

CHAPTER IV.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

“Can ye not discern the signs of the times?” Matt. 16 : 3.

These words of the Saviour were at first spoken for the benefit of the Pharisees and Sadducees of his own time when they desired from him a sign from heaven to attest his mission. His answer was a rebuke to them. From the signs in the sky they could tell what kind of weather to expect; but notwithstanding the many things transpiring all around them, they could not discern their meaning. The signs to which Christ called their attention were events long before predicted by the Old Testament prophets as those which would accompany the advent of the Messiah. These writings were the very ones which the Pharisees were supposed to understand.

But because they did not perceive in the signs of their times the fulfillment of prophecy, they were led to reject the truth the Saviour brought for that generation, until they, in turn, were rejected by the Saviour. As we near the time of the second coming of the Saviour, we may look for signs of that event in the fulfillment of predictions which the Bible has given as its precursors. The Lord himself has spoken on this point: “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.” Luke 21 : 25.

We may therefore conclude, as has been expressed by Bishop Burnett in his “Theory of the Earth” that, “When the last great storm is coming, and all the volcanoes of earth are ready to burst, and the frame of the world to be dissolved, there will be previous signs

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in the heavens and on the earth, to introduce this tragical fate. Nature cannot come to that extremity without some symptom of her illness, nor die silently without pangs of complaint.”

SIGNS IN THE SUN.

“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.” Joel 2 : 31.

“A something *strikingly awful* shall forewarn that the world will come to an end, and that the last day is even at the door.”—*Martin Luther*.

The great signs of the near approach of the end of the world were to come “*immediately after the tribulation of those days.*” Matt. 24 : 29. Those days were the 1260 days of the papal persecution. (But the tribulation was shortened for the elect’s sake. The suppression of the order of the Jesuits by the pope of Rome, and the influence of the reformers, together with the edicts of toleration¹ passed by Austria and Spain cut short the tribulation. So the persecution ceased a few years before the “days” ended, which has been shown to be in 1798. Mark says, “*In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened.*” The tribulation ceased shortly after the suppression of the order of the Jesuits in 1773. But the *days* did not end until 1798, twenty-five years later. The sun, therefore, must be darkened in the *first part* of the last twenty-five years of the 1260. Any other darkening will not answer the prophecy.

To find a fulfillment of the prophetic specification concerning the sun, we must not look for it in some natural phenomenon. We must seek for this sign in an

¹ With reference to the edicts of toleration mentioned, the historian says:—
“In Austria, Maria Theresa made very important improvements for the benefit of her wide dominions. In 1776 she abolished the torture in the hereditary states; and from 1774 to 1778 her attention was given to the establishment of a general system of popular education. Various salutary regulations were introduced, touching the temporalities of the clergy; and in Italy the arbitrary power of the Inquisition was circumscribed within narrow limits.”—*White’s History*, p. 458.

“*Edict of Toleration of the Emperor Joseph.*—By this edict he granted to all members of the Protestant and Greek churches, under the denomination of A Catholics, or non-Catholics, the free exercise of their religion. He declared all Christians of every denomination, equally citizens, and capable of holding all charges and offices in every department of state.”—*Cox’s House of Austria*, vol. 3.

event that cannot be accounted for on natural or scientific principles. There is one event, and but one, to which we may turn for such a fulfilment of the words of our Saviour. That is the recorded fact of a supernatural darkening of the sun, which occurred on May 19, 1780. Of this event, the *Boston Gazette*, of May 22, 1780, thus speaks:—

"The printers acknowledge their incapacity of describing the phenomenon which appeared in that town on Friday last. It grew darker and darker until nearly one o'clock, when it became so dark the inhabitants were obliged to quit their business, and they had to dine by the light of the candle. . . . Such a phenomenon was never before seen here by the oldest person living."

"*Dark Day*. The, May 19, 1780, so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day, extending over all New England. In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. . . . The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known."—*Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, in Explanatory and Pronouncing Vocabulary, art. Dark Day.*

"I refer to the dark day of A. D. 1780, May 19. That was a day of supernatural darkness. It was not an eclipse of the sun; for the moon was nearly at the full: it was not owing to a thickness of the atmosphere; for the stars were seen. The darkness began about 9 A. M., and continued through the day. Such was the darkness that work was suspended in the field and shop; beasts and fowls retired to their rest; and the houses were illuminated at dinner time. . . . The sun was supernaturally darkened."—*Josiah Litch, in Prophetic Expositor.*

"The greatest darkness was, at least, equal to what is commonly called candle-lighting in the evening. The appearance was indeed uncommon, and the cause unknown."—*Connecticut Journal of May 25, 1780.*

