

Chapter 03

Theſe two Epiftles he writeth to confirme them in the Apoſtles doctrine, and warneth them of ſcorners that ſhal come, and denie Domes-day. 5. Whoſe vaine argument he anſwereth, and giueth the reaſon of God's fo long patience, 10. exhorting to al holines of life in reſpect of that terrible day: 16. Finally giuing warning of ſuch as miſinterpret S. Paules Epiftles & the other Scriptures, and that we muſt not for any thing fal from the true faith.

in quibus

*2. Tim. 3.
1. Iude. 18.*

Pfal. 89.

*Ezec. 33.
1. Tim. 2.
1. Theſ. 5.
Apoc. 3.*

This loe the ſecond epiftle I write to you, my Deareſt, in which I ſtirre vp by admonition your ſincere mind: ² that you may be mindful of thoſe words which I told you before from the holy Prophets, and of your Apoſtles, of the precepts of our Lord and Sauour. ³ Knowing this firſt, that in the laſt daies ſhal come mockers in deceit, walking according to their owne cōcupiſcēces, ⁴ ſaying, Where is his promiſe or his cōming? For ſince the time that the Fathers ſlept, al things doe ſo perfeuere frō the beginning of creature. ⁵ For they are wilfully ignorant of this, that the Heauens were before, and the earth, out of water, and through water, confiſting by the word of God: ⁶ by the which, that world then, being ouerflowed with water perished. ⁷ But the Heauens which now are, and the earth, are by the ſame word kept in ſtore, referued to fire vnto the day of iudgement and of the perdition of the impious men. ⁸ But this one thing be not ignorant of, my Deareſt, that one day with our Lord is as a thouſand yeares, & a thouſand yeares as one day. ⁹ Our Lord flacketh not his promiſe, as ſome doe eſteeme it: but he doth patiently for you, not willing that any periſh, but that al returne to penance. ¹⁰ And the day of our Lord ſhal come as a theefe, in the which the Heauens ſhal paſſe with great violence, but the elements ſhal be reſolued with heat, and the earth and the workes which are in it, ſhal be burnt.

Efa. 65, 17.
Apo. 21, 1.

¹¹ Therefore whereas al these things are to be diffolued, what manner of men ought you to be in holy cōuerfations and godlineffes, ¹² expecting and hafting vnto the coming of the day of our Lord, by which the Heauens burning fhall be refolued, and the elements fhall melt with the heat of fire? ¹³ But we expect new Heauens and a new earth according to his promifes, in which iuftice inhabiteth.

Ro. 2, 4.

¹⁴ For the which caufe, my Deareft, expecting these things, labour earnestly to be found immaculate and vnfpotted to him in peace: ¹⁵ and the longanimitie of our Lord, doe ye account faluation, as also our moft deare Brother Paul according to the wifdom giuen him hath written to you: ¹⁶ as also in al epiftles fpeaking in them of these things; in the which are certaine things hard to be vnderftood, which the vnlearned and vnftable depraue, as also the rest of the Scriptures, to their owne perdition. ¹⁷ You therefore, Brethren, fore-knowing, take heed lest led afide by the error of the vnwife you fall away from your owne stedfaftnes. ¹⁸ But grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Sauour IESVS Chrif. To him be glorie both now and vnto the day of eternitie. Amen.

ANNOTATIONS

¹⁶ Certaine things hard.) This is a plaine text to conuince the Proteftants, who (as al heretikes lightly doe and did from the beginning) say the Scriptures be easie to vnderftand, and therefore may be not only read fafely, but also expounded boldly of al the people, as wel vnlearned as learned: and confequently euery one by himself and his priuate fpirit, without respect of the expofitions of the learned Fathers, or expectation of the Churches, their Paftours and Prelates iudgement, may determine and make choice of fuch fenfe as himself liketh or thinketh agreeable. For this is partly their faying, partly the neceffarie fequele of their foolish opinion, which admitteth nothing but the bare Scriptures. And Luther faid that the Scriptures were more plaine then al the Fathers commentaries: and fo al to be fuperfluous but the Bible. *Prefat. affert. art. damnat.*

Againft al which Diuelish and feditious arrogancie, tending to make the people esteem themfelues learned or fufficient without

The heretical proud fpirit of priuate interpretation of Scriptures.

