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THE
GREAT DAY
OF THE **LORD.**

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THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD.

THERE is a prominence given in the Scriptures to the day of the Lord second to no other period. The Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament repeatedly refer to that great day, and the New Testament is by no means silent on the subject. But, as with all other important Bible subjects, there is a wide diversity of opinion in the Christian world in regard to the character, length, and scope of the great day of the Lord, as well as its relation to man.

Where Satan cannot hide from the professed people of God the importance of a subject, he will divide their ranks concerning that subject. He will move upon men who have pet theories to support to connect those theories with the truth of God in such a way that, to the uninstructed, the truth seems to be dependent on the false theory, and it is accepted as truth; just as men persuade themselves that evil is good, in order that they may accomplish a certain purpose which seems good.

The doctrine of the day of the Lord has suffered in this way. It has been made to do service to the temporal-millennium theory and to the age-to-come doctrine. The theory has obtained that somehow the whole world is to be converted before Christ comes, or there is to be

a new probation granted to men. They do not see it accomplished here, and, therefore, think that it must be in the day of the Lord. Thus they reason; and we would that it were true that the majority would be saved; but we cannot belie the words of our Saviour that few comparatively enter the way of life, while many go in the way of destruction.

Our object in writing this is to show the character and length of the day of the Lord, as well as the principal events to occur in that day.

WHAT IS ITS CHARACTER?

In the consideration of this question we shall deal only with the clear and positive evidences of the word of God. There are many scriptures which refer to the day of the Lord, or to events in that day "which are hard to be understood." These must be interpreted in harmony with the clear and positive declarations which God has given. In these obscure passages we often find events of the day of the Lord mingled with others which occur in probation, but, because of the close connection, some ascribe them all to the day of the Lord, contrary to the express statements of other passages. The fact is lost sight of that events far apart are sometimes spoken of in the same connection. An example of this is found in Isa. 61:2. The mission of Christ was to proclaim "the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." He did the first at his first advent (Luke 4: 18, 19, 21); the second will be fulfilled by his people prior to his second advent (Rev. 14: 6-12). Sometimes the prophet saw for his own day God's judgments, severe, though mixed with mercy, and his mind was carried forward to that great day of wrath when the judgment of

God would be executed without mercy. We must "rightly divide" such scriptures by comparing them with the plain and unequivocal.

What is the *character* of that day? is it a day of peace and safety and mercy? is it an accepted time, a day of salvation? It would seem that this must indeed be the case if it is true that in this day the great majority, at least, of the inhabitants of earth are to be converted. But it is not what we may *believe*, dear reader, that will decide this question. What does the Bible say? It is there alone that we learn that there is such a period, and it is therefore evident that from the Bible alone we can learn its character. That it is not a day of peace, safety, and mercy to the inhabitants of earth, in which man may enter upon a new probation, is evident from the following considerations:—

1. It is nowhere represented in the Bible that a new probation will be given to man. No direct proof has ever been produced in support of the theory. The best arguments have been unwarranted inferences, sophistries, or appeals to man's selfish nature. On the other hand, the word of Inspiration declares that the present is the time to seek salvation. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have succored thee; behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the *day of salvation*." 2 Cor. 6. 1. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Heb. 3: 7, 15; Ps. 95: 7.

2. The positive testimony of the Bible concerning that great day. We have space for only a small portion of what is said in regard to its character. A part of the testimony of "the gospel prophet" is as follows:—

“Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt; and they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.” Isa. 13: 6-13.

There can be no mistaking this language. It is “the day of the Lord” that is referred to; the prophecy applies to that time when it is near at hand. It comes not as salvation, but as “destruction.” It will not cause joy, but fear and faintness; for that day shall be cruel both with wrath and fierce anger to lay the land desolate, and the sinners shall be destroyed. The world will be punished for evil, and the wicked for iniquity. The whole passage indicates the character of the day of the Lord in language too plain to be misunderstood.

But it is said that this refers to the land of Israel, which shall be made “desolate;” and, further, that “the day of the Lord” does not always refer to the great day of God. While we would not contend for a moment that the prophecies of “the day of the Lord” had exclusive reference to the great day of God, that day is always in-

cluded. The day of God's providential judgments upon lands and nations are only figures of the last final judgment, where the promised wrath will be poured out to the uttermost. The word translated "land" in Isa. 13:9 is *erets*, the same that is translated "world" in Ps. 22:27; Isa. 23:17; and Jer. 25:26; it is translated "earth" in Gen. 1:1, 2, 10, 11, 12, and in more than six hundred other places. That it refers to the earth in Isa. 13:9 is also evident from verse 11. The same day is referred to in Isa. 2:10-21, and chapter 24.

Isaiah certainly represents the day of the Lord as a day of wrath; but let us hear the testimony of another prophet:—

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy; for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zeph. 1:14-18.

The above language is much more terrible than that of Isaiah. It is so explicit; it is "the great day of the Lord." And how clearly is its character revealed by such terms as wrath, trouble, distress, wasteness, desolation, darkness, gloominess, and alarm! Those who have sinned shall be destroyed, and no earthly ransom or power can save them; for "the whole land [earth, *erets*] shall be

devoured," and "speedy riddance" will be made of all who dwell in the land [*erets*]. The earth-dwellers are the wicked. Luke 21:35.

One more testimony in regard to the character of the day of the Lord, and that from the New Testament.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, 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.

