

THE EARTH SAW AND TREMBLED.

"His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled." "Beware lest you should reject him who now speaks; for if those did not escape who rejected him who admonished them on earth [Moses-- [Heb. 10:28](#)], much less shall we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth [[Exod. 19:16-18](#)]; but now it has been announced, saying, 'Yet once for all I will shake not only the earth, but the heaven also.' Now this word, 'Yet once for all' denotes the removal of the things shaken, as of things made, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."--[Psa. 97:4](#); [Heb. 12:25-27](#).

THE Psalmist prophetically taking a standpoint of observation future from his day declared, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." As has been shown,* this began to be true in 1878, when our returned Lord Jesus took unto himself his great power. Yet not until 1915, when his kingdom will be fully set up and established in the earth, will his glorious reign be fully manifested and recognized. But that the prophet is referring specially to the present time, since 1878 and down to 1915, is clear from his succeeding statement--"Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies."

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. III., Chap. ix.

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How true it is that the storm clouds are all about this day of his kingly presence! and the darkness of gloom and perplexity and trouble deepens on every side. If we inquire, Why is this day of his presence such a time of trouble and perplexity and distress of nations? the answer is, Because righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne, and he is judging the nations and weighing them in the balance. Judgment is being laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, to the intent that ere long the equitable principles of his government may be established in all the earth. And not only will all unrighteousness be made manifest, but "a fire goeth before him and burneth up his enemies." All the opposers of his righteous course will be the sufferers: they shall be cut off, destroyed, burned up, with the fire of his jealousy.-- [Zeph. 3:8](#).

This work of judgment and consequent time of trouble being a necessary preparation for the glorious reign of righteousness that shall immediately succeed it, and all being wisely directed by the high and holy One who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind, the Prophet bids us discern in it all the abundant cause for rejoicing and gladness. Indeed, there is cause for rejoicing, not only among the saints, but in the whole earth; and it is the privilege of the saints to tell them so if they will hear. But whether they will hear or whether they forbear, let us tell it out, and by and by when the great afflictions of this judgment hour begin to seal its instruction upon the hearts of men, then the blessed testimony will be as healing balm, and they will see that he that smote them in his wrath, and scourged them in his hot displeasure, is also merciful and gracious, and unwilling that they should perish, but anxious rather that they should turn unto him and live.

It is in the midst of the clouds and darkness of this day of trouble incident to the setting up of Messiah's Kingdom, that the statement of the prophet is verified--"His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled." How apt is the figure! Truly like lightning flashes in the midst of the gloom and perplexity of this cloudy day come to men the remarkable glimpses of the great principles of truth and righteousness in

contrast with which the world's present disorder is so manifest. A flash of lightning from the obscured throne discloses here one error and there another and another; and by and by the whole world will be aroused. Already it is largely so, and the whole world trembles for fear, not knowing what the outcome will be.

It is remarkable, too, that the lightning flashes are continually calling attention to the Word of God--to the golden rule, to the equal rights and privileges of human brotherhood, to the faultless character and self-sacrificing disposition of Jesus Christ, to the law of love in contrast with the law of selfishness. It is leading men to reason of righteousness (if not to practice it) and of coming judgments when they hope and believe that in some way present wrongs will be righted. By the sudden and now increasingly frequent flashes of light which issue from the very storm clouds that surround the invisible, spiritual presence of our glorious King, these principles of the Word of God are ever and anon being illuminated and brought to the front for the consideration of all men. They are discussed in the daily press, in our popular periodicals, in labor and trades unions, on the streets, in stores and factories and counting rooms, in the market places, at public gatherings; even the heathen nations are discussing them and contrasting the daily life of professed Christians and Christian nations with the character and teachings of the great founder of Christianity, extolling the latter and ridiculing the former.

Thus his lightnings are enlightening the world, and as a result there is great commotion everywhere manifest: there is dissatisfaction, unrest, and the whole current of popular thought is set in a revolutionary direction. The lightning flashes are revealing the corruption that is in the world, and showing men that they are living far below the dignity of manhood; but how to right things they are not able to see; and the conflicting ideas and voices and theories and threats reveal the facts the prophets foretold--"The nations are angry"; and the whole earth trembles from the din of a wordy conflict which they realize must sooner or later come to blows. "The earth saw, and trembled."

But while the whole earth trembles for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth, what is the attitude and condition of the Lord's consecrated and faithful people? Are they, too, in fear? and when the judgments of the Lord fall heavily upon the wayward and disobedient, so that the whole earth reels to and fro and staggers like a drunken man ([Isa. 24:20](#)), are they in dismay and distress? Ah, no; for it is written--"Zion heard and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord;" and [Psalms 91](#) and [46](#) show why they rejoice while others weep. It is because they dwell in the secret place of the Most High (represented by the holy place in the typical tabernacle), and abide under the shadow of the Almighty (as the typical tabernacle was covered by the cloud, which symbolized the Lord's presence and protection). "The secret counsel of the Lord is for them that fear him, and his covenant [is] to make it known to them."--[Psa. 25:14](#).

These dwellers in the secret place of the Most High are therefore provided in these perilous times with a clear knowledge of the divine plan, which enables them to see both the necessity for the present method of divine discipline upon the world and also the peaceable fruits of righteousness which shall result therefrom. In the midst of the storm and battle of this day of the Lord they hear the commanding voice of the Lord of armies, and their hearts rejoice because they have full confidence in his ability to bring order out of all the confusion. They realize that in the judgments of this day it is the Lord that speaketh from [[R1913 : page 7](#)] heaven--from the high place of authority and control; and therefore they rejoice and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness--of his justice, wisdom and love, which insure his doing all things well.