"But especially I mention that wonderful darkness on the 19th of May inst. [1780]. Then, as in our text, the sun was darkened; such a darkness as probably was never known before since the crucifixion of our Lord. People left their work in the house and in the field. Travelers stopped; schools broke up at eleven o'clock; people lighted candles at noonday; and the fire shone as at night. Some people, I have been told, were in dismay, and thought whether the day of Judgment was not drawing on. A great part of the following night also, was singularly dark. The moon, though in the full, gave no light, as in our text."—*From a manuscript sermon by Rev. Elam Potter, delivered May 28, 1780.*

Milo Bostwick, of Camden, N. J., wrote on this subject, March 3, 1848, as follows:—

"The 19th of May, in the year 1780, I well remember; I was then in my sixteenth year. The morning was clear and pleasant, but somewhere about eight o'clock my father came into the house and said there was an uncommon appearance in the sun. There were not any clouds, but the air was thick, having a smoky appearance, and the sun shone with a pale and yellowish hue, but kept growing darker and darker, until it was hid from sight. At noon we lit a candle, but it did not give light as in the night, and my father could not see to read with two candles."

The American Tract Society bears testimony:—

"In the month of May, 1780, there was a very terrific dark day in New England, when 'all faces seemed to gather blackness,' and the people were filled with fear. There was great distress in the village where Edward Lee lived; 'men's hearts failing them for fear' that the Judgment day was at hand, and the neighbors all flocked around the holy man; for his lamp was trimmed and shining brighter than ever amidst the unnatural darkness. Happy and joyful in God, he pointed them to their only refuge from the wrath to come, and spent the gloomy hours in earnest prayer for the distressed multitude."—*Tract No. 379; Life of Edward Lee.*

"The 19th of May, 1780, was a remarkably dark day. Candles were lighted in many houses. The birds were silent, and disappeared. The fowls retired to roost. It was the general opinion that the day of Judgment was at hand. The Legislature of Connecticut was in session at Hartford, but being unable to transact business, adjourned."—*Timothy Dwight, D. D., in Conn. Historical Collections.*

Dr. Tenney, in 1785, wrote to the Historical Society concerning it. He says:—

"Although the uncommon darkness which attracted the attention of all ranks of people in this part of the country on the 19th of May, 1780, was a phenomenon which several gentlemen of considerable literary abilities have endeavored to solve, yet, I believe, you will agree with me that no satisfactory solution has yet appeared."

"On the 19th of May, 1780, an uncommon darkness took place all over New England, and extended to Canada. It continued about fourteen hours, or from ten o'clock in the morning till midnight. The darkness was so great that people were unable to read common print, or to tell the time of day by their watches, or to dine, or to transact their ordinary business, without the light of candles. They became dull and gloomy, and some were excessively frightened. The fowls went to roost. Objects could not be distinguished but at a very little distance, and everything bore the appearance of gloom and night. Similar days have occasionally been known, though inferior in the degree or extent of their darkness. *The*

causes of these phenomena are *unknown*. They certainly were not the result of eclipses."—*Robert Sears's Guide to Knowledge, ed. 1844.*

"Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind in nature's diversified range of events during the last century, stands the dark day of May 19, 1780, a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England, which brought intense alarm and distress to multitudes of minds, as well as dismay to the brute creation, the fowls fleeing, bewildered, to their roosts, and the birds to their nests, and the cattle returning to their stalls. Indeed, thousands of the good people of that day became fully convinced that the end of all things terrestrial had come; many gave up, for the time, their secular pursuits, and betook themselves to religious devotions."—*Our First Century, p. 88.*

Herschel, the great astronomer, gives the following testimony concerning the unaccountableness, scientifically, of the darkness:—

"The dark day in Northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be read with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain."

The nature of the event was so startling that it was considered worthy of being preserved in verse.

An old lady of Kennebunk Port, Maine, has placed in verse her testimony to the impressions left by the events of that day:—

"Ye sons of men who saw the night
Triumphing at high noon,
On nineteenth day of month of May,
Knew well that dismal gloom.
No orb above in coasts could move,
Thus to eclipse the sun;
We understand it was the hand
Of the eternal One,
Who drew a black and fearful veil,
And interposed the light;
And overhead a curtain spread,
Converting day to night.
If every town was burned down,
And forest in our land,
'T would not create a gloom so great;
'T was God's immediate hand."

Whittier, the celebrated poet, writes:—

"'T was on a May day of the far old year
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell
Over the bloom and sweet life of the spring,
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,
A horror of great darkness, like the night
In day of which the Norland sagas tell—
The twilight of the gods.

