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"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7.

NO TRUTH of inspiration can be more clearly demonstrated than that God reveals His designs to His prophets, that men and nations may be prepared for their accomplishment. Before visiting with judgments, God has uniformly sent forth warnings sufficient to enable the believing to escape His wrath, and to condemn those who have not heeded the warning. This was the case before the flood. The wickedness of the world had become very great. Every imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of men was only evil. It would seem that they had forfeited all claims for consideration. Violence and corruption filled the earth; men refused the right, and persistently followed the wrong; iniquity had come to the full; and the only way to efface the evil in such a case was to destroy it with its workers. But before doing so, the world must be warned of

the impending doom. Noah, a preacher of righteousness, was chosen to do the work. Noah had faith in God, and preached for one hundred and twenty years the message of warning and salvation. His work also testified with his words.

“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 the which he condemned the world.” Heb. 11:7.

At a later period, when the nations had again become sunken in idolatry and crime, and the destruction of wicked Sodom and Gomorrah was determined, the Lord said:—

“Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do: seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?” Gen. 18:17, 18.

And due notice was given to righteous Lot, who, with his daughters, was preserved; and none, even in that guilty city, perished without due warning. Lot evidently warned the people; and in thus communing with them, was “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.” 2 Peter 2:7, 8. His righteous life had been a rebuke to them; and we have every reason to believe that the holy example of Abraham in his worship of the true God was known to them. He had at one time been their saviour, and rescued their captives and spoil from the victorious enemy who was carrying them away. But when Lot warned his friends of the approaching doom, “he seemed as one that mocked.” Gen. 19:14. They, like the antediluvians, persisted in sin, and drank of the wrath of God.

At a subsequent time the sins of Nineveh rose to heaven, and Jonah was sent to bear to that proud capital the startling message, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed.” The consciences of those sinners told them the message was true; and from the least of them to the greatest they humbled themselves, and the overhanging judgment was averted.

Before Christ commenced His earthly mission, John the Baptist was sent as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” By this means the expectation of the people was raised, and through it many were led to accept of salvation, while the generation at large was condemned for rejecting the light.

Our Saviour in His time saw the destruction of Jerusalem just in the future of that generation, and faithfully warned the people, foretelling signs by which it might be known when the desolation thereof was nigh. Luke 21:20, 21.

Such is the testimony of inspiration respecting the dealings of God with His people in past ages. All who accept the Bible as the inspired word of God must acknowledge that He has been very faithful in warning people in past ages of impending judgments and other events which affected their eternal welfare. Such having been the divine plan in relation to past events, we would certainly be justified in expecting such warnings of Christ's second coming to be given as would comport with the importance of the event. But when we come to consider the future, and especially our own immediate

the impending doom. Noah, a preacher of righteousness, was chosen to do the work. Noah had faith in God, and preached for one hundred and twenty years the message of warning and salvation. His work also testified with his words.

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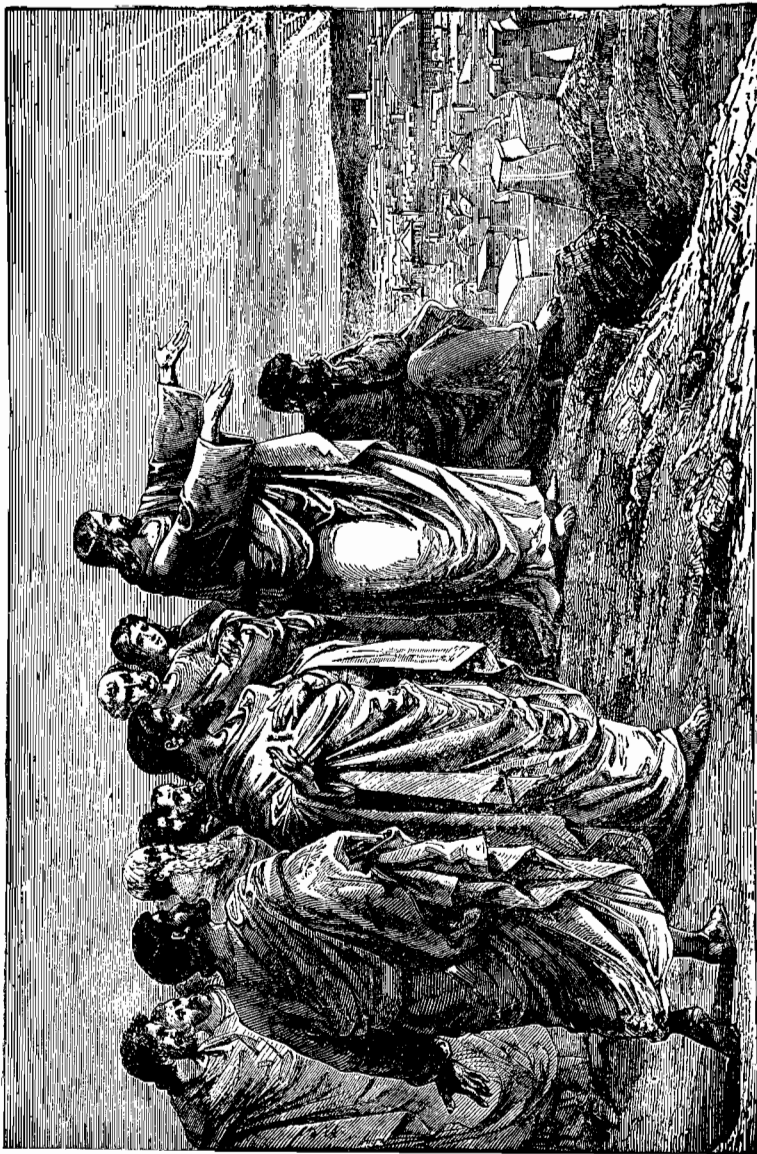
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future, the incredulity of very many is at once aroused.

But what are the facts in the case? Can anything be learned from the Bible relative to the time of the second advent? This is a grave inquiry; and, from the very nature of the subject, it is worthy of close investigation, and a candid answer. It is a matter of painful regret that many, under the influence of popular prejudice, have decided that the period of the second advent is a secret hidden with the Lord. While these can scarcely be reached with this subject, as long as they remain under the influence of those who denounce all investigation of it as prying into the secrets of the Almighty, there is still, we believe, a larger class who wait for evidence before deciding.

The Bible is a revelation from heaven. What God has revealed in that book, let no man, therefore, call a mystery, or a secret of the Almighty. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever." Deut. 29:29. If the Sacred Scriptures, in a most clear and harmonious manner, point out the signs of the approach of that great event, and if there is evidence that "it is near, even at the doors," the subject at once assumes great importance.

