do ours*.

**DILIGENCE**—*spoude*, literally, haste; hence earnestness, zeal, earnest application. It is used of one’s earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, or striving after anything. Here it is prefaced with “all.”\* We are to *bend every effort* to do our best for our Master! If we would be diligent, then the virtues here mentioned will be inculcated into our lives.

**in your faith supply virtue**

Or, “supplement your faith with virtue,” and so on with each of these phrases. The word “supply” (*epichoregeo*) has been the subject of much discussion. It is an emphatic form of the word *choregeo*, which originally meant to be a chorus-leader, lead a chorus, and secondly to furnish a chorus at one’s own expense; procure and supply all the things necessary to fit out a chorus. This “chorus,” from the Greek *choros*, is not to be interpreted as equivalent to our word “choir.” It was a band of dancers, who, in the process of their dancing performance also sang.\*\* Both *choregeo* and *epichoregeo* later means to supply, furnish abundantly (*choregeo*, “supplieth” I Pet. 4:11), the latter word being more emphatic and expressive than the former. Just as this chorus had to have several items of dress and make-up to be completely furnished, so the Christian must *supply* these various attributes if he is to be equipped properly for the spiritual life.

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\*Jude so uses it in verse 3 of his epistle: “Beloved, while I was giving *all diligence* to write unto you . . .”

\*\*The word *choros* is used only once in the N.T.! Luke 15:25 where it merely refers to *dancing*.

**FAITH**—*pistis*, here referring to their trust, confidence, and belief in God and His Son. Such a precious faith had resulted in their salvation (1:1); now they were to build upon this foundation. So they are told to supplement their faith with

**VIRTUE**—*arete* (see also v. 3). Thayer says the word means “a virtuous course of thought, feeling, and action; virtue, moral goodness.” But as the word was commonly used, it referred to manliness, courage, vigor, and energy, particularly in overcoming or enduring anything. “True virtue is not a tame and passive thing. It requires great energy and boldness, for its very essence is firmness, manliness, and independence.”—Barnes. Many modern translators have decided “courage” most accurately expresses the idea of the original. This must be supplemented with

**KNOWLEDGE**—*gnosis*, the acquisition of information (concerning spiritual truth) and the understanding and discrimination which results from having such information. However, knowledge by itself is ruinous. It must be coupled with

**SELF-CONTROL**—*egkrateia*, the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites (Thayer); countenance, temperance. It is from the root *egkrates*, meaning strong, stout, possessed of mastery. The Christian must be a master of himself!

#### **and in your self-control patience**

**PATIENCE**—*hupomone*, literally an abiding under or after, hence, to remain behind (when others have departed); to remain, not to flee. “Patience” is not a *passive* virtue, it is a very *active* one! It is the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose to serve God, and his loyalty to faith and piety, *by even the greatest trials and sufferings*. It is that temper which does not easily succumb under suffering, as opposed to cowardice or despondence. See I Pet. 2:19-20. To this quality we must add

**GODLINESS**—*eusebeia*, from *eu*, well, good, and *seboimai*, to be devout. It denotes that piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him. This person is conscious and mindful of God and His will! Oh that their number might increase! With such an attitude, the next virtue should not be difficult. For true religion involves

**BROTHERLY-KINDNESS**—*philadelphia*. (See comments under I Pet. 1:22). But loving our brothers and sisters in Christ is not enough! To this specific type of love, we must add the general.

**and in your brotherly kindness love.**

**LOVE**—*agape*. (See comments, 1:22). The man possessing this quality seeks the good and welfare of all—whether deserved or not. In this way he becomes like God (Jn. 3:16). It is that outgoing, self-forgetful love that a person has within himself for God and others—all others! We are to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44). We are to “walk in love” (Eph. 5:2). Ours is to be a “labor of love” (I Thes. 1:3). We are to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15); and be rooted and grounded in love (Eph. 3:17).

It is interesting to note that Peter, like Paul, places love in a preëminent position. “And the greatest of these is love” (I Cor. 13:13). “And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col. 3:14).

**1:8-9** For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle or unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.

### **Expanded Translation**

For if these things are your possessions and superabound, you are not caused to be lazy (idle, at leisure) or unfruitful (not developing good works or personal virtues) as you direct your minds toward a full and accurate knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he who does not possess these things (mentioned above) is blind (to the truly good life) being near-sighted; having taken on a short memory (i.e., being forgetful) concerning the cleansing from his old (former) sins.

