

THE EARTH—ITS FALL, REDEMPTION, AND FINAL DESTINY—THE ETERNAL ABODE OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

DISCOURSE BY PROFESSOR ORSON PRATT.

REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.

The earth was formed to be inhabited—it was designed to be the abode of animated existence—the dwelling place of beings capable of enjoying life and happiness.

At the time of its creation, it was pronounced by its Author to be "*very good*." The term "very good" could have no meaning, unless spoken with reference to beings who should be capable of experiencing some benefit from its construction. However beautifully formed—however grand and magnificent its motions—however skillfully its elements are combined, or its parts proportioned to each other, yet, if not designed to be connected with perceptive beings, the earth could not be pronounced good.

A mass of inanimate elements cannot be organized in any possible form or proportion so as to benefit or injure itself, and therefore cannot be good nor bad with reference to itself. Goodness and its opposite quality, when applied to unconscious matter, always have reference to conscious beings capable of deriving happiness or misery from these qualities. This was the meaning of the Creator when he ascribed the quality of goodness to the earth; it contained every necessary ingredient to render happiness to the beings who were designed to occupy it.

After having made every necessary preparation, countless species of living, moving beings came from the spirit world to inhabit earthly bodies, and

take up their abode upon this magnificent creation. Among the rest, man—the offspring of deity—left his ancient home—his brother and sister spirits, and came to a world most beautifully adapted to his future wants. Here he entered a tabernacle of flesh and bones, and received dominion and authority over all the lower orders of existence.

Here immortality reigned, and death had no dominion. The elements were so wisely arranged and proportioned, that life was derived from all things ordained for the use of man or beast, fowl or fish. The nourishing element of life was diffused through the earth, the ocean and the air. Life pervaded every vegetable and fruit not forbidden to man. Life reigned triumphantly throughout this vast creation. Death was unknown; it had not been seen, heard of, nor experienced in all the varied ranks of earthly beings.

Here, then, was a creation "very good," inhabited by beings capable of eternal existence, both body and spirit. Here was a creation adapted to the wants of all its inhabitants, calculated to preserve unchanged that immortality with which they were endowed. Here, then, was a creation worth possessing as an eternal abode.

Such was the inheritance given to man, with its vast treasures and sumptuous luxuries—such was the gift of heaven under certain restrictions. These restrictions were not complied with—man fell—a great change came