When the disciples inquired, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus did not reprove them for inquiring into this matter, nor tell them that there were to be no signs, and that nothing could be known with reference to



CHRIST WEeping OVER JERUSALEM.

these things, but He answered their question in the most definite manner.

The simple fact that the Lord mentions signs of His second advent, is the best proof possible that His people were not to remain ignorant of the relative nearness of the event. Add to this His injunctions to watchfulness, and the blessings which He pronounces upon those who are awake and watching at His coming, and it becomes a certainty that He would not leave His people ignorant of the proximity of that event. Paul also says that "unto them that *look for Him* shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28), and that a crown of righteousness will be given "unto all them also that *love His appearing.*" 2 Tim. 4:8.

With these assurances we may look for plain and emphatic tokens of the Saviour's second coming.

Watchman, tell me, does the morning
Of fair Zion's glory dawn?
Have the signs that mark its coming
Yet upon thy pathway shone?
Pilgrim, yes! arise, look round thee;
Light is breaking in the skies:
Gird thy bridal robes around thee,
Morning dawns, arise! arise!

Watchman, see, the light is beaming
Brighter still upon thy way;
Signs through all the earth are gleaming,
Omens of the coming day
When the Jubal trumpet, sounding,
Shall awake from earth and sea
All the saints of God, now sleeping,
Clad in immortality. —*Sidney S. Brewer.*



PROBABLY no other chapter of the Bible speaks more fully and more definitely upon the subject of the second advent, than does the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew,—a prophecy in Christ's own words. We invite the attention of the candid reader to a brief explanation of the entire chapter.

Verse 1: "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple."

Jesus had been addressing the multitude, in the presence of His disciples. He had reproved the scribes and the Pharisees for their sins, and had declared, as recorded in the previous chapter, the doom of the Jews, their city, and their temple. The disciples supposed that the temple would stand forever, and they called the attention of Christ to its magnificence and strength, and to the great stones that entered into the structure. On this point the historian of those times, Josephus, says: "Now the temple was

built of stones that were white and strong, and each of their lengths was twenty-five cubits, their height was eight, and their breadth about twelve."—*Antiquities of the Jews*, book 15, chap. 11. If we compute a cubit at twenty inches, we shall be able to gain some idea of the size and "manner" of these stones.

Verse 2: "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

This statement from the Master could not but deeply interest the disciples. The massive stonework of this magnificent structure, which the sacred record tells us was forty and six years in building, presented every appearance of stability, and gave promise of long continuance. But in these words we have a prediction of its utter destruction, which, forty years later, was fulfilled to the letter. This startling announcement very naturally aroused the interest of the disciples in regard to the events of the future, and gave rise to that most interesting conversation which occurred a little later on the Mount of Olives.

Verse 3: "And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

It matters not whether they supposed that the destruction of the temple, the coming of Christ, and the end of the age, would all occur at the same time or at different periods, since Christ, in His answer in this chapter, has distinctly spoken of each



JESUS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

separately, and has given each its place in the prophetic history of events. If it was their impression that the overthrow of the temple and the end of the world would occur at the same time, this would by no means prove that such was to be the case. As the Scriptures show, up to the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, their ideas upon many points were crude and inaccurate. Take as proof of this the parable which the Lord spoke when He was going into Jerusalem. See Luke 19. They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. To correct this impression, the parable of the nobleman was spoken. If they understood the parable at the time when it was given, it did not fully eradicate the impression from their minds, as is proved by what they did when they entered Jerusalem. We cannot believe that they would have hailed Him as the Son of David, and rejoiced before Him as a King in His triumph, if they had realised that He was going into the city to be condemned and crucified as a malefactor. Palm branches and shouts of triumph did not attend the steps of the lowly and the condemned.

After Christ's resurrection, John admits for himself and Peter, after they had seen the empty sepulchre, that "they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." John 20:9.

Again, after His resurrection, Jesus reproved two of His disciples, who, though they had trusted that He would redeem Israel, were then sad and disheartened. They did not then understand that Christ ought "to have suffered these things, and to enter

into His glory." The suffering part was still a mystery to them. And some of the apostles were so slow to realise that which He had spoken to them, that they could hardly be persuaded that He was indeed risen from the dead. After He had been with them for forty days, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom, they did not yet understand "the times and the seasons," and therefore asked Him, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

However the matter may have been entertained in the minds of the disciples, it is evident that their query (verse 3) consisted of two distinct questions in the mind of the Saviour. These questions relate, first, to the destruction of Jerusalem; and, second, to Christ's second coming at the end of the world, or age. They were distinctly answered by our Lord; not, however, before the promiscuous multitude, but on the occasion of a private interview with His disciples on the Mount of Olives. Christ here speaks to His disciples; hence His words in this prophetic discourse are addressed especially to the church.

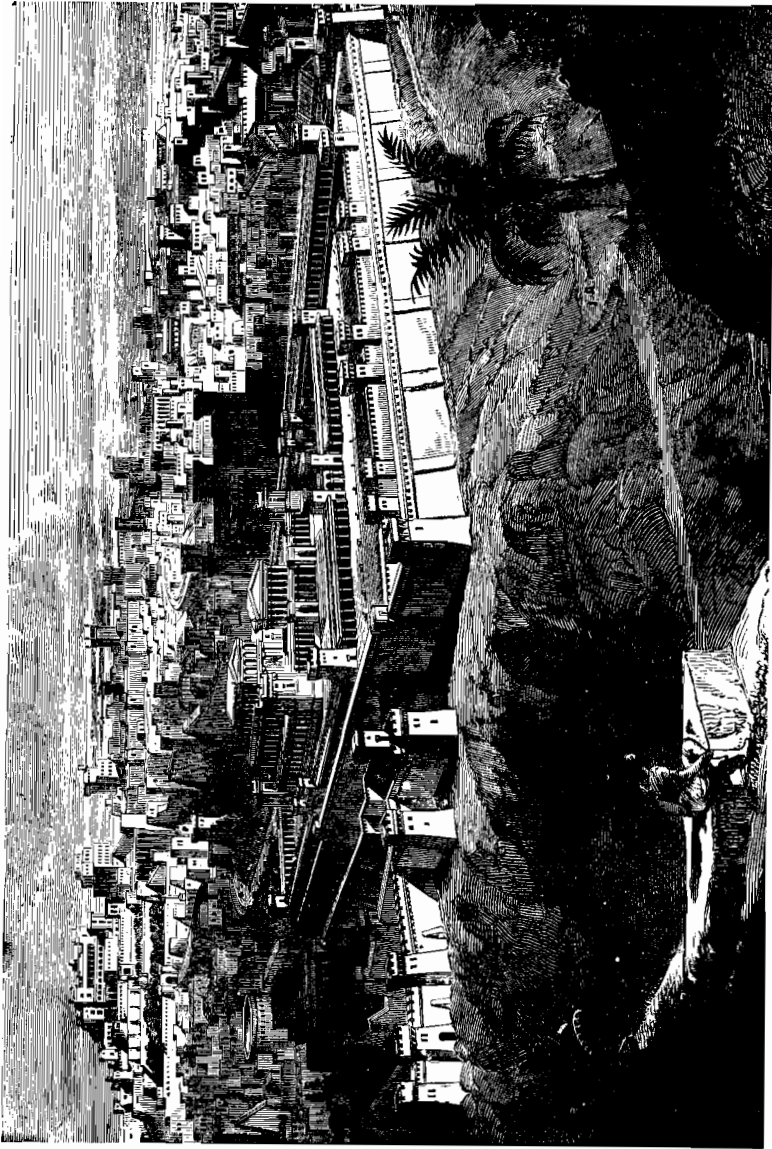
Verses 4, 5: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many."