#### **For if these things are yours**

That is, the things spoken of in verses 5-7. The verb “are yours” (*huparcho*) here refers to one’s goods, possessions, or property—that which *he himself* possesses.

#### **and abound**

To superabound, be “more than enough,” to have in abundance. The word is *pleonazo*, which is from the root verb *pleo*, to fill. We must strive to *fill* our cup up and let it *run over* with these graces!



**they make you to be not idle**

*Argos*, according to Thayer, is compounded from the *alpha* negative plus *ergon*, work. Hence, literally, one without work or one who does not work—an inactive, idle person. His definition here is, “lazy, shunning the labor which one ought to perform.”

**or unfruitful**

*Akarpos*, bearing no fruit. A fruitful person is one who, as he grows older in the faith, *produces* in his life those Christian virtues that are a blessing to himself, God, and man.\* He leads other souls to Christ, reproducing “after his own kind,” and dispenses to others such fruits as are edifying and nourishing.

**unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**

That is, as we direct our minds toward the acquisition of the knowledge of Christ. Here again we have the significant word *epignosis* for “knowledge” (see v. 2). We noticed the normal word for knowledge (*gnosis*) appeared in verse 6 as one of those virtues to be added *as we obtain the full, rich, and intimate knowledge (epignosis) of Christ for which we are striving. All of the qualities of verses 5-7 are necessary as abounding possessions if we would have the epignosis of Christ.*

**for he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near**

The last five words are only one in the original—*muopazon*, a present participle which might be rendered “being near-sighted,” or “being dim-sighted.” It specifies the particular kind of blindness that afflicts this man—purblindness. Heaven, and the things that pertain to the spiritual life are pictured here as off in the distance—perceptible only to those with good eyesight (spiritual eyes); for some, having eyes, see not (Mk. 8:18). The Laodicean church was so blinded (Rev. 3:17). Spiritual truths, to such a one, are covered with a blanket of smoke,\*\* and he does not perceive their true significance.

\*See Jn. 15:1-8, Heb. 13:15, Tit. 3:14, Matt. 7:15-23, Phil. 1:11, and Col. 1:10 on the subject of fruitbearing.

\*\*The verb *tuphloo*, “to blind,” is from the root *tupho*, to raise a smoke, to darken by smoke. Now, when the air is filled with smoke, one’s vision is limited—the more smoke, the less vision. Discernment is difficult, except for things near. So it is with one’s spiritual discernment, when his mind is beclouded with the “affairs of this life.” He sees only the nearby things—the things of this corrupt world!

Do not fail to notice *who* the blind one is in this passage. It is the man who fails to see his need of adding these traits (vs. 5-7) to his life, and therefore does not possess them. The immediate, convenient, and lustful things attract him — but they lead to damnation!

**having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins**

His eyesight is short and so is his *memory*! Isaiah reminded the righteous of Israel, “look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence ye were digged,” (Isa. 51:1). To become forgetful and unmindful of what a blessing it is to have our sins removed is disastrous to our souls! “Blessed is he” David said, “whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psa. 32:1. See also 103:1-4). If we do not frequently recall to our minds the great blessing of being clean through the blood of Jesus, we will soon go back to the dogvomit and the sow-wallow (2:22).

**1:10-11 Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Expanded Translation**

On which account, brothers, you must exert yourself more to make your calling (the invitation of the gospel which you accepted) and election (your place among God’s chosen ones) sure, certain, and steadfast. For if you practice these things (mentioned in vs. 5-7) you will never stumble and fall (i.e., be lost eternally); for by following this course it shall be richly and abundantly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom (heaven) of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence**

Christians are in constant need of earnest effort in maintaining and confirming their salvation. (See “diligence” defined under v. 5, where we have the noun form of this verb.)

**To make your calling and election sure**

CALLING—*klesis*, a calling, is always used in the New Testament of that calling the origin, nature, and destiny of which are heavenly (the idea of invitation being implied). It is used especially of God’s invitation to man to accept the benefits of salvation, when they are presented through the Gospel message

(I Thes. 2:13-15). Here it refers to the *accepted* call, for these are "brethren."

