

grace for the poet says of the people of God:

"Even down to old age, all my people prove;
My sovereign eternal unchangeable love:
And when hoary hairs shall their temples
adorn,
Like lambs, they shall still on my bosom be
borne."

Do we repose on Jesus which no one does nor which any one will do, except he is born of God? Or, do we repose on some man-invented society for heaven or temporal salvation? Do we sin that grace may abound? God forbid! Has the parched ground become a pool?—if we are on this highway it has. Is the thirsty land become streams of water? Do we water the withered plants, the poor and needy?

This was a pleasing prophecy to captive Israelites even in a temporal point, but what to the distressed soul, wonderfully sublime!

How is it with us, who live in the time referred to by this prophecy?

There is not an unregenerate man in this highway—"No lion shall be there?" The fool, without common worldly knowledge, shall not err therein. No falling from grace, no drunkenness and other bad practices there. But the glory of Lebanon shall be given to it.

With these reflections I will close, hoping if there is anything herein expressed, not according to scripture, it will be pointed out by some brother or sister. The style of scripture, in many places, is no more peculiar than this. I think there is but one high-way emphasized by the phrase, *and a way.*

S. M. CHARLES.

Zion's Landmarks.

P. D. GOLD, — — — EDITOR.

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P. D. Gold, Wilson, N. C.

Editorial.

MALACHI 4: 1.

"For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leaveth them neither root nor branch."

Brother A. P. Cowart of Georgia,

desires my view of this scripture.

The day alluded to here is the great and terrible day of the Lord. The last verse of the book of Mal. refer to this, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Elijah is John the Baptist). "And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," &c., "John's preaching was to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. He preached that which fulfilled the law and the prophets, preaching that which the fathers foresaw and longed to see, and which their children needed, and hence it united them in the new covenant of redemption, and saved the earth from a curse (both the literal earth and the earthly bodies of these souls.)

But it was a dreadful day and who should abide the coming of the Messiah? "But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth, for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. And he shall set as a refiner and purifier of silver," &c. Mal. 3: 2, 3. Jesus, the great refiner, shall purge the chosen people as silver is purged, for he does not purge dross or chaff but it is the precious which he purges, separating it from the vile. None but the precious metal in this great house can endure this fiery purging, or endure this dreadful day of the Lord; yet to these it will be a glorious day, for their offerings shall be pleasant and their service goodly. The worship of the Lord shall then be glorious and the fruit good.

Christ did come nigh unto the people to judgment and was a swift witness against sorcerers, adulterers, false swearers, &c. Then it was that the axe was laid at the root of the tree, and every tree that brought not forth good fruit was hewn down and cast into the fire, and all trees thus cast in the fire are burnt. Then the chaff began to be burnt. Then the day began to burn as an oven and the wicked were the stubble that were burned up forever. The day was hot as an oven. How searching was the teaching of Christ fully exposing the corruptions of the wicked, and freely justifying the poor penitent soul! How effectually did the teaching of Christ uproot and expose wickedness! Judgment was brought to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and hence the day was as an oven. The dross was burned off from the righteous and the wicked were burned up root and branch. Then wickedness was condemned and in many instances the wicked punished, even the Jewish nation was forever taken away, and the final sentence of everlasting destruction of the ungodly from the presence of the Lord was clearly foretold. A perpetual end is come to the wicked Jewish nation. No more shall they re-establish themselves as once that wicked people did, and yet the Jews still exist.

This is the beginning of the gospel

day, its end is not yet. In the end of the world, at the great day of judgment, when this same Jesus shall come the second time without sin unto salvation to take his jewels to himself, in that more glorious and triumphant manner, when the whole harvest shall be gathered in, then shall be the great day of decision or of the manifestation of God's righteous judgments. "Then shall ye return and descend between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth not. Mal. 3: 18. All shall return from their graves and it shall then be seen who serves God and who does not serve him, both in the glorious likeness of the righteous to Jesus who is in the brightness of God's glory, and in the shame and everlasting contempt of the wicked, as well as in the great fact that the righteous shall enter into the joy of their Lord to be ever with the Lord, while the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

But if this great day, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat and the world be destroyed by fire, shall be as an oven and the wicked shall be stubble, and shall be burned up that it shall leave them neither root nor branch, does it not teach the annihilation of the wicked? Does it not teach their utter and entire extermination, so that they shall altogether cease to be?

Two reasons forbid this construction. One is the reading of this passage, the other is the general reading of the Bible or the analogy of faith. If the fuel of a fire is consumed can the fire continue? Will not the fire itself die when that which feeds it perishes? The wicked are the stubble, and if the fire can annihilate them then the fire will die, but as long as they endure the fire still burns. It shall leave them neither root nor branch in the sense that all of the wicked, root, top, body, soul and all the man and his deeds, shall burn up together, no part shall be left out, hence neither root nor branch shall be left to him or total destruction of the wicked in the sense that eternal punishment is inflicted. It shall continue forever in the sense that the wicked shall never escape therefrom and sprout out or grow again. It shall be an effectual judgment and all of the works of the wicked shall be brought into judgment so effectually that neither root nor branch shall ever flourish again. On earth, if the wicked are punished, where the rod is taken off he will return to his old ways, but there he shall never flourish again, but the heated oven of the Lord's righteous wrath shall enclose him forever, and there shall be no respite of the punishment due to sin, hence it shall be burnt up root and branch.

But will not the wicked be consumed or annihilated? Do the other scriptures teach annihilation? The general teaching of scriptures seems

to forbid this view. For the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked seem to have the same duration. The words and terms used to express the length of the joys of the righteous are also used to express the duration of the punishment of the wicked; so that if the punishment of the wicked is not eternal neither are the joys of the righteous eternal, for one is set over against the other. For instance; "And many of them that sleep in the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and contempt."—Dan. 12: 2. Here is an evident reference to the resurrection of the bodies of men, and the life of the one is no longer than the shame of the other class. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25: 46, and elsewhere eternal life is called everlasting life. A life that is everlasting or eternal has no end, unless it is compared with another object which will end and to which it is limited, that is, must endure as long as that which it is compared in that sense it might be said to be everlasting. For instance the hills and mountains might be said to be everlasting when it is evident that it is meant that they shall last as long as the world stands. But here are terms used to denote existence or duration not through or in time at all, but in eternity which hath no end, and hence these terms, everlasting life and eternal life, are here unlimited.

What is meant is that it shall be an everlasting punishment and destruction. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. 1: 9. There is to be no more end of the punishment. It is everlasting punishment, but if the wicked are annihilated or altogether cease to be, how could their punishment be everlasting? When a man suffers on earth until he dies we do not say that his sufferings were eternal. If the punishment of the wicked ends, either speedily or after a long period why should the Savior say, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Man in nature has not immortality in the sense of having eternal life, still he is immortal in the sense that he shall always exist in some form, even if in forever dying or in death. If his destruction is an everlasting destruction, or his perishing an everlasting perishing, or his punishment an everlasting one, it means that it is everlasting or unending.

Whatever its character may be I know not, but recognize the solemn truth that it must be equivalent to the descriptions of it. But it would not be so dreadful if it blotted out or annihilated life putting one beyond all consciousness of punishment. This is what the wicked desire. This is what many convicted souls desire, but let not the wicked flatter themselves with the delusion nor with that of the univer-