Jesus knew the hearts of men, and that many impostors would arise, and deceive multitudes. He here warns His disciples, and guards them against the deceptions of corrupt and ambitious men. Such was the general expectation of the appearance of the Messiah among the Jews, that many would set up the claim that they were the Christ, to carry out

selfish purposes or to gain notoriety, and the credulous people, who understood little of the prophetic Scriptures and the true characteristics of the long-promised Messiah, would be easily led into the deception, and then be destroyed for sedition. History informs us that in the days succeeding those of Christ, impostors arose in great numbers. Josephus tells of an Egyptian false prophet who led 30,000 men into the desert to show them signs, and then brought them to Jerusalem as if to attack the city. He caused great pillage and destruction in Judea, but in the time of battle, ran away, leaving his followers to the exasperated Romans. "Wars of the Jews," book 2, chap. 13.

Dr. Adam Clarke says, on the authority of Josephus, that "under the reign of Nero, while Felix was procurator of Judea, impostors of this stamp were so frequent that some were taken and killed almost every day."

In the former part of the second century, Cazibee set himself at the head of the Jewish nation, and proclaimed himself their long-expected Messiah. To facilitate the success of his bold enterprise, he changed his name to that of Barchocheba, alluding to the Star foretold by Balaam. Adrian raised an army, and sent it against him. He retired into a town called Bither, where he was besieged. Barchocheba was killed in the siege, the city was taken, and a dreadful havoc succeeded. The Jews themselves allow that, during this short war against the Romans in defence of this false Messiah, they lost five or six hundred thousand souls. The Jews had rejected



ANCIENT JERUSALEM.

Jesus, the true Messiah, so they were left to be deluded by spurious pretenders. "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." John 5:43. This prediction was fully verified. In "Buck's Theological Dictionary," art. Messiah, is given a list of twenty-four false christs who led multitudes of the Jews into deception and ruin.

Thus the Jews, who ever since the first advent, have been expecting the Messiah, have been repeatedly the victims of cruel deception, false christs arising at different times, claiming to be the promised Messiah, and deceiving "many," as the Lord had said.

Verse 6: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."

It is proper that we should consider what is meant by the term "the end," as used in this verse, also in verse 14, "then shall the end come," and in verse 3, "the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world." In the first place, it may be unhesitatingly claimed that the term does not refer to the end of the Jewish dispensation, which terminated at the crucifixion, nor to the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred about forty years later. Because, first, Jesus treated the question concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and that referring to His coming and the end of the world, as relating to two distinct events widely separated in time. Second, the signs which were to foretoken the end did not occur before the destruction of Jerusalem. Third, the second coming of Christ, the close of probation, the judgment, the

resurrection, and the end of sin, death, and mortality are frequently and prominently associated together in the Bible as constituting the most important epoch in human history. To limit this thrilling discourse to the local and long-past destruction of Jerusalem, would be to rob it of its force and grandeur. Not only would the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, which we are now studying, be stultified, but very much of the life and power of the Scriptures would be sacrificed by such an application.

As to the meaning of the phrase, "the end of the world," it may properly be translated "the end of the age." In the margin of the Revised Version it is rendered "the consummation of the age." For an inspired use of the term, we refer to the Saviour's words in Matt. 13:38-42; where the same words, both in the original and the translation, are twice used:—

"The tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

From Rev. 14:14-16 we learn that the harvest of the earth and the second coming of Christ occur at the same time. Christ comes to reap the harvest of the earth. His coming, therefore, brings the end of the world.

By no possible means, therefore, can it be established that the "end of the world" means the

destruction of Jerusalem. Further evidence is found in Matt. 28:20, where the same expression, both in the original and in the translation, is used: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." No one would for a moment claim that this promise expired in A.D. 70, as must necessarily have been the case if the questions of the disciples and the subsequent discourse of Christ, as recorded in the chapter under consideration, related only to the impending doom of the temple and city.

Verses 7, 8: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

In these words Christ gives the reason why the disciples were not to be disturbed upon hearing of wars and calamities, and think because of these the end was immediately at hand. These things were to occur all down through the ages, and were not, therefore, to be regarded as the signs of the end. The sacred writers have so uniformly associated such calamities as war, famine, pestilence, and earthquake with the last judgment, that the disciples would be in danger of concluding that the end would immediately follow the first appearance of these calamities; hence the caution given: "These things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."

Here the disciples were distinctly taught not to expect the end until a long course of events had taken place. This fact is worthy of the candid attention of those who object to the proclamation of the second advent of Christ in the form of a special

message. These sometimes assert that it was right for the disciples to expect Christ to come at any time, even in their day, and that it has been scriptural and right for all Christians to expect the second appearing of Christ at any moment from the days of the chosen twelve to the present time. And they decide that nothing more can be known regarding the nearness of this event in our time than was known by Christians in past generations, and that the public mind should not now be moved upon this question any more than in all past time since the first advent of Christ.