**ELECTION**—*ekloge*, denotes the act of picking out, choosing. (See also I Thes. 1:4.) It refers to God's choice to bless a certain group with salvation. What group? Those who *obey* him—who comply with his plan for redeeming man (Heb. 5:9, Matt. 7:21-23). Concerning the "elect" and the free will of man, see comments under I Pet. 1:2-3.

**SURE**—*bebaios*, stable, firm, steadfast, established. If it is impossible, as some maintain, to lose one's salvation, what need is there here for such an exhortation? The very fact that these "brethren" were told to *make it firm*, presupposes that at least some of them were in danger of letting it slip from them.

### **for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble**

If you add to your lives the graces mentioned in vs. 5-7.

The apostle is not teaching here that his readers could expect to be without moral fault or shortcoming. If they would practice these things they would never "stumble" (*ptaio*), a word basically meaning to cause one to stumble or fall. But Thayer says it often signified in Greek writings *to fall into misery, become wretched*. The reference here, then, is to the *loss of our salvation*. If we practice the virtues here mentioned, we shall not fail to *stand up* and keep on progressing for Christ.

### **for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**

See "supplied" (*epichoregeo*) defined under v. 5. This entrance would be "richly" (*plousios*) supplied; that is, it will be abundant and rich in glory, dignity, and bliss.

The "eternal kingdom," in this passage, has reference to heaven, for *Christians* are to *enter into* it. Admittedly, there is a sense in which heaven is only the church (the usual meaning of "kingdom" in the New Testament) in a different role, for Daniel prophesied that the kingdom (church) would stand forever (Dan. 2:44) and the church is to be delivered up to the Father (I Cor. 15:23-24) at Christ's return. But I think *heaven* was definitely in the mind's eye of the apostle here, for these saints were to have an entrance (*eisodos*) into (*eis*) it. The word "entrance" (literally, a way into) may either refer to the act of entering, as it seems to here, or to a doorway or admission for getting into a place. We do not "enter into" a kingdom in which we are pres-

ently dwelling. Jesus used the term "kingdom" in a similar manner as he spoke of the Judgment Day. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). Paul, in one of his last written statements, said, "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto (*eis*) his heavenly kingdom . . ." (II Tim. 4:18).

**1:12 Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you.**

### **Expanded Translation**

On this account (the truths of verses 10-11) I shall be ready always (in the future, as I have been in the past) to remind you of these matters, although you know them and have been (and still are) established, fixed, and made fast in the truth which you possess.

#### **Wherefore**

Beginning a new thought based on the previous context, as he did in v. 10.

#### **I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things**

The future verb *melleso* ("shall be ready") indicates that the apostle will be prepared, as he was in the past and the present, to remind his readers of the truth they know.

But the better manuscripts have here *ouk ameleso*, "I shall not neglect" or "I shall not disregard." He would never be careless about fulfilling his responsibility toward them in keeping the truth before their minds.

The term "put you in remembrance" (*hupomimnesko*) signifies to cause to remember, remind, admonish of something. It is not meant by this that the readers had *totally forgotten* the truths which had established them. Rather, he continues

#### **Though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you**

Here is an ever-present need in the church: to exhort, admonish, and teach Christians to be conscientious in keeping what they have learned in mind, and act rightly upon that knowledge. Paul said, "only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk" (Phil. 3:16).

We need to be reminded and exhorted even though we may presently be established in the truth. (See "established," *sterizo*, defined under I Pet. 5:10.) "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12).

**1:13-14 And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me.**

### **Expanded Translation**

Yet I think (deem), it right, proper, and correct, as long as I am in this tent (as long as my spirit dwells in my body), to arouse your mind (literally, wake you up) by putting you in remembrance; realizing that the laying aside of my tent (that is, my *body*) will be abrupt, sudden, and swift, even as our Lord Jesus Christ made known unto me.

### **And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle**

Our bodies are the tabernacles or tents housing our spirits. ("Tabernacle," (*skenoma*) is translated "habitation" in Acts 7:46.) By calling it a tent, the apostle emphasized the temporary and perishable nature of our outward beings.

Peter did not plan to put himself "on the shelf" in his older years. "As long as I am alive and able," he says, "I will stir you up." What a wondrous attitude to have toward the work of the Gospel! Let us serve our Master *to our fullest capacity until our dying day!*

### **to stir you up by putting you in remembrance**

(See also 3:1).

*Diegeiro*, "stir (you) up" means to wake up, awaken, arouse from sleep. It is here used as a metaphor meaning to arouse or activate the mind, animate.