"Birds ceased to sing, and all the barn-yard fowls
Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars
Low'd, and looked homeward; bats on leathern wings
Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;
Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew sharp
To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shatter
The black sky."

—*Poem of Abram Davenport.*

THE DARKENING OF THE MOON.

"And the moon became as blood." Rev. 6: 12.

The night following the nineteenth day of May, was as unnaturally dark as the day that preceded it, since, as Dr. Adams informs us, the moon had full'd the day before. It is, too, the most remarkable case of the kind on record since the crucifixion, and must therefore be that to which the prophecy looks. Referring to that time, Milo Bostwick said:—

"My father and mother, who were pious, thought the day of Judgment was near. They sat up that night, during the latter part of which they said the darkness disappeared, and then the sky seemed as usual, but the moon, which was at its full, had the appearance of blood. The alarm that it caused and the frequent talk about it impressed it deeply on my mind."

"The night succeeding that day (May 19, 1780) was of such pitchy darkness that in some instances horses could not be compelled to leave the stable when wanted for service."—*Stone's History of Beverly (Mass.).*

"The darkness of the following evening or night was probably as gross as has ever been observed since the Almighty first gave birth to light. I could not help conceiving at the time that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable darkness, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes was equally invisible with the blackest velvet."—*Mr. Tenney, in Stone's History of Beverly (Mass.), as quoted by Mr. Gage to the Historical Society.*

The following ballad was written shortly after the events it describes, and was published in the *Green Mountain Freeman*, of Montpelier, Vermont:—

“Nineteenth of May, a gloomy day,
When darkness veiled the sky;
The sun's decline may be a sign
Some great event is nigh.

“Let us remark how black and dark
Was the ensuing night;
And for a time the moon declined,
And did not give her light.

“Can mortal man their wonders scan,
Or tell a second cause?
Did not our God then shake his rod
And *alter nature's laws*?”

THE FALLING STARS.

“And the *stars of heaven fell unto the earth*, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” Rev. 6:13.

This was literally fulfilled on the 13th of November, 1833. There have been other displays of shooting stars before and since, but not such as is described in the prophecy.

“The last sign we shall notice is that of ‘falling stars.’ ‘And the stars shall fall from heaven,’ says our Saviour. Matt. 24:29. We are sure, from the nature of the thing, that this cannot be understood either of fixed stars or planets; for if either of these should tumble from the skies and reach the earth, they would break it all in pieces, or swallow it up as the sea does a sinking ship, and would put all the universe into confusion. It is necessary, therefore, by these stars, to understand either fiery meteors falling from the middle region of the air, or blazing comets and stars. No doubt there will be all sorts of fiery meteors at that time; and among others, those that are called *falling stars*.”—*Bishop Burnett's Sacred Theory of the Earth*, p. 486, ed. 1697.

The eloquent and celebrated Frederick Douglass witnessed the scene, and in his book, “My Bondage and Freedom,” thus describes it. He says:—

“I left Baltimore for St. Michaelis in the month of March, 1833. I know the year, because it was the one succeeding the first cholera

in Baltimore, and was the year also of that strange phenomenon when the heavens seemed about to part with its stary train. I witnessed this gorgeous spectacle, and was awestruck. The air seemed filled with bright descending messengers from the sky. It was about day-break when I saw this sublime scene. I was not without the suggestion at that moment, that it might be *the harbinger of the coming of the Son of man*; and in my then state of mind, I was prepared to hail him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that the stars shall fall from heaven, and *they were now falling*. I was suffering much in my mind, . . . and I was beginning to look away to heaven for the rest denied me on earth.”

“But the most sublime phenomenon of shooting stars, of which the world has furnished any record, was witnessed throughout the United States on the morning of the 13th of November, 1833. The entire extent of this astonishing exhibition has not been precisely ascertained; but it covered no inconsiderable portion of the earth's surface. . . . The first appearance was that of fireworks of the most imposing grandeur, covering the entire vault of heaven with myriads of fire-balls, resembling sky-rockets. Their coruscations were bright, gleaming, and incessant, and they fell thick as the flakes in the early snows of December. To the splendors of this celestial exhibition the most brilliant sky-rockets and fire-works of art bear less relation than the twinkling of the most tiny star to the broad glare of the sun. The whole heavens seemed in motion, and suggested to some the awful grandeur of the image employed in the Apocalypse, upon the opening of the sixth seal, when ‘the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.’” — *Burritt's Geography of the Heavens*, p. 163, ed. 1854.

The celebrated astronomer and meteorologist, Prof. Olmsted of Yale College, says:—

“Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting stars on the morning of November 13, 1833, probably saw the greatest display of celestial fire-works that has ever been since the creation of the world, or at least within the annals covered by the pages of history.