In this passage the same character is given as in the prophets. It was given by the same Spirit. In that day, says the Lord, the atmospheric heavens will pass away, be rolled together like a scroll (Rev. 6:14), the earth shall be melted, and all that is marred by sin will be burned up. In the seventh verse of the same chapter, Peter calls it the day of judgment and perdition (utter destruction) of ungodly men.

Certainly this is sufficient to establish its character. All other testimony is in harmony with these quoted. They surely do not represent the day of the Lord as something to be desired by the inhabitants of earth. Yet it is to this that many are looking as a time of deliverance; but they will look for deliverance from earthly ills, and will meet greater ills; they will look for peace and find tumult.

In view of the scriptural testimony regarding the character of that day, and these erroneous ideas now prevalent concerning it, we can realize the force of the scripture:—

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went

into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" Amos 5: 18-20.

In "that day" there is no hope for the sinner; and he who solaces himself with refuge then, will, like the one who seeks shelter in the house and support against its wall, find a greater evil than he fled from. "Behold, NOW is *the accepted time*; behold, NOW is the *day of salvation*."

WHEN DOES THE DAY OF THE LORD BEGIN?

What we have learned concerning its character will help us very much to determine its beginning. It is a day "cruel both with wrath and fierce anger" (Isaiah 13); a day when "the loftiness of man shall be bowed down," and "the Lord alone shall be exalted" (Isaiah 2); a day of "wrath," "trouble," "distress," "wasteness and desolation," "darkness and gloominess" (Zeph. 1: 15); "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3: 7. All this is spoken of the day of the Lord and its connection with this earth; for it is to the earth that the wrath, the gloominess, the darkness, comes. The judgment is the judgment of the world, which is to be punished for its iniquity. When does this terrible period begin? We will not discuss the opinions which declare that it has already begun, or that it will begin at the second coming of Christ. Where in the divine plan does it begin, as shown in the word of God? The true theory will prove the falsity of all others.

1. We have in several scriptures a number of signs given which will precede and usher in the second coming of Christ. These passages are Matt. 24: 29, 30; Mark 13: 24-26; Luke 21: 25-27; Rev. 6: 13-17; Joel 2: 30, 31; and Joel 3: 13-16. It will be seen that the same signs

are mentioned in the same order. Isa. 13:13 and 2:17-21 also speak of the shaking of the earth. See also Heb. 12:26.

2. In that day of the Lord there will be no mercy offered to mankind. It is the great day of God's wrath. Men will be blinded by distress because they have sinned; "their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung," and no ransom which they can make, no defense which they can prepare, will be able to save them. Zeph. 1:14-18. The only defense against that day—a refuge in the God of heaven—is not theirs. Men will no longer flee to the Rock of Ages for defense; they realize that the time is past; and in despair the mightiest men cry to the rocks and mountains to hide them from "the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand." Rev. 6:15-17.

3. A warning message is given to the inhabitants of earth, when that day is near at hand, that they may turn from their sins, seek God, and live. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. This has ever been God's plan. He warned the antediluvian world, the Sodomites, the Jewish nation. He will warn the world through his prophets of that most terrible visitation of wrath—the day of God. Dan. 12:1.

One scripture which contains this warning is Joel 2:1, which reads: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land [*erets*, earth] tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Injunctions to seek God are given. People are told to rend their hearts,

and not their garments; the ministers of the Lord are told to pray and weep for their flocks. Certainly, no such language as this would be used if there was more abundant mercy to be found in that great day.

4. The message will be based on signs. In Joel 2: 30, 31 the signs which will precede that day are mentioned, namely, signs in the heavens, and especially the darkening of the sun and moon. The day of the Lord does not begin with these signs, for mercy is offered after these signs occur. The next verse says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." These signs are an evidence of the mercy of the Lord. They are given to verify God's holy word, and as a warning to men to flee from the wrath to come.

The darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars mentioned in the same connection in other passages, are in the past. The former occurred May 19, 1780, and the latter November 13, 1833.* The darkening of the former was not the result of an eclipse; its "true cause," as remarked in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, "is unknown." The meteoric shower of November 13, 1833, was the most remarkable ever known, and met in every respect the specifications of the prophecy. They fell as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, coming from a common center, and flying, as if shaken off by a tree (see Rev. 6: 13); and it would seem to an observer that the very stars had left their orbit and withdrawn their shining. Joel 3: 15.

5. The next event in order is the shaking of the powers of the heavens. Matt. 24: 29. That which causes this shaking is the voice of Jehovah. Joel 3: 16; Heb.

* See *Bible Students' Library*, No. 17, entitled "Second Coming of Christ."

12: 26. But this shaking does not precede the beginning of the day of the Lord; it occurs *in* that day. See Isa. 2: 17-19. Then, as the darkening of the sun and moon and falling of the stars are in the past when the day of God's wrath begins, and as the shaking of the heavens and earth occurs *in* that day, we are forced to the conclusion that its beginning lies between the falling of the stars and the shaking of the powers of heaven. But as the falling of the stars is in the past, the next event in order, as marked by these prophecies, is the great day of God's wrath.

6. Judicial wrath, or punishment, implies investigation of the lives of those upon whom this wrath falls. It is for this reason that, in the warning message given the people of earth, the Lord reveals that his judgment is come. This message is found in Rev. 14: 6-11. The first part includes all practical truth to which men are enjoined to turn; "for the hour of His (God's) judgment is come." That this is not the *executive* judgment* is evident from the following messages, which show that mercy is still offered after the first angel proclaims the judgment come.

