PREFACE.

THE publishers send out this work from a conviction that it throws light upon a subject of paramount importance and universal interest, and one on which light is to be greatly desired; that it presents truths too little known, or too widely ignored. The great controversy between truth and error, between light and darkness, between the power of God and the attempted usurpations of the enemy of all righteousness, is the one great spectacle which it is reasonable to suppose must engage the attention of all worlds. That such a controversy exists as the result of sin, that it is to pass through various stages of progress, and end at last in a manner to redound to the glory of God, and the higher exaltation of his loyal servants, is as certain as that the Bible is a revelation from God to men. That word reveals the great features of this controversy, a conflict which embraces the redemption of a world; and there are special epochs when these questions assume unwonted interest, and it becomes a matter of the first importance to understand our relation thereto.

Such a time is the present; for all things indicate that we may now confidently cherish the hope that this long controversy is drawing near its close. Yet many now seem disposed to relegate to the realm of fable that portion of the record opening to our view the steps by which our world became involved in this great issue; and others, though avoiding this extreme view, seem nevertheless inclined to regard it as obsolete and unimportant, and are thus led to treat it with neglect.

But who would not wish to look into the secret causes of so strange a defection; to discern its spirit, to mark its consequences, and to learn how to avoid its results? With such themes this volume deals. It tends to foster a living interest in those portions of God's word most often neglected. It clothes with new meaning the promises and prophecies of the sacred record, vindicates the ways of God in dealing with rebellion, and shows forth the wonderful grace of God in devising a way