“In nearly all places the meteors began to attract notice by their unusual frequency as early as eleven o'clock, and increased in numbers and splendor until about four o'clock, from which time they gradually declined, but were visible until lost in the light of day. The meteors did not fly at random over all parts of the sky, but appeared to emanate from a point in the constellation Leo, near a star called Gamma Leonis, in the bend of the Sickle. . . .

“The extent of the shower of 1833 was such as to cover no inconsiderable part of the earth's surface, from the middle of the Atlantic on the east to the Pacific on the west; and from the northern coast of South America to undefined regions among the British

possessions on the north, the exhibition was visible, and everywhere presented nearly the same appearance. This is no longer to be regarded as a terrestrial, but as a celestial, phenomenon; and shooting stars are now to be no more viewed as casual productions of the upper regions of the atmosphere, but as *visitants from other worlds*, or from the planetary voids."

5 "No philosopher or scholar has told or recorded an event, I suppose, like that of yesterday morning. A prophet 1800 years ago foretold it exactly, if we will be at the trouble of understanding stars falling to mean falling stars; or '*hoi asteres tou ouranou epesan eis teen geen*,' in the only sense in which it is possible to be literally true."—*Henry Dana Ward, in Journal of Commerce, Nov. 14, 1833.*

"It was observed that the lines of all the meteors, if traced back, converged in one quarter of the heavens, which was Gamma of Leonis Majoris; and this point accompanied the stars in their apparent motion westward, instead of moving with the earth toward the east. The source whence the meteors came was thus shown to be independent of the earth's rotation, and exterior to our atmosphere."—*American Cyclopaedia, art. Meteors.*

6 "We pronounce the raining of fire which we saw on Wednesday morning last, an awful type, a sure forerunner, a merciful sign of that great and dreadful day which the inhabitants of the earth will witness when the sixth seal shall be opened. The time is just at hand, described not only in the New Testament, but in the Old. A more correct picture of a fig-tree casting its leaves when blown by a mighty wind, it is not possible to behold."—*Connecticut Observer, of Nov. 25, 1833, quoted from Old Countryman.*

"The meteoric phenomenon which occurred on the morning of the 13th of November last, was of so *extraordinary* and interesting a character as to be entitled to more than a mere passing notice. . . . The lively and graphic descriptions which have appeared in various public journals do not exceed the reality. No language, indeed, can come up to the splendor of that magnificent display; and I hesitate not to say that no one who did not witness it can form an adequate conception of its glory. It seemed as if the whole starry heavens had congregated at one point near the zenith, and were simultaneously shooting forth, with the velocity of lightning to every part of the horizon; and yet they were not exhausted—thousands swiftly followed in the track of thousands, *as if created for the occasion.*"—*Christian Advocate and Journal, Dec. 13, 1833.*

"While a mere lad I was waked in the night to see a pale, frightened face bending over me, and to hear, 'Get up! get up! the day of Judgment has come, I believe, for the stars are all falling!'"—*Horace Greeley, in New York Tribune, June 4, 1859.*

FREQUENCY OF EARTHQUAKES.

"There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Matt. 24 : 7.

The alarming frequency of earthquakes in later years has caused some to look upon their history and estimate the ratio in which they have increased through the advancing centuries. In his "Coming Earthquake," D. T. Taylor quotes from Ponton and Mallett the following chronologically arranged table of earthquakes:—

	No.	No. of years.	Average.
Those recorded before A. D. 1.	58	1700	1 in 29 yrs.
A. D. 1 to 900.	197	900	1 in 4 "
" 900 to 1500.	532	600	1 in 1 yr.
" 1500 to 1800.	2804	300	9 in 1 "
" 1800 to 1850.	3240	50	64 in 1 "
" 1850 to 1868.	5000	18	277 in 1 "

Of destructive earthquakes, such as have overthrown cities and destroyed many lives, the number registered is about as follows:—

	No. of years.	Earth- quakes.	Average.
From B. C. 1700 to A. D. 96.	1796	16	1 in 112 years.
" A. D. 96 to 1850.	1754	204	1 in 8 "
" " 1850 to 1865.	15	15	1 in 1 year.
" " 1865 to 1868.	3	15	5 in 1 "

In a single year, 1868, over *one hundred thousand* persons perished by earthquakes. In January, 1869, there were *eleven* earthquakes, two of them great and destructive.

The *Christian Statesman*, of July 17, 1875, says:—

"The continued occurrence and great severity of earthquakes has distinguished the period in which we are now living above all others since the records of such phenomena began to be generally preserved."