This judgment was future in Paul's day. Acts 17: 31; 24: 25. It "is come" when the threefold message of Revelation 14 is due the world, just before God's wrath unmixed with mercy is poured out, before Christ comes. Verses 10, 14. This judgment is to ascertain who among the inhabitants of earth—dead or alive—are worthy of a resurrection to eternal life, or translation, at the coming of Christ. Those who are "accounted

*For a fuller discussion of the judgment, see No. 55 of this *Library*, or "The Sanctuary and 2,300 Days," published at this office.

worthy" among the dead will then be raised (Luke 20: 35), while those who are accounted worthy among the living will be changed in a moment, at the sound of the last trump. 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52. The fact that the dead are *raised incorruptible* is proof that their cases have been decided before. This judgment goes on in the courts of heaven, while the last message, based on the prophetic word of God, is being heralded to the world to prepare men for the decisions of that dreaded tribunal.

After judicial investigation comes the sentence of the judge. And so it is in the heavenly court. The close of the investigative judgment marks the close of probation, just before Christ comes. It is thus noted: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly [to execute judgment]; and my reward is with me to give to every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22: 11, 12. This decree therefore closes probation. We will refer to it again.

7. The threefold message of Revelation 14, as before noticed, warns us against the unmixed wrath of God; that is, wrath unmixed with mercy. The cup *now* in the hand of the Lord is mixed with mercy, full of that mixture,—mercy is abundant; but the wrath of Rev. 14:11 will be the dregs of the cup in Ps. 75:8. Probation will then be closed; the decree will have gone forth. This wrath of Rev. 14:11 is manifested in the seven last plagues; "for in them is *filled up* the wrath of God." Rev. 15:1. This pouring out of the plagues must therefore usher in the great day of God's wrath, a day in

which there is no light and mercy, but all is darkness and distress. Amos 5: 18; Zeph. 1: 15.

The following facts of Scripture confirm the above conclusion. We have seen that the day of the Lord begins after the falling of the stars, and before the shaking of the heavens and the earth; but this shaking occurs under the seventh plague. This plague is therefore *in* the day of the Lord. Under the sixth and seventh plagues is the great battle of Armageddon fought. Rev. 16: 14-16. But this battle also comes in the day of the Lord (Eze. 13: 5); therefore the sixth plague is *in* the day of the Lord; and what is true of one of these plagues in this respect is doubtless true of all.

8. One more evidence that the great day of God's wrath begins at the close of probation. In Zeph. 1: 14-18 is the terrible announcement of the nearness of the day of the Lord, and a description of its character. The following verses (chapter 2: 1-3) contain an appeal to the people of God to be ready for that time:—

“Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgments; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.”

Notice the expression as regards the time indicated in the preposition “before.” “Before the decree bring forth;” that is, the decree which marks the close of probation. Rev. 22: 11, 12. If this be not so, then there is no force in the appeal; for they could seek God after the going forth of the decree. That decree shuts out all opportunity of effectually seeking God.

“Before the day pass as the chaff;” that is, the “day of salvation.” “*Now* is the accepted time;” “now is the day of salvation.” 2 Cor. 6:2. Then will be the day of wrath. He who regarded neither would treat God’s time of mercy as worthless as chaff till it was too late. Boothroyd translates: “Before the decree be executed, and ye are as the chaff that passeth.” Those who regard not the warning would be found among the unjust who would remain unjust, and in the day of wrath be like the chaff—burned with unquenchable fire. Matt. 3: 12. Another evidence right in this line is found in the second chapter of Daniel, where the kingdoms of earth are symbolized by the gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay of the great image. These are smitten by the stone, representing Christ and his kingdom, and become as chaff of the summer threshing-floor, which the wind carries away that no place is found for them. Verse 35.

“Before the day of the Lord’s [fierce] anger come upon you.” God’s fierce anger is unmixed wrath. When, therefore, the day of probation and salvation closes, the day of executive judgment and perdition of ungodly men, the day of God’s wrath, the great day of the Lord, begins. The day of wrath begins when the day of salvation ends. We do not know how this could be plainer.

We have learned, then, thus far in our investigations, from the clear testimony of Scripture, (1) that the day of the Lord is a day of executive judgment, when God’s just wrath will be poured out upon a wicked world; (2) that that day begins when the day of probation closes, when the plagues begin to be poured out, when the decree goes forth which fixes irrevocably the destinies of all men, before Christ comes.

It will not be heralded by shout and trumpet; it will come as a thief in the night. 2 Peter 3: 10. The careless, wicked world will laugh and curse on till overtaken by the plagues of wrath. The righteous, with loins girded and lights burning, will be sealed for eternity.

Fellow-sinner, cold-hearted Christian, God has given these messages for you. You may hide from his wrath beneath the shelter of his wings. Psalms 91. Heed the "sure word of prophecy." "Turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" **NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME.**

EVENTS IN THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY OF THE LORD.

When the irrevocable decree of the Judge, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; . . . and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22: 11), goes forth, it forever closes all time of repentance and reformation. Our High Priest will then leave his mediatorial throne; the angel of mercy will fold her wings, while the black satyrs of evil will seem to triumph. But not for long. The next verse to the scripture above quoted, reads: "And, behold, I [Jesus] come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Here is a little period covered by the word "quickly." What occurs during this period? How much time does it embrace? What great events intervene between the beginning of the day of the Lord and the coming of Christ, inclusive?

