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THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE.

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THE Lord Jesus Christ, in describing the signs which would precede His return to this world, points out one of a remarkable character, because it is not any thing addressed to men's senses, but that which arises in their own hearts :—"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke xxi. 26). Even at this present time there is a very prevailing feeling in the minds of many, scarcely indeed conscious whence it arises, that we are on the eve of something portentous : men see the foundations of many things to be out of course—there are wars and rumours of wars—there is disquiet and uneasiness all around ; whether it be in matters of religion or of worldly policy, things are clearly undergoing a vast change ; and there are evidently principles and powers at work which man with all his wisdom cannot control or stay, and which even terrify those who may have apparently been the first to set them going. Some crisis, of good or of evil, most men acknowledge is near at hand ; and this being the secret feeling upon many minds, even where it is not openly owned, any tale or prediction of danger or terror fastens upon men thus ready for and expecting something, they know not what, and gains a surprising power over them which no reason or argument can meet.

Thus, lately there was a deep impression upon the minds of many that an Earthquake would swallow up the Metropolis of this kingdom. Hundreds acted on this impression, and left London and fled to a distance

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from it; and many, who openly derided this fear, secretly felt a quailing in their own hearts about it, and many a ribaldrous jest or boast was uttered only to cover the inward terror of an uneasy conscience. And shall we smile at the credulity of these persons? Shall we say they are either ignorant or superstitious? Shall we boast of our sea-girt Island, because it never has yet suffered under such a calamity, and therefore conclude that it never will? Would it not be better to pause, and enquire whether there might not be some foundation of truth upon which the late false prediction was grounded? And whether, though as yet all that vast Metropolis stands unshaken, the day may not be near when not one stone shall be left upon another, and when not only that city but all the cities of the world shall totter and fall, and the earth itself shall reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man?

Now the word of God most distinctly announces an impending universal catastrophe, soon to come to pass on this earth; a destruction as sudden and as universal as the deluge, or the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah—one in which neither age nor sex will be spared, in which the mighty man and the mean man, the bondman and the freeman, the slave and his master, will alike irrecoverably perish. A destruction so sudden and so instantaneous, that it will be like the flash of lightning shining in a moment from one end of the heaven to the other—a destruction so unexpected and unlooked for, that men shall just before say “Peace and safety,” but then sudden destruction shall come upon them, and they shall not escape. A destruction accompanied with fearful and terrific signs in heaven and on earth: the sea and the waves roaring, distress of nations, and perplexity! the sun black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon become like



blood, the stars falling from heaven, the heavens themselves passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat.

Many were alarmed at this rumour of an Earthquake visiting London. The expected day passes over without any such calamity, and the alarm ceases, and men are ashamed and begin to ridicule one another for their fears. But there is indeed a great, a terrible Earthquake coming—"a great Earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an Earthquake and so great" (Rev. xvi. 18). This Earthquake is largely spoken of by God:

There have been many partial Earthquakes already, which have affected different places; that at Lisbon, in the year 1755, which was felt in many parts of this land, and that in the West Indies lately, in which, it is said, upwards of 70,000 persons lost their lives. These and like partial Earthquakes the Lord Jesus foretold were to be expected, as He said, There should be wars, famines, and pestilence, and Earthquakes in divers places. But the Great Earthquake will not be confined to one or two places, but will shake every thing in the world, so that "every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places" (Rev. vi. 14). You would think it the height of madness *now* to rush under the falling rocks and seek to be crushed under their ruin, but in that day there will be something even more terrible than the very Earthquake itself, so that men shall even call on the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; men will seek death, but will not be able to find it. I will quote some further passages which relate to it:—"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a GREAT EARTHQUAKE; and the

sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us 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. vi. 12—17). "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols

of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. ii. 10—22). It is the day of the Lord —the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He Himself shall be personally revealed from heaven. The day when every knee will be made to bow to Him in heaven and in earth—when He alone shall be exalted. Every thing of man will be brought low—all his wisdom, his power, his goodness, all his massive works of art, all his vast commercial enterprise, all his wealth and luxury, all his gigantic strides of knowledge and invention smashed, and himself once boastful of his prowess, and of the might of his intellect, shall crawl like the worms of the dust, and seek to hide himself even under the falling ruins of his own greatness. The Lord Jesus alone shall be exalted in that day.