The following is from the *Detroit Tribune* of July 8, 1875, and relates to a then recent earthquake at Cucuta, United States of Colombo, which destroyed nine towns and damaged several others:—

"Such was the violence of the shock that not a single house remained standing, and the monuments in the cemetery were thrown down, and many of them removed a considerable distance from their original sites. In thirty seconds, the city of Cucuta was converted into a mountain of ruins. This horrible blow resulted in the death of

more than ten thousand persons, in addition to another thousand who were seriously wounded and bruised. Great numbers of *haciendas* have been destroyed, and hundreds of houses in the country overthrown, leaving the people homeless and consigned to poverty. Many trees were torn up by the roots, and the small hills opened like a melon. The cause of the catastrophe is of course unknown, or the precise place of its first manifestation."

In May, 1877, a most terrible earthquake, accompanied by a tidal wave, visited the South Pacific coast, which is described by the *Panama Star and Herald* as follows:—

"The terrible earthquake and tidal wave on the Peruvian and Bolivian coasts, May 9, 1877, proves it to have been one of the severest calamities of the kind ever known. Six hundred lives and twenty millions worth of property were destroyed. At Mollendo, a violent hurricane unroofed houses, while the sea tore up the railway. At Arica, people were building defenses to repel the expected attack of the rebel ram "Harascar." The shocks were numerous; the waves rose from ten to fifteen feet; houses, cars, locomotives, boats, etc., were tossed about like shuttlecocks. The shock continued all night. The volcano Ilaga is charged with the authorship of the phenomena.

"At Iquique, at the same hour, 8:30 P. M., the shaking began; amid the horrors of falling buildings and quaking earth, a fire broke out, and while trying to stay the flames, the sea rushed in and swept everything away. At Chanavaya the earth opened in crevices of fifteen meters deep. Two hundred persons were killed, dead bodies floated about the bay, and a pestilence was feared. The wave at Guanillos was sixty feet high, and that at Mexillones was sixty-five feet. A mine at Tocapilla caved in, smothering two hundred workmen. Cobija, in Bolivia, was swept of three fourths of its houses. The wave was thirty-five feet high. In Chanural the shock at 8:30 P. M. lasted three minutes. A fire broke out, followed by a swamping by a rush of the sea. At Pabelloa de Pica and Chanara, some sixty workmen were buried under the falling masses of guano. The damage done the shipping was very great, some vessels being sunk with all on board, while the crews of a few were saved on spars and planks. The water at the anchorage suddenly receded so that ships in eight fathoms of water touched bottom. At the same time the ships went swinging round and round in opposite directions, the anchor chains becoming entangled beneath the copper, and the yards and masts interlocking, while the air resounded with falling spars and the crash of bulwarks. The water also came whirling in like a maelstrom, causing the wrecks to spin round and round in great circles till they struck rocks and went down."

In 1886 a terrible earthquake visited New Zealand, destroying some villages, and over one hundred lives.

The following from the *Toledo Blade*, of July 15, 1886, describes the nature and extent of the sudden disturbance:—

"The violence of the earthquake led the people to think that the island had blown up, and would sink in the sea. The sensation experienced is said to have been fearful, and almost beyond description. Immediately after the first shock, the inhabitants rushed about frantically in all directions. When the second was felt, the entire country for miles around was lit up by the glare from the volcano, which had suddenly burst forth. The scene was as grand as it was awful. Huge volumes of smoke illuminated with flames, simultaneously burst forth over the range of mountains for sixty miles in length, and above the flames could be distinctly seen the balance of the fire, presenting the appearance of meteors chasing one another along the expanse of the sky. Reports from nearly all points in New Zealand show that earthquakes generally prevailed during the same period."

CYCLONES.

"Stormy wind fulfilling His word." Ps. 148:8.

The New York *Sun*, of Sept. 22, 1875, gives a most thrilling account of the destructive force of a Texas cyclone, which laid the town of Indianola in ruins, causing the loss of a hundred and fifty lives, out of the town's population of twelve hundred, and strewing corpses for twenty miles along the beach of Matagorda Bay. The same storm completely submerged Galveston Island, with the loss of many lives, and a great amount of property.

Shortly after, another cyclone was reported from Bengal, India, which swept away 2500 people. The terrible work it accomplished is told in the following words:—

"The cyclone which occurred on Oct. 31, 1876, arose in the Bay of Bengal, and took a northward course, wrecking several large vessels which lay in its track. It just missed Calcutta, but struck Chittagong, which lies in the most northeasterly corner of the bay, stranding every vessel in the harbor, and nearly destroying the town. Meanwhile the storm waves submerged the great islands of Hattiah, Sundeeep, and Dakhin, lying in one of the mouths of the Ganges, covered several smaller islands, and then flowed over the land for five or six miles toward the interior. . . .