We have seen that this position is incorrect so far as the early disciples were concerned. They are directed to the distant future as the time when their Lord should come. They are assured that they need not be troubled at hearing of wars and rumours of wars; "for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Our Lord then guides the minds of His disciples, as we shall see in the examination of this chapter, down over the time of the great apostasy, and the long period of the rule of papal Rome, before mentioning a sign of His second advent. He does not intimate that His people during these long periods may expect the end. No, not once. But when He comes to a later time, the Lord names signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars, and adds: "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

It is true that all Christians in all ages have been admonished to look forward to the glorious appearing of Christ; to watch for the signs, and to be prepared to meet Him when He comes. But we wish the

fact kept distinctly before the mind that the sacred Scriptures clearly teach when men may, and when they may not, know that the second appearing of Christ is near. While all have been prompted to watchfulness, it is a fact susceptible of the clearest demonstration that *until the signs appeared*, none could know that Christ's coming was near. On the other hand, after the signs *have* appeared, it is equally evident that there can be no excuse for any not knowing that it *is* near.

Mark this: Our Lord does not mention wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes as signs of His second advent, but rather as events of common occurrence all the way through the Christian age, which must exist before the end. And history attests the fact that these calamities have occurred all through these many centuries. The following is from a work by Noah Webster, L.L.D., published in 1799:—

“By famine and sword, 580,000 Jews were destroyed between A.D. 96 and A.D. 180.

“In Antioch, from A.D. 96 to A.D. 180, earthquakes destroyed thirteen cities and over 100,000 lives.

“In Rome, A.D. 199, pestilence destroyed 10,000 daily.

“In Rome, A.D. 187, pestilence appeared and continued three years.

“In London, A.D. 310, by famine, 40,000 died.

“In A.D. 446, September 17, an earthquake shook down the walls of Constantinople, and 57 towers fell.

“In Rome, A.D. 539, in one district 50,000 died.

“In Antioch, A.D. 588, an earthquake killed 60,000.

“In A.D. 542, the plague killed 10,000 in one day in Turkey.

“In A.D. 679, a severe famine in England, three years.

“In A.D. 717, in Constantinople, 300,000 died of plague.

“In A.D. 1095, earthquakes three months, followed by pestilence, by which it is said one-third of the human race died.

“In A.D. 1077, in Constantinople, so many died by plague and famine that the living could not bury them.

“In A.D. 1124, in Italy, there was such famine that the dead lay in the streets not buried; and in England one-third of the people died of plague.

“In A.D. 1294, in England, thousands died of famine.

“In A.D. 1346, in London, 50,000 died of plague and famine, and were buried in one grave-yard; in Norwich, 50,000; in Venice, 100,000; in Florence, 100,000; in Eastern nations, 20,000,000. It was called the black death.

“In A.D. 1352, in China, 900,000 died of famine.

“In A.D. 1427, in Dantzic, 80,000 died of plague.

“In A.D. 1570, in Moscow, 200,000 died of plague.

“In A.D. 1572, in Lyons, 50,000 died of plague.

“In A.D. 1625, in London, 35,000 died of plague.

“In A.D. 1656, in Naples, 300,000 died of plague.

“In A.D. 1665, in London, 68,000 died of plague.

“In A.D. 1755, an earthquake destroyed the city of Lisbon, killing 50,000. In Mitylene and the Archipelago, it shook down 2,000 houses. It shook all the Spanish coast. The plague followed, which destroyed 150,000 persons in Constantinople.”

Taken as a whole, these figures, though possibly over-estimated in some instances, do not nearly represent the ravages of death in their enormity. For instance, according to the “Encyclopedia Britannica,” Hecker estimates the celebrated “black death” of the fourteenth century, in the different epidemics, to have swept away one-fourth of the inhabitants of Europe, or 25,000,000 people!

PERSECUTION AND FALSE PROPHETS.

Verses 9, 10: “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.”

Here is a brief description of the afflictions and



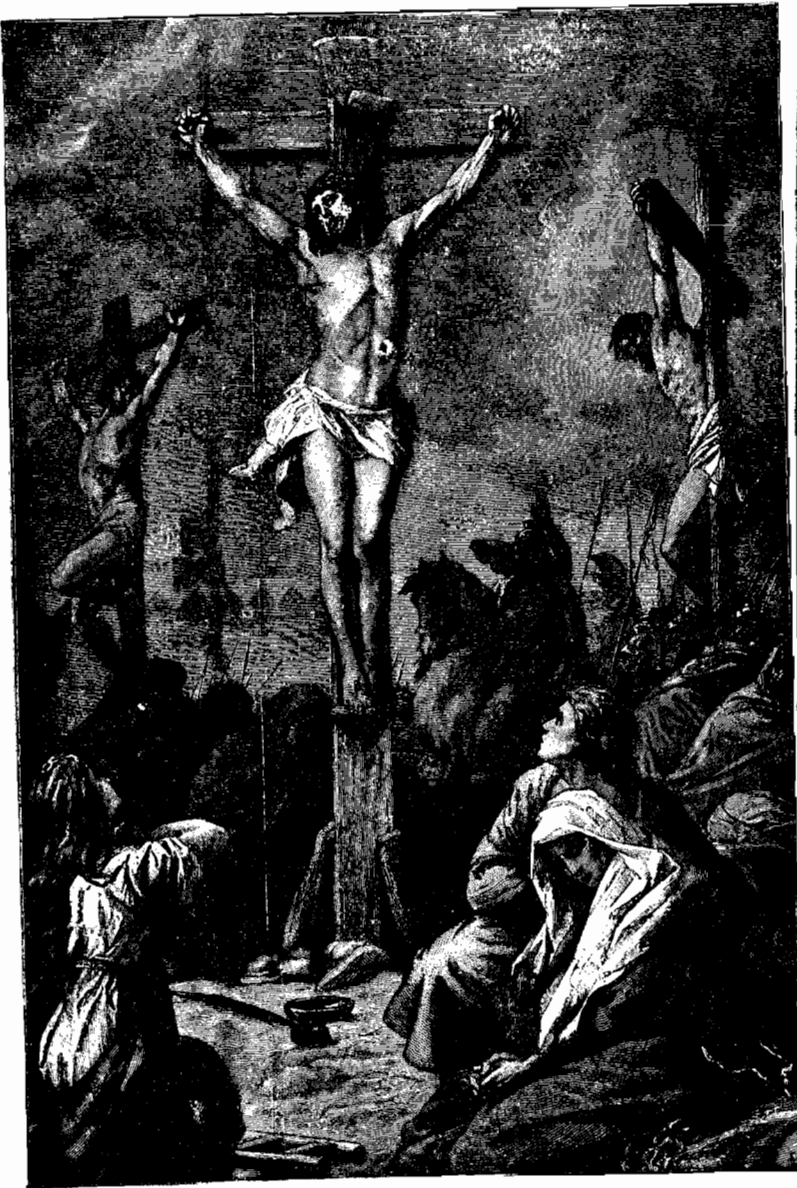
MARTYRDOM OF HUSS.

martyrdom of the church of Christ. Thousands of the faithful followers of Jesus were most cruelly put to death by pagan Rome; yet the prophecy doubtless applies more particularly to the long period of papal persecutions, in which not less than fifty millions of Christians were put to death in the most cruel manner that wicked men and demons could devise. In these verses we are brought down over the long period of the martyrdom of the church of Jesus Christ, to near the present generation. These verses being parallel with verses 21 and 22, this subject will be noticed again.

Verse 11: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

A true prophet is one who speaks for God. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Rev. 19:10. It is Jesus Christ speaking through human lips or pen to His people. *Pseudo*, or false prophets, speak through the agency of wicked spirits and the power of Satan. Their work is to deceive. And while this is true of those who are under the direct inspiration of superior beings, good or evil, it is true in a more restricted sense that consecrated teachers of divine truth may be regarded as God's prophets; and teachers of error may properly be called false prophets.

True and false prophets may be known. The prophets of God are teachers of purity, reprovers of sin, and faithful in warning the people of coming dangers. The duties of those whom God calls to speak in His name are clearly expressed by the sacred writers. We here quote from three of them:—



THE CRUCIFIXION.

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isa. 58:1.

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.” Joel 2:1.

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” 2 Tim. 4:1, 2.

False prophets do not reprove the people for their sins, and do not warn them of coming danger; but they proclaim peace to the sinner. Their teachings lead from God and His word, and are such as please the unconverted mind. The inspired writers have also spoken definitely of the testimony and work of false prophets. We here give several scriptures for example:—

“And Mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies. They shall not be in the assembly of My people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the laud of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God. Because, even because they have seduced My people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.” Eze. 13:9, 10.

“For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” Jer. 6:13, 14.

“Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place.

Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them." Jer. 14: 13, 14.

Jeremial's reprovng words to the false prophet Hananiah, who had prophesied peace, are in place here also:—

"Hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people: The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him." Jer. 28: 7-9.

It is time enough to believe such prophets after their predicted good time has come.

After stating the duty of the faithful servant of God to preach the word, to reprove, to rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, the apostle says:—

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. 4: 3, 4.

That time has now fully come. The people choose pleasing fables, which do not disturb them in their sins, rather than the reprovng, searching declarations of the word of God. They love to be deceived by the teachings of false prophets, and to "say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." Isa. 30: 10.

"Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall

not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. 5: 29-31.

The ears of the people are filled with the pleasing fables of the world's conversion, a good time coming, and that we are just entering the golden age. The threatenings of God's word on the proud, the haughty, the vain, the rich, the sinners in Zion, and those out of Zion, are kept back by the false teachers of these times. To such a pass have things come that many even dare to teach that the moral code of the ten commandments is abrogated. As the result of all this, we see in the world, and in the professed church of Jesus Christ also, that—

INIQUITY ABOUNDS.

Verse 12: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

This verse clearly indicates the condition of things to exist in the last days. Iniquity is to abound. There will be vice and corruption on every hand. And this will have an effect on many who have known and loved the truth. Their ardour will wane. They will become cold and formal. The text must have special reference to the professed church of Jesus Christ. Men must first experience the love of God and of heavenly things before that love can grow cold. Hence, those who have never been converted are not here referred to as losing their love and zeal for the truth. The apostasy is in the church. Iniquity prevails to such an extent that it finds its way into

the very heart of the professed church of Christ, diffusing its chilling influence through the whole body. The church itself becomes worldly, cold, and formal. With this agree the words of the apostle:—

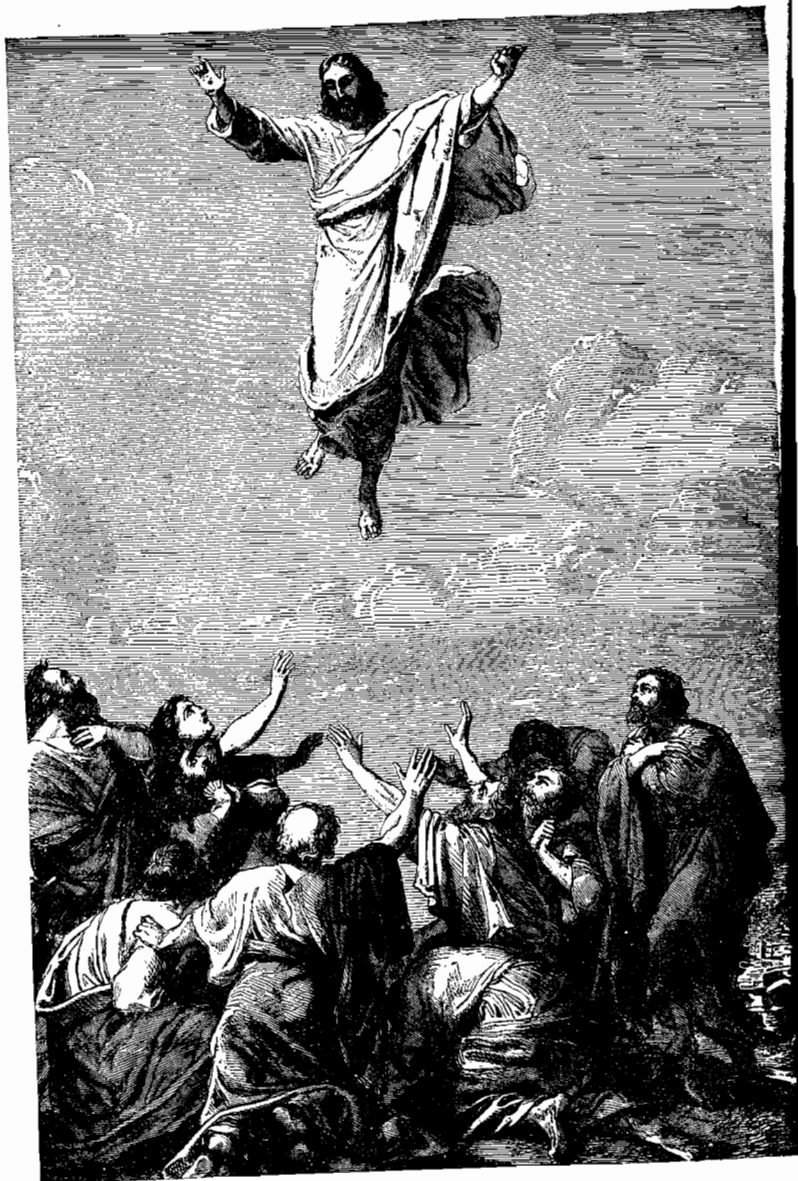
“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.*” 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Here is a catalogue of eighteen sins, all resting upon those having a form of godliness. These are not infidels and common worldly sinners, for *they* have not a form of godliness; but they are men and women professing to be followers of Jesus Christ. And although they make a profession of piety as high as heaven, these very sins lie at their doors. And by reason of their example and their chilling influence, many are enticed from the humble path that leads to heaven, and their love waxes cold.

THE END.

Verse 13: “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

As before noted, the word *end*, whenever used in this chapter, refers to the end of the gospel age, and to nothing else. It is the end associated in the New Testament with the second appearing of Jesus Christ. If it be urged that the word “end” has reference to the close of mortal life, then we reply that the disciples did not ask their Lord (verse



THE ASCENSION.

3) when they should die; but, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Neither does the Lord speak of death when He says (verse 6), "But the end is not yet." And it would be strange indeed to suppose that the word "end" in verse 14 meant death. If any think such a position admissible, let them read it into the text, thus: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall death come." Absurdity! This verse (verse 13), therefore, has special reference to those who, amidst the terrible corruption and depravity of the last days, should lead pure lives, and maintain their fidelity to God and their love for His truth.

Verse 14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

We here have stated what must take place before the end comes. The gospel, with all its warnings and offers of mercy, is to be preached in all the world. But the text is robbed of its force and wrested from its true meaning by that interpretation, sometimes given, by which it is assumed that all men will receive the gospel and be converted, and, instead of the end, there will ensue a thousand years in which all shall know the Lord, and then, after this long period of peace and safety, the end will come. How much is assumed by such an interpretation of the text will appear when we consider that the text does not say that every individual will even hear this gospel of the kingdom, though all

have an opportunity to hear. It does not state that any one will be converted and made holy by it. And we find it far from intimating that the world will be converted and remain so one thousand years. We have no reason to conclude that in the future everyone is to give heed to the preaching of the gospel any more than they have in the past. The history of the past shows that while a few have believed and received it, the great mass of men have passed it by unheedingly. And thus it will be to the end. The text simply states: First, that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world;" second, "for a witness unto all nations;" and third, that "then [not one thousand years later, but THEN] shall the end come."

But to what does the term "gospel of the kingdom" refer? The query sometimes arises as to whether the gospel in the common acceptation of the word, or a gospel peculiarly related to the second coming of Christ, is here meant. No such distinction is to be drawn. There neither is, has been, nor will be more than one gospel of the kingdom of God. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1: 8.

The gospel, then, in this instance, is the same as that which was preached to Abraham, and which Paul preached, which is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." But the gospel adapts itself to the times and needs of the people to whom it is preached. While, from its earliest dawn in Eden, Christ has been its central

figure, and the power of God its all-sufficient strength, it has, nevertheless, had a development. It has ever embraced God's messages of warning and mercy to mankind. In it God's plans have been unfolded as the ages have rolled on.

Thus, Paul, who preached the gospel, while standing before Felix, reasoned "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Acts 24:25. But the time was coming when the gospel message would announce the hour of God's judgment *come*. Thus we read:—

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:6, 7.

The gospel is here called the "everlasting gospel." It must necessarily, therefore, be the gospel of Christ. But when it reaches that point in its development indicated in this scripture, it says, "Fear God; . . . for the hour of His judgment is come."

The gospel of Jesus Christ embraces all truth relating to salvation. The warnings, counsel, invitations, promises, precepts, prophecies, proclamations, or whatever the Lord would have the people hear,—the gospel embraces them all. In the days of Noah, the gospel included repentance, faith, obedience, with the promises of grace and mercy; it also included the warning of the impending judgment. And the only way to escape that judgment was to heed the

warning message which was proclaimed for one hundred and twenty years to the wicked world.

So here in Revelation we have the gospel with all it implies, including the message of Christ's second coming and kingdom and the judgment; for note the development of the gospel message as indicated in the verses immediately following those already quoted:—

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Rev. 14:8.

Then a third follows, warning against false worship, the result of all of which is that a people is developed who are described thus:—

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Verse 12.

Then immediately following the proclamation of these messages, we have the following scene presented to view:—

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. . . . And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." Rev. 14:14-16.

Thus we learn the meaning of the term "gospel of the kingdom." It is *the gospel*. It embraces the plan of salvation from first to last, the messages of warning in all ages, and, according to the scripture quoted, before the end is to include the proclamation of the judgment hour come, the soon coming of Christ, a warning against apostasy, and the duty to

worship the God of heaven alone. This our Saviour says "shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." The Revelator says the message is to be preached "to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." Christ says, "In all the world." When this shall be done, the end will come.

The world-wide proclamation of the soon coming of Christ was inaugurated about 1832. Since that time, the work of extending its warning voice has gone on. A most remarkable feature of this movement is the fact that in different countries individuals were moved upon, almost simultaneously, to study the prophecies and proclaim the nearness of the end, although they knew nothing of what was being done by others. In Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Asia, the United States, and Canada, a profound interest in this subject was created, and people were led to expect the early appearance of Jesus. Since that time clearer light has been shining forth from the messages of Revelation 14, just referred to, and still the work is onward. Wherever the light of the Bible has penetrated, the good news of the coming Saviour is now going. Not only so, but messengers bearing this gracious warning are rapidly finding their way into the dark portions of the earth. Evidence of its extent and progress might be expressed in facts and figures; but the rapid development of the work would soon leave these in the rear. Let it suffice to say that at present the whole gospel is being preached and published in all the leading languages and countries of the world. The work has encircled the globe. It is rapidly reaching every

nation, tongue, and people. We are certainly rapidly approaching the end; for when the purpose of God in the proclamation of the coming reign of Christ shall be fully accomplished, then the end will come.

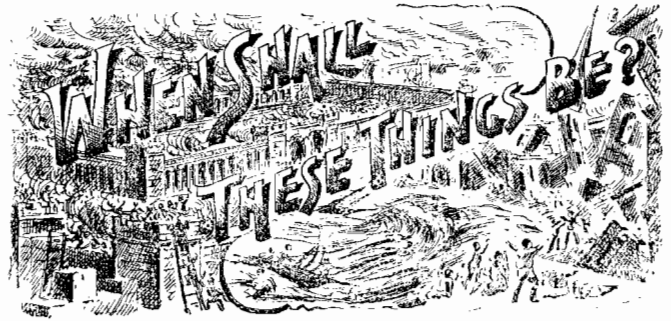
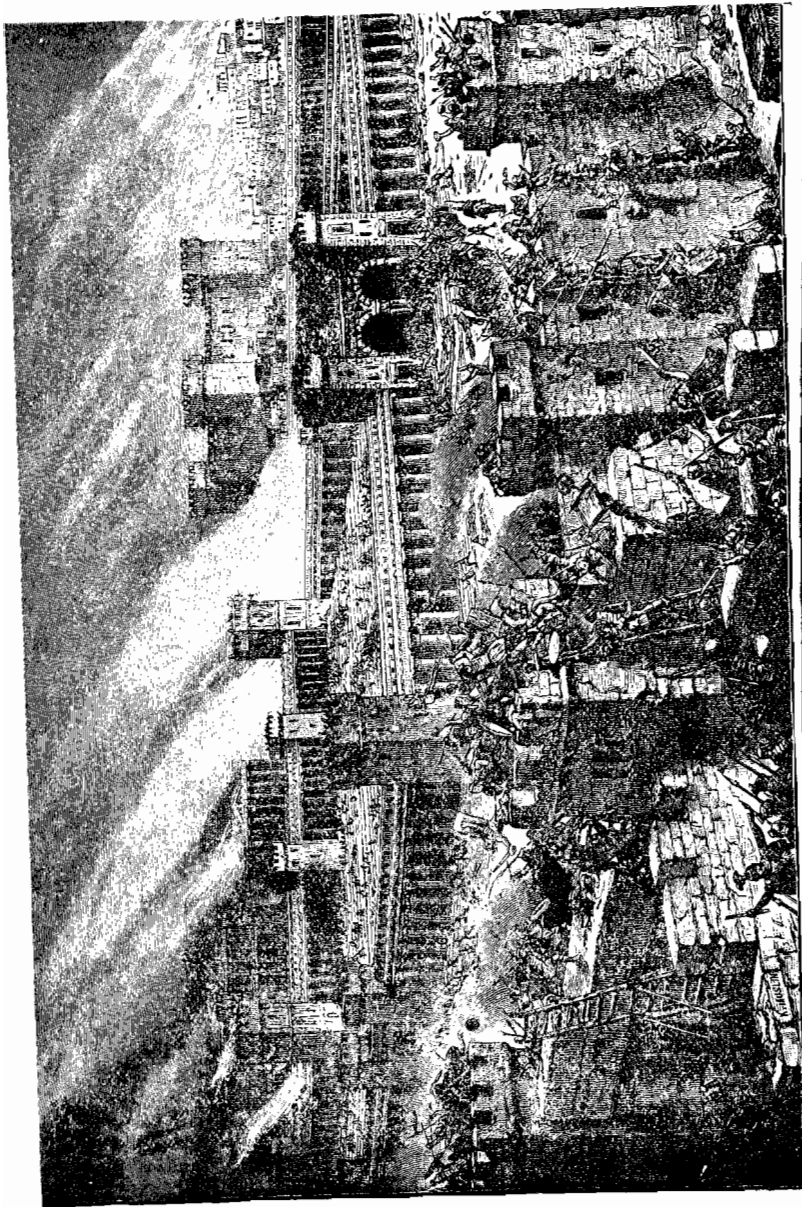
We are thus, in the first fourteen verses of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, brought down over the entire Christian dispensation. Beginning with a warning against the deceptions that were to succeed His own times, Christ next describes wars and disasters, persecutions, apostasy, the perils of the last days, and closes with an announcement of the extent to which the gospel shall be preached before the end. Following this, He goes back and describes more minutely the great events inquired after by His disciples, giving further details respecting the destruction of Jerusalem and the specific signs of His coming. He thus carries us again down over the same period of time.

SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING.

WHEN will the black and weary night,
So full of sins and sighs,
End, and the dawn of righteousness
Upon the world arise?

Crowns tremble 'neath His "iron rod,"
Thrones sway in every blast;
Dark shadows of events to come
Upon the world are cast!

Are these His signal-flags unfurled—
His watchfires in the night—
To tell us of His near approach
Who brings the promised light?—*Selected.*



Verses 15-20: "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let Him understand); then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains; let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day."

OUR Lord having, in verses 5-14, passed over the important events in the Christian age down to the end, goes back and introduces in verse 15 the destruction of Jerusalem, in answer to the inquiry, "When shall these things be?" Luke's version of this language is, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Luke 21:20. By this we know that the term "abomination of desolation" refers to the Roman army. This desolating power is spoken of by Daniel as follows:—

"And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. . . . And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Margin, "desolator." Dan. 9: 26, 27.

Here is a clear prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. Our Lord referred to the book of Daniel, and taught His disciples to read and understand it; and when they should see take place what was there predicted, they must make their escape.

It would seem to be impracticable to flee from a city after it was encompassed with armies: but our Saviour did not speak at random. Josephus tells us that Cestius Gallus, the Roman general who first led the attack upon Jerusalem, became dismayed at the apparent forces and strength of the city, and after having surrounded the city, without any just reason, and contrary to the expectation of all, raised the siege. The historian says: "He retired from the city, without any reason in the world."—*Wars of the Jews*, book 2, chap. 19. And in the first words of the succeeding chapter he further states: "After this calamity had befallen Cestius, many of the most eminent Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink."

Dr. A. Clarke, commenting on verse 16, says:—

This counsel was remembered and wisely followed by the Christians afterwards. Eusebius and Epiphanius say that, at this juncture, after Cestius Gallus had raised the siege, all who believed in Christ left Jerusalem and fled to Pella and other places beyond Jordan."

The flight of the Christians of Judea to the mountains would be attended with difficulties. And their subsequent condition would be that of hardship and suffering. The Lord knew this, and gave them the instructions and warnings necessary.

The statement of verse 19 was given to save them from the sorrows of unnecessary woe. That was a time of trouble.

To flee in the winter would subject them to exposure and cold. Over the recurring seasons they had no control. Winter would come in its turn; but there was a God who rules in the affairs of men, who could so control events as to prevent the necessity of fleeing at this unfavourable time. To Him they were to address their petitions for merciful protection and care.