Now mark how utterly unavailing every human resource will prove in that day. Men have trusted to their own righteousness, to their own wisdom, to the stability of their civil or religious institutions; but all are to be shaken in that day, when **THE LORD ARISETH TO SHAKE TERRIBLY THE EARTH.** This is the **GREAT EARTHQUAKE.** If you have not one to hold you up in that day you are lost—lost for ever. Yea—if you have not *now*, at this present moment, such an upholder, the wrath of God abideth on you. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself: but the simple pass on and are punished" (Pro. xxii. 3). The alone refuge in the day of the true Earthquake is the alone refuge now. But where is that refuge—where is the hiding place of safety now? It is

in Jesus. It is in the Lord who alone is exalted in that day. It is in that very Lord who is about to arise—to shake terribly the earth. What will be proved then, is as true now—the utter impotence of man. “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?” It is by exalting the Lord Jesus in this day, that we can alone be unshaken in that day. It is now the day when man is exalting himself. Look at him, how lofty he is in his own esteem and that of his fellows too; either for his moral worth, his military prowess, his political sagacity, or his profound science:—but “the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and he shall be brought low.” How then shall any one exalt the Lord now? By taking the place of a ruined sinner before God—the place of truth—the only place in which He sees man. By renouncing the goodness, the power, and the wisdom of man as utterly unavailing in commending us to God, or as having any efficacy in procuring the pardon of a single sin—by allowing that there is no goodness, no power, no wisdom which can avail for man as a sinner, but that which is in Christ Jesus. This is to exalt Him—by coming to God in His name, and not in our own; making mention of His righteousness, and not our own; owning that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. In His name there is remission of sins, and nowhere else. This is to exalt the Lord now. No one exalts Him but that sinner who by God’s own teaching is led utterly to renounce himself, and to own Jesus as every thing for him. So that by the Spirit he is taught to confess, “In

the Lord have I righteousness—in the Lord have I strength.” If any be in the Lord, and have the Lord for every thing—they can stand the Earthquake, for they are in Him who arises to shake terribly the earth. Of such it is written, “*Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*” (1 Cor. i. 30, 31). He who now knows that he is only a sinner before God, an object simply of his mercy and grace, and who believes that Jesus is the Lord, and that in Him is all that a sinner needeth—he that thus humbleth himself now, shall in that day be exalted, when all man’s glory is laid low. For then, even when by grace he is brought to glory, he will have to own the truth of God’s word:—“Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.” The glory of the whole redeemed Church will be then only the glory of the Lord. They will then say, “Thou art worthy”—thou alone; and those who exalt Him can say that now. In Jesus, then, is the alone refuge from the Great Earthquake.

During the late terror in the Metropolis, many fled, thereby hoping to escape the danger, and fled *in time*, so that if the Earthquake had come, they would have congratulated themselves at being safe out of the reach of the danger—I now speak to you of “*Wrath to come*,” and counsel you to flee from it—now while there is time—now that it is the day of salvation. I can see from God’s word the gathering wrath almost ready to burst upon this condemned world. I can see that “yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” The iniquity of the world will soon be full—the long-suffering of God soon be over; and when once the

Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door, in vain then will be any plea even for mercy—in vain then any knocking to enter. Now the way of safety is open wide for the poor ruined sinner. Now life, eternal life, freedom from all judgment, and from the hour of trial that shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth—is freely and fully proclaimed to all the ruined and the lost. “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” If you have terror upon your soul, if you have guilt upon your conscience, if you dread death, if you fear judgment, if your sins are many, if your righteousness none—there is Jesus; there is the blood of Jesus; there is salvation present and everlasting for such. But I counsel you let it be *now* that you escape for your life—that you flee to Jesus. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.”

And what induced the many to flee from London from this supposed danger? A guilty conscience—“The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth.” They knew they were unfit to meet death—they were afraid also to meet God. Had they trusted in Christ, there would have been no need of fleeing on account of an idle rumour. And can you now say, You fear not death—you fear not judgment—you dread not the presence of the Holy God? Can you say, God is your refuge and strength; therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, 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? This is the confident and happy language of one who trusts in Jesus—may it be your true and eternal portion.

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