We may certainly inquire concerning this period to the extent that God has revealed it to us. We do not propose to speculate over obscure passages, but to present those which are clear and unambiguous. As God's word

is truth, the obscure will be in harmony with the plain, positive testimony. With these objects before us, let us notice some of these great events:—

1. *The seven last plagues.* As there is no mercy mixed with them, as in them “is filled up the wrath of God” (Rev. 14: 11; 15: 1), they very properly begin, or usher in, the day of the Lord. The prediction concerning them is found in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation. That these plagues are literal, we need not argue. To suppose otherwise would make nonsense of the chapter. The plagues of Egypt were literal; these are the same. We have no more right to spiritualize the one than the other. True, symbols are introduced of institutions and powers, but it is done for the purpose of connecting them with previous prophecies from which these symbols may be understood. For instance, the beast (Rev. 16: 2, 10) represents Papal Rome, and its mark symbolizes one of its vital institutions. Revelation 13 and 14. The great river Euphrates (Rev. 16: 12) is referred to in chapter 9: 14, and refers to the great Mohammedan powers. These powers are affected by these literal plagues. It will be noticed also that these plagues fall upon the same generation of men. Those upon whom the fifth plague falls are those suffering from the boils of the first plague. Rev. 16: 1, 2, 10, 11.

It is not our purpose to describe these plagues, or give an exposition of Revelation 16, interesting as the prophecy is; we merely locate them between the close of probation and the coming of Christ, which occurs immediately after, or in conjunction with, the last plague. For it is under the last plague that the shaking of the powers of heaven takes place, and “then shall they see the Son

of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory." Mark 13:26. Under this plague, the great hail, reserved to the day of trouble (Job 38:22, 23), falls upon men who are still blaspheming God; and the great battle is fought at Jerusalem, in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Zechariah 14 and Joel 3.

The *time* occupied in the pouring out of these plagues is evidently a year. In prophetic language, a day symbolizes a year (Eze. 4:4-6; Num. 14:34); and in the prophecy concerning Babylon (Revelation 18), it is stated (verse 8): "Therefore shall her plagues come in *one day*, death and mourning and famine." Of course, famine could not come in one literal day; we therefore conclude that the time is symbolic, signifying one year. This seems to be referred to by the prophet: "For it is the *day* of the Lord's vengeance, and the *year* of recompenses for the controversy of Zion." Isa. 34:8. It ushers in the great day of God, and in it is the most signal manifestation of his just wrath until after the thousand years, namely, the pouring out of the seven last plagues.

2. *God's care for his people.* From this time of trouble (Dan. 12:1), God's people are delivered. None of the judgments fall upon them. They have made their peace with God; their names are in the book of life; they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Inspiration says of the righteous at that time:—

"He [the Lord Jehovah] shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at

thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Ps. 91: 4-12.

The reason of God's protection is given in the fourth and ninth verses. The faith of the child of God grasps the promises of God, and in the midst of boiling seas, falling rocks, and quaking mountains, he triumphantly sings:—

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed [do change, R. V.], and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." Ps. 46: 1-3.

3. *The death of all the wicked.* Many of them die in the battle of the great day, which takes place under the seventh plague. "And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jer. 25: 33. Then the fowls of heaven are called to the feast: "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." Rev. 19: 17, 18. The great apostate powers are cast alive into the lake of fire,

into which portions of the earth will be converted. Here they will be "utterly burned." Rev. 18: 8. The "remnant," or the men who are left after the great battle, are slain by the sword of the Coming One, who then appears. As Paul expresses it: "Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. 2: 9. See Dan. 7: 10.

4. *The righteous dead are raised at Christ's appearing.* "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel [see John 5: 28], and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thess. 4: 16. The resurrection of the righteous precedes that of the wicked. See John 5: 29; Acts 24: 15; Rev. 20: 4-6. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Rev. 20: 6. From this scripture we learn two important facts: (a) The first resurrection is that of the righteous dead; they are blessed and holy; (b) those mentioned in the fourth verse are the same as those of the sixth; they both reign with Christ a thousand years; (c) the coming of Christ, the slaying of the wicked, the raising of the righteous dead, mark the beginning of the thousand years of the millennium of the Bible. The preceding verse shows that there is one thousand years between the resurrections of the two classes: "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

This first resurrection (that of the holy) has been the hope of all past ages. Job, Isaiah, David, Hos. a, Jere-

miah, in fact, all classes—apostle, prophet, and saint—looked forward to the time when the coming of the Master of life would be the destruction of the grave (Hosea 13: 14), and the saints would shout, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” 1 Cor. 15: 55. This is the resurrection literally “out from among the dead,” of which our Saviour speaks in Luke 20: 35, and for which Paul earnestly longed. Phil. 3: 11. Glorious day to the worn pilgrims, the faithful toilers, the blessed martyrs, who, all unappreciated by a wicked and tyrannical world, have laid down their lives for the sake of Christ. Great is their reward.

5. *At the resurrection of the righteous dead, the righteous living are changed to immortality.* This is stated by the apostle Paul as follows:—

“Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” 1 Cor. 15: 51-53.

“For our conversation [commonwealth] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Phil. 3: 20, 21.

6. *This glorified throng will then be taken from this sin-cursed earth to those mansions of light prepared for them by their Lord.* We present upon this the following conclusive evidences:—

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord

himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4: 15-17.

"Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14: 1-3.

The last scripture quoted is the words of our Saviour to the troubled disciples. They loved him, and therefore loved his personal presence. He assures them that he will come again, and will take them to that place to which he was then about to go. What was this place? It was heaven, where God the Father dwelt. That this is so a brief examination of several scriptures will make plain.

