

2 Peter Devotionals & Sermon Illustrations

2 Peter 1

Illustrations and Devotionals

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A Dr. Congdon once approached Bible teacher R. A. Torrey, complaining he could get nothing out of his Bible study.

“Please tell me how to study it so that it will mean something to me.”

“Read it,” replied Dr. Torrey.

“I do read it.”

“Read it some more.”

“How?”

“Take some book and read it twelve times a day for a month.”

Torrey recommended Second Peter.

Dr. Congdon later said,

“My wife and I read 2 Peter three or four times in the morning, two or three times at noon, and two or three times at dinner. Soon I was talking 2 Peter to everyone I met. It seemed as though the stars in the heavens were singing the story of 2 Peter. I read 2 Peter on my knees, marking passages. Teardrops mingled with the crayon colors, and I said to my wife,

“See how I have ruined this part of my Bible.”

“Yes,” she said, “but as the pages have been getting black, your life has been getting white.”

Dr. Kenneth Gangel offers a summary of the reasons Peter wrote his second letter. “This final impassioned plea to grow in Christian maturity and guard against false teachers was precipitated by the fact that [Peter’s] time was short (2 Peter 1:13-15) and that these congregations faced immediate danger (2 Peter 2:1-3). He also desired to refresh their memories (2 Peter 1:13) and stimulate their thinking (2 Peter 3:1-2) so they would remember his teaching (2 Peter 1:15)... And he encouraged his readers with the certainty of Christ’s return (2 Peter 3:1-16).” ([Today in the Word](#))

"Precious faith." 2 Peter 1:1 - Octavius Winslow

Truly is faith the crowning grace of all, and a most costly and precious fruit of the renewed mind. From it springs every other grace of a gracious soul. It has been designated the 'queen' grace, because a royal train ever attends it. Faith comes not alone, nor dwells alone, nor works alone. Where faith in Jesus is, there also are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, patience, godly sorrow, and every kindred perfection of the Christian character, all blending in the sweetest harmony, all uniting to celebrate the glory of God's grace, and to crown Jesus Lord of all. Is it, then, surprising that this should be distinguished from all the others by the term "precious faith"? No! that must needs be precious which unfolds the preciousness of everything else. It makes the real gold more precious, and it transmutes everything else into gold. It looks to a "precious Christ" It leads to His "precious blood." It relies upon the "precious promises." And its very trial, though it be by fire, is "precious." It so changes the nature of the painful, the humiliating, and the afflictive, as to turn a Father's frown, rebuke, and correction, into some of the costliest mercies of life. Precious grace, that bids me look upon God in Christ as reconciled; and which, in the absence of all evidence of sight, invites me to rest upon the veracity of God! which takes me in my deepest poverty to Jesus, my true Joseph, having in His hands and at His disposal all the treasures of grace and glory! These are some of the characteristics of this royal grace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." By faith I can not only say that Jesus died for sinners, but that He died for me. Faith makes the great atonement mine. Faith appropriates to itself all that is in Christ. It lays its hand upon the covenant of grace, and exclaims, "All things are mine." Oh, to see one bowed to the dust under a sense of sin, yet by faith traveling to the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus for salvation, and finding it too- to mark the power of this grace in sustaining the soul in deep waters, holding it up in perilous

paths- is a spectacle on which God Himself must look down with ineffable delight.

2 Peter 1:1

[2 Peter 1:1 Like Precious Faith](#) - Alexander Maclaren

2 Peter 1:2

Real Wisdom

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God (2 Peter 1:2).

An early evening thunderstorm provided the setting for the most beautiful rainbow I'd ever seen. But when I tried to describe it to my wife, I became thoroughly frustrated, for its beauty defied my words. In an attempt to understand what I had observed, I read an article in the encyclopedia. It explained that a rainbow is an arc showing the colors of the spectrum, which is a display of light separated according to wavelengths. Each wavelength consists of a different color. There-fore the rainbow appears as a band of colors. The article increased my understanding, but it offered only cold facts. It didn't capture the rainbow's glory. Abstract knowledge adds to my intellectual under-standing, but only seeing its beauty can reach my emotions.

Second Peter 1 mentions two different kinds of knowledge. In verses 5 and 6, the author used a Greek word for knowledge that means the abstract information needed for spiritual growth. But in verses 2, 3, and 8, he used the Greek word that denotes a more complete, practical knowledge of Christ, which is actually the goal of such growth. These two terms differ in the same way that reading about a rainbow differs from seeing its beauty. Job spoke of that distinction after his testing when he said to the Lord, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You" (Job 42:5). As you increase your knowledge about God, pray that you may also grow in your knowledge of God. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

True wisdom starts with a heart full of faith, not a head full of facts.

2 Peter 1:2 - We need grace, free grace - J C Philpot

"May grace and peace be multiplied unto you." 2 Peter 1:2

When we see and feel how we need grace every moment in our lives, we at once perceive the beauty in asking for an abundant, overflowing measure of grace. We cannot walk the length of the street without sin. Our carnal minds, our vain imaginations, are all on the lookout for evil. Sin presents itself at every avenue, and lurks like the prowling night-thief for every opportunity of secret plunder. In fact, in ourselves, in our fallen nature, except as restrained and influenced by grace, we sin with well near every breath that we draw. We need, therefore, grace upon grace, or, in the words of the text, grace to be "multiplied" in proportion to our sins. Shall I say in proportion? No! If sin abounds, as to our shame and sorrow we know it does, we need grace to much more abound! When the 'tide of sin' flows in with its muck and mire, we need the 'tide of grace' to flow higher still, to carry out the slime and filth into the depths of the ocean, so that when sought for, they may be found no more.

We need grace, free grace . . .

grace today,
grace tomorrow,
grace this moment,
grace the next,
grace all the day long.

We need grace, free grace . . .

healing grace,
reviving grace,
restoring grace,
saving grace,
sanctifying grace.

And all this multiplied by all our . . .

wants and woes,
sins,

slips,
falls, and
unceasing and aggravated backslidings.

We need grace, free grace . . .

grace to believe,
grace to hope,
grace to love,
grace to fight,
grace to conquer,
grace to stand,
grace to live,
grace to die.

Every moment of our lives we need . . .

keeping grace,
supporting grace,
upholding grace,
withholding grace.

"May grace and peace be multiplied unto you." 2 Peter 1:2

2 Peter 1:3

[2 Peter 1:3 Man Summoned by God's Glory and Energy - Alexander Maclaren](#)

The great Scottish Bible expositor Alexander MacLaren once wrote: "We may have as much of God as we will. Christ puts the key of the treasure-chamber into our hand, and bids us take all that we want. If a man is admitted into the bullion vault of a bank and told to help himself, and comes out with one cent, whose fault is it that he is poor?" ([Today in the Word](#). Moody Bible Institute)

2 Peter 1:4

[2 Peter 1:4 Partakers of the Divine Nature - Alexander Maclaren](#)

2 Peter 1:4 "Exceeding great and precious promises" - If you would know experimentally the preciousness of the promises, and enjoy them in your own heart, meditate much upon them. There are promises which are like grapes in the wine-press; if you will tread them the juice will flow. Thinking over the hallowed words will often be the prelude to their fulfilment. While you are musing upon them, the boon which you are seeking will insensibly come to you. Many a Christian who has thirsted for the promise has found the favour which it ensured gently distilling into his soul even while he has been considering the divine record; and he has rejoiced that ever he was led to lay the promise near his heart.

But besides meditating upon the promises, seek in thy soul to receive them as being the very words of God. Speak to thy soul thus, "If I were dealing with a man's promise, I should carefully consider the ability and the character of the man who had covenanted with me. So with the promise of God; my eye must not be so much fixed upon the greatness of the mercy—that may stagger me; as upon the greatness of the promiser—that will cheer me. My soul, it is God, even thy God, God that cannot lie, who speaks to thee. This word of his which thou art now considering is as true as his own existence. He is a God unchangeable. He has not altered the thing which has gone out of his mouth, nor called back one single consolatory sentence. Nor doth he lack any power; it is the God that made the heavens and the earth who has spoken thus. Nor can he fail in wisdom as to the time when he will bestow the favours, for he knoweth when it is best to give and when better to withhold. Therefore, seeing that it is the word of a God so true, so immutable, so powerful, so wise, I will and must believe the promise." If we thus meditate upon the promises, and consider the Promiser, we shall experience their sweetness, and obtain their fulfilment. (Spurgeon, C. H. Morning and evening July 27 AM)

God's Precious Promises - Corrie ten Boom and her family had a special secret that helped them get through their difficult days under Hitler's regime. The family members would quietly ask each other, "What do you have in your shoe, Mama?" "What do you have in your shoe, Daddy?" "What do you have in your shoe, Betsy?" The answer—precious portions of Scripture that they had torn from their Bible. They were literally standing on the promises of God! (Turning Points Magazine)

Precious - Three things are called precious in the Scripture: the blood of Christ is called "precious blood," 1 Peter 1:19; and faith is

2 Peter 1:4. - D L Moody

- In regeneration, the corruption is escaped.
 - In reformation, only the pollution is escaped.
-

2 Peter 1:4

Cheering Promises - Precious faith and precious promise are necessarily linked together (2Pe1:1-4). The promises excite the faith, and faith reckons upon the fulfilment of promise. One is sometimes asked why it is that God's Word seems to fail, and that the righteous do appear to be forsaken! But surely the reason is, not that there is any failure on God's side to fulfil His promises, but that the promise is not claimed. It is possible to carry around a pocket-full of bank notes and cheques, and to die of starvation because they have not been cashed. When you have found a promise that just fits your need, do not rest content until you have laid it before God, and claimed its fulfilment.

Note that everything which is needed for life and godliness is already granted to us in Jesus our Lord (2Pe1:3). We have not to pray to our Father for things which He has not anticipated, but to claim those which He has already given. The one purpose of God's preparation is that we should not only escape the corruption which is in the world, but become "partakers of His Divine Nature." What a marvellous promise is this, which almost passes human thought and comprehension, that we should become animated and filled by the very nature of God!

Note the recurrence of the phrase "these things" in the following verses. When they abound in us we cannot be idle or unfruitful. The octave of qualities enumerated reminds us of those Chinese boxes, each of which contains a smaller one, until we finally arrive at some precious article enclosed in the innermost. Faith apprehends everything else--manly courage, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, kindness, and above all, love. To be deficient in "these things" is to be short-sighted (R.V.).

The Apostle says that the soul which has incorporated into itself these qualities of character will be welcomed into the Eternal Kingdom. It will enter the Harbour royally, with every sail set and pennant flying, and receive a choral entrance from the eager crowds that await its approach (2Pe1:11). Let us be diligent in our appropriation of God's great and precious promises, so that we shall never fail.

PRAYER - Grant us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, always to seek Thy kingdom and righteousness; and of whatsoever Thou seest us to stand in need, mercifully grant us an abundant portion; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN. (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk. June 9)

Big-bellied mercies "He has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." 2 Peter 1:4 Thomas Brooks

The promises are a precious book; every leaf drops myrrh and mercy. The promises are golden vessels, which are laden with the choicest jewels which heaven can afford, or the soul can desire. All our spiritual, temporal, and eternal good is to be found in the belly of the promises. The promises are precious beds of spices; they are bottles filled with those heavenly dews that will never fail—but will uphold and nourish the soul to life eternal. Promises are big-bellied mercies. There is nothing you can truly call a mercy—but you will find it in the belly of a promise.

2 Peter 1:4 Spurgeon

Partakers of the divine nature - To be a partaker of the divine nature is not, of course, to become God. That cannot be. The essence of Deity is not to be participated in by the creature. Between the creature and the Creator there must ever be a gulf fixed in respect of essence; but as the first man Adam was made in the image of God, so we, by the renewal of the Holy Spirit, are in a yet diviner sense made in the image of the Most High, and are partakers of the divine nature. We are, by grace, made like God. "God is love"; we become love—"He that loveth is born of God." God is truth; we become true, and we love that which is true: God is good, and he makes us good by his grace, so that we become the pure in heart who shall see God. Moreover, we become partakers of the divine nature in even a higher sense than this—in fact, in as lofty a sense as can be conceived, short of our being absolutely divine. Do we not become members of the body of the divine person of Christ? Yes, the same blood which flows in the head flows in the hand: and the same life which quickens Christ quickens his people, for "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Nay, as if this were not enough, we are married unto Christ. He hath betrothed us unto himself in righteousness and in faithfulness, and he who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Oh! marvellous mystery! we look into it, but who shall understand it? One with Jesus—so one with him that the branch is not more one with the vine than we are a part of the Lord, our Saviour, and our Redeemer! While we rejoice in this, let us remember that those who are made partakers of the divine nature will manifest their high and holy relationship

in their intercourse with others, and make it evident by their daily walk and conversation that they have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. O for more divine holiness of life! (Spurgeon, C. H. Morning and evening: September 16 AM)

2 Peter 1:4 An inexhaustible mine of wealth! Charles Spurgeon

"He has given us His exceeding great and precious promises!" 2 Peter 1:4

The promises of God are an inexhaustible mine of wealth to the believer. Happy is it for him if he knows how to search out their secret veins, and enrich himself with their hidden treasures.

The promises of God are a spiritual armory, containing all kinds of offensive and defensive weapons. Blessed is he who has learned . . .

to enter into the sacred arsenal,
to put on the breastplate and the helmet, and
to lay his hand to the spear and to the sword!

The promises of God are a spiritual pharmacy, in which the believer will find all kinds of restoratives and blessed elixirs. There is . . .

an ointment for every wound,
a cordial for every faintness,
a remedy for every disease.

Blessed is he who is well skilled in heavenly pharmacy and knows how to lay hold on the healing virtues of the promises of God!

The promises are a spiritual storehouse of food to the Christian. They are as the granaries which Joseph built in Egypt, or as the golden pot wherein the manna was preserved. Blessed is he who can take the five barley loaves and fishes of promise — and break them until his five thousand necessities shall all be supplied, and he is able to gather up baskets full of fragments.

The promises are the Christian's Magna Carta of blessings; they are the title deeds of his heavenly estate! Happy is he who knows how to read them well and call them all his own.

Yes, they are the jewel room in which the Christian's crown treasures are preserved. The regalia are his, secretly to admire today — which he shall openly wear in Paradise hereafter. He is already privileged as a king with the silver key that unlocks the strong room; he may even now grasp the scepter, wear the crown, and put the imperial mantle upon his shoulders!

O, how unutterably rich are the promises of our faithful, covenant-keeping God! If we had the tongue of the mightiest of orators, and if that tongue could be touched with a live coal from off the altar — yet still it could not utter a tenth of the praises of the exceeding great and precious promises of God. Nay, those who have entered into Heavenly rest, whose tongues are attuned to the lofty and rapturous eloquence of cherubim and seraphim — even they can never tell the height and depth, the length and breadth of the unsearchable riches of Christ, which are stored up in the treasure house of God — the promises of the covenant of His grace!

During the pioneer era in America, a poverty-stricken old man found his way into a settlement on the western frontier. He had run out of supplies, so he was looking for food. As he walked through the camp, someone stopped to talk with him and noticed that he wore a small pouch on a ribbon around his neck. The old man explained that it was a charm given to him many years before. He opened it, removed a crumpled paper, and handed it to his inquirer. Upon examining it, the villager discovered that it was a regular discharge from the federal army. It was signed by General George Washington himself, and it entitled the man to a pension for life. How surprised the old soldier was to find out that all these years he had been carrying a bona fide promise that his needs would be met! Because he had not claimed it, though, he had been a wandering, hungry, penniless man. We too sometimes wander around in the wilderness of spiritual poverty while God's ample provision goes unused (2Peter 1:3, 4). We forget that God has opened to us "His riches in glory" through the work and merits of Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:3). —P R. Van Gorder

2 Peter 1:4 - Thomas Brooks - A mine of rich treasures! ("A Heavenly Cordial" 1665)

"He has given us his very great and precious promises." 2 Peter 1:4

Oh how should saints then treasure up those precious promises, which assure their preservation, protection, maintenance, deliverance, comfort, and everlasting happiness! The promises are a mine of rich treasures! They are a garden full of the choicest and sweetest flowers of paradise! In them are wrapped up all celestial contentments and enjoyments! Therefore study them more

than ever, and prize them more than ever, and improve them more than ever.

Divine Nature - YOU'RE like an old car that has had a new motor placed inside. When you look at the vehicle, it looks like the same old car. But there is a new life source within it, a new motor. When you have a new motor you don't need to be concerned about changing spark plugs or connecting wires. All you have to do is understand you have a whole new motor. Many of us are trying to live our Christian lives by changing spark plugs on Monday, checking connections on Tuesday, changing wires on Wednesday, working on the gas line on Friday, and replacing the belt on Saturday. But all of the work was taken care of when you got the new motor. - Tony Evans

2 Peter 1:4

Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. -Vanish for ever all thought of indulging the flesh if you would live in the power of your risen Lord. It were ill that a man who is alive in Christ should dwell in the corruption of sin. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" said the angel to Magdalene. Should the living dwell in the sepulchre? Should divine life be immured in the charnel house of fleshly lust? How can we partake of the cup of the Lord and yet drink the cup of Belial? Surely, believer, from open lusts and sins you are delivered: have you also escaped from the more secret and delusive lime-twigs of the Satanic fowler? Have you come forth from the lust of pride? Have you escaped from slothfulness? Have you clean escaped from carnal security? Are you seeking day by day to live above worldliness, the pride of life, and the ensnaring vice of avarice? Remember, it is for this that you have been enriched with the treasures of God. If you be indeed the chosen of God, and beloved by him, do not suffer all the lavish treasure of grace to be wasted upon you. Follow after holiness; it is the Christian's crown and glory. An unholy church! it is useless to the world, and of no esteem among men. It is an abomination, hell's laughter, heaven's abhorrence. The worst evils which have ever come upon the world have been brought upon her by an unholy church. O Christian, the vows of God are upon you. You are God's priest: act as such. You are God's king: reign over your lusts. You are God's chosen: do not associate with Belial. Heaven is your portion: live like a heavenly spirit, so shall you prove that you have true faith in Jesus, for there cannot be faith in the heart unless there be holiness in the life. (Spurgeon, C. H. Morning and evening June 26 PM).

"Lord, I desire to live as one
Who bears a blood-bought name,
As one who fears but grieving thee,
And knows no other shame."

2 Peter 1:5

[2 Peter 1:5 The Power of Diligence](#) - Maclaren

Henrietta Mears speaks of applying all diligence "It is difficult to steer a parked car, so get moving."

Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge (2 Peter 1:5).

Apply Diligence - **Dr. Baylis**, speaking on 2 Peter 1:1-11, was stressing the fact of our responsibility to apply diligence to incorporating godly qualities into our lives. He quoted C.H. Spurgeon, "God sends every bird his food, but He doesn't throw it into the nest." God has provided everything for living a godly, Christian life, but I must do something, some work, to make it mine (**EDITORIAL COMMENT:** And I would add "do it" by relying NOT on your old man, your natural power, but on the new man, filled with and enabled by the Holy Spirit Who is in you continually "energizing" you, giving you the gifts of desire and power to work out your salvation in fear and trembling in a manner pleasing to the Father. cf Php 2:12+, Php 2:13NLT+)

DILIGENCE (Spurgeon in Feathers for arrows)

SELECT a large box and place in it as many cannon-balls as it will hold, it is after a fashion full, but it will hold more if smaller matters be found. Bring a quantity of marbles, very many of these may be packed in the spaces between the larger globes; the box is full now, but only full in a sense, it will contain more yet. There are interstices in abundance, into which you may shake a considerable quantity of small shot, and now the chest is filled beyond all question, but yet there is room. You cannot put in another shot or marble, much less another cannon-ball, but you will find that several pounds of sand will slide down between the larger materials, and even then between the granules of sand, if you empty yonder jug there will be space for all the water, and for the same quantity several times repeated. When there is no space for the great, there may be room for the little; where the little cannot enter, the less can make its way; and where the less is shut out, the least of all may find ample room and verge enough. Now, the diligent preacher may not be able to preach more sermons, his engagement book is crowded. He may not be able to offer more

public prayers, or to search the word of God more constantly; there is as much time occupied with these things as could well be given to them. Still there must be stray moments, occasional intervals and snatches, which might hold a vast amount of little usefulnesses in the course of months and years. What a wealth of minor good, as we may think it to be, might be shaken down into the interstices of ten years' work, which might prove to be as precious in result, by the grace of God, as the greater works of the same period. Little fishes are sweet, and these little works might possess in blessing what they lacked in bulk.

2 Peter 1:5

Long-distance runner Paavo Nurmi of Finland was an Olympic champion, winning twelve medals (nine of them gold) in the 1920, 1924, and 1928 Games. Nurmi was famous not only for his achievements, but also for running with a stopwatch in his hand to check his performance. It's good to know how you're doing along the way if you want to win a long-distance race. Peter would probably have liked Nurmi's commitment to excellence. The apostle was determined to win his own race--the Christian race--and help other believers to do the same. Since we're also in the same race, we need to pay close attention to Peter's teaching. (Today in the Word)

2 Peter 1:5

Pursuing Knowledge

In an interview at Santa Monica College a few years ago, a student told me that he was extremely interested in finding out all he could about religion, that he enjoyed studying it, and that he was looking for truth. When I questioned him further about his desire to learn so much about religion, he explained that he wanted to expand his education. His curiosity drove him to find out what motivates religious people, but he said he was not the kind of person who gets up in the morning with a desire to do the will of God.

We are like this student when we want to learn more about the Bible for some reason other than to know God better and to do what He wants us to do. The apostle Peter said that we should increase our understanding for one primary purpose—to bring our faith to maturity. Our goal in pursuing knowledge should be self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, which are marks of a wise Christian. This progression toward maturity results in a full experiential knowledge of Christ (v. 8).

God doesn't ask us to increase knowledge for the sake of knowledge. He asks us to grow in our understanding so that we can become God-centered, loving, productive people. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Unless it leads to wisdom, knowledge can be dangerous.

2 Peter 1:5-6

Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge, etc.” If thou wouldest enjoy the eminent grace of the full assurance of faith, under the blessed Spirit's influence, and assistance, do what the Scripture tells thee, “Give diligence.” Take care that thy faith is of the right kind—that it is not a mere belief of doctrine, but a simple faith, depending on Christ, and on Christ alone. Give diligent heed to thy courage. Plead with God that he would give thee the face of a lion, that thou mayest, with a consciousness of right, go on boldly. Study well the Scriptures, and get knowledge; for a knowledge of doctrine will tend very much to confirm faith. Try to understand God's Word; let it dwell in thy heart richly.

When thou hast done this, “Add to thy knowledge temperance.” Take heed to thy body: be temperate without. Take heed to thy soul: be temperate within. Get temperance of lip, life, heart, and thought. Add to this, by God's Holy Spirit, patience; ask him to give thee that patience which endureth affliction, which, when it is tried, shall come forth as gold. Array yourself with patience, that you may not murmur nor be depressed in your afflictions. When that grace is won look to godliness. Godliness is something more than religion. Make God's glory your object in life; live in his sight; dwell close to him; seek for fellowship with him; and thou hast “godliness”; and to that add brotherly love. Have a love to all the saints: and add to that a charity, which openeth its arms to all men, and loves their souls. When you are adorned with these jewels, and just in proportion as you practise these heavenly virtues, will you come to know by clearest evidence “your calling and election.” “Give diligence,” if you would get assurance, for lukewarmness and doubting very naturally go hand in hand. (Spurgeon, C. H. Morning and evening: July 26 AM)

2 Peter 1:5-7 J.R. Miller - A splendid sum in addition!

"ADD . . .

to your faith, virtue;
to virtue, knowledge;

to knowledge, self-control;
to self-control, perseverance;
to perseverance, godliness;
to godliness, brotherly kindness; and
to brotherly kindness, love." 2 Peter 1:5-7

Our verses present us with a splendid sum in addition! These graces are to be added one to another.

Faith comes first. But faith cannot stand-alone, so we add to our faith, virtue — that is, conformity of one's life and conduct to the highest moral and ethical principles.

Next we are to add knowledge. Knowledge, of course, of the true kind — wisdom for life, spiritual knowledge, knowledge of God, and of God's will as found in His Word.

Self-control comes next — this is the key of all noble life. No matter how strong we are, or how much we know — if we have not self-control, then something is lacking. He who can rule himself is strong — while he who lacks self-mastery, no matter what other gifts he may have, is pitifully weak.

Self-control produces another element — perseverance, perseverance in all Christian duties.

Another quality to be added to patience is Godliness — Godlikeness, Christlikeness.

Then comes brotherly kindness — affectionateness and forbearance to those among whom we mingle.

Last of all — love, the crowning gift and blessing!

These elements of character make up Christian maturity.

"For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:8

2 Peter 1:5-11 Fit for Heaven - Henry Allan Ironside

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12).

This is true of every Christian, and there are no degrees in this divine fitness. We are made meet to be partakers of our glorious inheritance the instant we are cleansed from our sins and receive the new nature, which is imparted by a divine operation when we are born of God. How different are the thoughts of even some of the best of men! How often we hear it said of some devoted and aged believer, "He is fit for heaven at last." But he was just as truly fit for heaven the moment he received Christ as he is at the end of a long life of devoted service. Fitness does not depend upon experience. But in this connection it is well to remember that there is something more than the Father's house, the inheritance of the saints in light, before us. It is important that we should also have in mind the coming glorious kingdom. In 2 Peter 1:10, 11 we are told, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The expression, "these things," refers to the various Christian virtues enumerated in verses 5-7. It is through these things we are fitted for a place in the coming kingdom, but it is the justifying, regenerating grace of God that alone makes us meet for our heavenly inheritance. In other words, it is important that we distinguish between salvation by grace and reward for service.

2 Peter 1:6. D L Moody - Notes from his Bible

- Temperance is the virtue of prosperity.
- Temperance—moderation—is the silken string running through the pearl chain of all the virtues.

