

sought the eminences around them, till all through the valleys nothing but little black islands of human beings were to be seen on the surface. Oh, what fierce struggles there were for life among them! . . . No one yet dreamed of the high grounds being covered, least of all the mountains. At length a sound was heard that sent paleness to every cheek, and chained every tongue in mute terror. It was a far-distant roar, faint but fearful, yet sounding more distinct and ominous every moment till it filled all the air. The earth trembled and groaned under it, as if an earthquake was on its march, and ever and anon came a crash, as if the ribs of nature were breaking. Nearer and nearer and more terrible it grew, till men, forgetting alike their pleasure and their anger, rushed out in the storm, whispering, 'The flood! The flood!' And lo! a new sea, the like of which no man had ever seen before, came rolling over the crouching earth, stretching from horizon to horizon as far as the eye could reach, losing itself like a limitless wall in the clouds above; it came pouring its terrible and massive waters onward; while the continual and rapid crash of falling forests and crushed cities and upturned mountains, that fell one after another under its awful footsteps, and the successive shrieks that pierced the heavens, rising even above the deafening roar of the on-rushing ocean, as city after city and kingdom after kingdom disappeared, made a scene of terror and horror inconceivable, undescrivable. The fountains of the great deep were broken up. But the last cry of human agony was at length stopped, ocean met ocean in its flow, and the waves swept on without a shore. Oh, what a wreck was there!—the wreck of 2,000 years, with their cities, cultivated fields, and mighty population! Not shivered masts and broken timbers, the remains of some gallant vessel, were seen on the turbulent surface, but the fragments of a crushed and broken world."

This is an awful picture of the infatuation of the antediluvians; but we may reasonably ask, Are mankind, as a rule, any different in this respect now to what they were before the flood? We can unhesitatingly answer No! for we have the authority of Scripture for averring most emphatically, They are not. Men have refused to listen to the voice of God in all ages, and assuredly will do so until the second advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and it is Himself, of whom it is written, "Never man spake like this Man," who is my authority for this statement. You cannot charge me with illiberality for reiterating the words of the Messiah. You cannot even call it a mere assertion without dishonouring Christ. I need no higher authority than His, and He solemnly tells us, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. xxiv. 37—39).

God never sends His judgments upon mankind without sufficient warning. We have the warning now. May the Lord increase our faith, and give us wise and understanding hearts. We shall then reap the reward that never fails to rest upon those who put their trust in God. All His believing servants, in all ages, have been thus rewarded, and so it was in the case of Noah. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house: by which he condemned the world and became heir to the righteousness which is by faith."

We, too, shall reap the reward, and "condemn the world," if we will diligently read God's Holy Word, and believe its teachings. Let us search, then, as for hid treasure, and, having found the truth, let us,