Jesus had just told his disciples previous to this that he was going away, that they should seek him, but as he had told the Jews, whither he went they could not come. Chapter 13:33. This remark to the Jews is recorded in chapter 7:33-35. Jesus there plainly says, "I go unto him that sent me." The Jews question what he can mean, and again our Saviour says, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come." Chapter 8:21. To this Jesus refers in chapter 13:33, 36. Peter asks him, "Whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go thou canst not follow me *now*; but thou *shalt follow* me *afterwards*."

From the above scriptures we learn that our Saviour,

in going away, returned to God, who sent **him**, therefore he ascended to heaven; that to this place the wicked Jews could never come; that the disciples could not come now, or through death; the coming of Christ must first take place. Then, when those heavenly mansions were prepared, he would come **again**, and the assurance that they should follow him afterwards would be fulfilled in ascending with their Lord to the New Jerusalem. The words, "Thou shalt follow me afterwards," though spoken to Peter, were true of all; for the promise (chapter 14:1-3) was to all. Therefore the children of God will, at the second coming of Christ, be taken to the third heaven, the dwelling-place of God.

This is confirmed by what John records in the Revelation. In chapter 15:2-4 John sees the company of those who have come off victors in the last struggle and hears their song of triumph. They stand on the crystal sea, or sea of glass; and this sea is before the throne of God in heaven. Chapter 4:1, 6.

Again: in chapter 14:1-5, John sees and hears the one hundred and forty-four thousand. Their voice comes "*from heaven*," they stand *before the throne*, the four living creatures, and the elders (chapter 4:1-6), and they "were redeemed *from* the earth." There could be no stronger proof than this that they are in heaven. And what is true of this company is true of all the people of God. John is carried forward to that time when the judgments of God shall have been visited upon the wicked, and all oppression of his people forever crushed; and of this he says, "I heard a great voice of *much people in heaven*, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments." Chapter 19:1, 2.

We have presented this evidence thus fully in order that our readers may see the strength of the position. There are those who ridicule what they are pleased to term "the heaven-going theory," and other terms of reproach are fixed upon it. Ridicule, reproach, and epithets are favorite arguments with those who are determined to maintain an untenable position. That the righteous do inherit the earth is true; and it is also true that they do ascend to heaven with our Lord when he appears the second time.

7. *The earth will be desolated at the second coming of Christ.* Other events already noticed show this to be the case. The wicked are slain by the brightness and terrible glory of Christ's presence; the righteous are taken to the heavenly mansions. This leaves the earth without a human inhabitant. Says the prophet Jeremiah (4: 23-27):—

"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was *no man*, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the *presence of the Lord*, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end."

The Lord will not wholly destroy the earth, but he will make it wholly desolate and empty of all its inhabitants for a time. Another prophet bears the following testimonies:—

"Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof." "The land shall be utterly emptied, and

utterly spoiled; for the Lord hath spoken this word." Isa. 24: 1, 3. "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger to lay the land [*erets*, earth] desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." Isa. 13:9.

The above testimonies admit of no double constructions. They are plain, unambiguous declarations which can only refer to the last great day.

8. *The everlasting kingdom of Christ will be set up at his coming.* Jesus has now gone to the "far country" to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. Luke 19: 12; Dan. 7: 13, 14. At his coming he will begin his reign! Says Paul, "Who shall judge the quick and the dead at his *appearing and kingdom.*" 2 Tim. 4: 1. He now reigns a priest upon his Father's throne, the throne of grace (Ps. 110: 1; Heb. 8: 1), and is gathering out of the world those who will be wholly his, fit stones for the great spiritual temple, fit subjects of his everlasting kingdom. Zech. 6: 12, 13; Eph. 2: 20-22. At the close of his priestly work the kingdom which he has redeemed is given to him (Dan. 7: 12, 13; Rev. 11: 15), and he comes forth, to execute wrath upon a guilty world. Ps. 110: 5, 6; Luke 19: 12, 13, 22, 27. At that time will be fulfilled the words of the Lord by the apostle, which we will paraphrase to make their meaning more obvious:—

"Then cometh the end [of probation and Christ's rule as kingly priest], when he [the Son] shall have delivered up the kingdom [of grace] to God, even the Father [Zech. 6: 12, 13]; when he [the Father] shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. [Ps. 110: 1.] For he [the Son] must reign [on his Father's throne], till he [the Father] hath put all enemies under his [the Son's] feet." 1 Cor. 15: 24, 25.

Having left the throne of grace, our Lord will at his coming take his rightful place on the throne of glory,

the throne of his father David. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Matt. 25: 31; Luke 1: 32, 34.

He does not, however, begin his reign upon this sin-marred earth, but in its capital city, the New Jerusalem, which is above, the mother of us' all, now waiting for her children. Gal. 4: 26, 27; Isa. 54: 1-5. In the Paradise of God, once upon the earth in its Eden beauty, now in the city of God, untarnished by sin since guilty man first transgressed, will the Lord of glory begin his reign. The earth is not yet fitted, although subdued. A little longer the Lord waits to manifest his justice and love to those of all dispensations who have been its inhabitants, and then the earth will blossom as when it came from the hand of God, and Christ's reign of endless peace will begin.

EVENTS OF THE MILLENNIUM.

