

all holy conversation and godliness? Looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

It would require too much time, and, moreover, is not necessary to the object I have in view, to enter into minute verbal criticism upon this passage. I will only remark that the phrase translated *the earth and the works that are therein*, might with equal propriety be rendered "the earth and the works that are *thereon*;" and yet the difference of meaning between the two modes of expression is of no great importance. Again, by the term *heavens*, in this passage, we are evidently to understand the atmosphere, or region immediately surrounding the earth; as in the first chapter of Genesis, where it is said that *God called the firmament heavens*; the plural form being used in the Hebrew, though not in the English translation.

What, now, by a fair exegesis, is taught in this passage concerning the destruction and renovation of the world? The following train of remark may conduct us to the true answer to this inquiry:

In the first place, this passage is to be understood literally. It would seem as if it could hardly be necessary to present any formal proof of this position to any person of common sense, who had read the passage. But the fact is, that men of no mean reputation as commentators have maintained that the whole of it is only a vivid figurative prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. Others suppose the new heavens and new earth here described to exist before the conflagration of the world. But these new heavens and new earth are represented as the residence of the righteous, after the burning and melting of the earth, which according to other parts of Scripture is to take place at the end of the world, or at the general judgment. How strange that, in order to sustain a favourite theory, able men should thus invert the obvious order of these great events, so clearly described in the Bible! Still more absurd is it to attempt to fasten a figurative character upon this most simple statement of inspiration. It is, indeed, true that the prophets have sometimes set forth great