"Of course the devastation in this district has been complete. The country is dead flat; and the people, when the wave burst upon them, had no place of safety but in the tree tops. And there such as

were able found their way, sharing their refuges with the wild beasts, birds, and serpents. Houses by the thousand were utterly swept out of existence, and the only relics of human habitations afterward found, were cast up on the Chittagong shore, ten miles distant.

"The Calcutta *Government Gazette* says that 'wherever the storm wave passed, it is believed that not a third of the population survived. The islands have barely one fourth of their former inhabitants.' All the cattle were destroyed, and the stench of the decomposing remains has already generated an outbreak of cholera, which, it is feared, will prove general. The British government is taking steps to relieve the distress which prevails."

April 14, 1879, a cyclone struck Collinsville, Ill., and damage was done to the amount of \$50,000. Ten houses were destroyed, several persons were injured, and one killed.

April 16, the lower part of South Carolina was visited by a tornado, which caused great destruction of life and property. One hundred dwellings were destroyed in Waterboro, and all the churches in the town were swept away. Fifteen persons were killed, and many wounded.

June, 1879, a cyclone in Kansas destroyed hundreds of houses, killed forty persons, wounded seventy or eighty, and destroyed an immense amount of property.

July 15, 1881, a terrible cyclone visited New Ulm, Minn., occasioning a great loss of property. The town was laid in ruins, and thirty or forty persons and hundreds of cattle were killed.

During April 6, 7, 8, and 9, 1882, cyclones visited Kansas, killing several persons and injuring others.

April 25, 1882, a cyclone occurred in Saline Co., Mo., in which 11 were killed, 35 wounded, and much property destroyed.

June 17, 1882, the towns of Grinnell and Malcom, Iowa, and their vicinity, were visited by the most destructive cyclone that has been known for twenty years. The storm traveled three hundred miles through the center of the State, carrying destruction and death in its path. The loss of property was estimated to be between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000; and besides the large number of persons killed or seriously injured, fifteen hundred were left homeless and destitute. In Grinnell,

as the many trees stripped of their bark and cut to pieces began to turn yellow, it added to the deserted appearance of that portion of the town. A correspondent of the *Inter Ocean* said that though that part of the town should be built up again, fifty years would not efface the marks of the tornado.

In the week ending May 19, 1883, many cyclones were experienced. Six men were injured in Coventry, Montana. In Racine, Wis., twenty were killed, and one hundred wounded. One hundred and fifty houses were wrecked. In Valparaiso, Neb., two persons were injured. White Pigeon, Mich., was visited, a school-house overturned, and many persons were injured.

At Kansas City, Mo., three were killed, and great damage done. At St. Joseph, Mo., also, much damage was done.

In the week ending May 26, 1883, such storms visited Missouri, Beloit, and Racine, Wis., in which twenty-five were killed, and more than one hundred wounded. In Beloit, live fish, one of which weighed a pound, fell in the business street.

The cyclone of Tuesday, Aug. 20, 1883, wrecked 300 houses in Rochester, Minn., damaged 200 others, and killed twenty-five persons. The total loss to the little city is \$400,000. At Kasson five people lost their lives, and in the counties of Dodge and Olmsted, the destruction of property was terrible. The whirling storm blew a passenger train from the track between Zumbrota and Rochester, the force of the gale smashing the cars to kindling wood. It is stated that one hundred passengers were killed or injured, and fifty wounded were removed to Rochester and Owatonna. Thirty-five were killed at Rochester, and eighty-two wounded. The storm covered a tract of country sixty miles long by two wide. Complete destruction marked its path.

April 21, 1885, a terrible cyclone visited Copiah Co., Miss., killing more than forty people, and wounding more than 150 others. A vast number of houses were blown down. It visited Georgia also, and did great damage.

On the same day many people lost their lives by a cyclone in Iowa; Sac, Woodberry, and Monona counties suffered great damage.

The same month a cyclone visited South Carolina, and many persons were killed. In one place thirty-three were killed and sixty wounded.

About the same time a hurricane visited Como, Colorado, and injured many persons.

The New York *Tribune* of Nov. 12, 1862, said concerning the frequency of these occurrences:—

“All over the country these storms have been of unusual frequency and dreadfully destructive this year. The lightning, the hurricane, the water-spout, number their victims this summer in the Western States by hundreds. And in many parts of Europe the same phenomena prevail, with a sprinkling of earthquakes in places where the earthquake is hardly ever felt. The cause is a mystery.”

In a sermon delivered by Mr. Talmage in 1883, on the wonders of the day, he said:—

“But look at the cyclonic,—the disasters cyclonic. At the mouth of the Ganges are three islands,—the Hattia, the Sundeeep, and the Decan Shahbaspoor. In the midnight of October, 1876, the cry on all those three islands was, ‘The waters! the waters!’ A cyclone arose and rolled the sea over those three islands, and of a population of 340,000, 215,000 were drowned, only those being saved who had climbed to the tops of the highest trees. *Did you ever see a cyclone?* No? I pray God you may never see one.

“But a few weeks ago I was in Minnesota, where there was one of those cyclones on land, that swept the city of Rochester from its foundations, and took dwelling houses, barns, men, women, children, horses, and cattle, and tossed them into indiscriminate ruin. It lifted a rail-train, and dashed it down, a mightier hand than that of the engineer on the air-brake. Cyclone in Kansas within a few months, cyclone in Missouri, cyclone in Wisconsin, cyclone in Illinois, cyclone in Iowa. Satan, prince of the power of the air, never made such cyclonic disturbance as he has in our day. And am I not right in saying that one of the characteristics of the time in which we live is disasters cyclonic?”

These are only a few of the many such destructive storms which have so ruthlessly destroyed life and property. The increasing frequency of these cyclonic disturbances has led many people to construct under-

ground cellars, to which they may flee for safety on such occasions. Once these things were not looked for; but now nature seems disarranged, causing perplexity to the inhabitants of earth, and bringing about that very state of affairs which the Saviour said should constitute one of the signs of his second coming. Luke 21:25, 26.

DISTURBANCES AT SEA.

“The sea and the waves roaring.” Luke 21:25.

“Let us then proceed in our explication of this sign, the roaring sea and waves, applying it to the end of the world. I do not look upon this ominous noise of the sea as the effect of a tempest; for then it would not strike such terror into the inhabitants of the earth, nor make them apprehensive of some great evil coming upon the world, as this will do. What proceeds from visible causes, and such as may happen in a common course of nature, does not so much amaze or affright us. . . . And such a troubled state of the waters as does not only make the sea unmanageable, but also strikes terror into all the maritime inhabitants that live within the view or sound of it.”—*Burnett's Sacred Theory of the Earth.*

In describing a tidal wave on the South Pacific coast, in which he was caught, in May, 1877, a writer in *Harper's Magazine* says:—

“I saw the whole surface of the sea rise as if a mountain side, actually standing up. Another shock with a *fearful roar* now took place. I called to my companions to run for their lives on to the pampa. Too late; with a horrible crash the sea was on us, and at one sweep dashed what was Iquique onto the pampa. I lost my companions, and in an instant was fighting with the dark waters. *The mighty waves surged, and roared, and leaped.* The cries of human beings and animals were frightful.”

The British vice-consul, who was at Arica, Peru, at the time, describes the scene as it appeared to him, in the following words:—

“What a sight! I saw all the vessels in the bay carried out irresistibly to sea; anchors and chains were as pack-thread. In a few minutes the great outward current stopped, stemmed by a mighty rising wave, I should judge about fifty feet [15.25 + meters] high, which came in with an *awful rush*, carrying everything before it in its terrible majesty, bringing the shipping with it, sometimes turning in circles, as if striving to elude their fate.”

Speaking of these disturbances and the extent of their influence, the *New York Tribune*, of Nov. 12, 1868, says:—

“The tidal disturbances are the most remarkable and extensive of which there is any record. It is said their velocity was about a *thousand miles an hour*. Both the great ocean waters of the Atlantic and Pacific have been agitated in their whole extent. We mention in particular the tidal waves at St. Thomas and all the neighboring islands, which were *full fifty feet in height* [15.25 + meters]. It is said by those who have witnessed these waves that the ocean’s *roar is exceedingly frightful*.”

One year, to a day, later, the same paper testifies:—

“Later and fuller details are every day increasing the interest with which scientific observers regard the recent earthquakes and tidal disturbances, and confirming our first impression that these convulsions of nature would prove to be among the *most remarkable and extensive of which there is any written record*.”