The time between the pouring out of the first plague, when the day of wrath begins and probation closes, and the last trump, when Christ appears, is called, in the prophecy of Rev. 18: 8, "one day," or a literal year. The coming of Christ, the resurrection and translation of the just, the slaying of the wicked, and the desolation of the earth, mark the beginning of the thousand years. Here the Bible millennium begins, not in glory, but, so far as regards this earth, enshrouded in darkness. What occurs during the millennium?

THE SAINTS JUDGE THE WORLD.

Where are the saints during this period? We have before shown that they were taken to the "Father's

house," the city of God in heaven. Here, associated with Christ, they judge the wicked dead; here they live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Rev. 20: 4.

Jesus told his disciples, who had forsaken the world, who were condemned by that chosen nation of Israel, that nation which had rejected God, that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matt. 19: 28. The tables would then be turned. Those condemned on earth by the greater part of the professed people of God, would in the future judge those apostate tribes; not in revenge, however, but in sorrow and strict justice. Paul admonishes the Corinthians to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes" (1 Cor. 4: 5), from which it may be legitimately inferred that at that time the saints will sit in judgment. And this is what Paul expressly states further on. In chapter 6: 1 he reproves them for going to law before the unjust, and not before the saints. Surely those who have been in some measure enlightened by the Spirit of God, ought to be able to judge between brethren of the same faith. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge [evil] angels? how much more things that pertain to this life." It is the fulfillment of this prediction by Paul that John sees, as recorded in Rev. 20: 4. This reign is therefore in heaven, not on the earth.

"But do the saints judge the wicked?" asks one. We answer, Yes, why not? The Bible expressly declares it, and why not believe it? Abraham, the father of the faithful, asked the question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. 18: 25. That question will

be answered to the faithful. They have believed God without always seeing the why and the wherefore. God will reveal to them that their faith was not misplaced; he will demonstrate to the redeemed host the wisdom of all his decisions.

Therefore holy angels are commissioned to keep infallible records of men's lives, with the motives which actuated their deeds. See Ex. 32:32; Ps. 139:16; Matt. 12:36; Ps. 50:21; Dan. 7:10; Mal. 3:16, *et al.* God in his infinite knowledge does not need these records, but his people need them. And during the thousand years those who have died out of Christ come in review before God and the saints, in their records, and their deeds are weighed, and their sentences apportioned accordingly. Rev. 20:12. The question of Abraham is then answered, and with one acclaim the saints raise the song, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Rev. 15:3.

THE PRISON HOUSE.

As before shown, under the seventh plague the earth shall be "*utterly emptied.*" Isa. 24:3. Thus the prophet speaks of the death of the wicked under the fearful judgments of God:—

"And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days they shall be visited." Isa. 24:21, 22.

The wicked are punished by the plagues. Under the burning glory of Christ's coming they die, and are gathered into the vast charnel-house of the dead,—this desolate earth. But this death is not eternal. After *many*

days they shall be visited again. John tells us how long a period these "many days" are. "But the rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Rev. 20: 5. This is conclusive. If the righteous dead, the blessed and holy, are raised, and the saints are all taken to heaven, if the "remnant" of the wicked are slain (Rev. 19: 21), and those who were dead remain so, there is not one wicked human being alive during the thousand years, and there is not one human being, either good or evil, alive upon the earth.

Upon this desolated earth Satan is confined. Rev. 20: 1-3. The word translated "bottomless pit," in verse two, is *abussos*, the Greek word which corresponds to the Hebrew word *t'hôm*, translated "deep" in Gen. 1: 2. In the Septuagint, *t'hôm* is translated *abussos*. They both refer to the empty and desolated earth. Here Satan is confined, to ponder over the ruin he has wrought. He cannot leave for other worlds, and the dead are beyond the reach of his power.

It seems evident, however, that there will be animal life on the earth during this period, but not human life. The most graphic picture of the earth in this frightful loneliness is found in the double prophecy of Isaiah, referring to Idumea and to the earth as the antitype of Idumea:—

"And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.

They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate." Isa. 34: 9-15.

What a scene! The earth is waste, empty, and desolate. The palaces of emperors, the courts of kings, the halls of legislation, know no sound of life save the scream of the wild fowl or the fierce growl of some beast of prey, which has sought these ruins as a shelter from the fierce blasts of fiery heat which sweep over the sin-ruined earth. The hoarse wind howls its dirges over the dead; and Satan and his minions, in remorseful despair, contrast the result of their hellish work with their former home in heaven. It is the sabbath of the earth. Palestine was deprived of the Jewish nation for seventy years, till the land had enjoyed her sabbaths (2 Chron. 36:20, 21), so the earth is desolated of all her inhabitants. Those who have rejected God are dead, the righteous are in heaven, and the earth is worn out and at rest, and this condition remains till the close of the thousand years.

Certainly the millennium, so far as this earth is concerned, is not to be desired. The pall of death will hang over this world at that time, where men, in the boasting of error, predict life and peace and joy. Would that their prediction were true, if it were God's

will. But the "sure word of prophecy" has drawn another picture in order that the world may be warned of the evil to come. There is life and peace, but it is in the presence of God in heaven. Infinite Mercy has set before us life and death; therefore choose life "before the day of the Lord's fierce anger come upon you."

THE CLOSE OF THE MILLENNIUM.