The word rendered "putting . . . in remembrance" (*hupomnesis*) is the noun form of the verb defined in v. 12. One means every faithful Gospel preacher must use to challenge and activate God's people, is to *remind* them of their responsibilities and privileges as Christians.

### **knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly**

Peter was now getting along in years, for he was an older man when he wrote his first epistle (I Pet. 5:1). Now he speaks of the laying aside of his earthly tabernacle and the time of his decease

(v. 15). When the spirit returned to God who gave it (Eccl 12:7), it would leave its earthly abode or tabernacle, his body.

The adverb *tachinos* (the poetic and later form of *tachus*) means literally swift, speedy, and has reference to the *manner* of his death, not the time.\* His life was to be taken abruptly and suddenly in his old age.

#### **even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me**

Where? In Jn. 21:18-19 are these words: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself and walkest whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." The significant part of the prophecy was *not* the fact that Peter would die during his older years—most people do that. The historian plainly tells us Christ was signifying by what *manner* of death he should glorify God in his old age. It was to be an abrupt, sudden, forceful death.

Now that Peter *was* an older man, he knew he was completely qualified to fulfill this prophecy at any moment. Some day in the near future, his life would be suddenly snuffed out.

**1:15 Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance.**

#### **Expanded Translation**

But I will give forth earnest effort so that after my exodus (death), you shall always be able to bring these things back to mind.

#### **Yea, I will give diligence**

See v. 5, where the noun form of the verb *spoudazo* (which also occurs in v. 10), is defined.

#### **that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance**

Peter wanted his work for the Master to be a lasting one. He wanted the effects of his labors to live on after his "decease." The

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\*However, some lexicons have "near at hand," or "impending" as a proper definition for the word here, agreeing with the King James Version's "shortly." And Thayer *does* cite several secular sources to show that the word may refer to an event soon to come.

word *exodos* indicates literally a way out; then, a going out, departure. See Heb. 11:22, "departure." It is used here of one's departure from this earth, as in Luke 9:31.

By his instructions and exhortations, including the writings of his two epistles, he hoped they would keep the true teachings in mind and live by them.

## 2. The certain and trustworthy sources of saving knowledge, 1:16-21

**1:16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.**

### **Expanded Translation**

For we did not follow (use as our guide) cleverly or cunningly invented fiction stories (lying fables, myths), when we disclosed to you the power (might) and arrival (literally, presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses and lookers-on of his magnificence, splendor, and excellence.

Beginning from v. 12, Peter discussed the message and attitude of a true preacher of the Gospel. Now he begins a discussion of the *false* teachers—and the validity of his own teachings in contrast to theirs. His warnings concerning these deceivers continue throughout chapter three (3:3-5, 16, 17). We will note their doctrines as we proceed.

### **For we did not follow cunningly devised fables**

That is, we apostles (see below). The word "follow" (*exakolutho*) is a rather emphatic word, and Peter is the only New Testament writer to use it. It means literally to follow out; hence, imitate, observe another (person or thing) and follow it as a guide. See also 2:2, 15.

The "fable" (*muthos*, hence our word myth), has an interesting history. It primarily signified speech or conversation. The first syllable *mu-*, meant to close, keep secret, be dumb, (thus our word *mute*). So Trench says our word must have originally signified the word (speech) shut up in the mind, or muttered within the lips. "At first there is nothing of the fabulous, still less of the false, involved in it." At the second stage of its history *muthos* is the mentally conceived, as set over against the actually true. These were stories that were intended for good, involving a higher teaching or a moral. Some of these ancient "fables" are still widely read, as Aesop's.

“. . . at its third stage *muthos* is the fable, but not any more the fable undertaking to be, and often being, the vehicle of some lofty truth; it is now the *lying* fable with all its falsehoods and all its pretences to be what it is not . . .” It is a word which belongs to the kingdom of darkness and lies.

The apostle calls them *cunningly* devised (*sophizo*) fables, i.e., skillfully invented, devised cleverly and artfully.\*

**when we made known unto you the power and coming of  
our Lord Jesus Christ**

Which coming? The word *parousia* (presence) when referring to the Saviour, has consistent reference to the second advent in the epistles of Paul, and is certainly so used in 3:4 and 12 in *this* epistle. Unless this passage be the sole instance, there is no New Testament passage in which it is used of his *first* coming or his life, ministry, and death while on earth.