But the Psalmist intimates that while the world at large would be in ignorance of the import of present events, and therefore in fear and dread; and while the saints, with clear knowledge, will be rejoicing because of the Lord's judgments and their foreseen outcome; some, all heedless of both the world's distress and of the voice which speaketh from heaven, will still boast themselves of idols. He says, "Confounded be all they that serve graven images; that boast themselves of idols."--[Psa. 97:7](#).

These words call to mind the warning of the Apostle Paul, above quoted--"See that ye refuse not him that [now] speaketh," etc. The Apostle addresses these words to those who know the Lord's voice and recognize it, warning them against at any time refusing longer to heed it, when it speaks in wrath and judgment. But, alas! there are some who heed not the warning, and who, although they recognize the voice of the Lord, do refuse longer to obey it and be led by it; and they turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, to the idols which their wayward hearts have set up in his stead. These "graven images" are indeed the work of their own hands--they are the human philosophies and science, falsely so called, of this evil day; and those who reject the testimony of him that speaketh from heaven, having once heard it, invariably fall into some one of the many forms of idolatrous worship now so prevalent; or else they drift restlessly from one to another of them.

All such shall surely be confounded; they shall be put to shame and confusion; their idols shall be destroyed; and the wilful sinner, once enlightened and blessed with the hallowed influences of the holy spirit and the truth, and who then turns away from all these, the Apostle declares shall not escape the reward of his deeds. "For," he says, "if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we *turn away from* [after once recognizing] him that speaketh from heaven."

The former reference, as shown by the preceding verses ([Heb. 12:18-21](#)), was to the ceremonies which accompanied the establishment of the law covenant, with Israel, in the hands of Moses, the mediator of that covenant. ([Exod. 19](#).) [**R1914 : page 7**] So solemn and impressive was the occasion that even "Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." First, through Moses, the people entered into a sacred covenant to obey the Lord, saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." And the Lord covenanted with them, saying, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people;...And ye shall be a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation."--[Exod. 19:5-8](#).

Then followed the giving of the law and the accompanying solemnities which established the covenant in the hands of Moses as the divinely appointed mediator--"And the Lord said unto Moses. Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, *that the people may hear when I speak with thee and believe thee forever.*" (**Verse 9.**) Then followed the demonstrations of the divine presence in the cloud-covered mountain, from which proceeded thunders and lightnings and the sound of a trumpet--"And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice....And the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up." (**Verses 18-20.**) And the people were charged not even to touch the mount on penalty of instant death.--**Verses 12,13,21-25.**

These solemn ceremonies prefigured the still more impressive circumstances which accompany the establishment of the "new covenant" in the hands of the mediator greater than Moses--our Lord Jesus Christ. The mountain (kingdom) of the Lord's house is now being established above the tops of all the mountains (kingdoms) of the earth, and exalted above the hills. ([Isa. 2:2](#).) Clouds and darkness (trouble and perplexity and distress of nations) are round about it ([Psa. 97:2](#)); and the thunderings and lightnings are making all the earth to tremble as did Israel at Sinai. And now (since 1878) "God hath set his King upon his holy hill of Zion." ([Psa. 2:6](#).) Wherefore, says the Apostle, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." For if those who refused to obey Moses, and presumptuously disgraced the ceremonies of the occasion at Sinai, met with instant death, how can we escape if we disregard the voice of the Mediator greater than Moses, who now bids all beware of the presumptuous sin of disregarding the remarkable circumstances which now accompany the establishment of the new covenant through Christ, its mediator?

We see the gathering, darkening clouds of trouble; we hear the thunder tones of judgment that "call the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof"-- from the east to the west ([Psa. 50:1](#)); we see the lightning flashes of truth and righteousness, and how the whole earth trembles with fear and for looking after those things that are coming; and the foretold events of this harvest time speak in trumpet tones. How shall

we regard these things? Shall it be with thoughtful and reverent fear, lest, the promise being left us of entering into the rest and glory of his Kingdom, any of us should seem to come short of it ([Heb. 4:1](#)), and with great carefulness to make our calling and election sure? or shall it be with that presumptuous irreverence which disregards all these manifestations of divine power and glory, and, turning away from him that thus speaketh from heaven, sets up some idol of a wayward heart? Let us beware of any condition of heart that would lead to such a course. [**R1914 : page 8**]

As in the type, so here, the establishment of the new covenant is accompanied with the shaking of the earth (society) and the mountains (kingdoms); and not only so, but Paul says the heavens also (the ecclesiastical powers) shall be shaken.

What is the object of all this shaking? It is the removal of the things shaken, and the establishment of a kingdom which cannot be moved. In this eventful period everything that can be shaken will be shaken; for only the unshakable principles of truth and righteousness can endure and be worthy of a place in the Kingdom of God. And every one called to share in that Kingdom must be a lover of and follower after righteousness and truth. All others will be shaken out of the company called to share the honors of the Kingdom. The many snares and delusions of this evil day are accomplishing this very work: they are shaking out all the unstable as well as the false and faithless ones; and in the end only the true will remain.

Seeing then that all these present things shall so shortly be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? "Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace."--[2 Pet. 3:11,14](#).

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