Says another paper:—

“Old mother earth has been indulging in some old caprices within the last ten years, the variety and frequency of her antics having especially increased during her last three annual revolutions. Tornados, water-spouts by land as well as at sea, freshets, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes have become of almost daily occurrence and of continually augmenting intensity. Moreover, they embrace a larger and larger area of territory at each recurrence. The last shock, which so fearfully devastated South America, was felt over *one-third of the earth’s surface*. These portentous phenomena are seriously engaging the attention of the scientific world. The remark that they only seem to us more frequent, because our means of communication are more complete and rapid, and that we now hear from all parts of the globe simultaneously, *will not explain the matter*, since the late commotions have been attended by disturbances of both land and sea in parts of the earth which have been constantly accessible for centuries, that were totally unparalleled in previous history. The change of the Gulf Stream from its course, and the alteration of climates, have been some of these increased marvels.”—*New York Mercantile Journal for Nov., 1868*.

THE WORLD GETTING OLD.

“The earth shall wax old like a garment.” Isa. 51:6.

As the earth in its present state grows older, it is evident from the words of the prophet, that we may look for weakness and decay in everything connected

with it. “The earth mourneth and *fadeth away*, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.” Isa. 24:4. This is because of the curse resting on the earth in consequence of sin. Already we see the fulfillment of the prophet’s words. The human race has dwindled in stature, and in vitality. Once man lived for centuries, now his average age is less than forty years. Speaking of the former size of man, the “*Encyclopedia Britanica*,” art. Giant, says:—

“It was a common opinion of the ancients that the human race had itself degenerated, the men of primeval ages having been of so far greater stature and strength, as to be in fact gigantic.

“In authentic history there are accounts of races of men of very large size. The Hebrew Scriptures allude to giants (nephilim) before the Flood, and in and about Palestine there were, in Joshua’s time, the Rephaim, Anakim, Emin, and Zamzummim, all men of great stature. The names of Og, two Goliaths, Ishbibenob, and Saphare preserved to us. In comparatively recent times there was a belief that the Patagonians and the men of Guayaquil were giants; and it is now unquestionable that the former do considerably exceed in stature the average of mankind.”—*Johnson’s Cyclopaedia, art. Giant*.

“After the discovery of America, stories of gigantic races in the New World were not uncommon, and the Patagonians especially were said to be eight and even twelve feet in stature. It is now known that most of the men are six feet in height.”—*New American Cyclopaedia, art. Giant*.

The *Des Moines Leader*, of Nov. 18, 1886, says:—

“Insanity, pauperism, idiocy, and every defect of mind or body, is on the increase. Taken as a whole the human race, as represented all the way up and down the Atlantic coast, appears to be deteriorating. The increase of crime and vice only keeps pace with the general deterioration.”

FAILURE IN CROPS.

On the failure of grain crops in the United States, the *New York Tribune*, of Feb. 10, 1869, quotes the following from a California paper:—

“It will hardly be claimed for California, that, though she has exceptional lands which yield more per acre than any lands in the great West, her soil is more lasting than that of Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan. Yet in those three States the average wheat crop has run

down to less than twelve bushels per acre, and it cannot be long till wheat culture there must be abandoned as unprofitable. Our own experience is not much more encouraging. . . . In our oldest wheat-raising districts there has been a *marked decline* in productions since 1866."

In an agricultural report from Washington, D. C., dated June 17, 1870, and published in the *Detroit Post*, it is stated that : —

"Twenty years have wrought changes in the list of wheat-growing States that are suggestive and even startling. . . . Facts showing the decrease of yield in every State would be equally striking, and more sadly suggestive. . . . Many gloomy reports and forebodings of failure have come from the 'Golden State.'"

CHAPTER V.

THE SECOND ADVENT.

"I WILL come again." John 14 : 3.

"THIS SAME JESUS which is taken up from you into heaven, SHALL SO COME in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1 : 11.

"They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24 : 30.

"Unto them that look for him shall he appear the SECOND TIME without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9 : 28.

Notwithstanding that the doctrine of the second advent is now looked upon with disfavor by many, there have been many good men in the Church who have held that doctrine as a prominent part of their religious faith. Near the time of his death, Martin Luther said : —

"I persuade myself verily that the day of judgment will not be absent full three hundred years more. God will not, cannot, suffer this wicked world much longer."— *Table Talk, chap. 1, par. 9.*

"The Scripture uniformly commands us to look forward with eager expectation to the coming of Christ, and defers the crown of glory that awaits till that period."— *Calvin's Institutes, b. 3, chap. 25.*

Alexander Campbell has given the following exhortation : —

"Let the Church prepare herself for the return of her Lord, and see that she make herself ready for his appearance."— *Christian System, p. 291.*

"His coming itself is certain. This has been the faith and hope of all Christians in all ages of the Church ; nay it was the faith and hope of the Old Testament saints ever since Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who said, "Behold the Lord cometh," etc.— *Henry, on 2 Thess. 2 : 1.*

In commenting on Luke 18 : 8, Dr. Henry speaks thus : —