The word here rendered “and,” (*kai*) is *sometimes* better translated “even.” If such is the case here, we have “power, even the coming,” both words referring to the return of our Lord to earth. Surely at that time his might will be displayed as never before!

The second coming of Christ was the very doctrine the mockers were denying (3:3-4). But neither this, nor any of his other teachings, could be disputed by Peter and the apostles (particularly here, James and John), for they were

**eyewitnesses of his majesty**

And, therefore, had every reason to *believe* him. To be an eyewitness (*epoptes*)\*\* affords the highest kind of evidence—evidence that is not easily set aside. The author was frequently an actual “on-looker” of the great events in the life of Christ. (See the *Biographical Sketch* of Peter’s life.) The transfiguration affords an excellent example, and is therefore cited in vs. 17 and 18.

The true preacher and teacher of the Gospel message is not a trickster, deceiver, or magician, *nor does he attempt to follow such!* His business is to acquire and reach, insofar as it is possible to do so, the true teachings of Christ and the apostles. *These* teachings, and no others, make up his doctrinal menu. Peter did not follow the myths of men—let us learn from his example!

\*This word also had a good sense at *first*, meaning to make wise, enlighten (II Tim. 3:15, “make . . . wise”).

\*\*Notice our discussion of the verb form (*epopteuo*) under I Pet. 2:12, 3:2.



**1:17-18 For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount.**

### **Expanded Translation**

For he (Christ) was the one who received from God the Father honor (respect, valuing as one of worth) and glory (credit and glorification arising from the good opinion of another) when a voice such as this was conveyed (borne, carried) by the Majestic Glory: This is my beloved (dear, loved) Son, in whom I am well pleased (approve, think well of). And this voice we ourselves heard conveyed (borne, carried) out of heaven, being, as we were, with him in the holy (sacred) mountain.

**For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**

The term "Majestic Glory" is not indicated as a title of God in the King James Version's "excellent glory," but should be so considered. (It is one word in the original, meaning, by itself, magnificence, splendid, becoming or befitting a great man.)

In Verse 16 we are given the testimony of their *eyes*—they actually saw the majesty of Christ when he was transformed before them. In *these* verses we have their "earwitness" — what they themselves *heard* concerning Christ from the very mouth of God!

Both honor and glory were conferred upon the Saviour in the statement, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Father also added, "hear ye him"—this Son of mine must be listened to and obeyed!

**and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount**

The mountain is labeled "holy" simply because Christ's transfiguration took place there. (Most geographers believe it was Mount Tabor.) Similarly, Zion is often called the "holy mount" by the prophets because the temple and Jerusalem, the "holy city" were located there. (Isa. 27:13, 66:20, etc.)

The "we ourselves" of this verse is deliberately emphatic in the Greek. We saw it with our own eyes, heard God's voice with our own ears—we were actually there *with* him! Peter, James and John had the most personal and iron-clad evidence of Christ's

deity. Therefore, when they preached His *message*, they could do so with certainty, boldness and authority.

See Matt. 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-10, Luke 9:28-36 concerning the transfiguration of Christ. The reading of *all* these accounts is necessary for a complete picture.

**1:19 And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts:**

### **Expanded Translation**

So we have the word (i.e., the statements) uttered by the prophets more fully established (by this event that James, John and I witnessed). You will do well to continually pay close attention to it as unto a lamp (torch) shining (and thus *providing light*) in a dark (squalid, murky) place, until the time when the daylight breaks through the darkness of the night and the Morning Star arises (comes into being) in your hearts.

#### **And we have the word of prophecy made more sure**

That is, the discourses and utterances of the prophets are *made more certain* because of the things these apostles witnessed on that great day of the transfiguration. The event supplied *additional confirmation* of the deity of Jesus.

The meaning is *not* that the prophetic word of the Old Testament was "more trustworthy" or "more certain" (that is, *superior*) evidence concerning the majesty and greatness of Christ *than the personal testimony the three apostles had received on the mount*. Rather, the thought is that the prophecies concerning Jesus were *confirmed* in that wondrous event. A literal rendering of this phrase is, "and we have the prophetic word more firm"—*not* more firm than the transfiguration evidence, but more firm *ITSELF* *because of* the transfiguration. Peter includes himself in the "we have . . ." It is difficult to believe that Peter himself considered *any* evidence more iron-clad than that which he had seen with his own eyes and heard with his own ears. A careful reading of the account in the Gospel will reveal that Peter was *especially* impressed at the occasion.