The consideration of events thus far has brought us to the close of the sabbath of the earth. The millennium will then have ended, the time of Satan's confinement will have passed, the "many days," during which the wicked have been shut up in the prison-house of the grave, will have terminated, and the time will have come when God will visit them again to call them back to life. Isa. 24:22; Rev. 20:5. The latter text reads: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years are finished." "The *rest* [or remainder] of the dead" are the wicked dead. The "blessed and holy" were raised at the beginning of the thousand years. "This is the first resurrection."

But there shall also be a resurrection of the unjust to condemnation. Acts 24:15; John 5:29. The wicked are again given life, in order that they may know what they have rejected, that they may see the wisdom and promises of God in his gospel vindicated and fulfilled to those who have believed and obeyed, and that they may receive the sentence—the due reward of their deeds—meted out to them during the thousand years in the Supreme Court of Equity, the sittings of which are forever ended, and from the decisions of which there is no appeal.

The wicked come up from their graves animated and actuated by the same selfish, sinful thoughts and motives which dominated their lives when they died. They are just as determined to accomplish their ends now as they were then. As they are raised from the dead, the city of God appears. This is mentioned in Zechariah 14. A mighty plain will, by the power of God, be prepared in the very place where the Son of God shed his blood for guilty man. Here the New Jerusalem will descend. Christ came at the beginning of the thousand years to gather his saints and to take them to mansions on high; but now the Lord our God shall come, and all the saints with him. Zech. 14:5.

The same facts are shown in Revelation 20 and 21. In verse 9 we have "the camp of the saints" and "the beloved city" referred to as showing the place where the wicked nations of earth will be gathered. In order not to break the connection, no mention is made in Revelation 20 of the descent of the city; that subject is reserved for the next chapter, in which is given a description of the New Jerusalem and its descent from heaven.

God's Spirit being withdrawn from the earth as a reprover of men—restrainer of sin, the wicked fall again an easy prey to the prince of evil:—

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Rev. 20 : 7, 8.

How long this period of deceiving the nations, marshaling and training their armies, and gathering

them to Jerusalem over the plague-desolated and earthquake-broken world to fight against God, may be, we know not. But it will necessarily take some time. The wicked are still mortal and selfish. The first will necessitate more or less time, and the second would delay union. But the master mind among them—he who once was Lucifer—reduces to something like order the vast host under the mightiest generals that earth has known, and prepares to attack the city of God. This object and its result are shown in the next verse:—

“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and *devoured* them.”

Actuated by the same selfishness that first inspired Satan, urged on by his mighty power and consummate artifices, they attempt, with rebellious hearts, to storm the city. But all the combined powers of the universe are naught against Him, or the city of the jasper wall. The fire of God *devours* the wicked. They are “burned up” “root [Satan] and branch [the wicked].” Malachi 4. Then will be fulfilled the words of the prophet regarding the New Jerusalem:—

“Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me; whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.” “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.” Isa. 54: 15, 17.

The tenth verse of Revelation 20 presents the fate of Satan. He is cast into the lake of fire “where are also the beast and the false prophet.” Revised Version. Just as the presence of Christ at the beginning of the

thousand years caused the consumption of the wicked, so at the close of the thousand years God's presence and the fire which falls from heaven converts the earth into one vast liquid lake of fire, in which the wicked will be overwhelmed, and into which Satan, the prince of the power of the air, who has heretofore had the privilege of navigating aerial regions, will be cast to be burned with them. It is thus that Peter speaks of this lake of fire:—

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be destroyed.” 2 Peter 3 : 10.

This fire will be universal; that is, it will include the whole earth. It will not occur at the beginning of the millennium, or all animal life would be extinct. The unjust will be destroyed at that time, but the fowls of the air will survive, to feast upon the flesh of the men slain in the battle of Armageddon. But at the close of the thousand years, the elements of the earth will be melted by the fierce heat, and the whole will form one vast lake of fire. This great burning comes *in* the day of the Lord, but *after* the thousand years. “In the which,” that is, in the day of the Lord, says Peter, quoted above. Then will be fulfilled such expressions as (Zeph. 1:2, 3):—

“I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling-blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord.”

The glory and power of the presence of God as he passes sentence upon the wicked just previous to their destruction, is thus presented:—

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” Rev. 20: 11.

The wicked then see what they have lost. They see, in transfigured glory and immortality, those whom they had in the day of probation scoffed at, ridiculed, persecuted. Those who crucified Christ now see the Man of Calvary in his glory. Satan and all others are revealed in their iniquity and moral deformity as recipients of God’s wrath, while to the righteous are fulfilled the promises of God. In the twelfth verse John is carried back to the thousand years when the wicked dead were judged from the records. It was the investigative judgment of the ungodly. Verse 13 relates to the executive judgment of the unrighteous; and in its execution, the wicked are cast in the lake of fire, to be utterly burned up. This is the second death. The first death was *in* sin; the second death is *for* sin unrepented of and cherished. Eze. 18: 26. A part of the work of Christ is here completed, for Satan is destroyed forever. Christ died “that through death he might destroy him who had power over death, that is, the devil.” Heb. 2: 14. To the same great enemy, the Lord, through the prophet, says: “I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee; thou shalt be a terror [literally, a worn-out or wasted thing—Young], and never shalt thou be any more.” Eze. 28: 18, 19. Here the subject brings

us, with sin and Satan swept from the face of the earth, the earth itself burning under its purifying fires, and the saints safe from harm in the city of God.

CONCLUSION.

The following facts concerning the day of the Lord have thus far been proved:—

1. That it is the great day of God's wrath upon this earth; that in it there will be no mercy for sinful man; that, instead of affording hope for the sinner, it affords no hope whatever.

