

## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

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WHEN the leader of those "angels which kept not their first estate" (Jude 6) fell from his holy and exalted place in Heaven, he precipitated upon the universe of God an awful controversy.

From the very nature of the case, there must be eternal antagonism between righteousness and sin. Between purity and pollution there can be no coalition; nor could the supreme Author of all things, the God in whom inheres every perfection, maintain any other than an attitude of uncompromising hostility to sin and all its fruits, to the author of rebellion and all his followers.

Another conclusion is apparent: God, as the foe of all evil, and at the same time omnipotent, could not, consistently with his own nature, suffer rebellion to enter within his realms, and abide forever. The intruder must be cast out; the disturber of the peace must be destroyed. There can be no question as to the issue of this controversy between a holy Creator and the rebellious creature.

That sin might make a full revelation of its nature and results to the intelligences of all worlds, this controversy was not arrested in its inception. When sin is finally destroyed, it will have given sufficient evidence to satisfy every mind that it deserves the infliction; and all will joyfully acquiesce in its merited doom.

Happily we have no evidence that, outside the apostate angels, any other world than our own has fallen under the influence of this sinful revolt. But this is enough to make it a matter of absorbing interest to us; for Satan and his angels being cast out of Heaven, this world has become the sole theater of the struggle between right and wrong. All men have become involved therein. Between them and salvation there lies the problem of recovery from sin, the attainment to a condition of reconciliation and acceptance with God.

What theme is therefore entitled to be regarded with more absorbing interest than this great controversy—the stages through which it has passed, its present development, and the outlook for the future. How and under what circumstances will the controversy end? and have we any evidence that the long-wished-for termination is drawing near?

To the consideration of these great themes the following pages are