

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO 2 PETER 3

In this chapter the apostle makes mention of the end and design of his writing this second epistle; foretells that there would be scoffers at the coming of Christ in the last days; describes the coming of Christ and the burning of the world; and closes with the use saints should make of these things. The end of his writing both this and the former epistle was to put the persons he writes unto in mind of the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, delivered by the prophets and apostles, (~~G0RB~~ 2 Peter 3:1,2); and then, agreeably to what the prophets had said, he predicts that there would be scoffers in the last day; who are described by their sinful course of life, and by their words, what they would say concerning the coming of Christ, and their reasoning about it, (~~G0RB~~ 2 Peter 3:3,4); which arose from their ignorance of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of the situation of them; and is refuted by showing that things have not remained as they were from the creation; that the earth standing in and out of the water, as it was capable of being overflowed with a flood, so it perished by one; and that the present heavens and earth are reserved and prepared for a general burning at the day of judgment, in which wicked men will be destroyed, (~~G0RB~~ 2 Peter 3:5-7); but let these men scoff as they will, the length of time since the promise of Christ's coming was made should be no objection with the saints to the performance of it; since the longest term of time is nothing with God, however considerable it may be with men, (~~G0RB~~ 2 Peter 3:8); besides, the reason of the coming of Christ being deferred, is not owing to any dilatoriness in the performance of the promise, but to the longsuffering of God towards his elect, being unwilling that anyone of them should be lost, but that all should be brought to repentance, (~~G0RB~~ 2 Peter 3:9); but as for the coming of Christ, that is certain, and will be sudden; at which time will be the general conflagration, which is described in a very awful manner, (~~G0RB~~ 2 Peter 3:10-12); and the use to be made of such a tremendous dispensation by the saints is to live a holy and godly conversation, (~~G0RB~~ 2 Peter 3:11); to be eagerly looking for the coming of Christ, (~~G0RB~~ 2 Peter 3:12), and to expect, according to his promise, new heavens and a new earth, in which will dwell righteous persons, (~~G0RB~~ 2 Peter

3:13); and to be diligent to be found in peace at that day, (~~GR14~~ 2 Peter 3:14); and to account the longsuffering of God salvation; and the whole of this account, and the use of it, is strengthened by the testimony of the Apostle Paul, of whom, and of his epistles, a character is given, (~~GR15~~ 2 Peter 3:15,16); and the epistle is concluded with some cautions and exhortations to the saints, to beware lest they should be carried away with the errors of wicked men, and so fall from any degree of steadfastness in the faith; and to be concerned for a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, to whom glory is to be ascribed for ever and ever, (~~GR17~~ 2 Peter 3:17,18).

Ver. 1. *This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you*, etc.] This is a transition to another part of the epistle; for the apostle having largely described false teachers, the secret enemies of the Christian religion under a profession of it, passes on to take notice of the more open adversaries and profane scoffers of it; and from their ridicule of the doctrine of Christ's second coming, he proceeds to treat of that, and of the destruction of the world, and the future happiness of the saints: he calls this epistle his “second epistle”, because he had written another before to the same persons; and that the author of this epistle was an apostle, is evident from (~~GRP~~ 2 Peter 3:2); and which, compared with (~~GR18~~ 2 Peter 1:18) shows him to be the Apostle Peter, whose name it bears, and who was an eyewitness to the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, (~~GR19~~ Matthew 17:1,2 ~~GR20~~ Mark 9:2): he addresses these saints here, as also in (~~GR18~~ 2 Peter 3:8,14,17), under the character of “beloved”; because they were the beloved of God, being chosen by him according to his foreknowledge, and regenerated by him, according to his abundant mercy; and were openly his people, and had obtained mercy from him, and like precious faith with the apostles; and were also the beloved of Christ, being redeemed by him, not with gold and silver, but with his precious blood; for whom he suffered, and who were partakers of his sufferings, and the benefits arising from them, and who had all things given them by him, pertaining to life and godliness, and exceeding great and precious promises; and were likewise beloved by the apostle, though strangers, and not merely as Jews, or because they were his countrymen, but because they were the elect of God, the redeemed of Christ, and who were sanctified by the Spirit, and had the same kind of faith he himself had. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, “my beloved”; and the Ethiopic version, “my brethren”: his end in writing both this and the former epistle follows;

in [both] which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that this was his view both in this and the former epistle, appears from (⁶⁰¹³1 Peter 1:13 ⁶⁰¹²2 Peter 1:12-15); he calls their minds pure; not that they were so naturally, for the minds and consciences of men are universally defiled with sin; nor are the minds of all men pure who seem to be so in their own eyes, or appear so to others; nor can any man, by his own power or works, make himself pure from sin; only the blood of Christ purges and cleanses from it; and a pure mind is a mind sprinkled with that blood, and which receives the truth as it is in Jesus, in the power and purity of it, and that holds the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, render the word “sincere”, as it is in (⁶⁰¹⁰Philippians 1:10); and may design the sincerity of their hearts in the worship of God, in the doctrines of Christ, and to one another, and of the grace of the Spirit of God in them; as that their faith was unfeigned, their hope without hypocrisy, and their love without dissimulation, and their repentance real and genuine; but yet they needed to be stirred up by way of remembrance, both of the truth of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; for saints are apt to be forgetful of the word, both of its doctrines and its exhortations; and it is the business of the ministers of the word to put them in mind of them, either by preaching or by writing; and which shows the necessity and usefulness of the standing ministry of the Gospel: the particulars he put them in mind of next follow.

Ver. 2. *That ye may be mindful*, etc.] This is an explanation of the above mentioned end of his writing this and the other epistle; which was, that those saints might be mindful of two things more especially:

of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets; that is, the prophets of the Old Testament, who were holy men of God, and therefore their words are to be regarded, and retained in memory; the Gospel itself was spoken by them, and so was Christ, and the things relating to his person and offices, and to his incarnation, sufferings, and death, and the glory that should follow; and indeed the apostles said no other than what they did, only more clearly and expressly; and particularly many things, were said by them concerning the second coming of Christ to judge the world, and destroy it, and to prepare new heavens and a new earth for his people, which is what the apostle has chiefly in view; (see ⁶⁰¹⁴Jude 1:14 ⁶⁰¹⁵Isaiah 11:3 65:17 ⁶⁰¹⁶Malachi 4:1 ⁶⁰¹⁷Daniel 7:9,10,13,14);

and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour; that is, Jesus Christ, as (^{<6117>}Jude 1:17) expresses it, and the Ethiopic version adds here; and which likewise, and also the Syriac version, and some ancient copies, read, “our Lord and Saviour”, and omit the us before the apostles; by whom are meant the twelve apostles of Christ, of which Peter was one, and therefore says, “us the apostles”; though the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and the Complutensian edition, read “your apostles”, and so the Alexandrian copy; but the former is the received reading: now “the commandment” of these intends either the Gospel in general, so called because it was the commandment of our Lord to his apostles to preach it; and therefore the word “commandment”, in the original, stands between “us the apostles”, and “the Lord and Saviour”, as being the commandment of the one to the other; unless it can be thought any regard is had to the new commandment of love, or that of faith, inculcated both by Christ and his apostles; (^{<6134>}John 13:34 ^{<6117>}1 John 2:7,8 3:23); or rather, particularly the instructions, directions, and predictions of the apostles concerning the second coming of Christ, and what should go before it, as appears from the following words, and the parallel place in (^{<6117>}Jude 1:17,18), the words of the prophets and apostles being here put together, show the agreement there is between them, and what regard is to be had to each of them, and to anything and every thing in which they agree.

Ver. 3. *Knowing this first*, etc.] In the first place, principally, and chiefly, and which might easily be known and observed from the writings of the apostles and prophets; (see ^{<5011>}1 Timothy 4:1,2 ^{<5011>}2 Timothy 3:1);

that there shall come in the last days scoffers, or “mockers”; such as would make a mock at sin, make light of it, plead for it, openly commit it, and glory in it; and scoff at all religion, as the prejudice of education, as an engine of state, a piece of civil policy to keep subjects in awe, as cant, enthusiasm, and madness, as a gloomy melancholy thing, depriving men of true pleasure; and throw out their flouts and jeers at those that are the most religious, for the just, upright man, is commonly by such laughed to scorn, and those that depart from evil make themselves a prey; and particularly at the ministers of the word, for a man that has scarcely so much common sense as to preserve him from the character of an idiot, thinks himself a wit of the age, if he can at any rate break a jest upon a Gospel minister: nor do the Scriptures of truth escape the banter and burlesque of these scoffers; the doctrines of it being foolishness to them, and the commands and ordinances in it being grievous and intolerable to them; yea, to such lengths

do those proceed, as to scoff at God himself; at his persons, purposes, providences, and promises; at Jehovah the Father, as the God of nature and providence, and especially as the God and Father of Christ, and of all grace in him; at Jehovah the Son, at his person, as being the Son of God, and truly God, at his office, as Mediator, and at his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, which they trample under foot; and at Jehovah the Spirit, whom they do despite unto, as the spirit of grace, deriding his operations in regeneration and sanctification, as dream and delusion; and, most of all, things to come are the object of their scorn and derision; as the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, a future judgment, the torments of hell, and the joys of heaven; all which they represent as the trifles and juggles of designing men: such as these, according to the prophets and apostles, were to come in “the last days”; either in the days of the Messiah, in the Gospel dispensation, the times between the first and second coming of Christ; for it is a rule with the Jews ^{f41}, that wherever the last days are mentioned, the days of the Messiah are intended; (see ^{<300>}Hebrews 1:1); when the prophets foretold such scoffers should come; or in the last days of the Jewish state, both civil and religious, called “the ends of the world”, (^{<501>}1 Corinthians 10:11); a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, when iniquity greatly abounded, (^{<401>}Matthew 24:11,12); or “in the last of the days”; as the words may be rendered; and so answer to *μυμυη τυρj ab*, in (^{<202>}Isaiah 2:2), and may regard the latter part of the last times; the times of the apostles were the last days, (^{<608>}1 John 2:18); they began then, and will continue to Christ's second coming; when some time before that, it will be a remarkable age for scoffers and scorers; and we have lived to see an innumerable company of them, and these predictions fulfilled; from whence it may be concluded, that the coming of Christ is at hand: these scoffers are further described as

walking after their own lusts; either after the carnal reasonings of their minds, admitting of nothing but what they can comprehend by reason, making that the rule, test, and standard of all their principles, and so cast away the law of the Lord, and despise the word of the Holy One of Israel; or rather, after their sinful and fleshly lusts, making them their guides and governors, and giving up themselves entirely to them, to obey and fulfil them; the phrase denotes a continued series of sinning, a progress in it, a desire after it, and pleasure in it, and an obstinate persisting in it; scoffers at religion and revelation are generally libertines; and such as sit in the seat of

the scornful, are in the counsel of the ungodly, and way of sinners, (~~<400B>~~Psalm 1:1).

Ver. 4. *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?* etc.] That is, of the coming of the Lord and Saviour, (~~<600B>~~2 Peter 3:2); the object of their scorn and derision, and whom they name not, through contempt; and the meaning is, what is become of the promise of his coming? where the accomplishment of it? The prophets foretold he would come; he himself said he would come again, (~~<614B>~~John 14:3,28); the angels, at his ascension, declared he would come from heaven in like manner as he went up, (~~<4011>~~Acts 1:11); and all his apostles gave out that he would appear a second time to judge both quick and dead, (~~<410E>~~Acts 10:42 ~~<500E>~~2 Timothy 4:1) (~~<604B>~~1 Peter 4:5), and that his coming was at hand, (~~<504B>~~Philippians 4:5 ~~<501E>~~2 Thessalonians 2:2); but where is the fulfilment of all this? he is not come, nor is there any sign or likelihood of it:

for since the fathers fell asleep; or “died”: which is the language of the Scriptures, and here sneered at by these men, who believe them so fast asleep as never to be awaked or raised more; and by “the fathers” they mean the first inhabitants of the world, as Adam, Abel, Seth, etc. and all the patriarchs and prophets in all ages; the Ethiopic version renders it, “our first fathers”:

all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation; reasoning from the settled order of things, the constant revolution of the sun, moon, and stars, the permanency of the earth, and the succession of the inhabitants of it, to the future continuance of things, without any alteration; and consequently, that Christ would not come, as was promised, to raise the dead, judge mankind destroy the world, and set up a new state of things: the fallacy of which reasoning is exposed by the apostle in the following words.

Ver. 5. *For this they willingly are ignorant of*, etc.] Namely, what follows; for as these men were such as had professed Christianity, and had the advantage of revelation, and had the opportunity of reading the Scriptures, they might have known that the heavens and the earth were from the beginning; and that they were made by the word of God; and that the earth was originally in such a position and situation as to be overflowed with a flood, and that it did perish by a general inundation; and that the present heavens and earth are kept and reserved for a general burning; and it might be discerned in nature, that there are preparations making for an universal

conflagration; but all this they chose not to know, and affected ignorance of: particularly

that by the word of God the heavens were of old: not only in the times of Noah, but “from the beginning”; as the Ethiopic version reads, and which agrees with the account in (^{<0002>}Genesis 1:1); by “the heavens” may be meant both the third heaven, and the starry heavens, and the airy heavens, with all their created inhabitants; and especially the latter, since these were concerned in, and affected with the general deluge; and these were in the beginning of time, out of nothing brought into being, and so were not eternal, and might be destroyed again, or at least undergo a change, even though they were of old, and of long duration: for it was “by the word of God” that they at first existed, and were so long preserved in being; either by the commanding word of God, by his powerful voice, his almighty fiat, who said, Let it be done, and it was done, and who commanded beings to rise up out of nothing, and they did, and stood fast; and so the Arabic version renders it, “by the command of God”; or by his eternal Logos, the essential Word of God, the second Person in the Trinity, who is often in Scripture called the Word, and the Word of God, and, as some think, by the Apostle Peter, (^{<0123>}1 Peter 1:23), and certain it is that the creation of all things is frequently ascribed to him; (see ^{<0116>}John 1:16 ^{<0002>}Hebrews 1:2,10 11:3); wherefore by the same Word they might be dissolved, and made to pass away, as they will:

and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; that is, “by the Word of God”; for this phrase, in the original text, is placed after this clause, and last of all; and refers not only to the being of the heavens of old, but to the rise, standing, and subsistence of the earth, which is here particularly described for the sake of the deluge, the apostle afterwards mentions: and it is said to be “standing out of the water”, or “consisting out of it”; it consists of it as a part; the globe of the earth is terraqueous, partly land and partly water; and even the dry land itself has its rise and spring out of water; the first matter that was created is called the deep, and waters in which darkness was, and upon which the Spirit of God moved, (^{<0002>}Genesis 1:2); agreeably to which Thales the Milesian asserted^{f42}, that water was the principle of all things; and the Ethiopic version here renders the words thus, “and the Word of God created also the earth out of water, and confirmed it”: the account the Jews give of the first formation of the world is this^{f43};

“at first the world was *μυμβ μυμ*, “water in water”; what is the sense (of that passage (^{<OR12>}Genesis 1:2);) “and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters?” he returned, and made it snow; he casteth forth his ice like morsels, (^{<SE77>}Psalms 147:17); he returned and made it earth; “for to the snow he saith, Be thou earth”, (^{<IS76>}Job 37:6), and the earth stood upon the waters; “to him that stretched out the earth above the waters”, (^{<SD16>}Psalms 136:6);”

however, certain it is, that the earth was first covered with water, when at the word, and by the command of God, the waters fled and hasted away, and were gathered into one place, and the dry land rose up and appeared; and then it was that it “stood out of the water”; (see ^{<OR19>}Genesis 1:9,10 ^{<PA46>}Psalms 104:6,7); moreover, the earth consists, or is kept and held together by water; there is a general humidity or moisture that runs through it, by which it is compacted together, or otherwise it would resolve into dust, and by which it is fit for the production, increase, and preservation of vegetables and other things, which it otherwise would not be: and it is also said to stand “in the water”, or by the water; upon it, according to (^{<SD41>}Psalms 24:2); or rather in the midst of it, there being waters above the firmament or expanse; in the airy heavens, in the clouds all around the earth, called the windows of heaven; and water below the firmament or expanse, in the earth itself; besides the great sea, a large body of waters is in the midst of the earth, in the very bowels of it, which feed rivers, and form springs, fountains and wells, called “the fountains of the great deep”, (^{<OR71>}Genesis 7:11); and in this position and situation was the earth of old, and so was prepared in nature for a general deluge, and yet was preserved firm and stable by the word of God, for a long series of time; so the Arabic version renders it, “and the earth out of the water, and in the water, stood stable, by the command of God”; but when it was his pleasure, he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly, of which an account follows.

Ver. 6. *Whereby the world that then was*, etc.] The old world, as it is called in (^{<OR15>}2 Peter 2:5); and as the Ethiopic version here renders it; the world before the flood, that had stood from the creation 1656 years:

being overflowed with water; by the windows of heaven being opened, and the waters over the earth poured down upon it; and by the fountains of the great deep being broken up in it; thus by these waters from above and below, a general inundation was brought upon it; for that the deluge was universal is clear from hence, and from the account by Moses; for as the

earth was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted its way, God threatened a general destruction, and which was brought by a flood, which overflowed the whole earth; for all the hills that were under the whole heaven were covered with it, and everything that had life in the dry land died, and every living substance was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground; (see ^{<0061>}Genesis 6:11-13 7:11,19,22,23); and hence it follows, that hereby the then world

perished; not as to the substance of it, whatever alteration there might be in its form and position; but as to the inhabitants of it; for all creatures, men and cattle, and the creeping things, and fowls of the heaven, were destroyed, excepting Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives, and the creatures that were with him in the ark; (see ^{<0023>}Genesis 7:23 ^{<0031>}1 Peter 3:20); and by this instance the apostle shows the falsehood of the above assertion, that all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation; for the earth was covered with water first, and which, by the command of God, was removed, and, after a long series of time, was brought on it again, and by it drowned; and from whence it also appears, that this sort of reasoning used by those scoffers is very fallacious; for though the heavens and the earth may continue for a long time, as they did before the flood, in the same form and situation, it does not follow from thence that they always will, for the contrary is evident from what follows.

Ver. 7. *But the heavens and the earth which are now*, etc.] In being, in distinction from, and opposition to the heavens that were of old, and the earth standing in and out of the water, and the world that then was when the waters of the flood overflowed it:

by the same word are kept in store; that is, by the word of God, as in (^{<0035>}2 Peter 3:5); and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “by his word”; by the same word that the heavens and the earth were made of old, or in the beginning, are they kept, preserved, and upheld in their being; or “are treasured up”; the heavens and the earth are a rich treasure, they are full of the riches God, as the God of nature and providence; and they are kept with care, as a treasure is, not to be touched or meddled with at present, but must continue in the same position and use; or they are laid up in the stores, and scaled up among the treasures of divine wrath and vengeance, and will be brought out another day, and made use of, to the destruction of the ungodly inhabitants of the world, and to aggravate and increase their misery and ruin: for it is further said of them, that they are

reserved unto fire; for though the world is, and has been preserved a long time without any visible alteration in it, yet it will not be always so preserved: and though it is, and will be kept from being drowned by water again, through the promise and power of God, yet it is kept and reserved for a general conflagration; (see ^{<61810>}2 Peter 3:10,12). And as the old world was put into a natural situation, so as to be drowned by water, there are now preparations making in nature, in the present world, for the burning of it; witness the fiery meteors, blazing stars, and burning comets in the heavens, and the subterraneous fires in the bowels of the earth, which in some places have already broke out: there are now many volcanos, burning mountains and islands, particularly in Sicily, Italy, and the parts adjacent, the seat of the beast, and where it is very likely the universal conflagration will begin, as Aetna, Vesuvius, Strombilo, and other volcanos; and even in our own island we have some symptoms and appearances of these fires under ground, as fiery eruptions in some places, and the hot waters at the Bath, and elsewhere, show; from all which it is plain that the heavens and earth, that now are, are not as they always were, and will be, but are reserved and prepared for burning; and that things are ripening apace, as men's sins also are, for the general conflagration. Josephus ^{f44} relates, that Adam foretold that there would be a destruction of all things, once by the force of fire, and once by the power and multitude of water; and it is certain the Jews had knowledge of the destruction of the earth by fire, as by water: they say ^{f45},

“that when the law was given to Israel, his (God's) voice went from one end of the world to the other, and trembling laid hold on all the nations of the world in their temples, and they said a song, as it is said, (^{<12910>}Psalm 29:9), “and in his temple doth everyone speak of his glory”: all of them gathered together to wicked Balaam, and said to him, what is the voice of the multitude which we hear, perhaps a flood is coming upon the world? he said unto them, “the Lord sitteth upon the flood, yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever”, (^{<12910>}Psalm 29:10). Thus hath the Lord swore, that he will not bring a flood upon the world; they replied to him, a flood of water he will not bring, but **ç a l ç l wbm**, “a flood of fire” he will bring, as it is said, (^{<23616>}Isaiah 66:16), “for by fire will the Lord plead”,”

or judge: and hence they speak ^{f46} of the wicked being judged with two sorts of, judgments, by water, and by fire: and, according to our apostle, the heavens and earth are kept and reserved to fire,

against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men; the time when God will judge the world is fixed, though it is not known; and it is called a “day”, because of the evidence and light in which things will appear, and the quick dispatch of business in it; and the “judgment” spoken of is the future judgment, and which is certain, and will be universal, righteous, and eternal, and when wicked and ungodly men will be punished with everlasting destruction: the bodies of those that will be alive at the general conflagration will be burnt in it, though not annihilated, and will be raised again, and both soul and body will be destroyed in hell.

Ver. 8. *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing*, etc.] Here the apostle addresses the saints he writes unto, and for whom he had a tender affection and regard, and for whose welfare he was concerned, lest they should be stumbled at the length of time since the promise of the coming of Christ was given, and which these scoffers object; and therefore he would have them know, observe, and consider this one thing, which might be of great use to them to make their minds easy, and keep up their faith and expectation of the coming of Christ:

that one day [is], with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; referring either to (¹⁹⁰⁴Psalm 90:4); or to a common saying among the Jews, founded on the same passage, $\mu\eta\sigma\varsigma$ $\Pi\iota$ a $h\beta$ $\eta\eta$ ι ζ $\omega\omega\omega\omega$, “the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years”^{f47}; suggesting, that though between thirty and forty years had elapsed since the promise was given out that Christ would come again, and should even a thousand, or two thousand years more, run off, before the coming of Christ, yet this should be no objection to the accomplishment of the promise; for though such a number of years is very considerable among men, ye not “with God”, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, with whom a thousand years, and even eternity itself, is but as a day, (²³⁶³Isaiah 43:13). Unless this phrase should be thought to refer, as it is by some, to the day of judgment, and be expressive of the duration of that: it is certain that the Jews interpreted days of millenniums, and reckoned millenniums by days, and used this phrase in confirmation of it. Thus they say^{f48},

“in the time to come, which is in the last days, on the sixth day, which is the sixth millennium, when the Messiah comes, for the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years.”

And a little after,

““the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man”. This is in the time of the Messiah which is in the sixth day.”

And elsewhere ^{f49},

“the sixth degree is called the sixth day, the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years. And in that day the King Messiah shall come, and it shall be called the feast of gathering, for the holy blessed God will gather in it the captivity of his people.”

So they call the sabbath, or seventh day, the seventh millennium, and interpret ^{f50}

““the song for the sabbath day”, (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 92:1) title, for the seventh millennium, for one day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years.”

To which agrees the tradition of Elias, which runs thus ^{f51};

“it is the tradition of the house of Elias, that the world shall be six thousand years, two thousand years void (of the law), two thousand years the law, and two thousand years the days of the Messiah;”

for they suppose that the six days of the creation were expressive of the six thousand years in which the world will stand; and that the seventh day prefigures the last millennium, in which will be the day of judgment, and the world to come; for

“the six days of the creation (they say ^{f52}) is a sign or intimation of these things: on the sixth day man was created; and on the seventh his work was finished; so the kings of the nations of the world (continue) five millenniums, answering to the five days, in which were created the fowls, and the creeping things of the waters, and other things; and the enjoyment of their kingdom is a little in the sixth, answerable to the creation of the beasts, and living creatures created at this time in the beginning of it; and the kingdom of the house of David is in the sixth millennium, answerable to the creation of man, who knew his Creator, and ruled over them all; and in the end of that millennium will be the day of judgment, answerable to man, who was judged in the end of it; and the

seventh is the sabbath, and it is the beginning of the world to come.”

Ver. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise*, etc.] The Syriac version reads in the plural, “his promises”, any of his promises; though the words seem rather to regard the particular promise of Christ's coming, either to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, of which coming there was a promise made, and is often referred to by Christ, and his apostles; (see ~~4001~~Mark 9:1 ~~4312~~John 21:22) (~~5807~~Hebrews 10:37); and it now being upwards of thirty years since it was given out, some men began to charge God with slackness and dilatoriness; whereas the true reason of the delay of it was, that there might be time for the gathering in of his elect among them by his angels, or apostles and ministers, sent into the several parts of Judea, that so none of them might perish, but be brought to faith and repentance; and thus as the time of Christ's coming was prolonged more than was thought it would, so when the days of afflictions were come, they were shortened also for these elect's sake: or this promise regards the second coming of Christ, to judge the quick and dead at the last day, of which the former was a prelude, presage, and pledge; that Christ would come again, and appear a second time in person, was promised by himself, and often spoken of by his apostles; and many of the primitive Christians thought it would be very soon, and which might be occasioned by the hints that were given of his coming in the other sense. Now this being deferred longer than was expected, the scoffers or mockers take upon them to charge the Lord with slackness in the fulfilment of his promise:

as some men count slackness; as if he had either changed his purpose, or had prolonged it beyond the appointed time, or was unmindful of his promise, and would never fulfil it; whereas he is in one mind, and none can turn him, nor will he delay the fulfilment of his promise beyond the set time; he has fixed a day for his coming, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and he will keep it: he is not dilatory,

but is longsuffering to us-ward: not to all the individuals of human nature, for the persons intended by us are manifestly distinguished from “some men” in the text, and from scoffers, mocking at the promise of Christ's coming, in the context, (~~6088~~2 Peter 3:3,4); and are expressly called beloved, (~~6081~~2 Peter 3:1,8,14,17); and God's longsuffering towards them is their salvation, (~~6085~~2 Peter 3:15), nor is it true of all men, that God is not willing that any of them should perish, and that everyone of them should

come to repentance, since many of them do perish in their sins, and do not come to repentance, which would not be the case, if his determining will was otherwise; besides, a society or company of men are designed, to which the apostle himself belonged, and of which he was a part; and who are described, in his epistles, as the elect of God, called out of darkness, into marvellous light, and having obtained like precious faith with the apostles; and must be understood either of God's elect among the Jews, for Peter was a Jew, and they were Jews he wrote to; and then the sense is, that the delay of Christ's coming is not owing to any slackness in him, but to his longsuffering to his elect among the Jews, being unwilling that any of that number among them should perish, but that all of them repent of their sins, and believe in him; and therefore he waits till their conversion is over, when a nation shall be born at once, and they that have pierced him look on him and mourn, and so all Israel shall be saved; or rather of the elect in general, whether among Jews or Gentiles, upon whom the Lord waits to be gracious, and whose longsuffering issues in their conversion and salvation. And upon account of these the Lord stays his coming till their number is complete in the effectual calling; and for their sakes he is longsuffering to others, and bears with a wicked world, with the idolatry, superstition, heresy, profaneness, and impiety, with which it abounds; but when the last man that belongs to that number is called, he will quickly descend in flames of fire, and burn the world, and the wicked in it, and take his chosen ones to himself. The Alexandrian copy reads, "for you", or your sakes; and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions. A passage somewhat like to this is met with in a book of the Jews ^{f53}, esteemed by them very ancient.

"God prolongs or defers his anger with men; and one day, which is a thousand years, is fixed, besides the seventy years he delivered to David the king. — And he does not judge man by his evil works which he continually does, for if so, the world would not stand; but the holy blessed God defers his anger with the righteous, and the wicked, that they may return, by perfect repentance, and be established in this world, and in the world to come."

And it is an observation of theirs ^{f54}, that when God is said to be "longsuffering", it is not written *Pa Æra*, but *μυρα Æra*, intimating, that he is longsuffering both to the righteous and the wicked; but then he bears with the latter, for the sake of the former: compare with this passage (~~ααα~~ Revelation 6:9-11);

not willing that any should perish; not any of the us, whom he has loved with an everlasting love, whom he has chosen in his Son, and given to him, and for whom he has died, and who are brought to believe in him. These, though they were lost in Adam, did not perish; and though in their own apprehensions, when awakened and convinced, are ready to perish; and though their peace, joy, and comfort, may perish for a while, and they may fear a final and total perishing; yet they shall never perish as others do, or be punished with everlasting destruction: and that this is the will of God, appears by his choice of them to salvation; by the provisions of grace for them in an everlasting covenant; by the security of their persons in the hands of Christ; by sending his Son to obtain salvation for them, and his Spirit to apply it to them; and by his keeping them by his power, through faith, unto salvation.

But that all should come to repentance; not legal, but evangelical, without which all must perish; and which all God's elect stand in need of, as well as others, being equally sinners; and which they cannot come to of themselves, and therefore he not only calls them to it, in his word, and by his spirit and grace, but bestows it upon them; he has exalted Christ at his own right hand, to give it to them; and repentance is a grant from him, a free gift of his grace; and the Spirit is sent down into their hearts to work it in them, to take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh; without which, whatever time and space may be given, or means afforded, even the most awful judgments, the greatest mercies, and the most powerful ministry, will be of no avail.

Ver. 10. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night*, etc.]

That is, the Lord will come in that day, which he has fixed, according to his promise, than which nothing is more certain; and he will come as a thief in the night: he will come “in the night”, which may be literally understood; for as his first coming was in the night; (see ~~ans~~ Luke 2:8,10,11); so perhaps his second coming may be in the night season; or figuratively, when it will be a time of great darkness; when there will be little faith in the earth, and both the wise and foolish virgins will be slumbering and sleeping; when it will be a season of great security, as it was in the days of Noah, and at the time of the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the phrase, “in the night”: and the Alexandrian copy uses the emphatic article, “in the night”: and he will come, “as a thief”, in the dark, indiscernibly; it will not be known what hour he will come; he will come suddenly, at an unawares, when he is not

expected, to the great surprise of men, and especially of the scoffers; when the following awful things will be done:

in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; not the third heaven, the seat of angels and glorified saints, and even of God himself; but the starry and airy heavens, which shall pass away, not as to their matter and substance, but as to some of their accidents and qualities, and the present use of them; and that with a great noise, like that of a violent storm, or tempest; though the Ethiopic version renders it, “without a noise”; and which is more agreeable to his coming as a thief, which is not with noise, but in as still a manner as possible; and some learned men observe, that the word signifies swiftly, as well as with a noise; and, accordingly, the Syriac version renders it “suddenly”; and the Arabic version “presently”, immediately; that is, as soon as Christ shall come, immediately, at once, from his face shall the earth and heavens flee away, as John in a vision saw, (^{f55}Revelation 20:11);

and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: not what are commonly called the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water, the first principles of all things: the ancient philosophers distinguished between principles and elements; principles, they say ^{f55}, are neither generated, nor corrupted; **τα τε στοιχεια κατα την εκπυρωσιν φθειρεσθαι**, “but the elements will be corrupted, or destroyed by the conflagration”; which exactly agrees with what the apostle here says: by the elements seem to be meant the host of heaven, being distinguished from the heavens, as the works of the earth are distinguished from the earth in the next clause; and design the firmament, or expanse, with the sun, moon, and stars in it, which will be purged and purified by this liquefaction by fire;

the earth also will be purged and purified from everything that is noxious, hurtful, unnecessary, and disagreeable; though the matter and substance of it will continue:

and the works that are therein shall be burnt up; all the works of nature, wicked men, cattle, trees, etc. and all the works of men, cities, towns, houses, furniture, utensils, instruments of arts of all sorts, will be burnt by a material fire, breaking out of the earth and descending from heaven, for which the present heavens and earth are reserved: this general conflagration was not only known to the Jews, but to the Heathens, to the poets, and Platonist and Stoic philosophers, who frequently ^{f56} speak of it in plain terms. Some are of opinion that these words refer to the

destruction of Jerusalem; and so the passing away of the heavens may design the removal of their church state and ordinances, (^{<8126>}Hebrews 12:26,27), and the melting of the elements the ceasing of the ceremonial law, called the elements of the world, (^{<8013>}Galatians 4:3,9), and the burning of the earth the destruction of the land of Judea, expressed in such a manner in (^{<6523>}Deuteronomy 29:23 32:22), and particularly of the temple, and the curious works in that, which were all burnt up and destroyed by fire, though Titus endeavoured to prevent it, but could not^{f57}: which sense may be included, inasmuch as there was a promise of Christ's coming to destroy the Jewish nation, and was expected; and which destruction was a prelude of the destruction of the world, and is sometimes expressed in such like language as that is; but then this must not take place, to the exclusion of the other sense: and whereas this sense makes the words to be taken partly in a figurative, and partly in a literal way; and seeing the heavens and the earth are in the context only literally taken, the former sense is to be preferred; and to which best agrees the following use to be made of these things.

Ver. 11. [*Seeing then [that] all these things shall be dissolved*, etc.] By fire; the heaven with all its host, sun, moon, and stars, clouds, meteors, and fowls of the air; the earth, and all that is upon it, whether of nature, or art; and, since nothing is more certain than such a dissolution of all things,

what manner [of persons] ought ye to be in [all] holy conversation and godliness? not as the scoffers and profane sinners, who put away this evil day far from them, but as men, who have their loins girt, and their lights burning, waiting for their Lord's coming; being continually in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of their religious duties, watching, praying, hearing, reading; living soberly, righteously, and godly; guarding against intemperance and worldly mindedness, and every worldly and hurtful lust.

Ver. 12. *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God*, etc.] The same with the day of the Lord, (^{<6180>}2 Peter 3:10), and so the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions here read; and it intends the day of Christ's second coming to judgment, and so is a proof of the deity of Christ; and is called "the day of God", in distinction from man's day, or human judgment, (^{<4013>}1 Corinthians 4:3), which is often fallacious; whereas the judgment of God is according to truth; and because in that day Christ will appear most clearly to be truly and properly God, by the manifest display of his omniscience, omnipotence, and other glorious perfections of his; and

because it will be, as the day of God is, a thousand years; and also the day in which God will finish all his works, as on the seventh day the works of creation, on this the works of Providence; when all his purposes, promises, and threatenings, relating to the final state of all persons and things, will be fulfilled, and every work be brought to light, and into judgment, and everything will stand in a clear light; for the day will declare it, either respecting God, or men; and there will be a display, as of his grace and mercy, to his church and people; for it will be the day of his open espousals to them, and of the gladness of his heart; so of his wrath and anger towards the wicked: for this great and dreadful day of the Lord shall burn like an oven, and destroy the wicked, root and branch: and it will be the day of Christ's glorious appearing, and of his kingdom, in which he will reign, before his ancients, gloriously; and when it is ended, God, Father, Son and Spirit, will be all in all: now "the coming" of this day saints should be "looking for" by faith; believing that it certainly will come, since the patriarchs, prophets, Christ himself, the angels of heaven, and the apostles of the Lamb, have all declared and asserted the coming of this day; and they should look for it, and love it, as with the strongest affection for it, and most vehement desire of it, since they will then appear with Christ in glory; and they should look out, and keep looking out for it, as what will be quickly; and though it is not as soon as they desire and expect, yet should still look wistly for it, and with patience and cheerfulness wait for it: yea, they should be "hasting unto" it, or "hastening" it; for though the day is fixed for the coming of Christ, nor can it be altered, as his coming will not be longer, it cannot be sooner, yet it becomes the saints to pray earnestly for it, that it may be quickly, and for the accomplishment of all things that go before it, prepare for it, and lead unto it; such as the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; and by putting him in mind of, and pleading with him, his promises concerning these things, and giving him no rest till they are accomplished; there seems to be some reference to the prayers of the Jews for the Messiah's coming, which they desire may be **hryhmb**, "in haste"; which will show that they are in haste for the coming of this day; and all which things God will hasten, though it will be in his own time: and moreover, saints should be hastening to it by their readiness for it, having their loins girt, and their lights burning, and their lamps trimmed, and they waiting for their Lord's coming, and going forth in acts of faith and love, and in the duties of religion, to meet him, and not slumber and sleep:

wherein; in which day, as in (^{<610>}2 Peter 3:10); or by which; by which coming of Christ, or of the day of God,

the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; at whose coming and presence, and from whose face the heavens and earth shall flee away, just as the earth shook, and the heavens dropped, and Sinai itself moved, when God appeared upon it; (see ^{<611>}Revelation 20:11 ^{<1508>}Psalm 68:8). This is a repetition of what is said in (^{<610>}2 Peter 3:10), exciting attention to the exhortation given.

Ver. 13. *Nevertheless we, according to his promise*, etc.] Or promises, as the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version; namely those in (^{<2517>}Isaiah 65:17 66:22);

look for new heavens and a new earth; not figuratively, the world to come in distinction from the Jewish world or state; a new church state, the Gospel dispensation, with new ordinances, as baptism and the Lord's supper, all legal ceremonies and ordinances being gone, and everything new; for these things had taken place already, and were not looked for as future: but these phrases are to be understood literally, as the heavens and the earth are in every passage in the context, (^{<610>}2 Peter 3:5,7,10); and designs not new heavens and earth for substance, but for qualities; the heavens and elements being melted and dissolved, and so purged and purified by fire, and the earth and its works being burnt up with it, and so cleared of everything noxious, needless, and disagreeable, new heavens and a new earth will appear, refined and purged from everything which the curse brought thereon for man's sin: and such heavens and earth the saints look for by faith and hope, and earnest expectation, and with desire and pleasure; and therefore are not distressed, as they have no reason to be, with the burning of the present heavens and earth, as awful as these things will be; and they expect them not upon their own fancies and imaginations, or the vain conjectures and cunningly devised fables of men, but according to the promises of God recorded in the above passages, and in which they may be confirmed by the words of Christ, and by the vision of John, (^{<611>}Revelation 20:1,5). The Alexandrian copy reads, "and his promises"; as if it respected other promises the saints looked for besides the new heavens and earth; namely, the resurrection of the dead, eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, the ultimate glory and happiness:

wherein dwelleth righteousness; meaning not the heavenly felicity, called sometimes the crown of righteousness, and the hope of righteousness, to

which righteousness gives a right, and where it will be perfect, for the apostle is not speaking of the ultimate glory of the saints; nor the righteousness of Christ, as dwelling in the saints, as if the sense was this, we in whom righteousness dwells, look for new heavens and a new earth; for though the righteousness of Christ is unto and upon them that believe, yet it is not in them; it is in Christ, and dwells in him, and not in them; it is not inherent in them, but imputed to them: by “righteousness” is meant righteous men; such as are so not in and of themselves, or by the deeds of the law, or by works of righteousness done by them, but who are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, and are righteousness itself in him; (see ^{<2636>}Jeremiah 33:16 ^{<4761>}2 Corinthians 5:21); now these, and these only, will be the inhabitants of the new heavens and the new earth; there will be no unrighteous persons there, as in the present world, which lies in wickedness, and is full of wicked men; and they will be stocked with inhabitants after this manner; all the elect will now be gathered in, and Christ, when he comes, will bring all his saints with him from heaven, and will raise their bodies, and reunite them to their souls; and those that are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will make up together the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; and whereas, upon the coming of Christ, the present heavens and earth will be burnt or purified by fire, and so made new and fit for the spirits of just men made perfect, who being again embodied, will fill the face of them, and shall inherit the earth, and reign with Christ on it for a thousand years, during which time there will not be a wicked man in them; for the wicked that will be alive at Christ's coming will be burnt with the earth, and the wicked dead shall not rise till the thousand years are ended, and who being raised, will, together with the devils, make the Gog and Magog army; wherefore none but righteous persons can look for these new heavens and earth, for to these only are they promised, and such only shall dwell in them; so the Targum on (^{<2273>}Jeremiah 23:23) paraphrases the words,

“I God have created the world from the beginning, saith the Lord, I God will “renew the world for the righteous”.”

and this will be, the Jews say, for the space of a thousand years;

“it is a tradition (they say ^{f58}) of the house of Elias, that the righteous, whom the holy blessed God will raise from the dead shall not return to their dust, as is said, (^{<2043>}Isaiah 4:3), and it shall come

to pass, etc. as the Holy One continues for ever, so they shall continue for ever; and if you should say those years (some editions read, “those thousand years”, and so the gloss upon the place) in which the holy blessed God “renews the world”: as it is said (^{<2121>}Isaiah 2:11), and the Lord alone; etc. what shall they do? the holy blessed God will make them wings as eagles, and they shall fly upon the face of the waters:”

and this renovation of the heavens and the earth, they say, will be in the seventh millennium;

“in the seventh thousand year (they assert ^{f59}) there will be found new heavens and a new earth;”

which agree with these words of Peter.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for these things*, etc.] For the burning of the heavens and the earth, for the coming of Christ, and for the new heavens and new earth,

be diligent that ye may be found of him; Christ, or **αυτω**, “in him”, as in (^{<3121>}Philippians 3:9); for such as are in Christ will have an undoubted right to the new heavens and the new earth, and will certainly dwell in them, because they will be found not in their own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ: or “before him”, as the Arabic version renders it; before him the Judge of all, at whose tribunal they must stand; but being clothed with his righteousness, and so without spot and blemish, they will not be ashamed before him: or “by him”; Christ first finds his in redemption, and next in the effectual calling, and last of all at his coming, when all the elect will be looked up, gathered in, and presented first to himself, and then to his Father, complete and perfect, not one wanting: and thus to be found in him, and before him, and by him, should be the concern of all that look for the glorious things here spoken of, and particularly that they be found in the following situation and circumstances: in peace; interested in that peace Christ has made by the blood of his cross; for such as are reconciled to God by his death, shall be saved by his life, and live with him in the new heavens and new earth, and for ever in the ultimate glory; and in enjoying that peace of conscience which he himself gives, and which flows from his blood, righteousness, and atonement; so that the day of his coming by death, or at judgment, will not be terrifying to them, but they will look for these things with great delight and satisfaction: or

in peace one with another; for peace makers and keepers are called the children of God, and so heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; or in happiness and glory, expressed by peace, which is the end of the righteous man, which he enters into at death, and will rest in to all eternity:

without spot and blemish; no man is so in himself, sanctification is imperfect, and many are the slips and falls of the saints, though their desire is to be harmless and inoffensive, and to give no just occasion for blame or scandal; but the saints are so in Christ Jesus, being washed in his blood, and clothed with his righteousness, and will be found so by him when he comes again, when he will present them to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, and also before the presence of his Father's glory, as faultless, with exceeding joy; and so will they be fit and meet to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and new earth, and reign with him therein, and be with him to all eternity.

Ver. 15. *And account [that] the longsuffering of our Lord*, etc.] Not his longsuffering towards the wicked, and his forbearance with them, for that is not the means of, nor the way to, nor does it issue in, their salvation, but in their sorer punishment and greater damnation, (see ~~ROM~~ Romans 2:4 9:22); but towards the elect, as in (~~ROM~~ 2 Peter 3:9); whom he bears much and long with before conversion, while in their sins, and in a state of unregeneracy, and waits to be gracious to them, as he is in their calling, and to make known and apply his great salvation to them; and as with particular persons, so with the whole body of them, till they are all gathered in, and even with the world for their sakes; and particularly the Lord's longsuffering here intends the deferring of his coming, or his seeming slackness in the performance of his promise: the reason of which is,

salvation: the salvation of all his chosen ones, and in that it issues; he waits, he stays, that none of them might perish, but that they might be all brought to faith and repentance, and so be saved: wherefore the apostle would have the saints consider it in this light, and not imagine and conclude, with the scoffing infidels, that he is slack and dilatory, and will not come, but that his view in it is the salvation of all his people, which by this means is brought about: in confirmation of which, and other things he had delivered, he produces the testimony of the Apostle Paul;

even as our beloved brother Paul also; he calls him a "brother", both on account of his being a believer in Christ, one that belonged to the same

family with him, and was of the household of faith, born of the same Father, and related to the same Redeemer, the firstborn among many brethren, and likewise on account of his being a fellow apostle; for though he was not one of the twelve apostles, but his call and mission were later than theirs, yet Peter does not disdain to put him among them, and upon an equal foot with them, nor was he a whit behind the chief of them: he styles him a “beloved” brother; expressing his affection for him, which the relation between them called for, and which he bore to him, notwithstanding his public opposition to him, and sharp reproof of him, (^{<R21>}Galatians 2:11), and perhaps loved him the more for it; (see ^{<R105>}Psalm 141:5 ^{<I275>}Proverbs 27:5,6); and he makes mention of him, and that under these characters, partly to show their agreement and consent in doctrine; and partly to recommend him to the Jews, to whom he writes, who had, upon report of his doctrine and ministry, entertained an ill, at least a mean opinion, of him; as also to set us an example to speak well of one another, both as ministers and private believers:

according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; meaning not all his epistles, as being written for the general good of all the saints, as well as for those particular churches or men to whom they were sent; for what Peter speaks of is what was particularly written to them, and is distinguished in (^{<G165>}2 Peter 3:16) from the rest of Paul's epistles; nor does he intend the epistle of Paul to the Romans, for the longsuffering of God spoken of in that, as in (^{<R114>}Romans 2:4 9:22), is his longsuffering to the wicked, which issues in their destruction, and not his longsuffering to his elect, which is salvation, as here; but he seems manifestly to have in view the epistle to the Hebrews, for Peter wrote both his first and second epistles to Jews; wherefore, since none of Paul's epistles but that were written particularly to them, it should seem that that is designed, and serves to confirm his being the author of it; in which he writes to the Hebrews concerning the coming of Christ, and of the deferring of it a little while, and of the need they had of patience to wait for it, (^{<R105>}Hebrews 10:36,37); and in it also are some things difficult to be understood concerning Melchizedek, the old and new covenant, the removing of the Aaronic priesthood, and the abrogation of the whole ceremonial law, etc. things not easily received by that nation; and the whole is written with great wisdom, respecting the person and office of Christ, the nature of his priesthood, and the glory of the Gospel dispensation; and in a most admirable manner is the whole Mosaic economy laid open and explained: he was indeed a wise

master builder, and whatever he wrote was “according to wisdom”; not fleshly wisdom, the wisdom of this world, nor with enticing words of men's wisdom, but according to the divine wisdom, under the influence of the spirit of wisdom and revelation; for he had not this of himself naturally, nor did he learn it at Gamaliel's feet, but it was what was “given to him”; it came from above, from God, who gives it liberally; and as he himself always owned it to be a free grace gift of God bestowed on him, and that all his light and knowledge were by the revelation of Christ, so Peter ascribes it to the same, that God might have all the glory, and all boasting in man be stopped.

Ver. 16. *As also in all [his] epistles*, etc.] From whence it appears, that the Apostle Paul had, by this time, wrote several of his epistles, if not all of them; and they were all written according to the same wisdom, and under the influence of the same spirit, as his epistle to the Hebrews:

speaking in them of those things; of the same things, Peter had been speaking of, of the coming of Christ, as that he should appear a second time to them that look for him, and would come as a thief in the night, and that the fashion, scheme, and form of this world should pass away, and that saints should look and wait for his coming, and love it: something of this kind is said in all his epistles; (see ^{<8028>}Hebrews 9:28 ^{<8182>}1 Thessalonians 5:2 ^{<8173>}1 Corinthians 7:31 1:7 ^{<8123>}Titus 2:13 ^{<8108>}2 Timothy 4:8); and also of mockers, scoffers, seducers, and wicked men that would arise in the last days; (see ^{<8001>}1 Timothy 4:1 ^{<8182>}2 Timothy 3:1),

in which are some things hard to be understood. The phrase, “in which”, refers either to the epistles, or the things spoken in them. The Alexandrian manuscript, and three of Robert Stephens's copies, read **εν α1ς**, “in which” epistles, but the generality of copies read **εν ο1ς**, “in”, or “among which things”, spoken of in them, concerning the subject here treated of, the coming of Christ; as the time of Christ's coming, which is sometimes represented by the apostle, as if it would be while he was living; and the manner of his coming in person with all his saints, and his mighty angels, with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, things not easily understood; and the destruction of antichrist at his coming, which will be with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; as also the resurrection of the dead, of the saints that will rise first, and that with spiritual bodies; and likewise the change of the living saints, and the rapture both of living and raised saints together, in the, clouds, to meet the

Lord in the air; and the standing of them before the judgment seat of Christ, and the account that everyone must give to him, (~~3045~~1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 ~~3007~~2 Thessalonians 1:7,8 2:8) (~~6154~~1 Corinthians 15:44,51,52 ~~0760~~2 Corinthians 5:10 ~~6142~~Romans 14:12);

which they that are unlearned; untaught of God, who have never learned of the Father, nor have learned Christ, nor have that anointing which teacheth all things; who, though they may have been in the schools of men, were never in the school of Christ; and though they have been ever learning, yet will never come to the knowledge of the truth; for men may have a large share of human literature, and yet be unlearned men in the sense of the apostle; and very often it is, that such wrest and pervert the Scriptures to the ruin of themselves, and others:

and unstable; unsettled in their principles, who are like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; the root of the matter is not in them; nor are they rooted and built up in Christ, and so are not established in the faith; they are not upon the foundation Christ, nor do they build upon, and abide by the sure word of God, or form their notions according to it, but according to their own carnal reasonings, and fleshly lusts; and so

wrest the word of God, distort it from its true sense and meaning, and make it speak that which it never designed; dealing with it as innocent persons are sometimes used, put upon a rack, and tortured, and so forced to speak what is contrary to their knowledge and consciences; and so were the words of the Apostle Paul wrested by ill designing men, as about the doctrines of grace and works, so concerning the coming of Christ; (see ~~8888~~Romans 3:8 ~~5188~~2 Thessalonians 2:1,2);

as [they do] also the other Scriptures; the writings of Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the other epistles of the apostles of the New Testament: and which is eventually

unto their own destruction; for by so doing they either add unto, or detract from the Scriptures, and so bring the curse of God upon them; and they give into doctrines of devils, and into heresies, which are damnable, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, which lingers not, and slumbers not. Now from hence it does not follow, that the Scriptures are not to be read by the common people; for not all the parts of Scripture, and all things in it, are hard to be understood, there are many things very plain and easy,

even everything respecting eternal salvation; there is milk for babes, as well as meat for strong men: besides, not the Scriptures in general, but Paul's epistles only, are here spoken of, and not all of them, or anyone whole epistle among them, only some things in them, and these not impossible, only difficult to be understood; and which is no reason why they should be laid aside, but rather why they should be read with greater application and diligence, and be followed with fervent prayer, and frequent meditation; and though unlearned and unstable men may wrest them to their perdition, those that are taught of God, though otherwise illiterate, may read them to great profit and advantage.

