

so many immense and glorious bodies, organized with inimitable skill, and declarative of infinite wisdom, is gloomy and forbidding. Indeed, it is scarcely credible that God should annihilate any of his works, much less so many and so glorious works. It ought not to be believed without the most decisive proof. On the other hand, it is a most animating thought that this visible creation, which sin has marred, which the polluted breath of men and devils has defiled, and which by sin will be reduced to utter ruin, will be restored by our Jesus, will arise from its ruins in tenfold splendour, and shine with more illustrious glory than before it was defaced by sin.

“After a laborious and anxious search on this interesting subject, I must pronounce the latter to be my decided opinion. And the same, I find, has been the more common opinion of the Christian fathers, of the divines of the Reformation, and of the critics and anontators who have since flourished. I could produce on this side a catalogue of names which would convince you that this has certainly been the common opinion of the Christian church in every age, as it was also of the Jewish.

“The words which are employed to express the destruction of the world do not necessarily imply annihilation. Is it said that the world shall perish? The same word is used to express the ancient destruction of the world by the flood, when certainly it was not annihilated. Is it said that the world shall have an end, and be no more? This may be understood only of the present form and organization of the visible system. Is it said that the heavens and the earth shall be dissolved by fire? But the natural power of fire is not to annihilate, but only to dissolve the composition and change the form of substances.”—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 450.

We have now examined the most important testimony respecting the future destruction and renovation of the earth; for inspiration only can certainly determine its future condition. But science may throw some light upon the changes through which it is to pass. And I now proceed to inquire whether geology affords us any glimpses of its future condition.

In the first place, geology shows us that the earth contains within itself all the agencies necessary for its future destruction in the manner pointed out in the Bible.