2 Peter 1:6

... perseverance, and in your perseverance godliness

An Elusive Virtue - In 1404, twenty-five-year-old Lorenzo Ghiberti won a commission to build and adorn a pair of bronze doors for the north side of the baptistery in the cathedral of Florence, Italy. He took twenty-one years to design and cast the masterpieces,

dividing the doors into twenty-eight New Testament panels. They cost \$550,000. The donors then asked him to make corresponding double doors for the baptistery's east side. This endeavor took twenty-seven years and featured the Old Testament in ten panels. He spent forty-eight years on just two projects, but his time and effort left artistic masterpieces for generations to admire. Building spiritual lives challenges us to a perseverance that defies even Ghiberti. The free will, prejudice, stubbornness, and pride that mocks God are all obstacles to change and growth. The life produced by the Spirit in the Word seldom comes easily or quickly. People are never as easy to mold as bronze and wood. Although a skilled craftsman can predict how basic elements will react under given stimuli, the spiritual leader never masters the moods and reactions of people. (Hurley, V. [Speaker's sourcebook of new illustrations](#) Dallas: Word Publishers)

2 Peter 1:8

As the Life, So the Fruit - IF we desire to glorify our Lord by fruitfulness, we must have certain things within us; for nothing can come out of us which is not first of all within us. We must begin with faith, which is the groundwork of all the virtues; and then diligently add to it virtue, knowledge, temperance, and patience. With these we must have godliness and brotherly love. All these put together will most assuredly cause us to produce—as our life fruit—the clusters of usefulness, and we shall not be mere idle knowers, but real doers of the Word. These holy things must not only be in us, but abound, or we shall be barren. Fruit is the overflow of life, and we must be full before we can flow over.

We have noticed men of considerable parts and opportunities who have never succeeded in doing real good in the conversion of souls; and after close observation, we have concluded that they lacked certain graces which are absolutely essential to fruit bearing. For real usefulness, graces are better than gifts. As the man is, so is his work. If we would do better we must be better. Let the text be a gentle hint to unfruitful professors, and to myself also. (Spurgeon, C. H: Faith's Checkbook)

2 Peter 1:8

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In growing a healthy, fruit-bearing church, try this plan.

Plant three rows of squash:

- Squash gossip.
- Squash criticism.
- Squash indifference.

Plant seven rows of peas:

- Prayer
- Promptness
- Perseverance
- Politeness
- Preparedness
- Purity
- Patience

Plant seven heads of lettuce:

- Let us be unselfish and loyal.
- Let us be faithful to duty.
- Let us search the Scriptures.
- Let us not be weary in well-doing.
- Let us be obedient in all things.

- Let us be truthful.
- Let us love one another.

No garden is complete without turnips:

- Turn up for church.
- Turn up for meetings, in prayer, and Bible study.
- Turn up with a smile, even when things are difficult.
- Turn up with determination to do your best in God's service.

After planting, may you grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). And may you reap rich results. (Morgan, R. J. [Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes](#) Page 122. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

2 Peter 1:8

Holy Fruit - Billy Graham told about the conversion of H. C. Morrison, the founder of Asbury Theological Seminary. He said that Morrison, a farm worker at the time, was plowing in a field one day when he saw an old Methodist preacher coming by on his horse.

Morrison knew the elderly gentleman to be a gracious, godly man. As he watched the old saint go by, a great sense of conviction of sin came over Morrison and he dropped to his knees. There between the furrows in his field, alone, he gave his life to God.

When he concluded the story, Billy Graham earnestly prayed, "Oh, God, make me a holy man."

Augustine said, "Do you wish to be great? Then begin by being." True and lasting greatness stems from what we are. Though we may seem to be doing nothing at all, we can be doing everything worthwhile if our lives are being styled by God's grace. Even if we are set aside through old age, sickness, or seclusion, we can still be productive. Are you bedridden or house-bound? Your holy life can still bear fruit.

This can happen only as we stay in close relationship with Jesus (John 15:1-11). Only then will we have the fruit that "remains" (v.16). —D H R ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I lived so that all whom I met could see
His Holy Spirit shining through me;
O friend, is this what our hearts can say
As we sit and think at the close of day?
—Nicholson

The most powerful testimony is a holy life.

2 Peter 1:8

The Garden - Imagine the beauty of fields where the tassels of dark green corn and heads of golden wheat wave gently in the breeze. Or picture in your mind gardens where magnolias bloom, roses spill out their perfume, and pansies lift their faces toward the sun.

Then think of a plot of land that is a monument to neglect--overgrown with weeds that choke out the growth of what is good, useful, and beautiful.

Now let's envision another kind of garden, one that has to do with spiritual realities. The apostle Peter told us how we can avoid being "barren" and "unfruitful" (2 Pet. 1:8). He encouraged believers to be diligent and spiritually productive, developing the character qualities of faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (vv.5-7).

Doing this requires effort. It demands that we work on our relationship with God--reading the Bible regularly, praying often, resisting temptation, focusing on obedience to Him, and reaching out to others in love. Peter mentioned the additional benefits of fruitfulness: a growing assurance, spiritual stability, and a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Savior (vv.10-11).

How productive is your life's garden? --HVL ([Our Daily Bread](#))

The Master is seeking a harvest
In lives He's redeemed by His blood;
He seeks for the fruit of the Spirit,
And works that will glorify God.
--Lehman © 1924 H. S. Lehman

A fruitful life is a joyful life.

2 Peter 1:9

The Cure for Short Sight - For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near."

THE CHRISTIAN graces which we have to supply present themselves to the Apostle's mind as the golden links of a chain or necklace, which begins with Faith, and ends with Love, so that Faith and Love clasp in the centre (2 Pe 1:5-7).

The idea of lavish expenditure is here associated with the word translated "Supply" (2Pe 1:5-11). Among the ancient customs of Greece, was the expression of goodwill to society on the part of leading citizens by the provision of public entertainments, in honour of benefactors, or generals returning victorious from war. Rich men craved permission to bear the cost, as in modern days men will endow hospitals and libraries.

So the Apostle says, See to it that you spare no cost in the glorious provision of "these things"; spare neither thought nor pains, if only these Christian graces are in you and abound. Then, for you also, there will be a profuse expenditure of Heavenly welcome. You will not enter the Heavenly City unnoticed and alone. A choral and processional greeting will be yours. You will not enter the port like some water-logged vessel, but with colours flying and all sails set! (2 Pe 1:11.)

Notice the order of these graces. Each is in the other like those Chinese boxes, each of which contains a number of smaller ones which fit inside. Opening the one marked Faith, manly courage should be discovered; opening courage, knowledge should present itself; from knowledge, we should come on self-control; within self-control should be patience; inside patience we have towards men should be godliness towards God; then we find brotherly love; and finally we come on Love!

The Apostle says that those who lack "these things" are short-sighted--they see only the things of this world, not the real things of eternity. The tenth verse warns us that the careful culture of these things in the heart will prevent stumbling in the outward life (Judges 1:20-24). So many people wait to feel good before they act goodness. The Divine method is to step out on the path of obedience to Christ, believing that He will supply the needed grace.

PRAYER

Accept, O Most Merciful Father, of this renewed dedication which we make of ourselves, our bodies, souls, and spirits unto Thee. Grant that we may be like Jesus, pure and undefiled, meek and gentle, peaceable, patient, contented and thankful. AMEN. (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk. September 6)

2 Peter 1:9

Identity Crisis - Several years ago I read about a young husband who forgot that he was married. According to the newspaper account, the day after the newlyweds returned from their honeymoon, the husband was 3 hours late getting home from the office. Dinner was burned--and his bride was burning mad. He had absentmindedly gone to his mother's house!

That's a funny story. But when people who belong to the Savior suffer from a similar memory problem, it's not very humorous. The apostle Peter reminded those of us who have entered into a relationship with Jesus that we are not what we used to be. As God's people, we should always keep in mind that we have been cleansed from our old sins (2 Pet. 1:9) and that we have a new purpose in life.

We who are united to Christ need to remind ourselves continually that we belong to Him, and we are to choose to live for His glory. By studying the Scriptures, communing with the Father, and fellowshiping with His children, we can avoid the spiritual identity crisis of forgetting who we are.

Believer, you have been spiritually reborn into God's family. Failing to remember this will result in something far more serious than a burned dinner (vv.8-11). --M R De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. [All rights reserved](#))

Yes, I know Him as my Savior,

For my sins are washed away;
And I'll never cease to praise Him
For this truth through endless day.
--Hallan

Your identity crisis is resolved when you identify with Christ.

2 Peter 1:10

Regarding "Make your calling and election sure" C H Spurgeon wrote...

When Mr. Whitefield was once asked to use his influence at a general election, he returned answer to his lordship who requested him that he knew very little about general elections, but that if his lordship took his advice, he would make his own particular "calling and election sure." It was a very proper remark.

I beseech you, give no sleep to your eyes till you have read your title clear to mansions in the skies. Shall your eternal destiny be a matter of uncertainty to you? What! Is heaven or hell involved in this matter, and will you rest until you know which of these shall be your everlasting portion? Are you content while it is a question whether God loves you or is angry with you?

2 Peter 1:10 J C Philpot

"Therefore brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you shall never fall." --2 Peter 1:10

Have you any testimony to your effectual calling? Has grace indeed laid hold of your heart? O that you might know more fully--more powerfully--what a blessed hope of eternal life is laid up in the bosom of this heavenly calling, that it might cheer and encourage you to press on more and more to realize all that is given you in Christ, both for here and hereafter, in present grace and in future glory! In knowing what is the hope of their effectual calling, the saints of God learn that this hope embraces all things which are made theirs in Christ, whether life or death, or things present or things to come, that all are theirs; and for this blessed and all-sufficient reason, that they are Christ's and Christ is God's. It is by making sure our calling that we make sure our election--for the one is the sure evidence of the other; and thus, if doubt and uncertainty hang over our calling, the same doubt and uncertainty must rest upon our election to eternal life. But as these doubts and fears are removed by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and we can clearly see and fully believe that the grace of God effectually called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, then we see by faith what is laid up in the bosom of this calling, and what a glorious hope of eternal life is thereby afforded as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and thus abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:10

David W. Folsom, author of the book *Assets Unknown*, estimates that there are over one trillion dollars worth of unclaimed property in the United States held in federal and state accounts, waiting to be claimed by the rightful owners. These assets include stocks and bonds, unclaimed pension and insurance benefits, and uncashed dividend checks. This staggering figure illustrates the "high cost of forgetting what you own." As Christians we are "co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17); we can't afford to lose sight of what God is holding in store for us. Forgetting spiritually costs more than forgetting financially.

Peter desired that his readers not forget what they learned. To the apostle, faith in Christ was far too "precious" (v. 1) to be allowed to slip away. The challenge for believers--then and now--is to make our "calling and election sure." This entails both God's choice of His own and His action in bringing His chosen ones to Himself. Rather than forgetting who we are and where we have come from, we need to do the things that will spiritually strengthen us. In this way, we can guard ourselves against falling into temptation or believing the lies of the deceivers. Peter knew these believers in Asia Minor were well-established in the faith. But he also realized how powerful the lure of false teaching would be for them, especially after he and the other apostles were gone. This was a critical issue for Peter; when he wrote this letter he knew that he was not going to live much longer. Jesus had revealed this to the faithful disciple who had loved and served Him for so long. The Lord had predicted Peter's martyrdom years earlier (John 21:18-19). Many historians believe that Peter was put to death in Rome shortly after 2 Peter was written. ([Today in the Word](#))

2 Peter 1:10 Be diligent in your faith.

From Spurgeon's sermon, "Particular Election" "...make your CALLING and ELECTION sure." 2 Peter 1:10 Be diligent in your faith. Take care that your faith is of the right kind - that it is not a creed but a credence - that it is not a mere belief of doctrine, but a reception of doctrine into your heart, and the practical light of the doctrine in your soul. No man has any right to believe

himself elect of God, unless he has been renewed by God; no man has any right to believe himself called, unless his life be in the main consistent with his calling, and he walk worthy of that whereunto he is called. Out upon an election that lets you live in sin! Away with it! away with it! The true Christian desires that day by day he may grow more holy; that hour by hour he may be more thoroughly renewed, until conformed to the image of Christ, he may enter into bliss eternal. om which we can obtain renewed supplies. "He gives more grace." Grace is no scanty thing, doled out in pittances. The fountain is full and overflowing--the treasury is large and inexhaustible; myriads are hourly hanging on it, and drawing from it, and yet there is no diminishing! Out of that fullness all may receive grace for grace. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8 Christian! Oh, repair to the throne of grace for a fresh supply, and, be assured, that there is . . . not a trial you can encounter, not a sorrow you can experience, not a difficulty you can meet with in your daily life, for which Jesus, in the treasury of grace, has not a corresponding solace. The throne of grace is the only refuge for the sin-stricken, woe-worn spirit.

2 Peter 1:10-11

Preparing Or Enjoying? - When you're 9 years old, you don't want to think a lot about the future. That's why it sometimes doesn't do any good to explain to my son Steven the long-term advantages of struggling through long division and practicing the piano. While I'm trying to convince him that he needs to be preparing for his future, his mind is set on enjoying the present.

All of us have that tension in our lives. Like children basking in the freedom of a summer day, we would prefer to spend our time enjoying life--playing, engaging in recreation, even savoring the joys of working at a job we love--instead of doing the hard work of preparing for our future.

If you have put your wholehearted faith in Jesus Christ to save you, you have the assurance of a future with Him in heaven. That might cause you to sit back and relax, thinking that the rest of life is just a vacation. Yet that's not what the Bible teaches.

In Philippians 2:12, Paul said to "work out" our salvation. And in 2 Peter 1:8, the call is to add godly character qualities to our lives. As we do these things, we are preparing for the time when we will be with our Lord.

Coasting is not an option. Let's prepare ourselves for service here on earth and for eternity with God in heaven. --J D Brannon ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

All things of earth are but a mist
That soon will fade away;
What lasts throughout eternity
Is what we do today. --DJD

Now is the time to invest in eternity.

2 Peter 1:11

[2 Peter 1:11, 15 Going Out and Going In - Maclaren](#)

CREEPING INTO HEAVEN - W H Griffith-Thomas

A Christian on his deathbed spoke these words:

'I shall be satisfied if I can but creep into heaven on my hands and knees.'

We can easily understand the spirit which prompted those words; he felt his service was as nothing compared with his need for God's mercy. At the same time there is another sense in which the words are not rightly applicable to the Christian, or Peter speaks of our having an abundant entrance given us in the everlasting kingdom (2 Peter 1:11).

In keeping with this, Paul constantly emphasized the Christian life with words such as wealth, riches, abundance, and he prayed that Christians might be

'filled with all the fullness of God' (Ephesians 3:19)

Paul was not satisfied with a bare entrance into heaven. His desire was that both he and his converts would have the fullest possible Christian life here below, and then enter fully into the joy of the Lord above. This is the true Christian life—the life of fullness, power, depth and reality." (W. H. Griffith Thomas)

2 Peter 1:11

An entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly.

There are two ways of entering a port. A ship may come in, waterlogged and crazy, just kept afloat by continual working at the pumps; or it may enter with every sail set, her pennon floating at the masthead. The latter is what the apostle desires for himself and those whom he addresses. He desired that an entrance abundant should be ministered unto them.

An abundant entrance is really a choral entrance. The idea may be illustrated from the entrance of a Roman conqueror to his city, whence he had been sent out to war. Amid the crowds of spectators, the procession climbed slowly to the capital, while sweet incense was poured on the air, and music raised her sweetest and most inspiring strains. Will your entrance into heaven be like that? Will you enter it, saved so as by fire, or to receive a reward? Will you come unrecognized and unknown, or be welcomed by scores and hundreds to whom you have been the means of blessing, and who will wait you? Will your coming make music right through the home of God? This is the meaning of the choral entrance. It reminds us of those words of Christ about the friends whom we have made by the right use of money welcoming us into eternal habitations.

The conditions on which that choral welcome will be afforded are clearly enunciated here. Look back to 2 Peter 1:5–6 (r.v.). There the identical word of the choir occurs again, translated “supply.” It is as though these eight Christian graces composed the octave choir, and that our diligence in acquiring and cultivating these will be rewarded hereafter by the choral welcome into the eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus. Wherefore give diligence. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily)

2 Peter 1:11. D L Moody's notes in his Bible

- Many Christians say, “If I can take a back-seat in heaven, I shall be satisfied.” But is God satisfied?

2 Peter 1:11

Travel Light

As Christians, we need to think of ourselves as travelers who are just passing through this sinful world. We are not permanent residents, but pilgrims on a journey to a better land. Therefore, we need to “travel light,” not burdening ourselves with an undue attachment to the material things of life. the more we care for the luxuries and possessions of earth, the more difficult will be our journey to heaven.

The story is told about some Christians who were traveling in the Middle East. They heard about a wise, devout, beloved, old believer, so they went out of their way to visit him. When they finally found him, they discovered that he was living in a simple hut. All he had inside was a rough cot, a chair, a table, and a battered stove for heating and cooking. The visitors were shocked to see how few possessions the man had, and one of the blurted out, “Well, where is your furniture?” The aged saint replied by gently asking, “Where is yours?” The visitor, sputtering a little, responded, “Why, at home, of course. I don’t carry it with me, I’m traveling.” “So am I,” the godly Christian replied. “So am I.”

This man was practicing a basic principle of the Bible: Christians must center their affections on Christ, not on the temporal things of this earth. Material riches lose their value when compared to the riches of glory. To keep this world’s goods from becoming more important to us than obeying Christ, we need to ask ourselves, “Where is our furniture?” ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

2 Peter 1:12

It was important for Peter to bring known truths to remembrance. Believers are apt to forget them, and then they do not exert the influence that they ought. Amid the cares, the business, the amusements, and the temptations of the world, the ministers of the gospel render us an essential service, even if they do nothing more than remind us of truths which are well understood, and which we have known before. A pastor need not always aim at originality; he renders an essential service to mankind when he reminds them of what they know but are prone to forget. He endeavors to impress plain and familiar truths on the heart and conscience, for these truths are most important for mankind. Though we may be very firm in our belief of the truth, yet it is appropriate that the grounds of our faith should be stated to us frequently, that they may be always in our remembrance. (Albert Barnes)

2 Peter 1:16 (Psalm 119:152)

No Revisions or Extensions - All speeches on the floor of Congress or in committee meetings become part of the Congressional

Record. But you can't always be sure that what was originally spoken or decided will be in the Record. This is due to the exercise of one of the most rigidly guarded privileges of House and Senate members: the right to "revise and extend" their remarks. It was granted originally to allow minor technical corrections in bills and speeches. Congressmen now use it to delete erroneous statements and claims and to add to or subtract from bills that are passed. The Bible's author wrote and, having written his record, never changed a word. He is never embarrassed by an untimely remark; he never apologizes for anything he said. He never said anything in haste and, consequently, never has to repent in leisure. What is written stands written. We may teach all that God has revealed through Christ in his Word—nothing less and absolutely nothing more. -Speaker's Sourcebook

G Campbell Morgan - Blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.—2 Pet. 1.9

That is a graphic description of the spiritual condition of a Christian who fails to make advance in Christian experience. It is because of that condition that there is arrest in development. The description moves in two stages. The first describes the condition in itself; the second gives the reason of the condition. The condition is that of blindness. This is immediately qualified by the words, "seeing only what is near." It is near-sightedness rather than total blindness. Such a man sees the things of time, and fails to discern those of eternity; he sees the material facts, but not the facts of which they are but passing expressions; in short, he sees himself and his fellowmen, but not God. This near-sightedness is destructive of a true Christian experience, and therefore makes advance impossible. The reason is that he has "forgotten the cleansing from his old sins." That is to say, he has failed to respond to all the enlargement of life and vision which came to him when he received the cleansing of his nature at the very beginning of his Christian life. What a revelation or reminder this is of the greatness of the blessing which comes to the soul when it is accepted, pardoned, justified, cleansed! That wondrous experience always means the relating of the life to the eternal, the opening of the eyes to God. In order to the maintenance of that relationship, and the continuity of that clear spiritual vision, it is necessary to abide at the Cross, never to forget the awe and wonder of forgiveness. In proportion as we wander from that solemn sense of grace, we become near-sighted, and all our Christian life is arrested.

2 Peter 1:19. D L Moody - from notes in his Bible

- The Bible does not say, as many seem to think, that prophecy is a dark place which we will do well to avoid, but rather that it is like a light shining in a dark place.

2 Peter 1:19 The prophetic word made more sure - quotes

C H Spurgeon - "Peter was with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, and nothing could shake Peter's conviction that he had been there in the midst of that heavenly glory. And yet for all that, Peter says concerning the inspired word, "We have a more sure word of prophecy." He felt that even the memory of that vision, which he had assuredly seen, did not always yield to him so much assurance as did the abidingly inspired Word of God. You ought to feel the same..

D L Moody -There's no better book with which to defend the Bible than the Bible itself.

D L Moody -The study of God's Word brings peace to the heart. In it, we find a light for every darkness, life in death, the promise of our Lord's return, and the assurance of everlasting glory.

Robert E Lee -In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength.

Henry Ward Beecher - The Bible is God's chart for you to steer by, to keep you from the bottom of the sea, and to show you where the harbor is, and how to reach it without running on rocks or bars.

2 Peter 1:19 - J C Philpot

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19

The "sure word of prophecy" is the mind of God revealed in the Scripture of truth. This is compared to "a light shining in a dark place." This "dark place" is the heart of man, and a dark place it is; and the light shining in the dark place is when the Spirit of God pours his own heavenly light into the dark heart. The Spirit of God works by the word of God. He makes use of the Scriptures of truth, by means of these blessed Scriptures to communicate light. There is no light in the Scriptures themselves; they cannot teach a man to profit, that being God's prerogative. They are a dead letter, nothing but a collection of words and syllables; there is no light in them, no, not a particle, but what the Spirit of God throws upon them when he shines through them.

I might compare the Scriptures to the moon--the moon has no light in herself, but she borrows all her light from the sun--blot out the

sun from the sky, and the moon would cease to shine. Or I might compare the Scriptures to what James compares them--"If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass." Here the Scriptures are compared to a mirror, or looking-glass. But light must shine upon the glass. Of what use is a looking-glass in a dark night? It reflects no image; it presents to you no likeness; you discern not your features therein; it might be nothing else but a naked board, as far as any reflection it gives of your face. But let light come into the room, or let the sun rise and shine upon it, and your countenance is reflected therein. So with the word of God; it is utterly ineffectual until the Spirit shines upon it; and when he shines upon it, he casts at the same time a ray of light into your heart; and as he shines with this twofold ray, first upon the word, and then into your soul, he reflects from the word your very image, and you see yourself just as you are, clearly portrayed. Now this is the light shining in a dark place; the light of God's truth shining into your dark heart. This becomes "a sure word" to you; faith is raised up in your heart to credit what God has revealed; the shining in of this light into the dark place causes you to believe; and you, believing in the light which is thus come into your dark heart, receive the word of prophecy as a sure word.

2 Peter 1:19

Hearing God - The first morning I heard the mockingbird practicing his bagful of imitations outside my window, I was thrilled by the beauty of his songs. Gradually, however, I began to take this early morning songster for granted. One day as I awoke, it dawned on me that I no longer appreciated my regular visitor. It wasn't the mockingbird's fault. He was still there. His beautiful song hadn't changed, but I was no longer listening for it.

As believers in Christ, we may have a similar experience hearing God speak to us in His Word. When we are first saved, the Scriptures, with their soul-stirring instruction and vital spiritual food, are deeply satisfying. As time goes on, however, we routinely read those same portions over and over in a manner that no longer speaks to us. Our spiritual senses grow dull and lethargic, and God's exhilarating Word becomes commonplace to us. But then, what joy we feel when a passage reveals an exciting truth, and once again we "hear" the Lord!

Are you reading the Scriptures out of a tired sense of duty? Or do you still possess the fresh expectancy you had when you first believed? Today, when you read God's Word, listen closely for His voice. -R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I scanned the Scriptures thoughtlessly--
My haste had closed my ear;
Then prayerfully I read once more--
This time my heart could hear. -Gustafson

Without a heart for God, we cannot hear His Word.

2 Peter 1:20-21 - J C Philpot

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man--but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:20-21

The Bible is put into our hands as a revelation from God. As such we have received it from our fathers. As such, and as such only, does it claim our attention and our obedience. If it is not the word of God--we speak with reverence--it is an imposture. Now, if we can but firmly establish the necessity of a revelation from God, we have laid a strong foundation for a belief that the Bible is that revelation; for no other is worth a moment's examination. This argument from necessity, then, is very strong--stronger, perhaps, than it at first appears, and as extensive in application as firm in strength. To feel the force of this argument, cast your eyes for a few moments over creation, and see what a provision has been made everywhere by its All-wise and All-powerful Creator for necessity. From man, at the head of creation, down to the lowest organized structure, there is not a necessity for which provision has not been made, and that in exact proportion to its needs. You yourself came into this world a poor, naked, helpless infant, full of necessities, and must have perished from the womb unless provision had been made for them. Who filled for you your mother's breast with milk and your mother's heart with love?

But you have a soul as well as a body--no less naked, no less necessitous. Shall, then, the body have its necessities, and these be provided for, and shall the soul have its necessities too, and for these there be no provision made? Is there no milk for the soul as well as for the body? no "sincere milk of the word that it may grow thereby?" The craving after God felt by every new-born soul, the eagerness with which it flies at once to get comfort and instruction from the word, the holy joy with which it hails every ray of heavenly light that shines on its dark path, evidently show how deep the necessity of a divine revelation is laid in the relationship between man and his Maker.

2 Peter 1:21

The Bible

The apostle Peter wrote two books of the New Testament, yet he realized that he was merely an instrument through which God transmitted His message to people. Peter told his readers that "prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

In Thoughts for the Quiet Hour, C. H. Spurgeon wrote,

"The Bible is the writing of the living God." He explained that though "Moses was employed to write his histories with his fiery pen, God guided that pen. It may be that David touched his harp and let sweet psalms of melody drop from his fingers, but God moved his hands over the living strings of his golden harp. Solomon sang canticles of love and gave forth words of consummate wisdom, but God directed his lips and made the preacher eloquent. If I follow the thundering Nahum, when his horses plow the waters; or Habakkuk, when he sees the tents of Cushan in affliction; if I read Malachi, when the earth is burning like an oven; or the rugged chapters of Peter, who speaks of fire devouring God's enemies; if I turn aside to Jude, who launches forth anathemas on the foes of God—everywhere I find God speaking. It is God's voice, not man's."

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." But more than that, it is God Himself speaking to us. —R W De Haan [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Bible is the only book whose Author is always present when it is read.

2 Peter 1:21

Windtalkers - Their contribution to victory in World War II was enormous, but few people even knew about them. In 1942, the US Army recruited and trained 29 young Navajo Indians and sent them to a base surrounded in secrecy. These people, who were called "windtalkers," had been asked to devise a special code in their native language that the enemy couldn't break. They succeeded, and the code was never broken. It secured and greatly speeded up war communications. For 23 years after the war, that secret code remained classified in case it might be needed again.

By contrast, the Bible was not sent down to us in some unbreakable code impossible to understand. Although it contains rich imagery, vivid metaphors, and the record of magnificent visions, it was written by human authors to give people the message of God's love and salvation.

That message is clear and unmistakable. The biblical writers were moved by God's Spirit to record exactly what He wanted us to know. For centuries people have been freed from their sin and guilt by believing His message.

We owe a great debt to the windtalkers. We owe an even greater debt to the writers of Scripture, who received God's Word and wrote it down. So let's read it often. —Dave Egner ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When reading God's Word, take special care
To find the rich treasures hidden there;
Give thought to each line, each precept clear,
Then practice it well with godly fear.
—Anon.

Many who have been blind to the truth have found that reading the Bible is a real eye-opener.

2 Peter 1:21

Perfect Predictions - At the beginning of a new year and a new millennium, we hear many predictions. But then, making predictions is nothing new. In 1983, US News & World Report magazine had a section titled "What The Next 50 Years Will Bring." It had the usual suggestions about the growing importance of computers, about new medical breakthroughs, and about the sleeker, faster ways of getting around. The introduction said, "Prediction is at best a risky business." Then it quoted Sir Francis Bacon, who said, "Dreams and predictions ought to serve but for winter talk by the fireside."

That may be true of man's predictions, but not of God's prophecies. Man may speculate about what will happen next week, but God showed us in the Bible that He knows the future. This truth is one reason we can have absolute confidence in the Book of books.

The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies about people, events, and nations that have already been fulfilled. The chance of that many predictions coming true is astronomical.

Do you lack confidence in the Bible? Spend some time examining its many fulfilled prophecies. I predict you'll be convinced that it truly is God's Word, and that you can rely on it for everything in your future. —J D Brannon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For Further Study: Look up the following prophecies and their fulfillment: Isaiah 7:14 & Luke 1:26-35; Micah 5:2 & Matthew 2:1; Isaiah 53:9,12 & Matthew 27:38,57-61. See also [Can I Really Trust The Bible?](#)

In a changing world you can trust God's unchanging Word. You can trust the Bible—God always keeps His word. ([Our Daily Bread](#))

2 Peter 1:21

Always Right - A weatherman boasted, "I'm 90 percent right—10 percent of the time." That's a ridiculous statement, but some people resort to that type of doubletalk to cover up a poor record.

The Bible's prophetic record, though, truly is accurate. Let's look at a few examples.

The Lord Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14) at the time specified (Daniel 9:25). Infants in Bethlehem were massacred as prophesied (Jeremiah 31:15). Jesus went down into Egypt and returned (Hosea 11:1). Isaiah foretold Christ's ministry in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-2). Zechariah predicted His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a colt (Zechariah 9:9) and His betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (11:12-13). David had never seen a Roman crucifixion, yet in Psalm 22, under divine inspiration, he penned a graphic portrayal of Jesus' death. Isaiah 53 gives a detailed picture of our Lord's rejection, mistreatment, death, and burial. These few prophecies (and there are many more) should impress us with the reliability of the Bible.

Since these predictions have all been fulfilled, let us also accept with confidence what the Bible says about the future. Remember, we have a book of prophecy that is right—all of the time! —R D H ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I'll trust in God's unchanging Word
Till soul and body sever;
For though all things shall pass away,
His Word shall stand forever! —Luther

You can trust the Bible—God always keeps His word.

2 Peter 1:21

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The best interpreter of a book is generally the man who wrote it. The Holy Ghost wrote the Scriptures. Go to him to get their meaning, and you will not be misled. (C H Spurgeon)

2 Peter 1:21

With Compliments of the Author - The story is told about a young boy named Timothy who was planning to give his grandmother a Bible for Christmas. He wanted to write something special on the flyleaf but wasn't sure what to say. So he decided to copy what he had seen in a book his father had received from a friend.

Christmas morning came and Grandmother opened her gift. She was not only pleased to receive the Bible, but she was amused by the inscription Timothy had put in it. It read: "To Grandma, with compliments of the author."

Even though that boy was unaware of it, he had suggested a unique fact about the Bible. It came to us from its Author -- God. The apostle Paul wrote, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Ti 3:16). And in today's Bible reading Peter said, "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). That makes the Bible the most valuable and desirable of all books.

Knowing who wrote a book often determines whether we'll pick it up and read it. The Bible, with its divine origin, not only ought to be read, but it demands our respect, our trust, and our obedience. It comes "with compliments of the Author." - R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Your thoughts are here, my God,

Expressed in words divine,
The utterance of heavenly lips
In every sacred line.--Bonar

The Bible is a gift from the Author -- God

2 Peter 2 Devotional

- [2 Peter 1 Devotionals](#)
- [2 Peter 2 Devotionals](#)
- [2 Peter 3 Devotionals](#)

2 Peter 2:1 Quotes and Illustrations Related to False Teaching...

2 Peter 2:1 Today in the Word

One reason the U.S. government is redesigning the country's paper currency is to reduce the problem of counterfeiting. The government has been trying to foil counterfeiters for years. Indeed, the ribbed edge on dimes and quarters, which is called "reeding," was introduced years ago in part to prevent counterfeiting. Why does our government have to work so hard to combat counterfeiting? Because counterfeiters are always among us, looking for opportunities to practice their deceptive trade. In this sense, counterfeiters are like the false prophets and teachers who are always present among God's people, looking for opportunities to practice their deceit and counterfeits. Peter addressed this problem in his second letter to the churches of Asia Minor. ([Today in the Word](#))

Wayne A Detzler on heresy writes that...

Some in the church of which I was pastor believed that people without Christ would be lost, but that they would not suffer eternal punishment. The argument went like this: Those who reject Christ will go to a place of punishment after death. However, they will ultimately be annihilated and cease to exist. Thus they will not suffer eternal punishment in hell. This heresy, called "annihilationism," is widespread in England. It is wrong because it denies the eternal nature of punishment, and it also contradicts the biblical teaching about the immortality of the soul. ([Detzler, Wayne E: New Testament Words in Today's Language. Victor. 1986](#))

Puritan writer **John Trapp**...

Heresy is the leprosy of the head.

Puritan writer **Thomas Watson**...

Error damns as well as vice; the one pistols, the other poisons.

Puritan writer **John Flavel**...

By entertaining strange persons, men sometimes entertain angels unawares: but by entertaining strange doctrines, many have entertained devils unaware.

Orestes Brownson...

Error makes the circuit of the globe while Truth is pulling her boots on.

German proverb...

An old error is always more popular than a new truth.

Blaise Pascal (1623-62)...

Man is being filled with error. This error is natural and, without grace, ineffaceable.

William Trench (1807-86)...

Schism is practical heresy, and heresy is theoretical schism.

Heresy is a magnet to attract the unsound and unsettled mind

[2 Peter 2:1 — The Owner and His Slaves](#) (sermon) Alexander Maclaren

2 Peter 2:1

Bad Gifts - A New York City couple received through the mail two tickets to a smash Broadway hit. Oddly, the gift arrived without a note, and they wondered who had sent it. But they still attended the show and enjoyed it immensely.

Returning to their apartment, they discovered that their bedroom had been ransacked. Valuable furs and jewels were missing. On the pillow was this simple note: "Now you know."

Like that nameless thief, a false teacher knows what people want and appeals to their desires (2 Peter 2). He doesn't wear a lapel pin to warn of his lies, but he comes disguised as a representative of the truth. He claims he will enrich lives, but those who follow him often learn at a high cost that they have been deceived.

Jesus, however, is a teacher we can trust completely. He offers us the gift of eternal life because He truly loves us. Accepting His gift of salvation is the first step in protecting ourselves from the deceptive gifts that false teachers offer.

But even believers can be deceived by false teaching. That's why God's Word exhorts us to study the Scriptures (1 Peter 2:2), test what we hear (1 John 4:1), and grow in the faith (2 Peter 1:5-9). That way, we won't suddenly discover that our spiritual life is in disarray. - H W Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)) (See also [How To Recognize A Good Church](#))

Since savage wolves, consumed with greed,
Seek simple sheep on which to feed,
Wise are those wary lambs who graze
Close by their Shepherd's watchful gaze.-- Gustafson

Not all gifts are free; some have hidden

price tags.

2 Peter 2:3

Plastic Words - OF ALL THE CONS we can fall prey to, one of the worst is being duped by a religious phony. Swindlers of this kind deal in counterfeit truth—something that looks and sounds right but is actually contrary to fact, an imitation meant to deceive the unsuspecting. These cons aren't always done for the benefit of some leader whose name you can't pronounce. No, every week, lies dressed up in their Sunday best receive nodding approval in mainline churches everywhere. Counterfeit truth is big business, and it's still owned and operated by the same insidious proprietor who began it all years ago. Warren Wiersbe in commenting on the religious counterfeits in 2 Peter 2:3 says: "Plastic words! Words that can be twisted to mean anything you want them to mean! The false teachers use our vocabulary, but they do not use our dictionary. They talk about 'salvation,' 'inspiration,' and great words of the Christian faith, but they do not mean what we mean." How can we avoid being hoodwinked by one of Satan's workers of deceit?

Stop: Refuse to blindly accept someone else's teaching just because others have been "blessed" by it. Stop long enough to make a serious study, comparing what is being taught with what the Scriptures teach.

Look: Take a careful look at the life of the main spokesperson. Is the fruit of the Spirit evident? Don't be wowed because someone sounds intelligent or wooed because of someone's charisma.

Listen: Pay attention to the terms a person uses and how they're defined. Also listen to what's not being said. Don't judge truth just by how you feel; think, and make your judgments according to what the Scriptures teach. (Tales of the Tardy Oxcart)

2 Peter 2:4 Quotes and Illustrations related to Divine Punishment...

Related Resource:

- Eternal Punishment

George Sweeting...

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell- On one occasion Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, the agnostic lecturer of the last century, was announced to give an address on **hell**. He declared he would prove conclusively that hell was a wild dream of some scheming theologians who invented it to terrify credulous people. As he was launching into his subject, a half-drunken man arose in the audience and exclaimed, "Make it strong, Bob. There's a lot of us poor fellows depending on you. If you are wrong, we are all lost. So be sure you can prove it clear and plain." No amount of reasoning can nullify God's sure Word. He has spoken as plainly of a hell for the finally impenitent as of a heaven for those who are saved. (George Sweeting: Great Quotes & Illustrations)

C S Lewis

The safest road to **Hell** is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. (Lewis, C S, The Screwtape Letters)

A W Tozer

The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions. (A. W. Tozer)

Anonymous

It does not require a decision to go to hell.

Carl F Henry...

The final chapter of human history is solely God's decision, and even now He is everywhere active in grace or judgment. Never in all history have men spoken so much of end-time, yet been so shrouded in ignorance of God's impending doomsday.

Alistair Cooke...

The time was the 19th of May 1780. The place was Hartford, Connecticut. The day has gone down in New England history as a terrible foretaste of Judgment Day. For at noon the skies turned from blue to grey and by mid-afternoon had blackened over so densely that, in that religious age, men fell on their knees and begged a final blessing before the end came. The Connecticut House of Representatives was in session. And as some of the men fell down and others clamored for an immediate adjournment, the speaker of the House, one Colonel Davenport, came to his feet. He silenced them and said these words: "The day of judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish therefore that candles may be brought.

George Sweeting...

One of the greatest paintings of all time is Michelangelo's The Last Judgment. The action of the painting centers on Christ as He raises His arm in a gesture of damnation. Though some elements of the painting appear unbiblical, at that time its message reminded people of God's holy presence, which had been forgotten in the humanism of the day. The painting pictures the dead as they are resurrected to be judged. As hell releases its captives, the Judge of Heaven reviews their works. The entire painting reflects the despair of that generation. When the painting was unveiled, a storm of conviction fell upon the viewers. All Europe trembled as the story of the power of The Last Judgment traveled from city to city. (Sweeting, G. Great Quotes & Illustrations)

C S Lewis...

There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this (**hell**) if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, especially, of our Lord's own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and has the support of reason.

J I Packer...

Wisdom directs us to admit that there is no biblical alternative to the biblical doctrine of eternal punishment.

C H Spurgeon...

As the Lord liveth, sinner, thou standest on a single plank over the mouth of hell, and that plank is rotten. Thou hangest over the pit by a solitary rope, and the strands of that rope are breaking.

John Thomas...

A hard look at this doctrine should first change our view of sin. Most believers do not take sin as seriously as God does.

Billy Graham...

As hell was becoming for many no more than a swear word, sin was also an accepted way of life... If people can ignore what the Bible calls sin, then they can quite logically discount what it says about the reality of hell.

Time/CNN Polling Data from a telephone poll of 1,018 American adults, conducted by Time/CNN by Yankelovich Partners, Inc., asked these questions:

Do you believe in hell, where people are punished forever after they die?

Yes: 63%

No: 30%

Do people get into heaven based mostly on the good things they do or on their faith of God, or both (asked of 809 who believe in heaven):

Good things they do: 6%

Faith in God: 34%

Both: 57%

Immediately after death, which of the following do you think will happen to you? (asked of 809 who believe in heaven):

Go directly to heaven: 61%

Go to purgatory: 15%

Go to hell: 1%

Be reincarnated: 5%

End of existence: 4%

2 Peter 2:4

Hell's Horrors by Melvin Worthington

Introduction: The doctrine of eternal punishment remains one of the strongest incentives for coming to Christ for salvation. Jesus spoke more about hell than about heaven.

1. A Place. The Bible identifies hell as a place (Luke 16:27–28; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 20:13–15). Hell is a place of punishment, partition, and permanence.

2. A Population. A comprehensive list of the inhabitants in hell is found in 1 Corinthians 6:9–12 and Revelation 21:8.

3. A Portrait. Luke 16:19–31 provides a detailed account of a man in hell. Careful attention should be given to his dying moment, described misery, desired mercy, disturbing memory, deadly mistake, and the divine message.

Conclusion: What about you? Are you a believer? Have you placed your faith in the finished work of Christ for salvation? God has given His Son, the Scriptures, and His Spirit to bring men to Christ. He will give nothing else. (Morgan, R. J. [Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes](#) Page 97. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

2 Peter 2:4 Where is the promise of His coming?

While We Wait by Melvin Worthington.

Scripture: Luke 19:13; John 14:1–3; Acts 1; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13–18; Hebrews 9:24–28; 1 John 3.

Introduction: The Second Coming of Christ is mentioned over 300 times in the Bible. It is a comforting hope, a cleansing hope, a compelling hope, and a certain hope.

1. **The Promised Advent.** We read the Almighty's promise in John 14, the angelic promise in Acts 1, and the apostolic promise in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 John 3.
2. **The Prevalent Attitudes.** Scoffers have doubted it, skeptics have denied it, sensationalists have distorted it, saints have depended on it, and the Scriptures have disclosed it (2 Pet. 3).
3. **The Practical Application.** While we wait for the Second Coming of Christ we should walk circumspectly (Eph. 5:15), work consistently (1 Cor. 15:57, 58), wait contentedly (James 5:7), watch carefully (Mark 13:32–37), witness compassionately (2 Cor. 5:10–21), warn convincingly (Acts 20:17–38), and worship congregationally (Heb. 10:25).

Conclusion: Are you living in light of Christ's Second Coming? (Morgan, R. J. [Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes](#) Page 147. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

2 Peter 2:4 Where is the promise of His coming?

Our Daily Bread

Our Lord's Return - Nearly 2,000 years ago Jesus said, "I am coming quickly." Since then, some have wrongly tried to predict when He will return. Others have scoffed. Was Jesus wrong? Did something happen that He didn't foresee?

Of course not! We view time from the perspective of our own brief life span. But to the eternal God,

"One day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3:8).

Jesus told His disciples that God had not given them specific information about "times or seasons" (Acts 1:7). He wanted them -- as He wants us -- to live in an attitude of expectation. Paul echoed this when he spoke of Christ's return as "the blessed hope" (Ti. 2:13).

But how do we live expectantly? Jesus instructed the disciples to be witnesses to all the world (Acts 1:8). Paul said, "Watch and be sober" (see commentary on 1Thessalonians 5:6) and love other believers (Acts 1:12-15). John urged us to walk in close fellowship with Jesus (1 Jn. 2:28-3:3) and to purify ourselves so that we will "not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2:28).

The Lord's any-moment return is no cause for date-setting but for watchful expectation. Let's serve Him in every aspect of our lives, and one day we'll hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Mt. 25:21). -H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Blessed are those whom the Lord finds watching,
In His glory they shall share;
If He shall come at the dawn or midnight,
Will He find us watching there?-- Crosby

A watching Christian will be a working Christian

2 Peter 2:7

C H Spurgeon

If Lot had not escaped, he would have perished with the men of Sodom. He could not endure them. He was vexed with their filthy conversation. How horrible, then, would it have been for him to perish with them! I cannot bear to think that some of you upright, moral people may yet be lost. You were never drunkards, and yet you will perish with the drunkards unless you repent and trust in Jesus. You were never swearers, but you will be as surely damned as the blasphemers will be unless you come to Christ. You cannot bear unchastity or filthiness of language. There is much about you that is most amiable and excellent. But even to you the Savior says, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). And if you are not born again, if you have no faith in Christ, you will as surely perish as will the worst of men. (C H Spurgeon)

2 Peter 2:7

Our Daily Bread

There's an old story about a man who tried to save the city of Sodom from destruction by warning the citizens. But the people ignored him. One day someone asked, "Why bother everyone? You can't change them." "Maybe I can't," the man replied, "but I still shout and scream to prevent them from changing me!"

Lot was a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7) who should have done some screaming. The record of his life reminds us of how our sense of moral indignation can be dulled by the world. Lot chose to dwell in cities where there was great wickedness (Genesis 13:12,13). When Sodom was invaded by hostile kings, he was captured. Even after Abraham rescued Lot, he was still drawn back to that wicked city (Genesis 19:1). And the last chapter of his story is an account of heartache and shame (Genesis 19). What a contrast -- this nephew and his uncle! Abraham trusted God, prayed for the righteous, and lived a moral life. But Lot was "oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7). Although the sin of his day bothered him, he apparently said little about it.

2 Peter 2:9 J C Philpot

"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations." 2 Peter 2:9

Few will sincerely and spiritually go to the Lord, and cry from their hearts to be delivered from the power of a temptation, until it presses so weightily upon their conscience, and lies so heavy a burden upon their soul, that none but God can remove it. But when we really feel the burden of a temptation; when, though our flesh may love it, our spirit hates it; when, though there may be in our carnal mind a cleaving to it, our conscience bleeds under it, and we are brought spiritually to loathe it and to loathe ourselves for it; when we are enabled to go to the Lord in real sincerity of soul and honesty of heart, beseeching him to deliver us from it, I believe, that the Lord will, sooner or later, either remove that temptation entirely in his providence or by his grace, or so weaken its power that it shall cease to be what it was before, drawing our feet into paths of darkness and evil.

As long, however, as we are in that state of which the prophet speaks, "Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty" (Hosea 10:2); as long as we are in that carnal, wavering mind, which James describes, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways;" as long as we are hankering after the temptation, casting longing, lingering side glances after it, rolling it as a sweet morsel under our tongue, and though conscience may testify against it, yet not willing to have it taken away, there is no hearty cry, nor sigh, nor spiritual breathing of our soul, that God would remove it from us.

But when we are brought, as in the presence of a heart-searching God, to hate the evil to which we are tempted, and cry to him that he would, for his honor and for our soul's good, take the temptation away, or dull and deaden its power; sooner or later the Lord will hear the cry of those who groan to be delivered from those temptations, which are so powerfully pressing them down to the dust.

2 Peter 2:9

C H Spurgeon

Faith's Checkbook

Whom, When, How to Deliver - THE godly are tempted and tried. That is not true faith which is never put to the test. But the godly are delivered out of their trials, and that not by chance, nor by secondary agencies, but by the Lord himself. He personally undertakes the office of delivering those who trust Him. God loves the godly or godlike, and He makes a point of knowing where they are, and how they fare.

Sometimes their way seems to be a labyrinth, and they cannot imagine how they are to escape from threatening danger. What they do not know their Lord knows. He knows whom to deliver, and when to deliver, and how to deliver. He delivers in the way which is most beneficial to the godly, most crushing to the tempter, and most glorifying to Himself. We may leave the "how" with the Lord and be content to rejoice in the fact that He will, in some way or other, bring His own people through all the dangers, trials, and temptations of this mortal life to His own right hand in glory.

This day it is not for me to pry into my Lord's secrets, but patiently to wait his time, knowing this, that though I know nothing, my heavenly Father knows. (Spurgeon, C H: Faith's Checkbook)

Temptation - That which moves us to sin. God cannot be tempted (James 1:13). But we can be tempted by our lusts (James 1:13-15), money (1 Tim. 6:9), lack of self examination (Gal. 6:1), and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16), to name a few. We are commanded to pray to be delivered from temptation (Matt. 6:13) for the Lord is capable of delivering us from it (2 Pet. 2:9).

2 Peter 2:9 Temptation Joseph Philpot ("Daily Portions")

"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations." 2 Peter 2:9 Few will sincerely and spiritually go to the Lord, and cry from their hearts to be delivered from the power of a temptation, until it presses so weightily upon their conscience, and lies so heavy a burden upon their soul, that none but God can remove it. But when we really feel the burden of a temptation; when, though our flesh may love it, our spirit hates it; when, though there may be in our carnal mind a cleaving to it, our conscience bleeds under it, and we are brought spiritually to loathe it and to loathe ourselves for it; when we are enabled to go to the Lord in real sincerity of soul and honesty of heart, beseeching Him to deliver us from it; I believe, that the Lord will, sooner or later, either remove that temptation entirely in His providence or by His grace, or so weaken its power that it shall cease to be what it was before, drawing our feet into paths of darkness and evil. As long, however, as we are in that state of which the prophet speaks, "Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty" (Hosea 10:2); as long as we are in that carnal, wavering mind, which James describes, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways;" as long as we are hankering after the temptation, casting longing, lingering side glances after it, rolling it as a sweet morsel under our tongue; and though conscience may testify against it, yet not willing to have it taken away, there is . . . no hearty cry, nor sigh, nor spiritual breathing of our soul, that God would remove it from us. But when we are brought, as in the presence of a heart searching God, to hate the evil to which we are tempted; and cry to Him that He would, for his honor and for our soul's good, take the temptation away, or dull and deaden its power; sooner or later the Lord will hear the cry of those who groan to be delivered from those temptations, which are so powerfully pressing them down to the dust.

2 Peter 2:9

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

The following authentic story will best illustrate and enforce this text. I give it as it was given to me by a friend who had verified the circumstances during a visit to Blankenburg. A godly Lutheran pastor, Sander, of Elberfeld, had been compelled to rebuke an evil-liver for some gross sin, and had thereby attracted to himself his malicious hate; and the man vowed to repay him. One night the pastor was called to visit a house that could only be reached by passing over a plank which bridged an impetuous torrent. Nothing seemed easier to his enemy than to conceal himself on the bank till the man of God was returning from the opposite end of the plank, to meet him in the middle, throw him into the deep and turbid stream, leaving it to be surmised that in the darkness he had simply lost his foothold. When, however, from his hiding-place he caught sight of the pastor's figure in the dim light, he was surprised to see that he was not alone, but accompanied by another. There were two figures advancing towards him across the narrow plank, and he did not dare attempt his murderous deed. And as they passed his hiding-place, the one whom he did not know cast such a glance towards him as convinced him of the sinfulness of the act he had contemplated, and began a work in his heart which led to his conversion.

When converted, he sought out the pastor, to confess to him the murderous intention which had so nearly mastered him, and said: "It would have been your death had you not been accompanied." "What do you mean?" said the other; "I was absolutely alone." "Nay," said he, "there were two." Then the pastor knew that God had sent his angel, as He sent him to bring Lot out of Sodom. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily)

2 Peter 2:13 - The fool's bauble, the fool's fiddle Thomas Brooks, ""[The Crown and Glory of Christianity, or, HOLINESS, the Only Way to Happiness](#)"" , 1662)

"The wicked freely strut about, when what is vile is honored among men." Psalm 12:8

"They love to indulge in evil pleasures." 2 Peter 2:13.

"Their souls delight in their abominations." Isaiah 66:3

Proverbs 10:23, "A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct."

Evil conduct is the fool's bauble, the fool's fiddle. Fools take great delight and pleasure in doing evil. Sin and wickedness are a sport or recreation to a fool. It is a great pleasure and merriment to a fool—to do wickedness. Proverbs 14:9, "Fools make a mock of sin." They make a jeer of sin—which they should fear more than hell itself! They make a sport of sin—which will prove a matter of damnation to them. They make a pastime, a game of sin—which will them miserable to all eternity. They make a mock of sin on earth—for which the devil will mock and flout them forever in hell. Justice will at last turn over such fools to Satan, who will be sure to return mock for mock, jeer for jeer, and flout for flout. Those who love such kind of pastime, shall have enough of it in hell. All unbelievers are such fools—for they delight and take pleasure in sin, which is the most corrupting and dangerous thing in the world.

"And so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth, but have delighted in wickedness." 2 Thessalonians 2:12 Well, sirs! Sin is the poison of the soul, the nakedness of the soul, the disease of the soul, the burden of the soul— and if God in mercy does not prevent it—sin will prove the eternal bane of the soul. Oh, then, how great is their folly, who delight in sin, and who make a sport of it!

G Campbell Morgan - Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage. -2 Pet. 2.19

This is a truth which is insisted upon in all the Biblical revelation. Paul had given it equally clear expression when in writing to the Romans he had said: "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Ro 6.16). It is nevertheless a truth which man is slow to believe. It simply means that the freedom of the will is strictly limited. I am free to choose my master. I am not free when I have chosen. I become the servant of that master. It is possible for a man to yield to sin, but in such yielding he becomes the servant of that sin. It is impossible for any man to treat sin as completely under his control, to be indulged in at his will, and to be laid aside at his will. Yielding is yielding, and that means submission, bending of the neck, being compelled to obey the commands of sin. The only way .of freedom from the mastery of sin, is that of escape therefrom through submission to Christ; and that submission must be more than an act, it must be an attitude maintained, or else we shall be "entangled" again in "the defilements of the world," and so our last state will become worse than the first. This is a truth which humbles the soul and leaves no room for pride of will. But it is the truth which, being recognized and obeyed, makes us free from the dominion of sin. In the uttermost abandonment of ourselves to the Lord, there is perfect deliverance from the power of sin; but in no other way shall we ever be any other than slaves of sin.

2 Peter 2:21

"It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness... "

If you go down to destruction from the borders of salvation, it will be sevenfold destruction. If you die with Jesus weeping over you, as he did over Jerusalem, you will die horribly. If you sink down to hell with that word in your ears, "How often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. 23:37), your sinking will be like that of a millstone in the sea. If you perish under a gospel ministry, it were better for you that you had never been born. (C H Spurgeon)

2 Peter 2:22 Sheep or swine? - John Ensor

"The swine that has been washed returns to wallow in the mire." 2 Peter 2:22

Sheep and swine can both end up in the mire. Yet the essential difference in their two natures is quite visible from the reaction each has to its fallen condition. While sheep do stray and stumble into the mire, they quickly loathe the situation and struggle to get free. They may be dirty, but they desire to be clean. They may be stuck, but they bleat for their shepherd to come and save them out of the muck. But swine, in keeping with their nature, wallow in the muck, content to stay there all day. "The swine that has been washed returns to wallow in the mire." 2 Peter 2:22

2 Peter 2:22

"A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." - The Bible compares us to different animals and some of the comparisons are not very complimentary. It says, "Don't be like a mule" (Ps. 32:9); a mule is usually backward about going forward! Jesus says that His sheep know Him and that sheep follow the shepherd; a sheep is not at home in a mudhole and a Christian is not satisfied to live in sin. There is an animal that feels at home in a mudhole; the Bible classifies the false teachers who return to their native habitat of sin with sows wallowing in the mire (2 Peter 2:22). We need to brush up on our Bible zoology. (Vance Havner)

2 Peter 3 Devotionals

Isaac Watts

The Promise and Sign of Christ's Coming. 2 Peter 3

- 1 Help, Lord, for men of virtue fail;
Religion loses ground;
The sons of violence prevail,

And treacheries abound.

2 Their oaths and promises they break,
Yet act the flatterer's part;
With fair deceitful lips they speak,
And with a double heart.

3 If we reprove some hateful lie,
How is their fury stirred!
"Are not our lips our own?" they cry;
"And who shall be our Lord?"

4 [Scoffers appear on every side,
Where a vile race of men
Is raised on seats of power and pride,
And bears the sword in vain.]

5 Lord, when iniquities abound,
And blasphemy grows bold,
When faith is hardly to be found,
And love is waxing cold –

6 Is not thy chariot hastening on?
Hast thou not given the sign?
May we not trust and live upon
A promise so divine?

7 "Yes," saith the Lord, "now will I rise
And make oppressors flee;
I shall appear to their surprise,
And set my servants free."

8 Thy word, like silver seven times tried,
Through ages shall endure;
The men that in thy truth confide
Shall find thy promise sure.

2 Peter 3:3 Quotes and Illustrations related to Scoffers & Mockers...

William Culbertson...

In the last days mockers will come - Sometimes those of us who hold that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again are spoken of as pessimists. I think it can be truly said that we are really the only ones who have any right to be optimistic. (William Culbertson)

Scoffers...

A recent cartoon depicts a man at his desk looking at a computer screen, while outside his open office window another man is flying past, having just jumped from the top of the building. The man at the desk says to the jumper, "Tough luck, Conners. The market has gone up 1,200 points since you jumped." So much for assuming that things will always be the way they are right now. As the saying goes, the only constant in life is change, and you would think that people would know better than to risk their eternal future on the assumption that nothing is going to change. But that's exactly what doubters and skeptics have been doing since the earliest days of Christianity. "Scoffers" choose to forget or ignore the fact that God has kept His word in history and will do so again. God judged the world in the flood of Noah, and the world is scheduled for judgment again when Christ returns.

Dead devotion is a living mockery.

Mocking God is life's great impossibility. W. T. Purkiser

The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, he mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray. Samuel Chadwick

God is not mocked. He does not answer prayers if he has already given us the answer and we are not willing to use it. William Macdonald

2 Peter 3:4 "Where is the promise of his coming?"

Every time a blasphemer opens his mouth to deny the truth of revelation, he will help to confirm us in our conviction of the very truth which he denies. The Holy Ghost told us by the pen of Peter that it would be so. (C H Spurgeon)

2 Peter 3:4

Fun-Loving Audience

The Danish philosopher, Kierkegaard, tells a parable of a theater where a variety show is proceeding. Each show is more fantastic than the last, and is applauded by the audience. Suddenly the manager comes forward. He apologizes for the interruption, but the theater is on fire, and he begs his patrons to leave in an orderly fashion. The audience think this is the most amusing turn of the evening, and cheer thunderously. The manager again implores them to leave the burning building, and he is again applauded vigorously. At last he can do no more. The fire raced through the whole building and the fun-loving audience with it.

"And so," concluded Kierkegaard, "will our age, I sometimes think, go down in fiery destruction to the applause of a crowded house of cheering spectators."

2 Peter 3:7, 10 - The conflagration of the world! Samuel Davies (from "[The Universal Judgment!](#)")

"The present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare!" 2 Peter 3:7, 10

The present state is but the infancy of the world. All the events of time, even those which make such great noise to us, and determine the fate of kingdoms—are but as the trivial games of little children. But if we look forward and trace events to maturity, we meet with vast, significant and majestic events! To one of those scenes I would direct your attention this day; I mean the solemn, tremendous, and glorious scene of the universal judgment!

You have sometimes seen a stately building in ruins; come now, and view the ruins of a demolished world! Come now, and view the whole universe severely laboring and agonizing in her last convulsions, and her well-ordered system dissolved!

You have heard of earthquakes here and there which have laid huge cities in ruins; come now, and feel the tremors and convulsions of the whole globe, which blend cities and countries, oceans and continents, mountains, plains and valleys—in one giant heap!

You have a thousand times beheld the moon walking in brightness, and the sun shining in its strength; come now, look and see the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood!

It is our lot to live in an age of war, blood, and slaughter; an age in which our attention is engaged by the dubious fate of kingdoms. Draw off your thoughts from these trifling objects for an hour, and fix them on more solemn and vital objects. Come view this dread scene!

"The world alarmed, both earth and heaven o'erthrown,
And gasping nature's last tremendous groan;
Death's ancient scepter broke, the teeming tomb,
The Righteous Judge, and man's eternal doom!"

Let us now enter upon the majestic scene! But alas! what images shall I use to represent it? Nothing that we have ever seen, nothing that we have ever heard, nothing that has ever happened on the stage of time—can furnish us with proper illustrations. All here is low and groveling—when compared with the grand phenomena of that day!

We are so accustomed to trifling earthly objects, that it is impossible that we should ever raise our thoughts to a suitable pitch of elevation. But before long, we shall be amazed spectators of these majestic wonders—and our eyes and our ears will be our instructors!

But it is now necessary we should have such ideas of them—as may affect our hearts, and prepare us for them. Let us therefore present to our view, those representations which divine revelation—our only guide in this case—give us . . .

of the person of the Judge, and the manner of His appearance;
of the resurrection of the dead, and the transformation of the living;
of the universal gathering of all men before the supreme tribunal;
of their separation to the right and left hand of the Judge, according to their characters;
of the judicial process itself;
of the decisive sentence;
of its execution,
and of the conflagration of the world!

2 Peter 3:8 One day is with the Lord as a thousand years.

F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

There is no succession of time with God: no past, no future; He dwells in the eternal present, as I AM. As we may look down from a lofty mountain on a stream in the valley beneath, tracing it from its source to its fall into the ocean, and feeling that each part of it is equally distant from the spot where we stand, so must time appear to the Eternal; who was, and is, and is to come.

One day is as a thousand years. — He could do in a single day, if He chose, what He has at other times taken a thousand years to accomplish. Do not say that He will require so long to do this or that — to restore or convert the Jews; to introduce the millennial age; to undo the effects of the Curse, and fill the years with blessing. Do not say that He must have as long to make the second heavens and earth as the first. Do not say that the overthrow of the empire of darkness, and the conversion of multitudes to God, can only be achieved by the processes which are now in vogue. All this could be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; and between sunrise and sunset God could effect the work of a thousand ordinary years.

A thousand years as one day. — Periods that seem so long to our finite minds are not so to God. A thousand years in our reckoning is but a day in his. You say it is nearly two thousand years ago since Jesus died, or at least that we are in the evening of the second thousand. But in God's reckoning, the Cross, the Grave, the Resurrection, took place in the morning of yesterday. Take wider views of God's horizon; believe in his mighty march throughout the centuries; He takes up the isles as a very little thing, and the centuries are the beats of the minute-hand. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily)

2 Peter 3: 8 - G Campbell Morgan - Forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.—2 Pet. 3.8

Thus the Apostle charges all Christian souls in their thinking of the ways and works of God to cancel the time element. Time is as nothing either way to God. We become hurried and flustered because we have only a day in which to do something. God has no such unrest, for in our small one day He is able to accomplish the things which men could only hope to do in a thousand years. On the other hand, we look on down the vista of the coming years, and the long time that must elapse before things can happen which we earnestly desire oppresses us. God has no such depression, for the thousand years are in His sight but as a day. The application of the truth which is of greatest importance to us is that of its bearings on the activities of God. Men either declare that the promise of the coming of the Lord is false because nigh two thousand years have passed since it was made; or they are tempted to think that He Who made the promise is in some way slack, that He is not acting as speedily as He might. It is only to state these things thus, to see how false the views are. It is well, then, thus to be charged not to forget this great truth. The purposes of God are so vast and so wonderful, that their working out in human experience must take, what for lack of a better term, we call time. On the other hand, His power is such that if and when He will, things can be done in a "twinkling of an eye," which will revolutionize all life, and bring in the final order.

2 Peter 3:9 not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

William Guthrie, George Swincock

"The Bible, which ranges over a period of 4,000 years, records but one instance of a deathbed conversion—one that none may despair, and but one that none may presume... There be few at all saved... and fewest

saved this way." (William Guthrie)

"All the while thou delayest, God is more provoked, the wicked one more encouraged, thy heart more hardened, thy debts more increased, thy soul more endangered, and all the difficulties of conversion daily more and more multiplied upon thee, having a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in." (George Swinnock, Puritan)

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is... not willing that any should perish."

C H Spurgeon Comment

While I have prayed, "Come quickly," I have often felt inclined to contradict myself and cry, "Yet tarry for a while, good Lord. Let mercy's day be lengthened. Let the heathen yet receive the Savior." We may desire the coming of the Lord, but we ought also to be in sympathy with the tarrying of the Most High, to which his loving heart inclines him. (C H Spurgeon)

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise...

With His Fingers Crossed - In 1492, Ferdinand granted Columbus great titles, vast privileges, and a tenth of the riches his explorations materialized. By 1500, when the size and wealth of the new world actually dawned on Ferdinand, he broke the agreement, though he had promised it by solemn treaty.

In the early 1950s, the Russians opened sixty million acres in Kazakhstan to grain farmers. They imported trainloads of Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians to work the state-owned cooperatives, planning to be self-sufficient in grain by 1954. The Communist Party promised to bring the future to its people. The people believed ... in vain. Today, several millions of those acres have reverted to pasture. The Party made promises and brought hope, one man said, then the Party vanished, leaving broken promises and ruined lives.

God understands that we live in hope and that, deprived of hope, our spirit diminishes, then dies. He has encouraged us to believe in his promises, which never fail; but we are intent on believing our own, which seldom succeed. Greed, false economic theory, political or social collapse can destroy even well-intentioned assurances. God's promises will not fail, for they are founded on him. (Hurley, V. [Speaker's sourcebook of new illustrations](#) Page 188. Dallas: Word Publishers)

2 Peter 3:9

See study on Greek word for **repentance metanoia**

2 Peter 3:10 The fierceness and wrath of Almighty God!

Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners In Zion Tenderly Warned"

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens will disappear with a roar, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10

The heat of that great fire which will burn the world, will be such as to melt the rocks, and the very ground, and turn them into a kind of liquid fire, so that the whole world will probably be converted into a great lake, or liquid globe of fire, a vast ocean of fire, in which the wicked shall be tossed to and fro, having no rest day nor night, vast waves or billows of fire continually rolling over their heads. But all this will be only an image of that dreadful fire of the wrath of God, which the wicked shall at the same time suffer in their souls. We read in Rev. 19:15 of "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." This is an extraordinary expression, carrying a terrible idea of the future misery of the wicked. If it had been only said of the wrath of God that would have expressed what is dreadful. If the wrath of a king be as the roaring of a lion, what is the wrath of God? But it is not only said the wrath of God, but the fierceness and wrath of God, or the rage of his wrath; and not only so, but the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. O what is that! the fierceness and rage and fury of Omnipotence! of a being of infinite strength! What an idea does that give of the state of those worms that suffer the fierceness and wrath of such an Almighty Being!

2 Peter 3:10-12

Colonel Davenport - During his 1960 presidential campaign, John F. Kennedy often closed his speeches with the story of Colonel Davenport, the Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives. One day in 1789, the sky of Hartford darkened ominously,

and some of the representatives, glancing out the windows, feared the end was at hand. Quelling a clamor for immediate adjournment, Davenport rose and said, "The Day of Judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty.

Therefore, I wish that candles be brought." Rather than fearing what is to come, we are to be faithful till Christ returns. Instead of fearing the dark, we're to be lights as we watch and wait. - Harry Heintz

2 Peter 3:10

Is This a Cause for Fear'

How are you planning your eternity with God? What are priorities in your life? What are the "treasures" that you are investing for the future'

Read this... On March 5, 1979, nine U. S. satellites simultaneously radioed back to earth that a gamma radiation explosion occurred in a nearby galaxy known as N-49. This explosion lasted for only one-tenth of a second, but released more radiation than our sun does in 3,000 years. Doyle Evans, an astrophysicist at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratories in New Mexico, noted that had this explosion of energy occurred in our galaxy, it would have instantly vaporized the earth!

Now hear this... "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall disappear with a roar and everything in it shall melt with a fervent heat (II Peter 3:10).

Is this cause for fear? Not if we know this: "All things were created by Him and for Him and in Him all things hold together." This verse from Colossians Chapter One is the key to why planet earth and our solar system in its galaxy continues. Science has no convincing explanation as to why our planet stays together and why our whole solar system continues intact. The apostle Paul, writing in Col. 1:17, tells us that our magnificent Creator and Sustainer keeps it so. The song writer captured this fact simply:

"He's got the whole world in His hand."

Western Communicator, Western Convention Baptist Seminary, Vol. 54 #1, p. 2, Earl Radmacher

James Smith - A holy life is a most influential sermon!

"You ought to live holy and godly lives!" 2 Peter 3:11

2 Peter 3:11 - J R Miller The Christian's dress all the week (J.R. Miller, "Help for the Day")

"You ought to live holy and godly lives" 2 Peter 3:11

Religion and common life are not two different and distinct things. We may not cut our existence in two parts, and say, "Over this Christ shall rule — but over that He shall have no control."

True religion knows no difference between Sunday and Monday, so far as the ethics of life are concerned. Each day brings its own specific duties; but there are not moral precepts for the one day which are suspended when its sun sets, that for six days a mitigated or less holy law may prevail. Holiness is to be the Christian's dress all the week through, in every hour's conduct. All pleasures and amusements must be tested by the unvarying rule of right. The standard of perfect purity cannot be lowered.

2 Peter 3:11

Leaning Towers

Since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be? (2 Peter 3:11).

The Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy is going to fall. Scientists travel yearly to measure the building's slow descent. They report that the 179-foot tower moves about one-twentieth of an inch a year, and is now seventeen feet out of plumb. They further estimate that by the year 2007 the 810-year-old tower will have leaned too far and will collapse onto the nearby ristorante, where scientists now gather to discuss their findings. Quite significantly, the word pica means "marshy land," which gives some clue as to why the tower began to lean even before it was completed.

We know that some things, like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, are destined to collapse. But what about the Golden Gate Bridge, the World Trade Center Towers, the Rock of Gibraltar, and the Rocky Mountains? Like that tower, they too are resting on "soft foundations." They too will fall one day—at a time already determined on God's calendar.

Maybe it doesn't seem pressing because we think we'll pass from this earthly scene long before that great judgment day comes. That's not how Peter responded. The inevitable collapse of all things made him think about the eternal society built on righteousness and truth, a society that would continue, even after Gibraltar is gone. It motivated him to build his life on Christ, the only foundation that will never crumble. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our main business in this world is to secure an interest in the next

2 Peter 3:11

Our Daily Bread

Prediction of the Future - I am fond of a line from Niels Bohr, the physicist, and have quoted it before.

"Prediction is a very difficult art," he says, "especially when it involves the future."

Scientists at the Goddard Space Flight Center report that one of the largest stars in our galaxy is about to self-destruct. Eta Carinae, which has a mass 100 times greater than that of our sun, is giving signs that its life is about over. Researchers say that it could become a supernova -- a blazing, exploding star -- within the next 10,000 years. What was especially interesting about the Science 81 report was the statement that since light from the star takes 9,000 years to reach the earth, the actual explosion could have already taken place.

This striking fact reminds me of the nature of biblical prophecy. For example, the predictions found in Revelation 8 are often written in the past tense. This is done because even though the prophet is writing of a future event, he has already "seen" it. Also, in the mind of God it's as if the events have already happened. Even though Christians differ on the interpretation of today's Scripture, we can definitely say that God's judgment against sin is certain. The outpouring of His anger against those who continually resist Him is so sure that it has been written about in the past tense. This should cause us to reflect with the apostle Peter, who wrote so appropriately, "Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness?" (2 Peter 3:11). As Christians, we know what's ahead for this world, and that knowledge should keep us living close to God.

2 Peter 3:13 Looking for a new heaven and new earth -

In 1899, evangelist D. L. Moody grew ill in Kansas City, canceled his engagements, and returned home to Northfield, Massachusetts. He lugged himself up to his bedroom to dress for dinner, but felt so exhausted that he took to bed. On December 22, he suddenly opened his eyes and spoke clearly: "Earth recedes! Heaven opens before me." His son, sitting near him, suggested he was dreaming. "This is no dream, Will," Moody replied. "It is beautiful! It is like a trance! If this is death, it is sweet! God is calling me, and I must go!" The family gathered around. "This is my triumph!" said Moody. "This is my coronation day! I have been looking forward to it for years." His face suddenly lit up. "Dwight! Irene! I see the children's faces!" His funeral was conducted at 10 a.m. on December 26, 1899, by C. I. Scofield, and he was laid to rest atop Northfield's Mount Hermon.

2 Peter 3:14

The Ermine - Be diligent - In the forests of northern Europe and Asia lives little animal called the ermine, known for his snow-white fur in winter. He instinctively protects his white coat against anything that would soil it. Fur hunters take advantage of this unusual trait of the ermine. They don't set a snare to catch him, but instead they find his home, which is usually a cleft in a rock or a hollow in an old tree. They smear the entrance and interior with grime. Then the hunters set their dogs loose to find and chase the ermine. The frightened animal flees toward home but doesn't enter because of the filth. Rather than soil his white coat, he is trapped by the dogs and captured while preserving his purity. For the ermine, purity is more precious than life. - H G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

2 Peter 3:14

Diligent Men

"If I had three hundred men who feared nothing but God, hated nothing but sin, and were determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified, I would set the world on fire." (John Wesley)

"Send us men with hot hearts." (Heathen convert)

John Wesley was denied the privilege of preaching from the pulpit in the church; but with true evangelistic fervor took his father's tomb for a pulpit and preached to the people the great truths of full salvation. Whitefield loved field preaching. Returning from a tour he lighted a candle and went upstairs to retire, weary after the journey; but the people gathered in front of the house and filled the street; and there on the stairway with a lighted candle in his hand, he preached his last message, retired and was no more; for God took him.

John Wesley averaged three sermons a day for fifty-four years preaching all-told more than 44,000 times. In doing this he traveled by horseback and carriage more than 200,000 miles, or about 5,000 miles a year. His published words include a four-volume commentary on the whole Bible, a dictionary of the English language, a five-volume work on natural philosophy, a four-volume work on church history; histories of England and Rome; grammars on the Hebrew, Latin, Greek, French and English languages; three works on medicine, six volumes of church music; seven volumes of sermons and controversial papers. He also edited a library of fifty volumes known as "The Christian Library." He was greatly devoted to pastoral work. Later, he had the care of "all the churches" upon him. He arose at 4:00 A.M., and worked solidly through to 10:00 P.M., allowing brief periods for meals. In the midst of all this work he declared: "I have more hours of private retirement than any man in England." At age 83, he was piqued to discover that he could not write more than 15 hours a day without hurting his eyes; and at the age of 86 he was ashamed to admit that he could not preach more than twice a day. In his 86th year, he preached in almost every shire in England and Wales, and often rode thirty to fifty miles a day.

John Knox, who cried out in his earnestness, "Give me Scotland or I die," carried with him this zeal to the close of his ministry. Often he would be supported by attendants in order to reach the pulpit; but when he arose to speak the divine passion so filled his soul that one of his friends said: "So mighty was he in his yearning that I thought he would break the pulpit into bits."

[2 Peter 3:14 Be Diligent](#) - sermon by Alexander Maclaren

2 Peter 3:16

in which are some things hard to understand

At lunch one day, W. Wilbert Welch, chancellor of the Grand Rapids Baptist College and Seminary, told a story about one of his professors, Dr. Brokenshire, a godly and gifted scholar with a thorough knowledge of Scripture. "I remember our first day in class," Welch recalled. "The professor didn't know us by name yet, so he referred to some cards in his hand. Looking up, he said, 'Mr. Green?' The student identified himself. 'Mr. Green, do you have any problems with the Bible?' 'No, sir,' replied the confident new student. Brokenshire replied, 'Then why don't you read it? You will.'"

A thoughtful reading of the Bible will raise questions. Peter said that Paul's writings contained "some things hard to understand" (2 Pet. 3:16). Sometimes we see only one side of a truth, or we come across what seems like a contradiction. Then there are the bigger problems—divine election and human freedom, the origin of evil, the reason for pain and suffering. But these perplexities need not undermine our confidence in the Bible.

God wants us to study the Bible, and a questioning mind is fertile soil for learning. Some things, however, will remain a mystery, and we must humbly accept God's right to withhold knowledge from us. No matter what problems we have in understanding the Bible, we can thank Him that He has revealed sufficient truth to win our hearts, guide our steps, and bring us to heaven. —D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Our difficulties in understanding the Bible are not due to divine error but to human ignorance.

2 Peter 3:16

Dangerous Distortions

Our Daily Bread

An enthusiast displayed on the walls of his office a collection of etchings, including one of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Every morning he noticed it was crooked, so he straightened it. Finally one evening he asked the cleaning woman if she was responsible for moving the picture each night. "Why, yes," she said, "I have to hang it crooked to make the tower look straight!"

In a similar way, some people have the habit of twisting the Scriptures to make their imperfect lives look better or to justify their own opinions. The apostle Peter warned his readers about the kind of people who do not approach God's Word with honest motives and

respect for its authority, and who distort its message. They will incur God's judgment (2 Peter 3:16-17).

Unless we review the Bible prayerfully and humbly, we may get a wrong message and be drawn away from our steadfastness in Christ. God gave us His Word as a light to guide our steps. If we obey it each day, we will find it to be an unfailing source of strength and truth.

Distorting the meaning of the Word of God to fit our preconceived ideas is a dangerous practice and a terrible sin. Let's be careful how we read and interpret the Bible. -H G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O send Thy Spirit, Lord, now unto me
That He may touch my eyes and make me see;
Show me the truth concealed within Thy Word,
And in Thy Book revealed I see Thee, Lord. - Groves

We must align ourselves with the Bible, never the Bible with ourselves.

[2 Peter 3:18 Growth](#) - sermon by Alexander Maclaren

2 Peter 3:18 - This rocking-horse type of spiritual life (Vernon J. Charlesworth)

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!" 2 Peter 3:18

Once, entering the house of one of his congregation, Rowland Hill saw a child on a rocking-horse. "Dear me," exclaimed the aged minister, "how astonishingly like some Christians--there is motion, but no progress!"

This rocking-horse type of spiritual life is still characteristic of too many Church members in the present day. "Grow in grace" is an exhortation but little regarded.

"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." 1 Peter 2:2

2 Peter 3:18

Today in the Word

Pastor and author **A. W. Tozer** observed this about the early church:

Conversion for the early Christians was not a destination; it was the beginning of a journey... In [the early church] faith was for each believer a beginning, not a bed in which to lie while waiting for the Lord's triumph. Believing was not a once-done act. It was an attitude of heart and mind which inspired and enabled the believer to follow the Lord wherever He went.

Since the Christian life is a journey that begins the day we receive Christ as Savior, how well we follow Christ after conversion is vital to our spiritual well-being. Peter's final instruction to his readers, and to the church, centered on the importance of a believer's continued growth in the faith. ([Today in the Word](#))

2 Peter 3:18

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ-

Twenty Years? A teacher with twenty years' experience was passed over for a promotion. Going to the administrator, she demanded, "Why did you choose that new young man who only had four years of experience at this job, when I have twenty years of experience?" The man answered, "Because you do not have twenty years of experience. You have one year of experience twenty times. You're still teaching the same things in the same way as you did when you were first hired. You haven't grown in the job."

The knowledge of Christ's love for us should cause us to love Him in such a way that it is demonstrated in our attitude, conduct, and commitment to serve God. Spiritual maturity is marked by spiritual knowledge being put into action. (Edward Bedore)

Those who know God the best are the richest and most powerful in prayer. Little acquaintance with God, and strangeness and coldness to Him, make prayer a rare and feeble thing. (E. M. Bounds)

The work of Japanese painter Hokusai spanned many years before his death in 1849 at age 89. But toward the end of his life, the artist dismissed as nothing all the work he had done before age 50. It was only after he reached 70 that he felt he was turning out anything worthy of note. On his deathbed Hokusai lamented, "If heaven had granted me five more years, I could have become a real painter." ([Today in the Word](#))

2 Peter 3:18 - J C Philpot

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18

Growth is the sure mark of life. We see this in vegetation, in the animal creation, in the growth of our own bodies, and of every other thing in which there is life. Where, then, there is the life of God in the soul, there will be a growth in that life. Paul says to the Thessalonian Church--"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fit, because your faith grows exceedingly" (2 Thess. 1:3); and Peter says, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." There is "an increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10), and "a coming in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). It was for this increasing knowledge of the Son of God that Paul stretched every desire of his soul when he followed after, if that he might apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of Christ Jesus; and thus reaching forth unto those things which were before, he pressed toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12-14).

This is not what is called 'progressive sanctification', as if the flesh got holier and holier, for that is still ever "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" but this is a growth of that "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." After this growth in grace, this closer conformity to the image of Christ, should we ever be striving with all the powers of our soul; not satisfied with a low and lean state before God, but with unceasing prayer and supplication, begging of the Lord that we might be "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:9, 10).

2 Peter 3:18

Let's Get Growing - Several years ago my interest in flowers had our home resembling a nursery. There's something about the presence of growing plants that I find very enjoyable. As I daily inspected their progress, I gained from my little green friends a new appreciation of the joy and necessity of the wonderful process of growth.

As Christians, we too are like plants. We should put down our roots, break up through the earth, spread out our branches, and burst into blossom. Such a thriving condition, however, isn't always evident in our lives. It's so easy to become bored and listless in the bland routine of our daily activities. Often we just hang on and merely exist without moving steadily toward maturity and fruitfulness.

At such times we are at a spiritual standstill and must allow Jesus the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2) to warm our hearts anew with His love. We must send our roots deep into the Word of God by meditating on it day and night (Ps. 1:2). Then we will be like a fruitful tree planted by rivers of living water, and our branches will extend outward in an ever-increasing influence and witness. They will be filled with blossoms that reflect the beauty of righteous living. If we've become dormant, let's get growing! - M D H ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If God can make a tiny seed
Into a flower so fair,
What can He make, O soul, of thee
Through study, faith, and prayer? -Anon.

When growth stops, decay begins.

2 Peter 3:18

The Highest Goal - What are you living for in your few fleeting years here on this earth? Anything other than fame, wealth, or influence?

When Thomas Naylor was teaching business management at Duke University, he asked his students to draft a personal strategic plan. He reports that "with few exceptions, what they wanted fell into three categories: money, power, and things -- very big things, including vacation homes, expensive foreign automobiles, yachts, and even airplanes." This was their request of the faculty: "Teach me how to be a money-making machine."

That's not exactly an exalted ambition! No thought of humanitarian service, and no thought of spiritual values! Yet, what those

students wanted was what many people want -- maybe what MOST people want.

The apostle Paul's overriding ambition was totally different. His consuming desire was to know Jesus

and become increasingly conformed to His holy example (Phil. 3:10). He wanted to serve Him by proclaiming the life-changing good news of God's grace. What is our highest goal? Do we want to be a money-making machine, which can never buy lasting happiness? Or do we want to become more like Jesus? -V C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

His Spirit fill my hungering soul,
His power all my life control;
My deepest prayer, my highest goal,
That I may be like Jesus.-- Chisholm

A wise person sets his earthly goals on heavenly gains.

2 Peter 3:18f

Rules for Good Health

A person who is "born again" starts a new life similar to that of a newborn infant. Seven rules that promote good health in babies can be adapted and applied to a Christian's spiritual growth.

1. Daily Food. Take in the "pure milk of the word" through study and meditation.
2. Fresh Air. Pray often or you will faint. Prayer is the oxygen of the soul.
3. Regular Exercise. Put into practice what you learn in God's Word.
4. Adequate Rest. Rely on God at all times in simple faith.
5. Clean Surroundings. Avoid evil company and whatever will weaken you spiritually.
6. Loving Care. Be part of a church where you will benefit from a pastor's teaching and Christian fellowship.
7. Periodic Checkups. Regularly examine your spiritual health.

Source unknown

2 Peter 3:18 One mark of growth in grace - J.C. Ryle, "Growth in Grace" 1879

"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" 2 Peter 3:18

One mark of growth in grace, is increased HUMILITY. The man whose soul is growing, feels his own sinfulness and unworthiness more every year.

He is ready to say with Job, "I am vile!"

And with Abraham, "I am dust and ashes!"

And with Jacob, "I am not worthy of the least of all Your mercies!"

And with David, "I am a worm!"

And with Isaiah, "I am a man of unclean lips!"

And with Peter, "I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

The nearer the Christian draws to God, and the more he sees of God's holiness and perfections — the more thoroughly is he sensible of his own countless sins and imperfections. The further he journeys in the way to Heaven — the more he understands what Paul meant when he says,

"I am not already perfect!"

"I am not fit to be called an apostle!"

"I am less than the least of all the saints!"

"I am the chief of sinners!"

The riper the Christian is for glory, the more, like the ripe corn — he hangs down his head with humility. The brighter and clearer his

gospel light — the more he sees of the shortcomings and infirmities of his own heart. When first converted, he would tell you he saw but little of them — compared to what he sees now.

Would anyone know whether he is growing in grace? Be sure that you look within for increased humility.

John MacDuff, The treasury is large and inexhaustible ("The Throne of Grace")

"Grow in grace." 2 Peter 3:18

Growth in grace is chiefly manifested in common things--in your ordinary duties--in your home circle, in resisting and overcoming--habits of self-indulgence --habits of harshness, fretfulness, irritability of temper, or the like. "Grace" may be brought into exercise too, in bearing sickness, trial, unkindness, or reproach, with a patient uncomplaining spirit--in helping and encouraging your neighbor--in being more generous, more kind, more sympathizing--in showing more "love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"--in delighting more in prayer and the Word of God--in setting the Lord more and more before you--in ever keeping Him in mind. It is thus "grace" will truly grow and expand, so that every fresh duty becomes more easy, and every fresh trial less painful. Grace, brought into the details of daily life--elevates and consecrates human affection, and sweetens earthly love with the deepest and tenderest sympathies, as it pervades duty, pleasure, and recreation. But we must never forget, that our ability for all this comes from above--that, as there is only one source from which "grace" comes to us at first, so there is only one source from which we can obtain renewed supplies. "He gives more grace." Grace is no scanty thing, doled out in pittances. The fountain is full and overflowing--the treasury is large and inexhaustible; myriads are hourly hanging on it, and drawing from it, and yet there is no diminishing! Out of that fullness all may receive grace for grace. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8 Christian! Oh, repair to the throne of grace for a fresh supply, and, be assured, that there is . . . not a trial you can encounter, not a sorrow you can experience, not a difficulty you can meet with in your daily life, for which Jesus, in the treasury of grace, has not a corresponding solace. The throne of grace is the only refuge for the sin-stricken, woe-worn spirit.

2 Peter 3:18

"Grow in grace"—not in one grace only, but in all grace. Grow in that root-grace, faith. Believe the promises more firmly than you have done. Let faith increase in fulness, constancy, simplicity. Grow also in love. Ask that your love may become extended, more intense, more practical, influencing every thought, word, and deed. Grow likewise in humility. Seek to lie very low, and know more of your own nothingness. As you grow downward in humility, seek also to grow upward —having nearer approaches to God in prayer and more intimate fellowship with Jesus. May God the Holy Spirit enable you to "grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." He who grows not in the knowledge of Jesus, refuses to be blessed. To know him is "life eternal," and to advance in the knowledge of him is to increase in happiness. He who does not long to know more of Christ, knows nothing of him yet. Whoever hath sipped this wine will thirst for more, for although Christ doth satisfy, yet it is such a satisfaction, that the appetite is not cloyed, but whetted. If you know the love of Jesus—as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so will you pant after deeper draughts of his love. If you do not desire to know him better, then you love him not, for love always cries, "Nearer, nearer." Absence from Christ is hell; but the presence of Jesus is heaven. Rest not then content without an increasing acquaintance with Jesus. Seek to know more of him in his divine nature, in his human relationship, in his finished work, in his death, in his resurrection, in his present glorious intercession, and in his future royal advent. Abide hard by the Cross, and search the mystery of his wounds. An increase of love to Jesus, and a more perfect apprehension of his love to us is one of the best tests of growth in grace. (Spurgeon, C. H. Morning and evening: January 4 AM)

2 Peter 3:18 Growth in grace - J.C. Ryle ("Growth in Grace" 1879)

"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" 2 Peter 3:18

When I speak of growth in grace, I only mean an increase in the degree, size, strength, vigor and power — of the graces which the Holy Spirit plants in a believer's heart. I hold that every one of those graces admits of growth, progress and increase. I hold that repentance, faith, hope, love, humility, zeal, courage and the like — may be . . .

little — or great,
strong — or weak,
vigorous — or feeble, and

may vary greatly in the same person at different periods of his life.

When I speak of a man growing in grace, I mean simply that . . .

his sense of sin is becoming deeper,
his faith is becoming stronger,
his hope is becoming brighter,
his love is becoming more extensive,
his spiritual-mindedness is becoming more marked,
he feels more of the power of godliness in his own heart — and he manifests more of it in his life.

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One mark of growth in grace (J.C. Ryle, "Growth in Grace" 1879)

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"I am less than the least of all the saints!"

"I am the chief of sinners!"

The riper the Christian is for glory, the more, like the ripe corn — he hangs down his head with humility. The brighter and clearer his gospel light — the more he sees of the shortcomings and infirmities of his own heart. When first converted, he would tell you he saw but little of them — compared to what he sees now.

Would anyone know whether he is growing in grace? Be sure that you look within for increased humility.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Another mark of growth in grace (J.C. Ryle, "Growth in Grace" 1879)

Another mark of growth in grace, is increased spirituality of taste and mind. The man whose soul is growing, takes more interest in spiritual things every year.

He does not neglect his duty in the world. He discharges faithfully, diligently and conscientiously — every relation of life, whether at home or abroad. But the things he loves best, are spiritual things.

The amusements and recreations of the world, have a continually decreasing place in his heart. He does not condemn them as downright sinful — he only feels that they have a constantly diminishing hold on his own affections — and gradually seem smaller and more trifling in his eyes. Spiritual companions, spiritual occupations, spiritual conversation — are of ever-increasing value to him. Would anyone know if he is growing in grace? Then let him look within for increasing spirituality of taste.

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Another mark of growth in grace (J.C. Ryle, "Growth in Grace" 1879)

Another mark of growth in grace, is increase in LOVE to others. The man whose soul is growing, is more full of love every year — of love to all men — but especially of love towards the brethren.

His love will show itself actively — in a growing disposition to do kindnesses, to take trouble for others, to be good-natured to everybody, to be generous, sympathizing, thoughtful, tender-hearted and considerate.

His love will show itself passively — in a growing disposition to be meek and patient towards all men, to put up with provocation and not stand upon his rights, to bear and forbear much rather than quarrel. A growing soul will try to put the best construction on other people's conduct; and to believe all things and hope all things, even to the end. There is no surer mark of backsliding and falling off in grace — than an increasing disposition to find fault, pick holes, and see weak points in others. Would anyone know if he is growing in grace? Then let him look within for increasing love to others.

Spurgeon - One of the best tests of growth in grace

"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18

"Grow in grace"—not in one grace only, but in all the Christian graces.

Grow in the starting place of grace, faith. Believe the promises more firmly than you have before. Let faith increase in fullness, constancy and simplicity.

Grow also in love. Ask that your love may become extended, more intense, more practical, influencing every thought, word and deed.

Grow likewise in humility. Seek to lie very low, and know more of your own nothingness.

As you grow downward in humility, seek also to grow upward—having nearer approaches to God in prayer and more intimate fellowship with Jesus.

To know Him is "life eternal"—and to advance in the knowledge of Him is to increase in happiness. Whoever has sipped this wine will thirst for more; for although Christ satisfies—yet it is such a satisfaction that the appetite is not only satisfied, but invigorated.

If you know the love of Jesus—then will you pant after deeper draughts of His love.

If you do not desire to know Him better—then you do not love Him at all, for love always cries, "Nearer, nearer!"

Seek to know more of Him . . .

in His divine and human natures,

in His sin-atonement work,

in His excruciating death for you,

in His present glorious intercession,

and in His future royal coming in glory!

Remain by the cross, and search the mystery of His wounds!

An increase of love for Jesus, and a more perfect apprehension of His love for us—is one of the best tests of growth in grace.

2 Peter 3:18

How A Tree Grows - An impatient college student went to the president of the school and asked if he could take an accelerated course that would allow him to graduate sooner. "Yes," the president replied, "but it depends on what you want to be. When God wants to make an oak, he takes a hundred years. But when He wants to make a squash, He takes 6 months."

Like that student, we sometimes get frustrated with the rate of our spiritual growth. We'd like to see ourselves a lot closer to maturity than we are. We're disappointed that we fall back into childish behavior we thought we had outgrown. We want "school" to be over.

But growth takes time, and it often comes in spurts. Trees grow rapidly during a 4 to 6 week period in early summer, when woody fibers appear between the bark and the trunk. During the remainder of the year, these fibers solidify into the sturdy wood from which furniture is built, which will last several lifetimes.

Not growing as fast in your Christian life as you'd like? Perhaps you're "solidifying." It's a vital part of the process that the One who

began a good work in you will bring to completion (Phil. 1:6). Be patient. God isn't finished with you yet. --D C Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

May I never run on ahead of Thy plan,
Nor tarry, a laggard, behind.
O order my steps, precious Lord, that each one
With Thy steps may be perfectly timed. --Bowser

About the only thing you can get in a hurry is trouble.

2 Peter 3:18

How Tall Are You? - When it comes to how tall we stand, inherited genetic factors establish a ceiling that limits our height. Regardless of diet and exercise, physical growth ceases at a certain point. No matter how hard we may try, when that limit is reached we can't grow anymore (vertically that is, though many of us have a tendency to continue to expand horizontally).

Our potential for spiritual advancement, however, is unlimited. How "tall" we become depends on our own desire and how much we draw on the provisions of our heavenly Father. We're not held back by the genes we inherited from our earthly parents. The sky's the limit.

Christian maturity doesn't just happen. Our "diet" has to be right and we must "exercise" our faith regularly. Unless we feast on God's Word, there'll be no progress. Unless we obey it, we'll never realize our full potential.

How tall and strong are you in God's sight? How much have you developed this year? Whatever your answer, you can stand even taller. Remember the secret of growth control, and then do something about it. The Bible commands, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). --R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Jesus, take my heart and hand
And help me, this I pray,
That I through Your sweet love may grow
More like You day by day. --Garrison

Drawing close to Christ produces a growing Christlikeness.

2 Peter 3:18 - D L Moody's notes in his Bible

- "Grow in grace." The old age of grace is **maturity**, not decay; **advance**, not decline; **perfection**, not imbecility. We go from strength to strength. (**Ed**: cp 2 Cor 3:18 "from glory to glory" by grace by the Spirit, by the intake of the Word a "mirror!")
 - Without grace, there can be no saving knowledge.
-

2 Peter 3:18

To him be glory both now and forever. -Heaven will be full of the ceaseless praises of Jesus. Eternity! thine unnumbered years shall speed their everlasting course, but forever and for ever, "to him be glory." Is he not a "Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"? "To him be glory." Is he not king for ever?—King of kings and Lord of lords, the everlasting Father? "To him be glory for ever." Never shall his praises cease. That which was bought with blood deserves to last while immortality endures. The glory of the cross must never be eclipsed; the lustre of the grave and of the resurrection must never be dimmed. O Jesus! thou shalt be praised for ever. Long as immortal spirits live—long as the Father's throne endures—for ever, for ever, unto thee shall be glory. Believer, you are anticipating the time when you shall join the saints above in ascribing all glory to Jesus; but are you glorifying him now? The apostle's words are, "To him be glory both now and for ever." Will you not this day make it your prayer? "Lord, help me to glorify thee; I am poor, help me to glorify thee by contentment; I am sick, help me to give thee honour by patience; I have talents, help me to extol thee by spending them for thee; I have time, Lord, help me to redeem it, that I may serve thee; I have a heart to feel, Lord, let that heart feel no love but thine, and glow with no flame but affection for thee; I have a head to think, Lord, help me to think of thee and for thee; thou hast put me in this world for something, Lord, show me what that is, and help me to work out my life-purpose: I cannot do much, but as the widow put in her two mites, which were all her living, so, Lord, I cast my time and eternity too into thy treasury; I am all thine; take me, and enable me to glorify thee now, in all that I say, in all that I do, and with all that I have." (Spurgeon, C. H. Morning and evening: February 15 AM).

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,

Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with thy powerful hand; Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.
--WILLIAM WILLIAMS

2 Peter 3:18

From Jonathan Bagster's Daily Light we read - As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. O teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Surely the people are grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (From Ps. 103:15–16; 91:12; Mark 8:36; Isa. 40:7–8; 1 John 2:17; 2 Cor. 6:2; 1 Cor. 7:31; Heb. 10:24–25.) (Click here for January's offerings of Daily Light and an index to all 365 days of Jonathan Bagster's **Daily Light** revised with the NAS substituted for the KJV and all Scriptures linked to the original verses to allow reading in context)

2 Peter 3:18

God's Garden

In growing a healthy, fruit-bearing church, try this plan.

Plant three rows of **squash**:

- Squash gossip.
- Squash criticism.
- Squash indifference.

Plant seven rows of **peas**:

- Prayer
- Promptness
- Perseverance
- Politeness
- Preparedness
- Purity
- Patience

Plant seven heads of **lettuce**:

- Let us be unselfish and loyal.
- Let us be faithful to duty.
- Let us search the Scriptures.
- Let us not be weary in well-doing.
- Let us be obedient in all things.
- Let us be truthful.
- Let us love one another.

No garden is complete without **turnips**:

- Turn up for church.
- Turn up for meetings, in prayer, and Bible study.

- Turn up with a smile, even when things are difficult.
- Turn up with determination to do your best in God's service.

After planting, may you grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). And may you reap rich results.

2 Peter 1

Exposition by C H Spurgeon

2 Peter 1:1

Peter here uses both his names,-Simon or Simeon, which was his first name, and signifies "hearing with acceptance," and happy are they who have the hearing ear and the receptive heart; and then there is what I may call his Christian name, the name which Christ gave him, Petros, or Cephas, a rock or stone. Those who learn to hear well, since faith cometh by hearing, may hope to obtain even greater stability of character than Peter had. Observe that Peter calls himself "a servant of Christ." There is no higher honor than to be a servant of God. "To serve God is to reign." An ancient philosopher was the author of that maxim, and Christianity fully endorses it. He is a true king who is a servant of God.

In this respect, all believers are on a level with Peter, but here is his distinguishing title, "an apostle of Jesus Christ," a sent one, one who had seen the Lord, and who could bear personal testimony to the fact of his existence, his death, and his resurrection. Hence the apostleship has ceased, since there are no longer any who lived in our Lord's days upon the earth.

Mark the reason why this Epistle, like the first, is caned "the general Epistle of Peter," since it is addressed, not to any one church, as Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians but to all saints, not to the Hebrews alone, but to the Gentiles as well. It is a general Epistle, addressed to all those who have "obtained like precious faith." These words were written by the apostle Peter many centuries ago, yet they come to us as fresh as if he had written them but yesterday, and may God grant us grace to profit from them as they are read by us to-day! After the apostle's titles comes the salutation of his Epistle

Peter was pleased to be able to write those words. There was a time when he had thrice denied his Master, but now he is glad to call himself "a servant of Jesus Christ." Once he had said, "I know not the man," but now he claims that he has been sent out by that glorious Lord to be his apostle,-a sent one,-"a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ." Probably he had ringing in his ears, at that moment, those blessed words, "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs;" and he was going to do that work again in this his second general Epistle.

These Epistles are not written to everybody. Some readers do not seem to remember this fact. This one is written, says the apostle, "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us." The faith of the weakest believer in Jesus is the same kind of faith as that which was found in Simon Peter, who stands among the very first of the worthies in the College of Apostles." Like precious faith with us." Only think of it, you whose faith is of a very trembling sort, which might be well described as "little faith." Yet yours is "like precious faith" with that of Peter and the rest of the apostles. The tiniest diamond is as truly a diamond as the Koh-i-noor, and the smallest faith, if it be really the work of the Spirit of God, is "like precious faith" with that of the apostles.

2 Peter 1:2

You have some measure of these choice blessings; may you have a great many times as much! When we go to the multiplication table, we not only multiply by two and by three,

but we can multiply by a hundred, we can multiply by ten thousand. Oh, that God would thus multiply to us the grace and the peace that he has already given to us! "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you"-

The more we know of God, the more grounds and reasons shall we have for enjoying grace and peace, and the more we know of God and of Jesus our Lord, the more will our enjoyment of grace and peace be multiplied.

2 Peter 1:3

It is through knowing God that we realize that "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness," for all these things are in him; and as we know him, trust him, love him, and become like him, we also come to possess all these precious things in him.

2 Peter 1:2-5

"Since it is God who, by his divine energy, has made you partakers of the divine nature, see that you use your grace-given energy; rest not idly upon your oars because the tide of grace carries your ship onward."

2 Peter 1:4

See what is God's great object in giving us these "exceeding great and precious promises." It is that we may become morally and spiritually like himself, just and true and holy and righteous, even as God himself is. O brothers and sisters, we fall far short of the high example that we find set before us in our gracious God, nevertheless, we press forward towards the goal, strengthened by God himself, who, having begun to make us like himself, will never cease that blessed work unto he has fully accomplished it.

2 Peter 1:5

For we cannot expect to go to heaven asleep. We are not taken there against our wills. It is not our will that accomplishes our salvation; but still, it is not accomplished without our will. "Giving diligence," yes, but more than that, "giving all diligence,"

Giving all diligence - It is not man's effort that saves him; but, on the other hand, grace saves no man to make him like a log of wood or a block of stone; grace makes man active. God has been diligently at work with you; now you must diligently work together with him.

2 Peter 1:5-7

As you have seen the mason take up first one stone, and then another, and then gradually build the house, so are you Christians to take first one virtue, and then another, and then another, and to pile up these stones of grace one upon the other until you have built a palace for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Faith, of course, comes first, because faith is the foundation of all the graces, and there can be no true grace where there is no true faith. Then "add to your faith virtue," which should have been translated "courage." True courage is a very great blessing to the Christian, indeed, without it how will he be able to face his foes? "And to courage knowledge," for courage without knowledge would be foolish rashness, which would lead you to the cannon's mouth when there was nothing to be gained by flinging away your life.

"And to knowledge temperance;" for there are some who no sooner get knowledge than they are carried away with the new doctrine which they have learned, and become like men intoxicated, for it is possible to be intoxicated even with truth. Happy is that Christian who has temperance with his knowledge who, while holding one doctrine, does not push that to the extreme, but learns to hold other doctrines in due conformity with it. "And to temperance patience," or endurance, so that we are able to endure the "trial of cruel mockings" or sharp pains, or fierce persecutions, or the usual afflictions of this life. He is a poor Christian who has no power of endurance, a true Christian must "endure hardness as

a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

“And to endurance godliness:” having a constant respect to God in all our ways, living to God, and living like God so far as the finite can be like the Infinite. “And to godliness brotherly kindness.” O dear friends, let us be very kind to those who are our brothers in Christ Jesus; let the ties of Christian kinship unite us in true brotherhood to each other. “And to brotherly kindness charity;” let us have love to all men, though specially to the household of faith.

It is ignorance that is intemperate and rash.

2 Peter 1:6-8

What Christian ever wishes to be barren or unfruitful? Is it not the aspiration of every branch in the true vine to bring forth much fruit?

2 Peter 1:9

He is short-sighted; he has some light, and some physical sight, but he cannot see to a distance; spiritually, he is blind.

It is a great mercy not merely to see men as trees walking, but to have clear spiritual vision. There is a great deal of dust that gets into our eyes, and there is no way of clearing out that dust, and becoming long-sighted, getting a sight that can see to heaven, except by getting that spiritual life which manifests itself in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

2 Peter 1:9, 10

He who is diligent in seeking these graces is kept from falling. Every Christian is safe from a final fall, but he is not safe from a foul fall unless he is kept by grace.

2 Peter 1:10

This is the second time that Peter writes about giving diligence. We are told not to be slothful in business, and this matter of which Peter write is the most important of all business. To prosper in this world may bring some advantages, but to prosper in heavenly things is infinitely better.” “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,”-that you may be sure of it, and that others may be sure of it too. Let it not continue a subject of question with you, “Am I the Lord’s, or am I not? Am I called by grace, am I chosen by God, or am I not?” Make these things sure beyond all doubt.

2 Peter 1:11

You shall get far into the kingdom, you shall know the innermost joys of it. You shall get near the King, and you shall become like the King; and when you come to die, you shall not be tugged into the harbour like a dismasted, water-logged vessel, but you shall go in like a full-rigged ship with all sails set, and so you shall have an abundant entrance into the fair haven of eternal felicity. May God grant us this unspeakable blessedness, so that we shall not “be saved, yet so as by fire” but that we shall find our heaven begun below, and go from heaven below to heaven above scarcely knowing any change at all! There have been saints who have found the steam of Christ’s love running so strongly, and carrying them down to the great ocean of eternal life, that they have scarcely known where the river and the ocean have met.

2 Peter 1:11

In this life you can enjoy all the privileges of the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; and in the life to come you shall go into the harbour of eternal peace like a ship with an her sails full, speeding before a favorable wind, and not as one that struggles into harbour, —

Tempest-tossed and half a wreck

2 Peter 1:12

He who exhorts others to be diligent must not himself be negligent, and Peter most appropriately writes, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things"

We are not merely to preach new truths which people do not know, but we are also to preach the old truths with which they are familiar. The doctrines in which they are well established are still to be proclaimed to them. Every wise preacher brings forth from the treasury of truth things both new and old;-new, that the hearers may learn more than they knew before; old, that they may know and practice better that which they do already know in part.

2 Peter 1:13

When people are as they should be, it is worth while to stir them up. You do not want to stir up dirty water, but you may stir that which is pure and sweet as much as ever you like. And a good fire sometimes becomes a better one by a little stirring up.

2 Peter 1:13-14

In the last chapter of the gospel according to John, it is recorded how Christ prophesied concerning the death of Peter, that when he was old, he should stretch forth his hands, and another should gird him, and carry him whither he would not. The evangelist adds, "This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." The prospect of crucifixion was thus always before Peter's mind; and knowing what was to happen to him, he was not alarmed, but was rather quickened to greater diligence in stirring up the saints to make their calling and election sure. Hear thou behind thee, O Christian, the chariot wheels of thy Lord; hear thou behind thee the whizzing of the arrow of death, and let this quicken thy pace! Work while it is caned to-day, for the sun even now touches the horizon, and the night cometh when no man can work. If we knew how short a time we have to live, how much more earnest, how much more diligent should we be! Let us be up and doing. "Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober," working diligently until the Lord comes, or calls us home to himself.

2 Peter 1:14

The Lord had told Peter how he was to die. He had told him that he would die by crucifixion: "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." He knew that the day of his martyrdom was approaching, and so, being divinely warned, he was the more earnest to preach as a dying man to dying men. I have sometimes heard, as a criticism of that expression of Baxter's about a dying man preaching to dying men, the remark that it would be better, as living men, to preach to living men. It is quite true that we must throw all our life into our preaching; but, as a rule, living men are never more truly alive than when they are under a due sense that they are also dying men. When we realize that eternity is very near us, and we are consciously drawing near to the great judgment-seat of Christ, than all our faculties are fully aroused, and our whole being is bent on doing the Master's work with the utmost vigor and earnestness.

2 Peter 1:15

When we are gone from the earth, we want the truth that we have spoken to live on after us, we want even from our graves to continue to speak for Christ. Therefore it was that Peter kept on repeating the same truth over and over again. He hit this nail on the head many times, and sought to clinch it, so that, when he was gone, it would not start from its place, but would remain firmly fixed.

2 Peter 1:15-18

Peter and James and John were with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, and Peter here bears his witness that they were not deceived when they bowed down before Christ, and worshipped him as Lord, nor were they deluded in expecting his coming and believing

in his power.

I am sure you do not wish to be barren; I cannot imagine that any of you will be content to be unfruitful; so seek after an these virtue, and may God help you to give diligence to the attainment of them.

2 Peter 1:16.

There is need in these perilous times to come back to such an elementary truth as this. The truths taught us in God's Word are not fables, myths, or merely parables, but they are matters of actual fact. The apostles were eye-witnesses of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"-eyewitnesses of his majesty." We receive these truths without the slightest question, and base our faith upon them. We should be troubled indeed if we had any doubts whatsoever about these great foundation facts of our holy religion.

He had no retractions to make as he came towards the close of his ministry. He did not have to say that, after all, he had been greatly mistaken; there had been an advance in theology since Jesus Christ had died, and he was sorry to say that he had preached a good deal when he was young which he would like to unsay now that he was old. Oh, no! Peter held fast to what he had previously preached because he knew that it was the very truth of God, and the other apostle had done the same, so that Peter could write, We have not followed cunningly devised fables,"-

Peter was one of the three who saw the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory upon the Mount of transfiguration, and he recalls this.

2 Peter 1:17, 18.

They were not deceived,-neither Peter, nor James, nor John. There was "such a voice" from God himself, which they literally heard; it was the Father bearing approving witness to the person and work of his only-begotten and well-beloved Son.

Peter was not deceived about that matter; at the time, he and his fellow-apostles had been overcome by the too-transporting sight, but they all knew that it was no vision, or dream, or delusion, so Peter here speaks very positively concerning it. Why can we not receive the testimony of true witnesses such as Peter and the other apostles who sealed with their life's blood the witness which they bore to their Lord and his truth?

2 Peter 1:19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy

Surely, nothing could be more sure than the evidence presented to the apostles in the holy mount. Yet Peter thus writes to express his utmost confidence in the Word of God. Surer than the light he saw, which dazzled him; surer than the voice he heard, which he never failed to remember, and to which he ever bore unfaltering witness; surer even than these things is that divine Book which is still preserved to us: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy.

You have already the assurance of the Word itself; you must build upon that, and upon that alone; but you shall have added to that a "day dawn" and a "day star" in your own hearts. We have the witness within us now: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;" and those things which we have received by faith we now have proved to be true by their effect upon our own souls. We know the light now because we walk in it; we know it to be light, for it has enlightened us.

Can anything be more sure than that which an eye-witness sees? Well Peter says that this prophetic Book, in which Holy Scripture is stored up is better to us than if we had even seen Christ himself. If any one thing be more sure than another, it is this blessed book-revelation of the Christ of God.

2 Peter 1:19-20

Even the prophets themselves did not always know the full meaning of their own prophecies. Many prophecies have never been completely understood until they have been fulfilled. This passage also appears to me to mean that no prophecy is to be restricted to any one event, so as to say, "This prophecy has been entirely fulfilled."

It is not to be kept by any man to himself. God spoke to Jacob at Bethel, and we read concerning it, in Hosea 12:4, "there he spake with us." With regard to the children of Israel rejoicing at the Red Sea, we read, in the sixty-sixth Psalm, "There did we rejoice in him." The promises God made to this believing men or that he makes to all believing men. You remember that text, "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." That promise was first of all spoken to Joshua, yet Paul quoted it, in writing the Epistle to the Hebrews, as if it was spoken to every believer, and so indeed it is. No apostle, no prophet, could hedge up a promise, and say, "This was mine and nobody else's." It is a common heritage of all the saints. Every promise is within the boundary of the covenant of grace, and all who are in that covenant are heirs of all the promises, to whomsoever they were made.

2 Peter 1:20, 21

How we do rejoice in this fact! We shall never give it up. It is a disbelief of inspiration, which lies at the bottom of all the modern theories; but with this disbelief we have not the slightest fellowship. In our inmost souls we believe that "holy men of God spake as they were moved (or, "borne along") by the Holy Ghost." They spoke not for their own age alone, neither were the prophecies given to a few persons so as to belong privately to them; but the whole inspired Scripture stands fast for all the faithful, and is the truth to us to-day, even as it was to those to whom it was first spoken.

2 Peter 1:21

So that they sometimes spoke what they did not themselves understand; the prophecy carried its own key within itself, and the key could not be found until the prophecy was fulfilled. I believe that the prophesies in the Revelation, and in the books of Daniel and Ezekiel are very much of this character, and that, while it is quite right to watch for and expect the coming of the Lord, we shall spend our time more profitably in preaching the doctrines of the gospel than in meditating upon the mysterious prophecies of the Word. They will be understood when they are fulfilled, but we do not think they will be fully understood before that time.

This is the foundation of our faith,-that this Book is divinely inspired. Suffer nobody to make you doubt concerning this matter; for you must give up Christianity itself if you give up the inspiration of this Book. You have nothing else to fall back upon but this Book and your own personal verification of it by the work of the Holy Ghost in your own soul. To tamper with inspiration is to tamper with the heart of true religion. The least doubt upon that matter is fatal. I mean what I say, and I know how desperately this mischief is working in these days in which we live. Men used to say, with the famous Chillingworth, "The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants;" and so it was once. Yet now it seems to me that anything but the Bible is coming to be their religion but, as for us, we accept as authoritative nothing that contradicts these truths which are written in this Book. We mean to stand fast by these truths, God helping us; we can do no other, come what may in this evil age. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2 Peter 2:1. But there were false prophets also among the people,

How true that is still! Be not startled, brethren, as though some strange thing had happened to us in this generation. It always was so, and so it will continue. If there are true prophets, there will also be false prophets; and if there be the Spirit of God, there will be the spirit of evil; and often, in proportion as the everlasting truth is full of power, the everlasting lie will be full of power, too, and will strive mightily against it. That same sun and shower, which shall make yonder wheat to grow, will at the same time cause the thorns also to spring up; and perhaps for a time they may threaten to choke the wheat, until at last the wheat will choke the thistles. "There were false prophets also among the people,"-

2 Peter 2:1.

They always try to do their hateful work privily; and then they ask, "What is all this fuss about? We have not departed from the truth, we are as sound in the faith as any of you are," when they know, traitors that they are, that they are undermining the foundations, and trying to take away the very corner stone of the faith. These "false teachers" will deceive the very elect of God if it be possible; but they are not easily deceived, for God has given them a discerning mind by which they "try the spirits whether they are of God." The Lord Jesus said of his sheep, "A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." Sheep though they be, they have discernment enough to know their Shepherd; and the godly soon detect false teachers who privily "bring in damnable heresies,"-1, 2. Even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

They say, "It is narrow; it is old-fashioned; it is not in accordance with the spirit of the age." I know not what else they say; but for all that they say, it still remains "the way of truth."

2 Peter 2:3, 4.

"If God spared not the angels that sinned," he will not spare any who sin, however high their position may be; even though they be the angels of the churches, he will "cast them down to hell."

2 Peter 2:5.

Which some in these days say could not be consistent with the acts of a God of love. Their imaginary deity, from whom they have taken away every glorious attribute of holiness and justice, would not have done this; but the God that judgeth righteously must and will punish sin, as he ever has done; and "this God is our God for ever and ever," even the God who is "a consuming fire."

2 Peter 2:6-8.

I love to see in God's people a holy horror of the sin which surrounds them. In several of the prayers in which we joined before we came upstairs to this service, there were many tears and cries over the wickedness of our streets,-the impurity and the drunkenness which defile so many all around us. Alas! alas! Men seem bent on horrible iniquity; and it looks as if London, this great modern Babylon, will repeat the story of the cities of the plain. Well may we pray, "O Lord, have mercy upon the people!"

2 Peter 2:9, 10.

We have far too many, nowadays, of both these sorts of sinners, and of the two sorts joined in one: "them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government."

2 Peter 2:10. Presumptuous are they, self willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

There let us cease our reading, and turn to another holy song, in which we will praise our God, whose grace hath made us to differ from the ungodly by whom we are surrounded.

2 Peter 3:1

The purest minds need stirring up at times. It would be a great pity to stir up impure minds. That would only be to do mischief; but pure minds may be stirred as much as you please, and the more the better. There are hallowed memories in the minds of all Christians; but those memories are apt to lie asleep, and it is well to ring the alarm bell, and wake up all the memories within the believer's heart, even as Peter did when he wrote, "I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."

2 Peter 3:2.

Peter believed in the inspiration of the very "words" of Scripture; he was not one of those precious "advanced thinkers" who would, if they could, tear the very soul out of the Book, and leave us nothing at all; but he wrote, "That ye may be mindful of the words" — the very words — "which were spoken before by the holy prophets." "Oh!" says one, "but words do not signify; it is the inward sense that is really important." Exactly so; that is just what the feel said about egg-shells. He said that they did not signify; it was only the inward life-germ of the chick within that was important; so he broke all the shells, and thereby destroyed the life that was within. We contend for every word of the Bible, and believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, believing indeed that there can be no other inspiration but that. If the words could be taken from us, the sense itself would be gone.

2 Peter 3:3.

A prophecy which has been abundantly fulfilled. You need not go far to find them; they come in the form of living men, and they swarm in the form of their books. They are to be met with almost everywhere; like the locusts, they fill the air, and hide the light of the sun: "There shall come in the last days scoffers," —

2 Peter 3:3. Walking after their own lusts

Errors of doctrine are almost always attended with errors of practice, and certainly' they legitimately lead that way. Those who scoff according to the lusts of their intellect are very likely to live according to the lusts of their flesh. The two things are congruous; they are born from the same cause, they flourish for the same reasons, and they tend to the same ends: "Walking after their own lusts," —

2 Peter 3:4.

Only the modern scoffers have tried to improve upon their predecessors, for they say, "All things have developed by evolution from the beginning, which never had a beginning, but which somehow or other has always existed." Thus the scoffers change their strain, but they never alter their spirit; it is always an attack upon revealed truth. Indeed, they scarcely seem to believe that there is any revealed truth, and they will only accept that which they might themselves have invented.

Notwithstanding what these men say, all things have not continued as they were since the beginning of the creation, for there have been great interpositions of divine power in the past, as Peter goes on to show.

"Inviolable laws still govern the material creation. Men are still swift to sin. Oppressors are not overthrown; and, oftentimes, the good are left to languish in poverty and suffering. 'Where is the promise of his coming?'"

2 Peter 3:5-7

Admire the power of God's Word., It was by the Word of God that the heavens were made, by the Word of God that the earth was drowned, by the Word of God that it has been preserved ever since, and will be preserved until, by that same Word, fire shall come

to devour all the works of men. As surely as Noah's flood came, so surely shall there be a burning up at the appointed season: "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire?"

Ignorant that there has been one great interposition of God to avenge the insults to his holy law, and to overturn the rule of sin: "For this they willingly are ignorant of,"

There will come a second interposition; we know not when, but assuredly it shall come; and if the visitation tarry, we must wait for it; for it shall come, it shall not rely tarry, however long it may seem to be delayed.

2 Peter 3:8

You are in a hurry; you do not understand the infinite leisure of the Eternal One. The wondrous system of divine grace seems to have hardly room and scope enough in the few years that men give to it by their prophetic calculations; but God's prophecies are being fulfilled to the very letter. It may be that the length of time for their accomplishment will be far greater than any have imagined, yet to God it shall still be a very little while. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." We cry, "How long? how long?" Yet, according to God's reckoning, it is but the day before yesterday that Christ died, and only about a week ago that Adam was expelled from Eden. A thousand years is, after all, a very brief space of time. If it be measured by our life, it seems long; but what is the life of a man? Measured other ways, — and there are many other modes of measurement, — it grows even longer; but measured by the eternity of God, it is a vanishing point altogether, there seems to be nothing left of it.

There are no years to him; there are no days to the great Ancient of days. A thousand years must seem to be a mere speck in comparison with his everlasting existence,— as a dream when one swarths, it has swiftly passed away; but God still remaineth.

2 Peter 3:8

Money; Perspective; Time

The apostle Peter writes: "But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day" (2 Peter 3:8 NRSV).

An economist who read this passage was quite amazed and talked to God about it. "Lord, is it true that a thousand years for us is like one minute to you?"

The Lord said yes.

The economist said, "Then a million dollars to us must be like one penny to you."

The Lord said, "Well, yes."

The economist said, "Will you give me one of those pennies?"

The Lord said, "All right, I will. Wait here a minute." --John Ortberg

2 Peter 3:9

So he hurries not. He gives the sinner space and time and verge enough in which to repent. Oh, that man would turn to God, moved by that gracious long-suffering of his!

Therefore does he wait. If men ask why there is no interposition of wrath to overthrow the ungodly, the answer is, because this is part of God's great reign of love. He waits, because he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" yet there will be a limit even to his patience.

With His Fingers Crossed - In 1492, Ferdinand granted Columbus great titles, vast

privileges, and a tenth of the riches his explorations materialized. By 1500, when the size and wealth of the new world actually dawned on Ferdinand, he broke the agreement, though he had promised it by solemn treaty.

In the early 1950s, the Russians opened sixty million acres in Kazakhstan to grain farmers. They imported trainloads of Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians to work the state-owned cooperatives, planning to be self-sufficient in grain by 1954. The Communist Party promised to bring the future to its people. The people believed ... in vain. Today, several millions of those acres have reverted to pasture. The Party made promises and brought hope, one man said, then the Party vanished, leaving broken promises and ruined lives.

God understands that we live in hope and that, deprived of hope, our spirit diminishes, then dies. He has encouraged us to believe in his promises, which never fail; but we are intent on believing our own, which seldom succeed. Greed, false economic theory, political or social collapse can destroy even well-intentioned assurances. God's promises will not fail, for they are founded on him.

--Speaker's Sourcebook

2 Peter 3:10

It is impossible to tell when it will come, but the day of the Lord will come, and, to the great mass of mankind, it will come as a thief in the night. Though often warned, they will not expect it. The Lord's saints will watch for him, for they are not in ignorance that that day should overtake them as a thief; but, to the ungodly, the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; " —

2 Peter 3:10

Men make great boasts concerning what they build, and there are many wonderful works of men upon the face of the globe; but the day will come when there will be no trace of them left, for they will have utterly disappeared. Why, then, should you and I live for these things, — for the things which are seen, which are temporal? O beloved, live for the things which are not seen, which are eternal!

2 Peter 3:10-13

An Elusive Virtue - In 1404, twenty-five-year-old [Lorenzo Ghiberti](#) won a commission to build and adorn a pair of bronze doors for the north side of the baptistery in the cathedral of Florence, Italy ([Florence Baptistery](#)). He took twenty-one years to design and cast the masterpieces, dividing the doors into twenty-eight New Testament panels. They cost \$550,000. The donors then asked him to make corresponding double doors for the baptistery's east side. This endeavor took twenty-seven years and featured the Old Testament in ten panels. He spent forty-eight years on just two projects, but his time and effort left artistic masterpieces for generations to admire. Building spiritual lives challenges us to a perseverance that defies even Ghiberti. The free will, prejudice, stubbornness, and pride that mocks God are all obstacles to change and growth. The life produced by the Spirit in the Word seldom comes easily or quickly. People are never as easy to mold as bronze and wood. Although a skilled craftsman can predict how basic elements will react under given stimuli, the spiritual leader never masters the moods and reactions of people.

--Speaker's Sourcebook

2 Peter 3:11

These are garments which we should wear in prospect of eternity; these are things which no fire can touch, for holiness and godliness will outlive even the flames of the last great day.

2 Peter 3:12, 13

This should be the practical outcome of the anticipation of coming judgment. Let us look on "all these things" as passing away.

The end of this world will be the beginning of a new and better one, of which

“righteousness” will be the great characteristic.

We believe that God will, in the end, have a complete victory over sin, and that even this poor world of ours, purified by the fire, shall be lifted up, in a sevenfold splendor, to be a part of the great kingdom of our God: “New heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

2 Peter 3:14

Be diligent to get; rid of all those spots which sin has made. In one sense, you are cleansed from them already; but in another sense, the purifying work must constantly go on. You are to overcome your besetting sin, yea are to vanquish all your tendencies to evil, every thought is to be brought into captivity to the mind of the Lord.

2 Peter 3:15, 16

If Peter here alluded to the doctrine of election, and the great doctrines that spring out of predestination, that is no argument why they should not be preached; for if they are not to be preached because men wrest them, then nothing is to be preached, seeing that we are here told that they also wrest other Scriptures unto their own destruction. Any rope will do for a man to hang himself with; and any doctrine will surface for a man to ruin himself with if he wishes to do so. The doctrine of divine mercy has been twisted into a reason why we should live in sin., The doctrine of human capability has been wrested into this falsehood, “I can repent when I like, or believe when I like; and therefore I may leave it to the very last.” There is no form of opinion which cannot be rendered mischievous. Our business is to study the Word, and preach it as we find it; and if men will wrest it, we cannot help that. Is it not so that the truth will always be a savor of life unto life to those who believe; and a savor of death unto death to those who perish?

The Scriptures are given for our learning; and, rightly used, guide us to the Savior; yet, alas! some “wrest” them “unto their own destruction.” Let none of us ever be found committing such fatal folly as that.

2 Peter 3:17, 18.

The only way to prevent falling is to grow; the tree that grows will not fall over.

I should like to point out to young Christians, and to all Christian people, how Peter finishes this Epistle, erst with a warning and then with a counsel. He says, “Beware lest ye be led away,” and then he puts in a “but” —“but grow in grace.” If you go into a plantation, at a certain time of the year, you may see a great number of trees that have no leaves upon them; how are you to know which are alive, and which are not? Well, you would soon know if you could look at their roots. If a tree has been growing, if its roots have taken hold upon the soil, you may pull it, but you will not stir it. There it stands; and, in like manner, growth in grace brings fixity in grace. You who have faith, pray God that you may have growing faith. A living faith is a growing faith, and a growing faith is a living faith. Pray, therefore, that you may “grow in grace.”

2 Peter 3:18

An ascription of praise to Christ is never out of place at the beginning or at the end of an Epistle, or in the middle of it. You may praise the Lord Jesus Christ anywhere at any time; it shall never be a waste of time to sing unto’ his name: “To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

2 Peter 3:18 Growth in Grace

NO. 2700

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“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” — 2 Peter 3:18.

It is worth while to remark that this passage immediately follows the seventeenth verse, where the apostle says, “Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” He puts the one after the other, as if the one must be the means of the other. There had been some, in the apostle’s day, who had wrested, to their own destruction, certain expressions in the Epistles of Paul which Peter said were “hard to be understood;” and, therefore, he warned Christian men and women to take heed lest they, “being led away with the error of the wicked,” should “fall from their own stedfastness.” In order that they might know how to stand, and to be preserved from falling, he gave them this direction: “grow in grace;” for the way to stand is to grow; the way to be steadfast is to go forward. There is no standing except by progression. If you see even such a simple thing as a child’s toy rolling along your floor at home, you will observe that it will always stand upright as long as it keeps on rolling; but when it stops, down it goes. So is it with the Christian; as long as he is in motion, so long he stands; but if it were possible for the motion to cease, then the Christian would fall from his stedfastness. Glory be to God, he will be kept from falling, and he shall be presented faultless before the throne of God! The way to stand, then, is to go forward; the way to be steadfast is to progress; the way to be alive, according to the apostle, is to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

We will offer, first of all, two or three remarks upon growth “in grace” in general; and, secondly, a few remarks upon growth in grace being intimately connected with growth “in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

I. First, then, we shall offer some remarks upon growth “in grace” in general. What shall we say about it?

The first remark we make is, that there is a sense in which there is no such thing at all as growth in grace. If you understand the word grace as signifying free favor, and the love of God towards his people, there is not, and there cannot be, any growth in that at all.

**“The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God,” —**

he is, by the grace of God, there and then justified, and complete in Christ Jesus. And if he lives till his hair is grey, he will never be more justified, and never be more beloved, than he is the very first moment in which he believes in Christ. As soon as ever I have a vital connection with the Lamb of God, I am “in grace.” Let me live on, let my grace grow, let my faith increase, let my zeal become warmer, let my love be more ardent, yet I shall not be more “in grace” than I was before. God will not love me more, he will not have a deeper and a purer affection in his heart to me than he has the very first moment when I turn to him, nor will his grace the less justify me, or less accept me, the first moment when I come to him with all my sins about me, than it shall do when I stand before the throne. We never grow in the grace of election. We are always, as Peter says in his first Epistle, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father;” and in that sense of being “in grace” there is neither growth nor any retrograde movement. So also is it in the matter of justification.

**“In union with the Lamb,
From condemnation free,
The saints for ever were,
And shall for ever be.”**

And they are at any one time as much justified as they are at any other time. Give me to be justified to-day,

then I was justified yesterday, and I shall be justified to-morrow. As soon as I put my trust in the Savior, I became complete in grace; so far as that was concerned, I was made perfect in Christ Jesus. I cannot be more than perfect; and, therefore, I cannot in that respect grow in grace; I cannot receive more justifying mercy; I cannot receive more pardoning grace; for I have had it all at once, and have so become perfect in Christ.

But you will remark that our text does not say anything about grace growing; it does not say that grace grows. It tells us to "grow in grace." There is a vast difference between grace growing and our growing in grace. God's grace never increases; it is always infinite, so it cannot be more; it is always everlasting; it is always bottomless; it is always shoreless. It cannot be more; and, in the nature of God, it could not be less. The text tells us to "grow in grace." We are in the sea of God's grace; we cannot be in a deeper sea, but let us grow now we are in it. We cannot, be more in it than we are, or than we always have been. We are in God's grace; we are in the covenant; we are in the scheme of redemption; we are in union with Jesus; we cannot be more or less so, for we are eternally secure through the blood of our Savior. But while it cannot grow more, we can grow more in it, and so we shall "grow in grace."

I must make another remark. It is certain that, while the grace of God toward us does not grow: yet there is such a thing as the development of grace. There are some persons who strongly object to the doctrine of progressive sanctification, and to our mentioning anything like growth in grace. My brethren are welcome to object if they like, but I am sure, if they read the Scriptures (they will surely not object to Scriptural terms), they will find growth in grace very frequently mentioned; if that does not mean progressive sanctification, then I do not understand the term "growth in grace" at all. It is quite certain that there are degrees in the development of grace. You will surely not say that the young man, who has been converted only for the last few months, knows as much of grace, understands as much about it, and has as much faith, and as much love, as the man who has for the last twenty or thirty years been earnestly engaged in his Master's service. You will not tell me that one man, who is scarcely ever seen coming up to the house of God, and who is daily in a state of religious starvation, stands on a par in grace with a man who is laboring for his Master, whose love is evident to all, and whose faith is testified before the whole congregation. You will not tell me there is a dead level in Christianity, which all alike reach. If you do say so, I shall tell you that you have no eyes, or that you do not look about you. For it is certain that there are some who are further advanced than others are, some with greater faith than others have. There are "great faiths" as well as "little faiths," great loves as well as little loves; there are men of ardent spirits who have grace more fully developed in them than it is in others, It is true, they are not more loved of God than others are, and not more justified, nor more accepted, for in that respect we all stand on a level, and there is no difference; but as to the development of grace in our souls, and the display of grace in our lives, everyone must admit that there is a difference between different saints. I cannot understand the difference existing between various ministers of Christ, if it is not because of the difference in the degrees of grace which they possess. Some have just started in the Christian ministry, and have preached a little about redemption, but they have not gone far enough to preach about election; or, at least, not about the vital union of every blood-bought child of God with the person of Emmanuel; or if they should now and then preach upon that blessed truth, they cannot talk about the eternal security of the saints, and declare how, against wind and tide, they shall all sail safely into the heavenly harbor. They have not grown enough in grace to preach on such themes as these; so will not everyone admit that there are degrees of development in grace, while it is also true that there are none of us more justified, more elect more chosen of God and loved of him than any other believers are?

Now for a third remark, which is, that growth in grace is not to be measured by weeks, and months, and years. There are persons who think that the age of a man will tell how much he knows about divine things. "Oh!" say some, "So-and-so is such a young man, what should he know about divine grace? There is a hoary-headed father there; he must know a great deal more." If you talk like that, you will soon find out your mistake. God often delights to show how he scorns and scoffs at all the distinctions of man. He makes the young men prudent, and he gives even to children knowledge and discretion. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings he ordains strength because of his enemies. It is true, we do believe, and we should believe, that there is more knowledge beneath the grey hairs than under the youth's curly locks; generally speaking, it is so. Yet God, in order to display his sovereignty, has so arranged that he sometimes puts his treasures into an earthen vessel that has not been fashioned more than a few years.

Do not suppose that persons grow in grace according to their years. Some grow faster in grace in five minutes than others do in fifty years. I believe that some saints progress further in grace in one single month than others do in twelve months or twelve years. I am sure I may speak concerning myself. I have sometimes grown more in grace, in one hour, than I have at other seasons in a week, a month, or a year, when God, in his

infinite wisdom, has been pleased to give me a vision of the Savior, or to break up the fountains of wickedness that lay hidden in my soul. I have learnt more in one hour, when the Holy Spirit's hand has been upon me, than I have in weeks and months simply with my own study. God's people grow like trees grow. Sometimes they take a start, and grow upward; at another time, they are growing downward. Sometimes, apparently, the sap sleeps within the branch; — a winter time comes over it, and it is asleep.

Do not imagine, my dear friends, that because you are getting old, you are growing in grace. People are continually warning young men of their danger. No doubt we are in danger; but let me remind you that there is not an instance in Sacred Scripture of a young man disgracing his profession; but there are instances in Scripture of men of middle age and of grey hairs doing so. It is thus we, who are young, are in the greatest danger; and, therefore, God upholds us to show the power of his grace; but some of you older folk conceive that you are not in peril; and, therefore, God suffers you to fall, that he may stain the pride of your self-glorious, and let you see that it is not anything in flesh, neither age, nor standing, nor rank, nor condition, which ensures our safety; but that he holdeth up the humble, and casteth down the proud. David did not fall into his great sin until he had come certainly to maturity, and into the very prime of life, and then he sinned with Bathsheba. Lot did not transgress so grossly before he became an old man. If you turn to the pages of Scripture, you will notice that, wherever there has been a lamentable fall, — as in the case of Peter, — it has been a man who has grown up, and become strong in years. God thus shows us that it is not mere years that can teach us grace, — in fact, that years, and age, and learning, and talent, have nothing to do with grace; and he could, if he pleased, take a child six years old, and pour wisdom and knowledge into the lips of that child that could puzzle the seers of this world. He often takes the most unlikely instruments, and uses them for the accomplishment of his purposes; and because men have said that experimental preachers must have grey heads, he says, "Nay; it shall be a youth who shall lead the multitude; it shall be a child, out of whose mouth I will pour words of wisdom, for I will overthrow all human glory, and show mankind that it is not the preacher who is to be praised, but God." Salvation is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but it is God that showeth mercy. It is not the man who preaches, who accomplishes the work; but God working through the man. He could dispense with the man altogether if he pleased; at any rate, he will have the man he pleases, and at what age he pleases, and qualify him as he pleases.

Once more:, growth in grace is not to be estimated by our feelings. There are some of you, beloved, who think you are not growing in grace because you do not feel so lively as you used to do. "Ah!" say you, "when I was young, everything was bright then. What peaceful hours I then enjoyed! I would go over hedge and ditch to hear the gospel preached; I had such an intense desire to hear about God and Jesus Christ, such love to the gospel that, when I once got to hear a minister preach, it mattered not whoever he might be, it all seemed sweet. But now I am so depressed that I cannot enjoy the truth as I used to do." Do not think, because your wild heat is gone, that you have not grown. When we light a fire, we always put the straw and kindling at the bottom; and when we first light it, there is a deal of flame, and a great deal of smoke. But, afterwards, when the flame gets hold of the coals, there is not so much blaze, but there is really more heat. You may have lost some of your flame and smoke, but then you have more solid fire; we would rather warm our hands by the coals than by the straw, for that must soon go. So is it with grace; it begins with a flame which catches the lighter substances, and lays hold on the imagination and the passions; but, in after life, it appeals to the judgment, and makes the man one solid lump of burning fire. He is not a little flame, rising towards heaven, that the wind might blow out with a puff; but he becomes so strong a fire that the wind shall but increase the flame, and shall make the heat the greater. So it may be with you. Perhaps you have become more solid though you are less fiery.

Do not suppose, when you are depressed, that, therefore, you are not growing. Many of God's plants grow best in the dark, and he often puts them in the dark to make them grow. When you are growing upwards, recollect that there is such a thing as growing downward. You may have had, yesterday, a divine manifestation that took you up to the top of the Delectable Mountains. You must not think you are big because you are up on high, for pigmies perched on Alps are pigmies still; and if you were ever so little, it would not make you any bigger if you were taken to the top of St. Paul's. If, on the other hand, you are deep down in a mine, do not imagine that you are any the smaller for that reason. I can tell you that you will often grow faster in the dungeon than on the top of a mountain; but it is not a pleasant place to be in. When our depravity is revealed to us, when our desolation of spirit, and our utter hopelessness and powerlessness are uncovered and made manifest by God's Holy Spirit, we grow, I believe, even faster than we do when, on the wings of seraphs, we are privileged to mount on high. So, do not measure your growth in grace by your feelings. Some of you make a kind of barometer of your feelings. Do not do so. If we are in Christ, we are in Christ by faith, and not by

feelings; and recollect that, whether your feelings are good or bad, you are no more or less a child of God. Your faith, sinner, unites you with the Lamb, — not your feelings. Trust him in darkness, trust him in distress, lean on him when you cannot see him; and when there seems nothing to walk on, still tread, for the ground is firm beneath the foot of faith.

Just by way of warning, let me urge you not to think that you are growing in grace because you happen to be doing a little more for the church externally. “Oh!” we often say, “now I am progressing, am I not? I am busy in the Sunday-school, laboring hard there; I am preaching; I am doing this, or that, or the other; now I am growing in grace.” Ah! it is a proper thing to be diligent in good works, and to be abounding in acts of righteousness; but if you begin to say, “Now I am growing,” because of this or because of that, you have made a great mistake. It often happens that, when we are very full of public labors, we are very short in private devotions. I must myself confess that it has been so with me — and that is a very lamentable thing, — for then I was not really growing. A man may have his hands ever so full before the world, and think he is doing much; but he may not be really growing in grace after all. Do not think that this is an excuse for anybody who is not doing much, you Issachar-like people, like “a strong ass between two burdens,” too lazy to lift either. I am not giving you a word of comfort. You are not growing, for you are doing nothing; and those who are doing something must not boast of their growth. It hath more to do with private devotion than with public exercise; it hath more to do with meditation than with explanation; it hath more to do with contemplation and adoration than with public service. We must look more to the state of the internal matters, keeping up private prayer, and attending to the reading of the Scriptures. If we do not, however much we may seem to progress outwardly, we are not any richer; we are only beating out the little gold we had into a thinner plate, and spreading it over a wider surface. The more we do for Christ, the more he will do for us; but let us take heed that, whilst’ we water other people vineyards, our own is not neglected, and that the stones of the hedges thereof are not cast down. May God grant you, brethren, to grow in grace!

II. Now we come to the second thought, that growth in grace is intimately connected with growth “in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

In fact, there cannot be any grace at all except as we know Christ, and there can be no growth in grace except as we grow in our knowledge of Christ. We may always test whether we are growing by this question, — Do I know more of Christ to-day than I did yesterday? Do I live nearer to Christ to-day than I did a little while ago? For increase in the knowledge of Christ is the evidence as well as the cause of true growth in grace. In order to prove this, I will mention one or two Christian virtues, and you will see that they must increase as we know more of Christ.

With regard to love, some of us say, “How little we love Christ!” Many of you sing, —

**“Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought, —
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I his, or am I not?”**

That is a very good hymn, — I find no fault with it; — but please do not sing it too often. Now and then, you are welcome to it, but get through it as quickly as you can. I would far rather hear you sing that grand hymn of Toplady’s, —

“A debtor to mercy alone, Of covenant mercy I sing; Nor fear, with thy righteousness on, My person and offering to bring.”

“Oh!” say you, “I long to grow in love. I want to know that I love Jesus. I want to feel my heart going out after him, and my soul knit to him.” Well, the way to grow in love is to know more of Christ. The more you know of the Savior, the better you must love him; the more you discover of his beauties, of his excellences, of his virtues, of his perfections, and of his glories, the more your soul will be drawn towards him. I tell you, who do not love Christ at all, that it is because you do not know him; for if you knew anything of him, you would love him in proportion to your knowledge. The more you know of my Master, the more you will love him. You have only lifted one corner of the veil that shrouds his forehead, you have seen but one portion of his visage, so you love him; but if you had faith to lift the veil entirely, to see all of his blessed countenance, to mark the majestic sweetness which sits enthroned upon his lofty brow; if you could descant on his eyes, which are “like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim,” — if you could describe him as being “altogether lovely,” ah! you would love him more. Blessed are the men that improve upon acquaintance! Jesus Christ is one of those

blessed ones; the more you know of him, the more you love him. Sweet Jesus! when I first saw thee, I loved thee! When first thy wounded hand and bleeding side were uncovered to me, then I loved thee. Ah! but that love is nothing compared with what I have now. And, oh! when I shall see thee as thou art, — when my soul becomes changed into love, — the love I have now shall seem to have been nought but a spark compared with that vehement flame of love which I shall have to thee then. Know more of Christ; read more of him; think more of him; ask about him more; because you will be sure to grow in the grace of love, in proportion as you know more of Christ.

So is it with regard to faith. What is the reason why so many of us groan because our faith is so feeble? It is because we do not know enough of Christ. There are many people who need to know a great deal more about Jesus than they know at present; and if they knew more about Jesus, they would have more faith. "Oh!" says one, "when I look at myself, I think, 'Oh, what is to become of me?'" Then I search to see if there are not some evidences of grace." That is all wrong! You have no business to look there; you will not grow in faith by looking at yourself. One look at Jesus is worth fifty at yourself. If you would have more faith, keep your eye on Jesus. The wounds of Christ on Calvary are the mothers of faith; these are the breast from which faith must draw its nourishment. If you would grow in faith, you must live near to the cross. The sweet flower of faith was first sown in Christ's precious blood, and it must be watered by it every day. Know more of Christ; think more of him; and your faith will increase. Your little faith would soon get strong if you lived more on Jesus. If you would become Great-hearts by-and-by, and knock those giants about as terribly as Mr. Great-heart did of old, live near to Jesus; live with Jesus; feast at his banqueting table; for there is no food so strengthening to the spirit as the flesh of your Lord, and no wine can so invigorate your soul as the blood of Jesus Christ your Savior.

So is it with regard to our courage; for that is a Christian grace, and one in which many are terribly deficient. Our Christian courage will always increase in proportion as we know Christ. We have far too many timid Christians who have not courage enough, I was about to say, to speak to a cheese-mite; they would not be able to profess the name of Christ before the smallest creature in the world; they would be almost ashamed to declare that they loved the Savior even within bare walls, for fear some bird of the air should hear them, and go and tell the tale. They are so ashamed of their own faith (and yet it is real faith) that they scarcely dare to speak. The smallest stone in the road would make them stumble; a straw would be almost as great to them as a range of mountains like the Himalayas would be to others; they would be entirely cast out of the road if they had the least prospect that there could be a shadow in it for them to pass by. It is because we do not know enough of Christ that we are afraid of anything. I believe that, when we come truly to know Christ, we shall, be afraid of nothing at all. Shall we be afraid of man? Nay; we shall say, "Whether it is right to obey God rather than man, judge ye." Shall we be afraid of the devil when we know Christ? Nay; we shall say, "Christ hath the devil chained, and he can always pull the dog of hell in when he attempts to bite us. Christ hath hold of the dragon, and he cannot inflict deeper wounds than Christ willeth." We shall not be afraid of the messenger of death, for we shall regard him as an angel of the covenant sent to fetch God's people up to heaven. Courage wilt always be increased in proportion as we know more of Jesus; and if we could have Christ for our daily and hourly Companion, I believe all the hosts of hell, marshalled in battle, would no more affright us than would a flock of small birds that might settle upon our path, but we should say, "In the name of the Lord, we will destroy them." If you would have more true Christian courage, get more of "the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

So is it with regard to our zeal, which is a grace sadly lacking in these times. If we would be more zealous, we must live nearer to Christ. If the Son of man were to come now, would he find zeal upon the earth? His own question was, "Shall he find faith?" But, would he find zeal? It would be difficult even for him to discover much of it, amongst Christians. There is sound orthodoxy, but no zeal; there is heterodoxy, but still no zeal. Where do you find it? Just here and there. There is a remnant, according to the election of grace, who are zealous for God; but, in these times, we are sorry to say it, religion has degenerated into a kind of formality. It is a fashionable thing to be pious. We have been going on in the same track as other people; there was an old cart-rut, and we all drive along it. We have kept on at the same pace as our fathers; but, oh! if we knew more of Christ, we should have more zeal.

I cannot think it possible for men to lack zeal when they know Christ. They would then say, "Did my Savior shed his blood for me, and shall I fear even to die for him? Did he come all the way from heaven to earth to save souls, and shall not I also seek to win them for him?" Should we have so many lazy preachers if they had more of Christ in their hearts? If they understood more of Jesus, should we have so many slothful, sluggish members in our churches, with so many who can make any excuse rather than labor for Christ, patching up any empty apology for idleness? No; brethren, if we knew more of the Savior, if we had more frequent visions

of him, if we saw him oftener on his cross, and viewed him more frequently sitting with the crown upon his head, we should say, "I vow revenge against my sloth; all I can do will be too little for so good a Lord.

"All that I am, and all I have, shall be for ever thine;

Whate'er my duty bids me give, My cheerful hands resign.

**"Yet if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I should give him all."**

It is no use to try to get more zeal except in the right way, knowing more of Christ; and if we seek to grow in zeal as certain people we might mention have done, we shall have a zeal like a house on fire! It will do more mischief than it will do good. There may be some heat, and a deal of illumination; but it will die away, by-and-by, into black ashes, poisoning the churches everywhere. I have seen a certain kind of revival in England, and I can always tell where such "revivals" have been by the scarred state of the places after them. These so-called "revivals" have been wrought by excitable meetings, held by sundry preachers, who have invented strange doctrines, but have said nothing about the grace of God. They have for a time stirred up the people to a kind of religious furor, and they have left behind them a very desert. Before them it was like a garden of the Lord, but behind them barrenness and desolation. The church has been divided; there has been a reaction, and the people have sunk into the most lamentable condition. If we would have true zeal, it must be by the preaching of the good old doctrine, proclaiming Jesus Christ and him crucified; for anything else comes of the devil, and to hell it shall tend; its issue shall be destruction, and not salvation. But if we keep to the truth of God, there will be "revival" enough. We want nothing but the good old-fashioned gospel to stir the world again. Though men have tried new schemes, God will not own them. All these heresies must be swept away, and the true gospel — distinguishing grace of God in all the sovereignty of election — must yet again be preached; and when it is preached in all its fullness, then shall the church be zealous, and then shall Zion arise, and shake herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments.

Further, if we would grow also in the grace of brotherly kindness, we must know more of Christ. O beloved, we must lament that there is too little brotherly kindness in the world! There is a great deal of that mawkish, mistaken kindness which says, "We must never say anything contrary to anybody else's opinion. If we know of a doctrinal error, we must not expose it, because love of our brethren implies that, even if they are wrong, we would not tell them of it." But I think true brotherly kindness is always to preach the truth, and tell our brethren where they are wrong, and give them the opportunity of getting set right; to preach whatever we believe to be true, and to maintain what God has taught us; and then, after all, to say, "Well, brother, you differ from me. I am not infallible; I still love you." But that is no love which makes us hide the truth. True love will make us honest, zealous, and affectionate.

Why don't we love one another as much as we ought? It is because we do not love the Savior enough, and we have not seen enough of him. If we had known more of the Savior, I am sure we should love him better. I met with a strange idea when reading a book by old Burroughs, the other day. He says, "If Jesus Christ were to come down to his church now, he would see some of his children with black eyes; some others would be seen scratched in the face, and some bruised all over. He would say to them, 'What have you been doing?' If one should answer, 'Lord, I have been fighting with my brother, and he did this;' the Lord would say, 'Children of one family fight! the birds of one nest disagree! how sad it is!'" It is a queer thought, but it may be a profitable one; for if our Lord Jesus Christ finds his people quarrelling, what will he say? You may remember a story I have told you before. An old Scotch elder had been disputing with his minister at an elders' meeting. He said some hard things, and almost broke the minister's heart. Afterwards, he went home, and the minister went home too. The next morning, when the elder came down, his wife said to him, "Eh, Jan! ye look very sad this morning; what's the matter wi' ye?" "Ah!" said he, "you would be sad too if you had had such a dream as I've had." "Weel, and what did ye dream about?" Oh! I dreamed I had been at an elders' meeting, and I said some hard things, and grieved the minister; and as he went home, I thought he died, and went to heaven. A fortnight after, I thought I died, and that I went to heaven, too; and when I got to the gates of heaven, out came the minister, and put out his hand to welcome me, saying, 'Come along, Jan, there's nae strife up here, and I'm happy to see ye.'" The elder went to the minister to beg his pardon, but he found that he was dead; and he laid it so to heart that, within a fortnight, the elder himself departed; and I should not wonder if he did meet the minister at heaven's gate, and hear him say, "Come along, Jan, there's nae strife up here." It will be well for us to recollect that there is no strife up there. Glorified saints have no strife among themselves; and we should

love one another more in brotherly kindness if we thought more of heaven, and more of our blessed Jesus.

Lastly, there is another grace in which we need to grow; that is, the grace of humility. I am sure we should increase in that grace if we lived nearer to Christ. O humility, most precious thing, thou art most rare! He who talks most of it hath least of it. He who preaches of it best full often is least the subject of its power. O humility! I have sometimes thought that thou wert a phantom, and that pride was the reality, Humility, where art thou? The depths of poverty say, "Thou art not in me," for the poor are often proud. The heights of riches say, "Thou art not here," for the rich are often proud, too. O humility! Thou art not to be found in science, for philosophy puffeth up, Thou art not to be found in ignorance, for that is the mother of pride. O humility, where can I find thee? Where art thou? Nowhere can I see thee, or know what thou art, except I sit at the feet of Jesus, and behold myself a lost, ruined sinner purchased by divine love. If you, dear friend, would be truly humble, you must look at your Savior, for then you will say, —

**"Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"**

You will never feel yourself such a worm as when, by faith, you see your Savior dying for you; you will never know your own nothingness so well as when you see your Savior's greatness. When you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you will be sure to grow in humility. Growing Christians think themselves nothing, but, full-grown Christians think themselves less than nothing; and the nearer we get to Jesus, the smaller self will appear to be. Self and Christ can never come close together. When I stand near self, Christ is small; when I stand near Christ, self is small. May God grant to you, dear friends, to grow in the knowledge Of Christ! Read the Scriptures more. Seek more the influences of the Holy Spirit upon them; spend more time in devotion; ask God the Holy Spirit to give you a fresh sight of Calvary; be oftener on the mount of transfiguration, in the garden of suffering, in the hall of agony, under the cross of crucifixion; live with Jesus, and near to him; and so, changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord, you shall each one of you grow unto the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

SERMONS BY ROB MORGAN

2 PETER

2 Peter 1:16

The Da Vinci Code – Part 1

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

2 Peter 1:16

Today we are continuing our series of messages entitled Night Vision, and I want to devote the final two messages in this series to the subject of the popular novel and the upcoming movie entitled The Da Vinci Code.

Perhaps you're saying to yourself, "Well, this message isn't for me. I've not read The Da Vinci Code and I'm not going to see the movie. I'm just going to have to sit here and be bored for twenty-five minutes."

Well, I don't want to encourage anyone to read the book or see the movie; but millions of people are reading the book and they will see the movie—and many of them are your friends and associates, and your youngsters. And since this is the arguably the most damning assault against Christianity in our generation, we need to at least know what the issues are, and we need to be reassured that there are excellent answers to the questions raised.

I have read the book and I'd like to begin with a brief synopsis of it. The novel begins with the discovery of a murder victim in the Grand Gallery of the Louvre in Paris. The victim is the museum's curator, and the Paris police call in a consultant to help with the case. That consultant becomes the novel's chief protagonist, a Harvard professor named Robert Langdom, and alongside him is a cryptologist named Sophie Neveau. As they investigate the case, they become suspects themselves and find themselves in danger.

They also come to realize that this murder is connected with the legendary search for the Holy Grail, which is really the earthly remains of Mary Magdalene plus some associated ancient documents that tell the “real” story of Jesus.

The underlying premise of the book is that Christianity as the world knows it is a 2000-year-old hoax. Jesus of Nazareth was indeed a great teacher who was murdered by the Romans, but he rotted in his grave. Prior to his martyrdom, however, he married Mary Magdalene and had a daughter. Mary and her daughter fled to France where they established the Merovingian line of French royalty.

According to this novel, the real story of Mary Magdalene has been preserved in hidden codes and symbols to avoid the wrath of the Catholic Church. Leonardo Da Vinci knew the real story of Jesus, and he used his painting The Last Supper to give hidden clues.

As the main characters continue their investigation, they learn that a powerful Catholic organization called Opus Dei is prepared to use any means necessary to keep the true story of Jesus from coming out. If the secrets are revealed, we are told, Christianity, as we know it, will be exposed as the fraud that it is, built upon centuries of lies.

Now, let me give you some quotes from this book that point to its real purpose:

Ø This quote appears at the beginning of the book: All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate. That’s the first clue that you’re dealing with something more than a novel. Dan Brown is saying that even though the story itself is fiction, it is based on documents and historical facts that are true and verifiable. If you believe that, I’ve got a nice white house sitting on 18 acres of land in downtown Washington, D.C. I’d like to sell you. Not only is a work of fiction, but very many of the purported “facts” that Dan Brown claims to be accurate are also false.

Ø What I mean... is that almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false. That is basically the thesis for the entire book.

Ø The Bible is a product of man, my dear. Not of God. That’s another key statement.

Ø More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them. As I hope to show you, that is an incredible distortion of history.

Ø Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned. That statement, made as fact, is false.

Ø Behold... the greatest cover-up in human history. Not only was Jesus Christ married, but He was a father... The marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record. There is no document, ancient or modern, that bears out this claim. There is nothing in any manuscript we have ever found that affirms this to be true. There is nothing in archaeology that would even hint at this. The evidence we have from antiquity presents a different picture.

Ø The scrolls highlight glaring historical discrepancies and fabrications, clearly confirming that the modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda—to promote the divinity of the man Jesus Christ and use his influence to solidify their own power base. That statement, presented as fact, is patently false.

None of those statements from The Da Vinci Code are true, yet if you don’t know something of church history and New Testament scholarship, they sound intriguing and, in the context of the book, they sound convincing.

One article I read on this on this subject said: “We are all entitled to our own opinions, but we are not entitled to our own facts. It is OK for a novelist to create a fictional story and even a fictional setting if he wishes. What you can’t do with impunity is create a fictional foreground and fictional background, the latter of which you claim is based on fact. That is precisely what Dan Brown has done. His novel, The Da Vinci Code, claims to be based on facts, but his ‘facts’ are just as much fiction as his fiction.”[1]

The real danger is that this book and movie will increase the skepticism of non-believers, undermine the faith of nominal believers, and create a brain-full of doubts in our own young people who see this movie.

Because all of this is rather complex, I'd like to present today's message in a series of six simple sentences:

1. The New Testament Was Written in the First Century

First, the New Testament was written in the first century. It's important to keep that in mind. To the consternation of liberal scholars, the date for the writing of the books of the New Testament has been pushed earlier and earlier by the discovery of earlier and earlier manuscripts. When I was a freshman at King College in 1970, I had a liberal professor of religion who claimed that John's Gospel was probably written in the Third Century because John's theology was so developed and his book was so profound that it would have taken considerable time for Christianity to have developed to that extent. I've thought about his words many times. My professor was simply spouting out what he had been taught years before in his liberal seminary, but he had not kept up with the times. Even then, his scholarship was outdated and incorrect.

In 1934, a little fragment was found in Egypt, and today it's in a museum in Manchester, England. Known technically as P (Papyrus) -52, it's popularly known as the Ryland Fragment, named for John Ryland, who found it. It is a torn page from a very early copy of the Gospel of John, which manuscript specialists date to the first quarter of the second century. Some date it as early as A.D. 100, proving that copies of John's Gospel were in circulation throughout the Roman Empire from a very early date, probably within the first century.

Another Greek manuscript, known as P-45, dates to around AD 200 has all four Gospels together.

The Magdalen College Greek Fragments of Matthew's Gospel is dated by some scholars between AD 100 and 150, though some scholars place it in the first century itself.

A list of the canonized books of the New Testament, called the Muratorian Fragment, is dated to sometime between AD 150 and 200, and it lists almost all the New Testament books, including the four Gospels.

Many scholars believe the entire New Testament was written and composed prior to AD 70, all within the lifetime of the apostles, during the first generation of believers, within the lifetime of those who witnessed the resurrection.

Furthermore these books were, for the most part, accepted as sacred, canonized, New Testament Scriptures by the early church from a very early point in its history. In fact, we have an interesting document coming from a biblical skeptic named Marcion who lived in the 100s. In attacking the New Testament books, he did us the favor of listing them, and he confirms for us that our New Testament was in circulation and accepted by the church, pretty much as we have it now, by AD 140.

We know that in the early 200's, a full century before the Council of Nicea, Origen, an early church leader, listed all the accepted books of the New Testament—a list that matches today's canon.

In summary, The Da Vinci Code says that there were hundreds of Christian writings, and that Emperor Constantine in the fourth century went through them and picked the ones that were politically helpful to him, thus creating the New Testament as he wanted it to be, and that the New Testament is essentially a fourth century document chosen for partisan, political purposes.

But, in fact, the New Testament was written in the first century; and by the second century—100 to 200 years before Constantine—the New Testament was already accepted in a form very similar to the one we have today, by the early church as Holy Scriptures. That is a matter of historical record.

Dr. Clark E. Pinnock says, "There exists no document from the ancient world witnessed by so excellent a set of textual and historical testimonies, and offering so superb an array of historical data on which an intelligent decision may be made. ...Skepticism regarding the historical credentials of Christianity is based upon an irrational bias."

2. The New Testament Writers Were Eyewitnesses and Apostles of our Lord, and Their Documents are Anchored in History.

The apostle Peter wrote: We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty....

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15: Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures... He was buried... He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and... He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living....

Luke 1 says: Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

3. The New Testament Writers Warned of False Teachers

As you read through these first century documents we call our New Testament, you find that even then, from the earliest days of Christianity, the apostles were concerned about false teaching and heretical views that were cropping up here and there.

Even at this early stage in Christian history, even within a generation of the resurrection of Christ, and even within the lifetime of the apostles, there were people teaching and preaching things about Jesus Christ that were not true.

Let me give you some examples.

In Galatians 1:6ff., Paul wrote: I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a Gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned.

In 1 Timothy 1:3ff., Paul wrote, As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith.... Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm....

The apostle Peter, in 2 Peter 2:1: There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.

And from the book of Jude: Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

4. One of the Emerging Heresies Was Gnosticism

One of these emerging heresies was Gnosticism. The word "Gnosticism" (the "G" is silent, so the word is pronounced nos'-te-ci'-sm), comes from the Greek word for knowledge, and it's rather difficult to determine exactly what the Gnostics taught. One textbook I consulted said that if you get ten scholars together to articulate Gnostic belief, you'll get ten different answers.

In simplest terms, Gnostic belief seems to often include these elements:

1. Gnosticism stresses the acquisition of inner knowledge—not objective, factual, historical knowledge, but mystical, inner, secret knowledge.
2. The physical world (all matter, all material and physical things) is evil, and the universe was not created by the great and good God who is over all, but by some lesser god who made enormous mistakes in the process.
3. Despite the evil of our bodies and our material world, there is somewhere in our spirits a spark of divinity from the true God. That's why we need the secret, inner gnosis, knowledge, enlightenment, that is ethereal and mystical and mysterious and other-worldly.
4. Christ descended to earth from some high level of divine beings to help us find this true knowledge. He needed to be crucified to free Himself from the evil body He acquired, so He chose one named Jesus to be crucified in His stead, and the death of Jesus freed Christ to ascend to a higher plain. In so doing, He taught us we can all experience a spark of divinity.

There are many variations on this, but at least you get the idea of the sort of philosophy espoused by Gnosticism. It's almost a sort of combination of Christianity with Hinduism or Pantheism. And in the New Testament, we get the idea that even in the first century, the apostles were starting to battle this as a heresy. If you read the book of Colossians, for example, or the book of 1 John, it seems

that Paul and John were battling an early form of Gnosticism. That leads to my fifth point:

5. Between the Second and Fourth Centuries, Gnosticism Became a Full-Blown Movement.

There were a lot of Gnostic preachers and practitioners who were writing a lot of strange books advancing their beliefs. The Gnostic writers flourished between the years AD 100 to AD 300. And during that same time, their heresy was combated by the apostolic fathers, the early leaders of the post-apostolic church, who viewed Gnosticism as a perversion of Christian truth.

For example, one of the earliest Christian leaders was a man named Ignatius of Antioch. He was born during the lifetime of the apostles, about AD 50, and he was probably a disciple of the apostle John. He died about AD 110 by being slain for his faith, probably by being thrown to the lions in the amphitheater. In his writings, he warned of a particular heresy that was gaining popularity which alleged that Jesus Christ did not have an actual body, but was instead a spiritual being. Gnosticism, remember, says that the physical is evil, therefore Jesus could not have been God because He had a physical body.

Polycarp also wrote against similar teachings that were beginning to circulate.

Justin Martyr was a philosopher who converted to Christ in AD 132, and from his writings we see that he battled a form of Gnosticism that was beginning to gain steam in his days.

Then came Irenaeus, born about AD 140, who was a student of Polycarp. Irenaeus wrote a book entitled *The Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So-Called*, commonly called by its simpler title, *Against Heresies*. He outlined the Gospel exactly as the New Testament presented it, and he also argued that if there had been some kind of secret knowledge, the apostles would have know it and passed it on to those whom they appointed as bishops over the churches.

One after another, we have early Christian scholars and apologists describing and attacking this strange cult and heresy known as Gnosticism.

And then, everything died down and little was heard from or about Gnosticism for hundreds of years, until December of 1945. Two Islamic brothers were traveling along the Nile River in Egypt, going to a little town called Nag Hammadi. In the shadow of a cliff, they dismounted from their camels and started digging in the dirt and sand, looking for a particular kind of soil that was valued as fertilizer. Suddenly their shovels hit something hard and made a hollow-sounding thud. It was an old clay jar, and—to make a long story short—they discovered a collection of long-lost Gnostic writings dating from the third and fourth centuries, writing in the Coptic language. It was one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, almost as spectacular as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Nag Hammadi Library takes us back 1700 years and gives us a fascinating set of Gnostic writings from the early centuries of Christianity.

However, these Gnostic books are very different from our New Testament. We can say six things about these Gnostic Gospels.

- Ø They make for fascinating reading and fill in some historical blanks in Christian history.
- Ø The Gnostic Gospels, however, are not anchored in history as the New Testament is.
- Ø They were not written by the original followers of Christ.
- Ø They were not written in the first century.
- Ø They contain fanciful stories that don't ring of truth.
- Ø They are full of mystical and mysterious babble.

Now I want to come to the very crux of my message and get to the bottom line of what I am saying today. The premise of *The Da Vinci Code* is that the later Gnostic Gospels by unknown heretics in the second and third centuries represent the true story of Christ; and the original Gospels and New Testament writings from the first century, written by the original followers of Jesus, are the false and heretical ones.

Dan Brown merely swaps out history—the Gnostic Gospels are the true ones, and the true Gospels are the heretical ones.

Everything we know from the first four centuries of Christianity makes this a laughable position to take, but it doesn't matter. The ancient heresy of Gnosticism corresponds to the mystical, pluralistic, non-theological, multi-cultural, New Age, postmodern spirit of our world. It seems as if the devil has discovered that an old lie that worked in the early years of Christianity works just as well here, now, at the end of the age. And he has used Dan Brown's book to mainstream this to the masses.

Now, at the risk of exhausting you, let me make one final statement.

6. Even in the Gnostic Gospels There is No Evidence that Jesus Was Married to Mary Magdalene. Dan Brown has to stretch the limits of credibility even further with this purported fact. Where does he come up with this? It comes from a disputed sentence in the Gnostic document known as the Gospel of Philip.

I'm going to read to you from the Gospel of Philip, even though it isn't a Gospel and it's not by Philip. I'll read you a few passages to demonstrate what the Gnostic Gospels are like, and then I'll read you the text that has caused all the excitement. The so-called Gospel of Philip begins with these words:

Ø A Hebrew makes a Hebrew, and such a person is called a convert. A convert does not make a convert. [Some people] are as they [are] and make others [like them], while others simply are.... A Gentile doesn't die, never having been alive so as to die. One who has believed in the truth is alive, but this person is at risk of dying just by being alive....

(Do you see what I mean about mysterious and mystical babble? This is typical of these so-called Gnostic Gospels).

Ø Light and darkness, life and death, and right and left are siblings of one another, and inseparable. For this reason the good are not good, the bad are not bad, life is not life, death is not death. Each will dissolve into its original nature, but what is superior to the world cannot be dissolved, for it is eternal....

Ø Some say (the virgin) Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. They are wrong and do not know what they are saying. When did a woman ever get pregnant by a woman?

Ø Jesus tricked everyone, for he did not appear as he was, but he appeared so that he could be seen. He appeared to everyone. He [appeared] to the great as great, he [appeared] to the small as small, he [appeared to the] angels as an angel and to humans as a human. For this reason his word was hidden from everybody. Some looked at him and thought they saw themselves...

Ø God is a man-eater, and so humans are [sacrificed] to him. Before humans were sacrificed, animals were sacrificed, because those to whom they were sacrificed are not gods.

Ø The world came into being through a mistake. The creator wanted to make it incorruptible and immortal, but he failed and did not get what he hoped for. For the world is not incorruptible and the creator of the world is not incorruptible....

Now, here is the interesting paragraph:

Ø Wisdom, who is called barren, is the mother of angels. The companion of the (here, the word is obscure, but it might be savior) is Mary of Magdala. The (the phrase is lost) her more than the disciples, kissed her often on her (and here the word is obscure). The other [disciples] said to him, "Why do you love her more than all of us?" The savior answered and said to them, "Why do I not love you like her? If a blind person and one who can see are both in darkness, they are the same. When the light comes, one who can see will see the light, and the blind person will stay in darkness."

Here is an unclear and disputed passage from a strange heretical sect dating from the third century, found in the middle of a rambling and confused work, purporting to be a Gospel when it isn't a gospel, and claiming to be written by Philip when it isn't at all by the New Testament Philip—and there is not a credible historian in the world who, based on this uncertain scrap of writing, suggest that here we have the key that undermines all of Christianity. And nothing else in any other document in Christian history suggests that Jesus was married. It is pure, mindless, incredulous, nonsense. And yet, Dan Brown opens his book by saying that his work is a novel, but it is based on documented truth.

Well, I want to end this message by telling you that we hold in our hand a reliable document that contains the truth of the ages—the infallible, inerrant, timeless, enduring Word of God; and it tells us of a Savior who died and rose again to forgive our guilt and to give us everlasting life. It's a miracle book. Let me end with a story that illustrates this:

In the most recent edition of the Gideon Magazine, a man named Guille Zapata received a Gideon New Testament at an engineering university, and after reading it he received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He got a job as a petroleum engineer in a

small town in Peru, and this town was a very superstitious place. It had the reputation of being a stronghold for the occult, and for witches and warlocks. Guille put up a sign offering free Bible lessons to anyone who was interested, but no one took him up on the offer. One day, the rain came down in torrents and the water began seeping into Guille's house. In desperation, he began bailing out the water, and suddenly a filthy dog darted through the opened door into the house.

The dog grabbed Guille's New Testament, turned on his paws, and ran back out into the rain. Guille threw down his bailing tools and took out after the dog, but he was unable to retrieve his Bible. The dog, meanwhile, ran into the shack of a known witch doctor named Leoncio Guerrero.

Two weeks later, the witch doctor knocked on Guille's door and ask if he could enroll in Bible lessons. Leoncio explained that one evening an extremely ugly dog brought a little blue book into his house. He opened it to Psalm 115 and started reading about the sin of idolatry. As he read, he began to realize that something was missing from his life, and as Guille talked with the man the Lord opened his heart, he was saved, and he had soon led his entire family to faith in Christ ("The Witch Doctor" in *The Gideon*, April 2006, p. 5).

Today I encourage you to turn from lies and deceptions and to trust the living, life-changing word of God. For, as Peter himself said:

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty

2 Peter 1:16 The Da Vinci Code - Part 2

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 2 Peter 1:16

Today we're coming to the end of our springtime series of sermons entitled *Night Vision*, in which we have looked at some of the challenges facing Christianity at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Steven Pierce likes to remind me that American military forces rightfully claim to "own the night," because their superior technology gives them the ability to see the enemy even through the darkness, so that hostile forces can no longer use the cloak of night as a weapon. Using night-vision goggles, American soldiers can peer through the darkness and clearly spot their enemies.

Well, the church of Jesus Christ can do the same. We "own the night." We have the night-vision goggles of Scripture that enable us to recognize and identify the enemy and to gain the advantage. So we've used these six messages to identify and combat some of the forces lining up against the Gospel.

Our final topic has been *The Da Vinci Code*, the book and movie that attack the historical foundations of Christianity. Now if you think this isn't an issue, consider this. As of now, May of 2006, Dan Brown's novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, has sold more copies than any other fictional work in U.S. history. It has been read "cover to cover" by about 45 million adults just in the United States. That's twenty percent of our population. To put it another way, *The Da Vinci Code* has become the most widely read book with a spiritual theme, apart from the Bible itself, to have ever penetrated American homes and American society.

It is extremely hostile to Christianity. At the front of his book, Dan Brown claims that even though this book is a work of fiction, all his descriptions of documents and so forth are accurate. But they aren't; and the whole book seems designed to create and increase intellectual skepticism against Christianity.

Let me review by summarizing the basic plot of *The Da Vinci Code*. There is a murder at the Louvre Museum in Paris, and a professor and a cryptologist—a man and a woman—are called in to help with the investigation. They soon realize that they themselves are suspects. So they flee from the police and set out to solve the murder while being chased across Western Europe.

As the story unfolds, they realize that the murder is connected with information proving that Christianity as the world knows it is a 2000-year-old hoax. Jesus of Nazareth was a Jewish Rabbi who, prior to his crucifixion, had married Mary Magdalene and had a daughter. After the martyrdom of Jesus, Mary and the little girl fled to France where they established the Merovingian line of French royalty.

According to this novel, the real story of Mary Magdalene has been preserved in hidden codes and symbols to avoid the wrath of the Catholic Church. Leonardo Da Vinci knew the real story of Jesus, and he used his painting The Last Supper to give hidden clues.

As the main characters continue their investigation, they learn that a powerful Catholic organization called Opus Dei is prepared to use any means necessary to keep the true story of Jesus from coming out. If the secrets are revealed, we are told, Christianity, as we know it, will be exposed as the fraud that it is, built upon centuries of lies

In writing this novel, Dan Brown leads his readers to believe that even though the story is fiction, it is based on factual information, and that Christianity really is a man-made religion with feet of clay. And so it presents a challenge for Christians—and also an opportunity—to show that Christianity is indeed true, and that Dan Brown's thesis is neither intellectually nor historically credible.

That is not hard to do.

Let me give you my bottom line: If The Da Vinci Code represents the best ammunition that non-Christians have to fire at the Gospel, then Christianity is in great shape. The Da Vinci Code uses poor scholarship to ask interesting questions for which Christianity has great answers.

Last week, in the first message on this subject, I explained that the New Testament was written in the first century by the eyewitnesses and apostles of Jesus Christ, and we have an abundance of ancient manuscripts attesting to the veracity of the New Testament documents. In these documents, especially in the epistles, the writers such as Peter and Paul and Jude express concern about heresies that were arising, and one of those heresies—Gnosticism—developed into a full-blown movement in the second, third, and fourth centuries. It eventually died out, more or less; but in 1945, a treasure trove of Gnostic writings was discovered near the village of Nag Hammadi, Egypt, providing us with interesting insights into a second and third century Christian heretical sect.

What The Da Vinci Code does is to claim that the first century Gospels are the heretical ones and that the second, third, and fourth century Gnostic writings are the true Gospels. That, to me, is the foundation of the whole novel—and it represents the thinking of post-modern, non-authoritative, mystical, multi-cultural, pluralists who want to dominate the thinking of our popular culture. It isn't historically credible, but it fits with the mood of the age. All that I dealt with last week.

Now in today's message, I would like to point out several dramatic and factual errors in The Da Vinci Code, but I have a problem. There are so many errors that I just don't know where to start. I read one historian and scholar who complained, "Detailing all the errors, misinterpretations, deceptions, distortions, and outright falsehoods in The Da Vinci Code makes one wonder whether Brown's manuscript ever underwent editorial scrutiny or fact-checking."

The Priory of Sion

The very first thing in the book, after the title page, the dedication, and the acknowledgments, is a page prior to chapter one. This is the page before the novel begins in which Dan Brown claims that his facts are true. The first word on that page is—in bold, all-capital letters—FACT:

The first paragraph on this so called "Fact" page says this. Fact: The Priory of Sion—a European secret society founded in 1099—is a real organization. In 1975 Paris's Bibliothèque Nationale discovered parchments known as Les Dossiers Secrets, identifying numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo da Vinci.

A priory is a sort of monastery or monastic order headed by a man called a prior. The Da Vinci Code claims that the Priory of Sion is a secret monastic order within the Catholic Church that dates back nearly a thousand years. According to The Da Vinci Code, the Priory of Sion is the secret organization that has been charged with guarding the secret of the Holy Grail, starting in 1099 when, according to the novel, the Knights Templar discovered the long-lost documents beneath the ruins of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. In other words, the novel claims the Crusaders found documents beneath Solomon's Temple in 1099 proving that Christianity was a hoax. The Priory of Sion was formed to safeguard these documents, and in the early 1500s, Leonardo da Vinci was the Grand Master of this society.

As I said, at the opening of the book before the "fiction" part begins, Dan Brown affirms the historicity of the Priory of Sion. And later, in the body of the novel (chapter 48), he claims that the secret documents of this organization "(have) been authenticated by many specialists and incontrovertibly confirmed."

The problem is that it's all a hoax. None of that is true. It is documented fact that the Priory of Sion is the fabrication of an anti-Semitic French con man who created a mythical story of the Priory of Sion in the 1950s. There is no such organization as the Priory

of Sion. Credible historians laugh at Dan Brown for even making this claim. No one would have said anything or thought anything about it if he had not opened the entire book by asserting its factual historicity. But, as we're coming to realize, not only is Dan Brown's fiction fiction, but his facts are fiction, too.

The Deity of Christ

A much more serious issue involves the deity of Christ. The Da Vinci Code claims that the church voted in the fourth century to declare Jesus Christ a divine being. This is a notion that had not previously occurred to the followers of Christ. No one had imagined Jesus as God until Emperor Constantine came up with the idea and orchestrated this for political reasons to strengthen his power base. Under his influence, the Council of Nicea in AD 325 voted to declare Jesus as God, but the vote was a close one.

Let me quote to you from the book itself: Referring to the Council of Nicea (a great gathering of church leaders in AD 325 in the town of Nicea in modern-day Turkey), Dan Brown says: "At this gathering... many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon—the date of Easter, the role of the bishops, the administration of sacraments, and, of course, the divinity of Jesus.... Until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by his followers as a mortal prophet... a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal.... Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea.... Jesus' divinity was the result of a vote... A relatively close vote at that."

That paragraph goes beyond shoddy research. It is lying at best and deliberate deception at worst. I'd like to remind you of something I said last week. The New Testament documents were all in circulation by the end of the first century, and many scholars believe they were all written by AD 70. There is widespread acceptance of the fact that the New Testament books—both the Gospels and the Letters—were all written in the first century—many generations before the Council of Nicea.

Now forget about the fact that we believe and we claim that the New Testament is Holy Scripture. Just look for a moment at the documentary evidence itself. Apart from their being divinely inspired Scripture, just consider for a moment that these books are authentic first century documents, as we can demonstrate them to be.

They clearly show that Jesus was considered to be God by His followers in the first century, and that He Himself claimed to be so, and that even His enemies understood that He was making such a claim.

Just take John's Gospel as an example. As I said last week, the discovery of the Ryland Fragment in 1934 proved that copies of the Gospel of John were in circulation by about the year AD 100 to 125. How does the Gospel of John begin? In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. How does the Gospel of John end? One of the concluding stories told by John is the affirmation of Thomas to Jesus: My Lord and My God. In chapter five of John, the Jews tried to stone Him because He was claiming that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. The divinity of Jesus Christ is a major theme of the Gospel of John, two hundred years before the world ever heard of an Emperor named Constantine or a Council known as Nicea.

And then in addition to the first century New Testament documents, we have the writings of the early church fathers in the second century.

- Ø Ignatius wrote in AD 105: God Himself was manifested in human form.
- Ø Clement wrote in AD 150: It is fitting that you should think of Jesus Christ as God.
- Ø Justin Martyr wrote in AD 160: The Father of the universe has a Son. And He... is even God.
- Ø Tertullian wrote in AD 200: Christ our God.
- Ø Origen wrote in AD 225: No one should be offended that the Savior is also God.
- Ø Cyprian wrote in AD 250: Jesus Christ, our Lord and God.
- Ø Methodius wrote in AD 290: He truly was and is.. with God, and being God.

This is just a sampling.

Then in the 300s, this was affirmed by the Council of Nicea in AD 325. Let me explain how that came about. In the early 300s, there was a heretic named Arius who began teaching that Jesus Christ was a created being, like other humans, and was not the

only begotten Son of God. Arius and his followers, known as the Arians, worked hard to promote their doctrine attacking the doctrine of the deity of Christ, which was held by Christians from the very beginning of the Christian movement. So the subject came up at the great church council at Nicea; and at the Council of Nicea, the church leaders voted to affirm the fact that God the Son was co-equal with God the Father.

Dan Brown claims that the church voted to declare Christ as a divine being, and that the vote was close. That is the claim made by the novel. In fact, the church voted at Nicea to affirm the truth that Jesus Christ was co-equal with the father, and the vote was 360 for and 2 against. Two men who were present did not sign the statement of faith.

So I want you to see just how Dan Brown has twisted history in making his claims. He claims that no one thought of Jesus Christ as God before the Council of Nicea in AD 325, and that Emperor Constantine advanced the idea in order to solidify his own political power, and that the deity of Christ was a new idea that was adopted by a vote, and that the vote was close.

We can demonstrate that the original followers of Christ in the first century believed Jesus to be God, and that every generation of Christians between the life of Jesus and the Council of Nicea held to this position. It was the accepted teaching of the church from the very beginning—and that when this doctrine was attacked by Arius, it was affirmed at Nicea by a vote of 360 to 2.

The New Testament Books

The third error I'll mention is that the New Testament was compiled by Constantine to advance his own political views. I'm going to deal quickly with this because I talked about it last week. Here's what the novel claims:

Ø The Bible is a product of man, my dear. Not of God.

Ø More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them.

Ø Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned.

As I demonstrated last week, the New Testament documents date from the first century and were written by the original eyewitnesses and apostles of Christ. That's part of the history record for which we have excellent documentary evidence. From the second century, we have lists in which most or all the New Testament books were accepted by the early church as canonical, Holy Scriptures.

Nobody really voted on which New Testament books to include and which books to leave out. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the twenty-seven books of the New Testament also guided the early church to accept those books that were inspired; and there was broad consensus in the early church about most of these books.

One hundred fifty years before the Council of Nicea, a man named Marcion confirmed that a list very close to our New Testament was already circulating.

In the early 200's, Origen, an early church leader, listed all the accepted books of the new Testament—a list that matches today's canon.

And most scholars concur that the New Testament was essentially formed and accepted by the church everywhere by the late second century, and many scholars would place the date even earlier. At the Council of Nicaea, the church affirmed what had already been commonly accepted by the church around the world.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Another glaring mistake that Dan Brown made—and when I saw this one I did a double take because even an arm-chair historian like me knows this was a bobble: He claims that the Dead Sea Scrolls contain secret information about Jesus Christ, that they contain secret Gospels. On page 234 of the novel, this is what the writer says: "Fortunately for historians...some of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert. And, of course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hammadi. In addition to telling the true Grail story, these documents speak of Christ's ministry in very human terms."

I talked about the Nag Hammadi documents last week. What surprises me is that Dan Brown also claims that the Dead Sea Scrolls contain hidden Gospels or additional information about Jesus Christ. That is just not true. The Dead Sea Scrolls were Jewish documents that make no mention at all of Christ or of Christianity. They contain vast portions of Old Testament text and give us some interesting insights into Jewish sects of the day, but they are not Christian at all and make no reference to Jesus Christ. Anyone with any knowledge of anything in this regards knows that.

Brown even gets the date of their discovery wrong. He says (quote): "The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert." They were actually discovered in 1947.

The Holy Grail / Mary Magdalene

Another misconception is that the church—at least, the Roman Catholic Church—has also held to a tradition about the so-called Holy Grail. The Holy Grail has usually been considered to be the chalice or cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper, but Dan Brown says that the true Holy Grail is the earthly remains of Mary Magdalene.

The truth of the matter is this: For the first thousand years of her existence, the church had little to say about the chalice of the last supper. Nobody anywhere in the church even talked about any such thing as a Holy Grail -- until the eleventh and twelve centuries when someone composed some fictional, poetic legends about it in connection with King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. It's a medieval figment of fiction.

In *The Da Vinci Code*, Dan Brown claims that the Holy Grail is really the earthly remains of Mary Magdalene, and in that regard he makes a far-fetched claim regarding the famous painting *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci. Brown claims that the figure next to Jesus Christ in the painting is not John the Apostle, but actually Mary Magdalene.

Well, of course, Leonardo isn't around for us to ask, but I'll simply point out two things. First, painters of that era often painted John as a feminine figure because he is the apostle of love. You can go to the great museums of Europe and find many renditions of the twelve apostles, and John is very often the youngest and fairest and most feminine character in the painting, for he was the apostle who leaned against Jesus breast and loved him and that's just the way he was pictured.

Second, if the figure next to Jesus really is Mary Magdalene, then we have a real problem, which is—where was John? Can you conceive of Da Vinci painting a picture of the last supper and forgetting to put the apostle John into it? If the figure to our Lord's immediate right is really Mary, then John must be hiding under the table.

And speaking of Mary Magdalene, Dan Brown says that it is a matter of historical record that she and Jesus were married, and that she was chosen by Him to become the leader of His movement following His death, that she was really the leader of the early church.

But there is no documentary evidence to support that without reading a great deal of wild speculation into one fragmentary paragraph in the so-called Gospel of Philip that I referred to last week.

Other Errors

There are many other errors in *The Da Vinci Code* that represent nothing less than an all-out assault on Christianity. Dan Brown claims, for example, that sex (in virtually any form including ritualistic orgies) is a spiritual act in which one can gain divine enlightenment, and that the church recast sex as a shameful act in order to keep people from experiencing enlightenment from God. Nothing about that is true.

Dan Brown claims that the early church murdered five million women, accusing them of witchcraft. That isn't true.

Dan Brown claims that the Jewish Shekinah, the Glory of God, was the powerful female equal to God and was worshipped alongside Jehovah in the Old Testament. That is not true, and there is no evidence at all for this. The very word "Shekinah" does not appear in the Old or New Testaments, but it was a Hebrew term used by later rabbis to describe God's glorious clouds of glory among His people. The Hebrew term itself means "One Who Dwells." At no point in Jewish antiquity did it refer to a female goddess.

None of this would matter a great deal if this were just a fictional work and if Dan Brown admitted that his facts as well as his storyline were fictional. But Brown speaks like an authority and claims to base his book on facts—and it's hard not to assume that there is an "agenda" behind this novel.

But as I said earlier: If The Da Vinci Code represents the best ammunition that non-Christians have to fire at the Gospel, than bring it on! We have answers that are better than the questions—and our best and ultimate answer is Jesus Christ Himself.

He is described before His birth in the Old Testament, and every aspect of His birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection are predicted in advance. He is described in the New Testament as the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us.

He's the healer of a thousand sorrows, the subject of a million songs, and the transformer of a billion souls. He is the centerpiece of history and the superlative of the ages.

He's the man of sorrows, the friend of sinners, the light of the world, the bread of life, and the name above all names. He's the fairest of ten thousand to my heart.

Do you know Him as your Savior and Lord? Are you ready for His return?

We need to believe our beliefs and doubt our doubts without making the mistake of doubting our beliefs and believing our doubts—especially when something as foolish and error-riddled as The Da Vinci Code comes along. Dan Brown can say whatever poorly considered thing he wants to, and he can make millions of dollars in the process; I don't begrudge him that, but as for me...

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold;
I'd rather be His than have riches untold.
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands.
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand
Than to be the king of a vast domain
Or be held in sin's dread sway.
I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today