2. That the day of the Lord will begin with the close of probation, a short time before the coming of Christ. The decree of Heaven which marks its beginning is: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22: 11, 12.

3. A warning message will precede this fearful period, entreating men to flee from the wrath to come, and find refuge in the truth of God.

4. The seven last plagues begin with the day of the Lord, in fact, the wrath of God is manifested through them. The period during which these plagues will be poured out will be about one year.

5. At the close of the pouring out of the plagues, the Lord appears in the clouds of heaven, the righteous dead are raised immortal, the righteous living changed, and all are taken to heaven, to the New Jerusalem. The wicked are destroyed in the great battle, by the plagues, and by the brightness of Christ's coming.

6. This leaves the earth desolate of all human life. The righteous are in the courts on high, engaged in judgment work, the wicked are dead, and each class remains in its respective place and condition during the thousand years. During this time birds and beasts multiply, and furnish food for the wicked when they are raised at the end of the thousand years. Satan, confined to this earth, muses over the ruin he has wrought. This is the boasted millennium of the earth in the light of Bible facts.

7. At the end of the thousand years, the wicked are raised, Satan is loosed, the city of God descends from heaven with the saints, the wicked are deceived by Satan, and surround and lay siege to the New Jerusalem. Here they receive their sentence, and fire from God out of heaven devours them. The streams of the earth become pitch, and the dust brimstone; the fire ignites the combustibles of earth, and, with the internal fires, converts the earth into one vast sea of fire, into which the wicked will be cast. Here they are destroyed, brought to ashes, utterly burned with fire.

The foregoing, which, to our mind, have been conclusively proved by plain, positive Scripture, show the falsity of the claim that the day of the Lord is just one thousand years long. 2 Peter 3: 8 is supposed by some to teach this idea, but manifestly the text teaches no such thing. It is only a parallel to Ps. 90: 4, and shows God's faithfulness in view of his never-ending existence. It may seem to us that his promise never will be fulfilled, but in God's own time, though one thousand years hence, it will be as surely fulfilled as though that time came to-morrow. All time is naught to Him who is "*from everlasting to everlasting.*" The day of the Lord

begins before the thousand years; it ends after the thousand years, but just how long after we know not.

This fire not only destroys the wicked, but purifies the earth. "The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10. It is God's great crucible, out of which will come only the pure. The works of sinful man, and every sin-polluted thing, will be eternally purged. The alchemy of Eternal Wisdom and Power will transmute the base to the precious, will purge the pollution of sin forever from the earth; for death and the grave will be cast into the lake of fire destroying not only sin, but the consequences of sin.

This lake of fire is God's great test, "*lapis Lydius*," or touchstone, which eternally shows the claims of Satan and his followers to be false. They have claimed inherent immortality. They are put to the test of fire. Is there something in man which survives all ordeals, all destructive agencies? Satan has deceived mankind by his first lie into so believing. "Ye shall be as gods," said he; "Ye shall not surely die." The Christian's claim to life is through Christ and righteousness. It is the only way in which the boon of life is offered by the Author of life.

Unnumbered multitudes have believed the adversary; a countless throng have believed God, and have accepted of the gracious offer of righteousness and life through Christ. Here are two classes. The one—the righteous—in the city of God; the other—the wicked—without. The fire of God falls from heaven, met by the smouldering fires from beneath. "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day [of the Lord's wrath] shall

declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and *the fire shall try* every man's work of what sort it is." 1 Cor. 3: 13. The earth is one molten sea; the mightiest work of men and Satan, the highest claims of men and devils, are set against the faith of Christians and the power of God. To this time the words of the prophet refer:—

"Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself. Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble; your breath, as fire, shall devour you. And the people shall be as the burnings of lime; as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." Isa. 33:10-15.

Righteousness is proved to be life. Faith in Christ is vindicated. The wicked and all wicked works perish forever. The city of God, like the ark in the deluge, is borne upon the tempest-tossed, molten sea unharmed. The children of God are safe within. They can dwell amid the age-lasting burnings, they can dwell in the devouring fire. They are no longer human, but divine; no longer natural, but spiritual; no longer mortal, but immortal; for they are like Christ. No elements of destruction can harm them; for they are the partakers of *His* nature under whose control is the boundless universe with all its herculean forces.

Here we close. The purifying fires have accomplished their work. From the furnace test spring the "new

heavens and a new earth," according to God's promise. 2 Peter 3: 13. "Behold," says the Lord through the prophet, "I make all things new." Rev. 21: 5. It comes once more from the hand of God, clad in its Eden beauty. The meek now inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the *abundance* of peace. Ps. 37: 11. Their eternal reign has begun. The kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, *is* given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. Dan. 7: 27. The lowly Man of Nazareth, who had no comeliness pleasing to earth, a "man of sorrows," scourged and crucified by his own nation, is now reigning in his glory. He is the King in his beauty, upon whom the pure in heart can look without a dimming veil between, seeing in him their eternal friend, their gracious Redeemer, the chiefest among the myriads of heaven, and the One altogether lovely. And in his presence, sharing his life and glory, the righteous will reign throughout the eternal ages which measure the life of God.

Would we have a part there? Then we must seek God *now*. He wants us to come. "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die." The Creator of the universe invites you. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." All things holy, and good, and enduring say, Come. The city of God invites us; the earth, when "there shall be no more curse," unites in the call. Through Christ, all is yours. The day of wrath draweth on apace. Come now. "BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME; BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION."