

Be Found of Him in Peace

SECOND PETER, CHAPTER THREE

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance"—2 Peter 3:1

THE apostle thus refers to his letters and the object of them. He says he wrote to "stir up" the pure, or sincere, minds of the brethren and sisters "by way of remembrance." Their minds had been made pure or sincere by the—

"Word of God shed abroad in their hearts."

And then Peter goes on to call attention to the predictions made by the holy prophets, together with the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. A true deduction we can make from the words the apostles is this:—

That in the application of the prophetic Word and, the commandments of Christ by the apostles, we shall not be lulled to sleep with the view that all is well, and so rest assured things will "work out all right" for us in the end.

No, that is not the apostle's view at all, as he shows us time and time again in this chapter; but rather that the delay (or as some may count "slackness," or "slowness") is for the purpose of working out our salvation, for—

"God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (v. 9).

Then Peter goes on to tell us that scoffers shall come in the last days, "walking after their own lusts," or passions.

Natural man can only see the tangible, material things of the immediate present. He sees only within his own narrow little sphere, or world. Beyond that nothing, to him, moves of any great importance.

But God's Word looks and speaks far beyond anything we may ask or think. God, too, has spoken of the present, and assures us of man's stunted mind—what it would say, and has said, concerning the times and Christ's promised return (v. 4):

'All things continue the same.'

And unless we are aware of the Truth, and live closely to it, we shall also be lulled into the same view as the man of the world has, and with the same perspective as he.

Yes, and that "willing ignorance," that deliberate ignoring of the Word of God as it suits us, will only take us away from and to the Truth as it suits us. But, says Peter—

"Seeing we know these things before."

—the things that he has called our attention to in this chapter, he gives a word of warning as he says to us—

"Beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (v. 17).

All things have NOT "continued as they were from the beginning," and only a "willing ignorance" would even suggest it, for in vs. 5-7 we are confronted with facts long established in history—the great and terrible destruction of all mankind in the days of Noah.

From this man should learn that, as so long foretold, the Lord himself will again be in evidence when the time of his return is at hand—

"As it was in the days of Noah" (Matt. 24:37-39).

These things mentioned by the apostle and by Jesus himself should be a landmark for our guidance and instruction and warning.

In v. 8 he speaks concerning time, whether long or short. All things are taken into account by God, and all is by careful planning and arrangement.

But whether it be 1000, or 6000 years, our own individual salvation is what really counts. This is what the apostle is driving at, and with which we should be most deeply concerned. No matter how we view, the "times and seasons," in any case it only lasts a lifetime at the most for anyone of us. And that is what, above all, we should be interested in.

Peter's words are written as a guide and an instruction to those of whom he speaks as "beloved" — those whom he loved, and whom God loves—the "called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28), for whom, we are gloriously assured—

"All things (including apparent delay and present disappointment and distress) work together for good."

Things of this life should indeed be of little account in comparison to the Truth. Let us make this observation with the apostle as he says (v. 9)—

"The Lord is not slack (or slow) concerning His promise, as some men observe to be slowness."

—by which we are reminded of the parable in which the evil servant says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming," and begins to smite his fellow-servants and to eat and drink with the drunken.

To "eat and drink with the drunken" is not altogether that we have to carouse with the world in their carrying on. Just to be in their company, when we should be in the Lord's house and with the Lord's people, is as much an offence as "eating and drinking with the drunken."

"For in such an hour when we think not, the Son of man cometh."

For, says the apostle, (continuing the thought that the "delay" is not slackness but longsuffering) God's ways are based upon the facts that are conveyed to us in v. 9. There it is stated that God's longsuffering is "to usward," and it is with great emphasis that the apostle speaks.

What is the meaning? Just this: That as God's work in the days of Daniel was delayed by the Prince of Persia 21 days (Dan. 10:13), so we ourselves, because of the tardiness of our conduct in our labor in the Lord can also "delay" the fulfilment of God's purpose, Who—not willing that any should perish—holds off the day for the sending of His Son Jesus back upon the earth again.

Remembering that (v. 10)—

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."

—we realize that the brief time we still have may be our salvation, as again with great desire of heart to stir up our pure minds we read v. 11—

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved . . ."

—what things? The present things which can so easily absorb our time and attention—

". . . what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!"

Surely to this searching question there is need for an answer! And the clear, unhesitating answer should be in our righteous walk and conduct. A pure, earnest, sober, wholly-dedicated holy walk and conversation and godliness should be our only answer. Yes, as we "haste unto the coming of the day of God" (v. 12), nothing short of this will suffice.

In vs. 12-13, attention is called to the impending changes, and thus the events we see today before our eyes earnestly and zealously speak with a voice of truth to arouse us to our responsibilities. Then in v. 14 the apostle drives home the lesson for each one of us in words we should never forget—

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things . . ."
—the terrible things of the last Great Day of God's wrath and judgment on a selfish, corrupt and sin-laden world, of which the signs today are so clear—

". . . be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace . . ."
—the peace of holiness and godliness—

". . . WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS."

Accounting, Peter goes on to say (v. 15), that the forbearance and apparent "delay" on the part of God, has been for our benefit and "salvation," and thus we are to use the time as a furtherance of our opportunity to "work out our salvation."

With a further, final warning (v. 17) against being "led into the error of the wicked"—the common, ordinary ways of the world so pressing on us daily and unceasingly from every angle—and thus "falling from our steadfastness" (and thus losing the glorious promise of salvation), he closes with an exhortation to the only way of safety and escape—growth in grace and knowledge—

*"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
"To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."*

—W. J. P.