The prophecies of the Old Testament (v. 21) which foretold of Christ's coming, deity, and greatness, are rendered more sure and unimpeachable now that he *had* come and the transfigura-

tion had taken place. Therefore, the American Standard Version's "And we have the word of prophecy *made more sure*" is to be preferred above the King James Version's "We have also a more sure word of prophecy," for it appears that the translators of the former version were only trying to say that the transfiguration made the prophecies more *certain* and, therefore, more *believable*. This, I believe, was the intention of the Holy Spirit.

But what was there about the transfiguration of Christ that would solidify and confirm the prophecies? Notice these points:

1. The miracle of the transforming of Christ was itself an act of God.
2. The miraculous presence of Moses and Elijah, and their talking with Him. Also, their miraculous disappearance.
3. The bright cloud overshadowing them—probably the same as the *shekinah* of the Old Testament — indicating God's presence.
4. God's own voice proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5)—not Moses, not Elijah, but *MY BELOVED SON!*
5. The closest friends of Jesus (Peter, James and John) were deeply moved by this miracle, and *believed*. Peter himself wanted to build three tabernacles on the spot as a memorial.

#### **whereunto ye do well that ye take heed**

Literally, "unto which [word] you do well taking heed." Both "do" and "take heed" are in the present tense—indicating continuous or regular action. The latter (*prosecho*) is defined, literally, to bring to or near; hence, to turn the mind to, be attentive to, devote thought and effort to. The prophetic utterances, being as they are very trustworthy and reliable (as the apostle has just shown) are deserving of our most careful consideration and study!

#### **as unto a lamp shining in a dark place**

If a man doesn't have a lamp in a dark place (the original indicates a *very* dark place), he will soon be *lost*. He is dependent upon the light for guidance. Here *prophecy* is spoken of as such a lamp.

Of John the baptizer, Jesus said, "He was the lamp that burneth and shineth; and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light" (Jn. 5:35). David could say of God, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105).

What a passage this is! How we should ever regard the prophecies of the Old Testament with value, prizing them as greatly as a lamp on a dark and dangerous night, and heeding the light they provide.

**until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts**

This speaks of the duration of the lamp. It shined until the Gospel sunlight of Jesus Christ arrived and fulfilled its prophecies, that is, until the Gospel Age (See Luke 1:78-79.) The "day star" in Greek, *phosphoros* (literally, light bringing star), had technical reference to the planet Venus in the world of astronomy. The day fully "dawned" at Pentecost, but the day star (which signifies the approach of day) does not arise **IN OUR HEARTS** until we accept and obey Christ individually (Acts 3:19-20).

**1:20-21 knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.**

### **Expanded Translation**

Knowing this first (keeping this foremost in your minds): that no prophecy of Scripture exists (or, is created; or, occurs) of the prophet's own invention (the prophet did not put his personal slants on the message he spoke). For no prophecy ever came (was brought) by the will (purpose, design) of man; rather, men spoke from God, being moved (borne, carried) by the Holy Spirit.

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These verses tell us *why* the prophecies are worthy of our time and attention; because, when they were given, the *Holy Spirit* was speaking!

**knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation**

There are at least three basic views concerning the meaning of this phrase.

1. The view of the Roman Catholic Church: Because every part of Scripture was written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit and declared as such by the Church (note the capital "C"), *the Church is also to interpret it*. God has promised to guide the

Church into all the truth to the end of the world; therefore, we must submit to the judgment of the Church and not depend upon our own fallible and erroneous judgment.\*

Thus we are not to trust the meaning *we* would place on Scripture, for the divine task of "rightly dividing the word of truth" is in the hands of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and, finally, in the hands of its head, the pope.

2. That no one can explain prophecy by his own mental power, as it is not a matter of subjective interpretation. To explain it, one needs the same illumination of the Holy Spirit in which it originated. The idea is that Divine assistance is needed. Thus several translators have renderings such as, "that no prophecy of Scripture can be understood through one's own (unaided) powers."

That there is a degree of truth to this explanation I would not question, though it seems to present several difficulties. Consider a third possibility:

3. That no prophecy of Scripture exists as a result of one's private or personal views. The reference in the phrase under consideration is not primarily to the *receivers* of prophecy, but the *writers* or *speakers* of it, the prophets.

