

THE FIRE OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

**"The earth...and the works therein shall be burned up."
– 2 Pet. 3:10.**

IF this text were the only one bearing upon the subject of the fire of this Day of the Lord we would conclude that it should be considered as literal; but it is not the only Scripture. Many other Scriptures which refer to this same fire show clearly that it is a symbolic fire of destruction that is coming. We can see that fire is very properly a symbol of destruction and is so used throughout the Scriptures – the lake of fire, for instance, "which is the Second Death." (Rev. 20:14.) We find that many Scriptures refer to the coming time of trouble. Some refer to it as a whirlwind of trouble; others as a tempest and flood – a flood shall sweep away the hiding places; mountains shall be removed and carried into the midst of the sea, etc. – as though there would be great earthquakes and sinking of the earth and flooding of the whole world. Yet other Scriptures speak of it as a burning fire. Manifestly it cannot be all three of these in a literal sense. Then there are other Scriptures which show that these expressions are used in a symbolic sense; for instance (Zephaniah 3:8,9), "Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." This seems to be a literal pouring out of something and a consuming of the earth with literal fire. But that it is not literal fire is proven by the very next sentence, which declares, "Then will I turn unto the people a pure language (message) that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." Evidently the people would not remain if the earth is to be consumed with literal fire. But if, as the Scriptures show, the fire be symbolic, it is plain that people will

still be here after the trouble. Then the Lord will, according to his promise, turn to them the pure message.

THE BABEL OF VOICES IN CHRISTENDOM

At the present time the message that the people receive is represented in many creeds, probably hundreds in all; hence the message is a very indistinct one and the Scriptures represent it as "Babel," or confusion. One tongue or voice cries that the message of the Lord is Free Grace; another tongue or voice says it is Election; a third says that only a few will get salvation; while another declares salvation will be universal; a fifth informs us that election is with water, and that without the water no one will be saved. So a variety of voices is heard, and the poor world is not able to determine which is the Truth. As a matter of fact they all have so much error that they condemn themselves in the minds of all reasonable people who have not been born in prejudice and steeped in error. When the Lord will turn this pure message to the people, Babylon will no longer be. She will have come to her end. The voice of the Lord will be known through the glorified Church, "And the Spirit and the Bride shall say, 'Come!' And whosoever will may come and drink of the water of life freely!" (Rev. 22:17.) The Bride class are now on probation that it may be determined which will eventually be of that class. When the marriage of the Lamb shall have taken place, it will be the work of the "Spirit and the Bride to say 'Come'...and whosoever will may take of the water of life freely." This will be after the **[R4628 : page 188]** "burning" time is over; hence it proves that the fire refers to a time of trouble – a time of destruction against iniquity. The Lord's anger will burn against all kinds of injustice and inequity. Wrong doing, and wrong-doers will then be punished.

The Apostle's statement respecting the Church implies that this judgment, or testing, or fiery trial will begin with the Church and extend to the world. If it "begin first with us" what will the end

be to those who make no pretense of following the Gospel message? The Apostle again states that the "fire of that day shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (I Cor. 3:13.) This we understand to refer especially to the Church. Every one in the Church is to be tried; his work is to be tried. However, in great measure it will be a trying time for all the world as well; all inequity and injustice will be exposed, reprobated and destroyed. We see increasing instances of this of late – in the number of fire insurance presidents, for instance, who have been exposed. Fiery trials came upon them as the result of exposures, **[R4628 : page 189]** etc. Some of these men were undoubtedly hastened to the tomb, "burned" to death, we might say, by fiery trials. And a great deal of burning, heart-burning, and headaches and prostration are caused today by various exposures of one kind or another as the time advances. No doubt that Day will bring forth further developments and trouble until the prophecies respecting it shall have been completely fulfilled – until the picture of utter destruction of everything evil, both root and branch, is carried out. – Mal. 4:1.

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