Ver. 17. *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know [these things] before,* etc.] As that there will be such mockers and scoffers in the last days, and such unlearned and unstable men that will deprave the Scriptures, and wrest them in such a miserable manner:

beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked; from the simplicity of the Gospel, along with such wicked men, that wax worse and worse, deceivers and being deceived, by giving into any of their errors which respect the grace of God, or the person and offices of Christ, or particularly his second coming; be upon the watch and guard against them, having previous notice of them, for they lie in wait to deceive: lest ye

fall from your own steadfastness; which was proper to them, and which, by the grace of God, they had, and retained, both in the faith of Christ and doctrine of the Gospel; for though the saints can never finally and totally fall into sin, or from the truth, yet they may fall from their steadfastness, both as to the exercise of the grace of faith, and as to their profession of the doctrine of faith; and to be fluctuating, hesitating, and doubting in either respect, must be very uncomfortable and dishonourable.

Ver. 18. *But grow in grace,* etc.] In the gifts of grace, which, under a divine blessing, may be increased by using them: gifts neglected decrease, but stirred up and used, are improved and increase. And though men are to be thankful for their gifts, and be contented with them, yet they may lawfully desire more, and in the use of means seek an increase of them, which may be a means of preserving themselves, and others, from the error of the wicked. Moreover, by “grace” may be meant internal grace. The work of grace is gradual; it is like a grain of mustard seed, or like seed cast into the earth, which springs up, it is not known how, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; saints are first babes, and from

children they grow to young men, and from young men to fathers. There is such a thing as growth in grace, in this sense; every grace, as to its act and exercise, is capable of growing and increasing; faith may grow exceedingly, hope abound, love increase, and patience have its perfect work, and saints may grow more humble, holy, and self-denying: this is indeed God's work, to cause them to grow, and it is owing to his grace; yet saint, should show a concern for this, and make use of means which God owns and blesses for this purpose, such as prayer, attending on the word, and looking over the promises of God, for an increase of faith; recollecting past experiences, and looking to the death and resurrection of Christ for the encouragement of hope, and to the love of God and Christ, for the stirring up of love to both, and to the saints; considering the sufferings of Christ, the desert of sin, and the glories of another world, to promote patience and self-denial, and the pattern of Christ, to excite to humility; though "grace" may also intend the Gospel, the knowledge of which is imperfect, and may be increased in the use of means, and which is a special preservative against error, a growth in which saints should be concerned for:

and [in] the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; of his person, office, and grace, than which nothing is more valuable, and is to be preferred to everything; it is the principal thing in grace, and is the beginning and pledge of eternal life, and will issue in it; for an increase of which, and a growth in it, the word and ordinances are designed; and nothing can be a greater security against error than an experimental growing knowledge of Christ. The Syriac version adds, "and of God the Father"; and so some copies read:

to him [be] glory, both now, and for ever; or "to the day of eternity"; that is, to Christ, who is truly God, or otherwise such a doxology would not belong to him, be ascribed the glory of deity, of all divine perfections; the glory of all his offices and work as Mediator; the glory of man's salvation; and the glory of all that grace, and the growth of it, together with the knowledge of himself, which saints have from him; and that both in this world, and that which is to come.

Amen; so be it.

FOOTNOTES

- Ft1** -- Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 50:6. c. 25.
- Ft2** -- Ib. 50:3. c. 3. 25.
- Ft3** -- Catalog Script. Ecclesiastes sect. 2.
- Ft4** -- Guido. Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 92.
- Ft5** -- Lex. Cabalist. p. 464.
- Ft6** -- Sepher Jetzirah, p. 1. 4.
- Ft7** -- R. Eliahu in Adderet apud Trigland. de Sect Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 153.
- Ft8** -- Vid. Ammonium **περι ομοιων**, in voce **δεσποτης**.
- Ft9** -- Sepher Bahir in Zohar in Genesis fol. 27. 3.
- Ft10** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 25. 3.
- Ft11** -- Ib. fol. 32. 3.
- Ft12** -- Midrash Ruth in Zohar in Genesis fol. 45. 1. 2. vid. fol. 77. 3.
- Ft13** -- Zohar in Numbers fol. 84. 1. vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 4. & 9. 4. & Raziel, fol. 14. 2. & 18. 2.
- Ft14** -- Smegma Orientale, p. 251, 252.
- Ft15** -- In loc.
- Ft16** -- Aben Ezra in ~~Gen~~ Genesis 8:21.
- Ft17** -- Pirke Eliezer, c. 22.
- Ft18** -- Targum in Psal. 46:8.
- Ft19** -- Misna Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 149. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 2.
- Ft20** -- De Temulentia, p. 272.
- Ft21** -- Antiqu. 50:1. c. 8. sect. 3. c. 11. sect. 3.

- Ft22 -- De Abrahamo, p. 381.
- Ft23 -- De Temulentia, p. 272.
- Ft24 -- Polyhistor. c. 48.
- Ft25 -- De vifa Mosis, 50:2. p. 662.
- Ft26 -- Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 149. 1.
- Ft27 -- Tzeror Hammot, fol. 14. 4. & 16. 4. & 20. 2.
- Ft28 -- Jarchi in ^{<0130>}Genesis 13:10.
- Ft29 -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 57. 2. Jarchi in ^{<0133>}Genesis 13:13.
- Ft30 -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 56. 1, 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 3. & 14. 3. & 20. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 44. fol. 39. 1.
- Ft31 -- De vita Mosis, 50:2. p. 662.
- Ft32 -- T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 38. 2.
- Ft33 -- T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 3.
- Ft34 -- Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 165. 1. Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. 50:3. c. 5.
- Ft35 -- Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 6. & Jarchi in ib. Sepher Cosri, par. 2. p. 254.
- Ft36 -- De falsa Religione, 50:1. c. 21.
- Ft37 -- Pesikta, Ilmedenu & Gerundensis apud Drus in loc. T. Bab Sanhedrin fol. 106. 1. Aben Ezra in ^{<0428>}Numbers 32:28.
- Ft38 -- Tradition. Hebrews in Genes. fol. 69. D.
- Ft39 -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 104. 3. Vid. Bechinot Olam, p. 178.
- Ft40 -- Vajikra Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 158. 4.
- Ft41 -- Kimchi in ^{<2300>}Isaiah 2:2.
- Ft42 -- Vid. Laert. 50:1:in Vit. Thaletis.
- Ft43 -- T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 77. 1.
- Ft44 -- Antiqu. Jud. 50:1. c. 2. sect. 3.

- Ft45** -- T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 1.
- Ft46** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 50. 4. & 51. 1.
- Ft47** -- Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 7. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 160. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 216. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 20. 1. Zohar in Exodus fol. 60. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 157. 1. & Nishmet Chayim Orat. 1. c. 5. fol. 12. 1.
- Ft48** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 13. 4.
- Ft49** -- Ib. fol. 16. 1.
- Ft50** -- Bartenora in Misn. Tamid, c. 7. sect. 4.
- Ft51** -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 9. 1.
- Ft52** -- Ceseph Misna in Maimon. Hilchot Teshuva, c. 9. sect. 2.
- Ft53** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 83. 3.
- Ft54** -- T. Hieros, Taanioth, fol. 65. 2. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 50. 2.
- Ft55** -- Diog. Laert. 50:7. in Vita Zenonis.
- Ft56** -- Vid. Diog. Laert ib. & 50:9. in Vita Heraclit. & Hesych. de Philos. p. 36. Arrian. Epict. 50:3. c. 13. Phurut. de Natura Deorum, p. 39. Ovid. Metamorph, fab. 7. Min. Felix, p. 37. & Justin. Martyr. Apol. 2. p. 66.
- Ft57** -- Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud. 50:3. c. 9, 10. & 50:7. c. 14, 16.
- Ft58** -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 1, 2. Ed. Coch. p. 317.
- Ft59** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 35. 3.