The word *epiluisis* ("interpretation") is from the verb *epiluo*, which, as Macknight points out, primarily signified to untie a knot, to unloose a bundle so as to disclose what it contains. The prophets only released the "burden" God had given them, *only untied the bundle and revealed its contents to mankind for all ages to view*. So Young's literal translation reads, "No prophecy of the Writing doth come of private exposition . . ." The writers of Scripture did not put their own construction on the God-breathed words they wrote.

". . . the apostle teaches that the truths which the prophets communicated were not originated by themselves; were not their own suggestion or invention; were not their own opinions, but were of higher origin, and were imparted by God; and according to this passage may be explained '. . . that it is a great principle

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\*A summary of the footnote in the Duay-Rheims (Catholic) Version of the Bible. The word "Church," in Roman Catholic terminology, does not here have reference to the members of that organization, or even to the Priests and Bishops (as a full reading of the quote will show). It refers to "The Most Holy See"—the Pope himself!

in regard to the prophets, that what they communicated was not of their own disclosure; that it was not revealed or originated by them.'"—Barnes.

**for no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit**

This verse seems to confirm the rightness of our interpretation of verse 20. No true prophecy *ever* came because some man willed it or decided to manufacture it. Rather, men spoke as though they were the very mouth of God.

How strongly were the prophets influenced by the Holy Spirit as they spoke? The apostle specifies that they "were moved" (*phero*) by its power. (The same word is rendered "came" earlier in the verse.) They were "borne along," or "impelled" by the Holy Spirit in their speech—not expressing their own thoughts, but expressing the mind of God in words provided and ministered by Him.\*

### QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER I

1. How does Peter's description of himself in the salutation differ from that found in the first letter?
2. To whom is this epistle addressed (using the terminology of verse 1)?
3. Look at v. 1. Who does the "us" refer to?
4. Do you remember another possible translation of the phrase "in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ"?
5. The word "knowledge" (*epignosis*) appears in verses 2, 3, 8. Do you remember its significance? How does it differ from the "knowledge" (*gnosis*) of verses 5 and 6?
6. What has God's power granted unto us?
7. Through what do we become partakers of the divine nature?
8. In *what way* do we become partakers in the divine nature? (i.e., how should we be like God?)
9. From what must we *escape* if we are to be partakers of the divine nature?
10. The various attributes of vs. 5-7 are to be added "for this very cause." For *what* very cause?
11. What is the meaning of "virtue" (v. 5)?  
(Note: In a sense, *all* of these graces may be thought of as "virtues" in *our* terminology. But the apostle obviously has

\*W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.

## LETTERS FROM PETER

- a particular one in mind, as he lists it separately.)
12. What is meant by "patience" (v. 6)?
  13. Carefully distinguish between the graces of "brotherly kindness" and "love."
  14. Why do you suppose love is placed at the end of the list? Does any other New Testament writer do this?
  15. These traits are not simply to be ours, but also must \_\_\_\_\_ (?)
  16. If so, then we will not be \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  17. The man that lacks these things is spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ (?)
  18. Does he see *anything*?
  19. What has he forgotten?
  20. What is our "calling" and "election"?
  21. What is "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"?
  22. Is it ever necessary to *remind* someone of that which they already know?
  23. In what city was Peter's "tabernacle" located?
  24. Did Peter ever intend to stop working in God's vineyard?
  25. He was going to stir them up by \_\_\_\_\_ (?)
  26. Where did Jesus signify that Peter's death would be swift?
  27. He wanted them to remember these things even after his \_\_\_\_\_ (?)
  28. What great event is being described in vs. 16-18?
  29. To whom, then, does the "we" refer in v. 16?
  30. Through what two basic avenues had testimony concerning the deity of Christ been brought to their minds?
  31. Explain, in the context, the phrase, "and we have the word of prophecy made more sure" (v. 19).
  32. How is Bible prophecy to be heeded?
  33. When did "the day dawn"?
  34. Who or what is the day-star?
  35. How does it arise *in our hearts*?
  36. What is the Roman Catholic view of the phrase "no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation"?
  37. Carefully define the word "interpretation."
  38. Give a satisfactory explanation of the meaning of verses 20 and 21, keeping the *whole context* in mind.