The Scriptures be hard, namely S. Paules epiftles, fpecially where he fpeaketh of iuftification by faith.

their Pastours and spiritual Rulers help, to guide themselves in all matters of doctrine and doubts in religion: the holy Apostles here telleth and fore-warneth the faithful, that the Scriptures be full of difficultie, and specially S. Paul's epistles of all other parts of holy writ, and that ignorant men and vnstable or phantastical fellows puffed to and fro with every blast of doctrine and heresie, abuse, peruert, and misconfer them to their owne damnation. And S. Augustin faith, that the special difficultie in S. Paul's epistles, which ignorant and euill men doe so peruert, and which S. Peter meaneth, is his hard speech and much commendation of that faith which he faith doth iustifie. Which the ignorant euen from the Apostles time, and much more now, haue and doe so misconfer, as though he had meant that only faith without good workes could iustifie or saue a man. Against which wicked collection and abuse of S. Paul's words, the said Father faith all these Canonical or Catholike epistles were writtē.

*De fid. &
op. c. 14.*

But the Heretikes here to shift of the matter, and to creep out after their fashion, answer, that S. Peter faith not, S. Paul's epistles be hard, but that many things in them are hard. Which may be to the Catholikes an example of their sophistical euasions from the euidence of God's word. As though it were not alone to say, *Such an Authour or Writer is hard: and, There be many things in that Writer hard to be vnderstood.* For, whether it be that the argument and matter be high and past vulgar capacitie, as that of predestination, reprobation, vocation of the Gentils, & iustifying faith: or whether his manner of stile and writing be obscure: all proueth that his epistles be hard and other Scriptures also: because S. Peter here affirmeth that by reason of the difficulties in them, whether in the stile, or in the depth of the matter, the ignorant and vnstable (such as Heretikes be) doe peruert his writings, as also other Scriptures, to their owne damnation. Whereby it is plaine that it is a very dangerous thing for such as be ignorant, or for wild witted fellows, to read the Scriptures. For such conditioned men be they that become Heretikes, and through ignorance, pride, & priuate phantasie, meeting with hard places of S. Paul's epistles or other Scriptures, breed Heresies.

And that not only the things treated of in the holy Scriptures, but also that the very manner of writing and ending thereof, is high and hard, and purposely by God's prouidence appointed to be written in such sort, see S. Augustin *li. 2. de doct. Christ. c. 6. & ep. 119.* S. Ambrose *ep. 34. in principio.* S. Hierom to Palinus *ep. 103. c. 5. 6. 7.* who also (*ep. 65. c. 1.*) faith that in his old age, when he should rather haue taught than be taught, he went as farre as Alexandria, only to heare Didymus, and to haue his help for the vnderstanding of the Scriptures, & confesseth with great thanks to the said Didymus, that he learned of him that which before he knew not. Dauid faith, *Giue me vnderstanding and I wil searce thy law.* The Eunuch in the Actes, said,

*Pf. 118.
Act. 8.*

The Protestants idle distinction between difficultie in the Epistles and difficultie in the things.

The Greek copies haue both, some ἐν ὅς, in which things: some ἐν αἰς, in which epistles.

Not only the matter, but the stile of the Scriptures is hard.

Luc. 24. v. 45. How can I vnderftand without an interpreter? The Apoftles, til Chrift opened their fenfe to vnderftand the Scriptures, could not vnderftand them. The holy Doctours by continual ftudie, watching, and praying, had much a-doe to vnderftand them: that great Clerke S. Auguftin confeffing in the forefaid *epiftle 119. c. 21.* that there were many moe things that he vnderftood not, then that he vnderftood. The Heretikes fay the Fathers did commonly erre, and how could fuch great wife learned men be deceiued in reading and expounding the Scriptures, if they were not hard? And if they were hard to thẽ, how are they eafie to thefe new Maifters the Heretikes? Finally, why doe they write fo many new gloffes, fcholies, commentaries, as a cart can not carrie? Why doe Luther, Zuinglius, Caluin, and their Companions agree no better vpon the interpretation of the Scriptures, if they be not hard? Whereat ftumbled al the old heretikes & the new, Arius, Macedonius, Vigilantius, Neftorius, Berengarius, Wicleffe, Proteftants, Puritanes, Anabaptifts, and the reft, but at the hardnes of the Scriptures? They be hard then to vnderftand, and Heretikes peruert them to their owne damnation.