

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 : —

"In particular . . . it intimates that Christ . . . will delay his coming so long as that, first, wicked people will begin to defy it, and to say, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' 2 Peter 3:4. They will challenge him to come (Isa. 5:10; Amos 5:19) and his delay will harden them in their wickedness. Matt. 24:48. Secondly, even his own people will begin to despair of it, and to conclude he will never come, because he has passed their reckoning."

"Ages have passed away. The latter days are here. An inspired apostle was directed to announce, that in after-days there should come scoffers, mocking at the promise of his coming and the destruction of the whole world. The infidelity of the last day is here. The scoffing unbelief, as foretold, is come; and it was to be accompanied with willful ignorance, the offspring of a secret love for darkness."—*Nelson on Infidelity*, p. 101.

Thomas Coke, the author of the following, was an associate of the Wesleys, and made nine missionary voyages from England to America.

"Near, even at the doors, is the day of Judgment. The period of time which yet remains we know is short; how short, who can tell? We ought to be in constant and hourly expectation of it. At the coming of Christ to avenge and deliver his faithful people, the faith of his coming will, in a great measure be lost. Chronological calculation; and the general appearance of the world, all conspire to tell us that the events of the latter days are even come upon us, and that the time of God's controversy with the earth is near at hand. It is already on the wing."—*Coke's Commentary*.

Lorenzo Dow was a firm believer in the Lord's near coming, as his words unmistakably show:—

"The ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image only remain; these times are eventful, and the signs are portentous; let all the Israel of God be in a state of readiness for the coming of the Lord."—*Appendix No. 2. to Life of Dow*, p. 349.

Richard Baxter, also, whose words of comfort have been read in so many thousands of households, has testified to his love for the doctrine in the following strain:—

"Would it not rejoice your hearts if you were sure to live to see the coming of the Lord, and to see his glorious appearing and retinue? If you were not to die, but to be caught up thus to meet the Lord, would you be averse to this? Would it not be the greatest joy that you could desire? For my own part, I must confess to you that death, as death appeareth to me, is an enemy, and my nature doth abhor and fear it. But the thoughts of the coming of the

Lord are most sweet and joyful to me, so that if I were but sure that I should live to see it, and that the trumpet should sound, and the dead should rise, and the Lord appear, before the period of my age, it would be the joyfulest tidings to me in the world. Oh, that I might see his kingdom come! It is the character of his saints to love his appearing, and to look for that blessed hope. 'The spirit and the bride say, Come.' 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' Come quickly, is the voice of faith, and hope, and love."—*Vol. 17, p. 555*.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, in speaking of the Lord's coming, said:—

"For this we are to work and watch and hope and pray. For this coming of the Lord we are to prepare the highway. And all ministry of the gospel, all instruction in righteousness, all work of Church, and school-house, and Christian home, is a making of this path straight that he whose right it is may come. 'How long, O Lord, how long?'"—*Christian Union*, March 11, 1886.

And lastly, William Cowper has left his sentiments on the subject, to the world, in a beautiful stanza worthy of particular notice at this portentous time:—

"A world that seems
To toll the death-bell of its own decease,
And by the voice of all its elements
To preach the general doom. When were the winds
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
Fires from beneath, and meteors from above,
Portentous, *unexampled, unexplained*
Have kindled beacons in the skies, and the old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.

Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And nature with a dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all?"—*The Task*, book 2.