"Neither on the Sabbath day." *The Sabbath* is the uniform term used in both Testaments to designate the day on which God rested after the creation, the day upon which He put His blessing, and which He set apart for man. In His life Christ kept the Sabbath (see Luke 4:16); in His teaching He upheld it, and taught its true meaning and what was "lawful" to do on that day (Matt. 12:12); and when He lay in the tomb, the devout women reverently rested on this day "according to the commandment." Luke 23:56. Christ declared Himself Lord of the Sabbath, and said it was made for man. Mark 2:27, 28. He does not speak of the Sabbath as being only a seventh part of time, or one day in seven, and no day in particular, nor does He call it a Jewish institution. The Sabbath is the term

used, referring to the last day of the first week of time, and to the last day of each subsequent week since then. It was made to be a blessing to all mankind, as a perpetual memorial to ever keep in mind the one true God, the Creator of all things.

But the Jews, by their narrow views, their meaningless exactions and useless restrictions, had greatly perverted the meaning and use of this divine institution. They had made it a burden. Christ, in both His life and teachings, sought to rid it of these encumbrances, to magnify it, and restore it to its own holy dignity, and make this part of God's law, as well as the rest, honourable. Isa. 42:21. But the Jews rejected His teaching respecting the Sabbath, as they did His teaching upon other matters. They accused Him of breaking the Sabbath (John 5:18), and because of His teaching in regard to it, "went out and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him." Matt. 12:14. They therefore continued in their perverted notions and restricted ideas. Flight from Jerusalem and Judea on that day would consequently be attended with difficulties and probable detention. Hence the injunction to pray that circumstances should not necessitate their flight on that day. And their prayers were heard. God so overruled affairs that neither Jews nor Romans hindered them in their flight.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

Verse 21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be."

It is not surprising, perhaps, that upon a casual

reading some should conclude that this verse had its fulfilment at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. It is true that this was a time of great suffering, and the verse follows so closely those which relate to the destruction of the city, that this explanation suggests itself readily enough. But for good reasons we cannot accept that application of this verse. Jesus is giving a continuous prophecy. The narrative proceeds from verse to verse along the line of the entire dispensation.

The "great tribulation" mentioned in verse 21 is that of the church of Christ, and not the tribulation of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem. We offer the following reasons for so deciding:—

1. It is a fact that the tribulation of the Christian church, especially under the reign of the Papacy, was greater than God's people had suffered before "since the beginning of the world." And the tribulation of the Christian church was greater than it will ever be again. True, a time of trouble "such as never was," spoken of in Dan. 12:1, is coming *upon the wicked*; but we find in the same verse this blessed promise, "And at that time Thy people shall be delivered." The tribulation of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem was not greater than the world will ever witness. The vials of Jehovah's unmingled wrath are yet to be poured out, not upon the people of one nation only, but upon the guilty people of all nations, and it will be of such a terrible nature that no pen can picture the scene.

"The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried." Jer. 25:33.



2. If the tribulation be applied to the Jews, or to any other class of unbelieving men, it cannot be harmonised with Dan. 12:1, which speaks of the time of trouble such as never was, when Michael shall stand up. Certainly there cannot be two times of trouble, at different periods, greater than ever was or ever would be. Therefore the "tribulation" spoken of in Matt. 24:21, 29, applies not to the Jews, but to the church of Christ, extending through the 1260 years of papal persecution; and the "time of trouble" mentioned in Dan. 12:1, to the unbelieving world, to be experienced by them in the very near future. Of those of past generations who are to be saved out of all nations, it is said, "These are they which came out of *great tribulation*, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:9-14. This clearly shows upon whom the great tribulation foretold by Christ was to come.

3. The period of tribulation was shortened for the elect's sake. This cannot refer to the Jews; for the Jews were not the elect in A. D. 70, nor at any subsequent time. Upon their rejection of Christ, their house was left desolate, and the kingdom of God, the gospel, was taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, as Christ had said. Matt. 23:38; 21:43. Says Paul, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." The elect were the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. And where were they when distress came upon the Jews?—They had fled to the mountains. It is absurd, then, to say that the days of retribution upon the Jews in the city of

Jerusalem for their unbelief, were shortened for the sake of the elect, who had fled from the place of distress. Moreover, the punishment that came upon Jerusalem was not restrained or modified, but continued until the city was destroyed, and its people were given to the sword and to captivity.

4. The connection between verses 20 and 21 shows that the tribulation was to commence with those Christians who were to flee out of the city. "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day; for then shall be great tribulation." Our Lord here speaks of the tribulation which His people would suffer from the time of their flight onward. We follow them in their flight to the mountains, and then pass along down through the noted persecutions of the church of God under pagan Rome, and we see, indeed, *tribulation*. And when we come to the period of papal persecutions, we see them suffering the most cruel tortures, and dying the most dreadful deaths that wicked men and demons could inflict. This last period is especially noted in prophecy.

The prophet Daniel saw the Papacy, its blasphemy, its high-handed presumption, its work of death on the saints, and its duration as a persecuting power, under the symbol of the little horn. Of this he says:—

"And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." Dan. 7:25.

It is generally admitted that "a time and times and the dividing of time" is 1260 years. The proof

of this may readily be seen by comparing Rev. 12:14, 6 and 13:5 with the scripture just quoted. In these passages we learn that "time, times, and the dividing of time" is equivalent to a thousand two hundred and threescore days, which equals three and one-half Biblical years, or "forty and two months," reckoning thirty days to the month. Applying the scriptural rule of interpretation, a day for a year (Eze. 4:6), we have 1260 years.

This period was to cover the supremacy of the Papacy. The beginning of it would be the point of the establishment of the power, or supremacy, of the Papacy. This was the year 538 A.D. Justinian, emperor of Rome, with his capital at Constantinople, espoused the cause of the bishop of Rome, and in 533 A.D. issued a decree which constituted that prelate head of all the churches. But the Arian Ostrogoths had possession of Rome, and it was not until they had been rooted up that the city was accessible to the bishop. This was accomplished in 538, by Belisarius, Justinian's celebrated general. It was thus the dragon gave the beast (the Papacy) "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Rev. 13:2. For a concise and clear account of this occurrence we refer the reader to the work "Two Republics," by A. T. Jones, pp. 551-553.

Commencing the 1260 years at A.D. 538, they reached to A.D. 1798, when Berthier, a French general, took possession of Rome. The pope was made a prisoner and carried with violence away from his palace and out of Italy, to Valence, France, where, a year and a half later, he died in exile. The Papacy

was stripped of its civil power. Here ended the days of tribulation spoken of by our Lord. But these days were to be—

SHORTENED FOR THE ELECT'S SAKE.

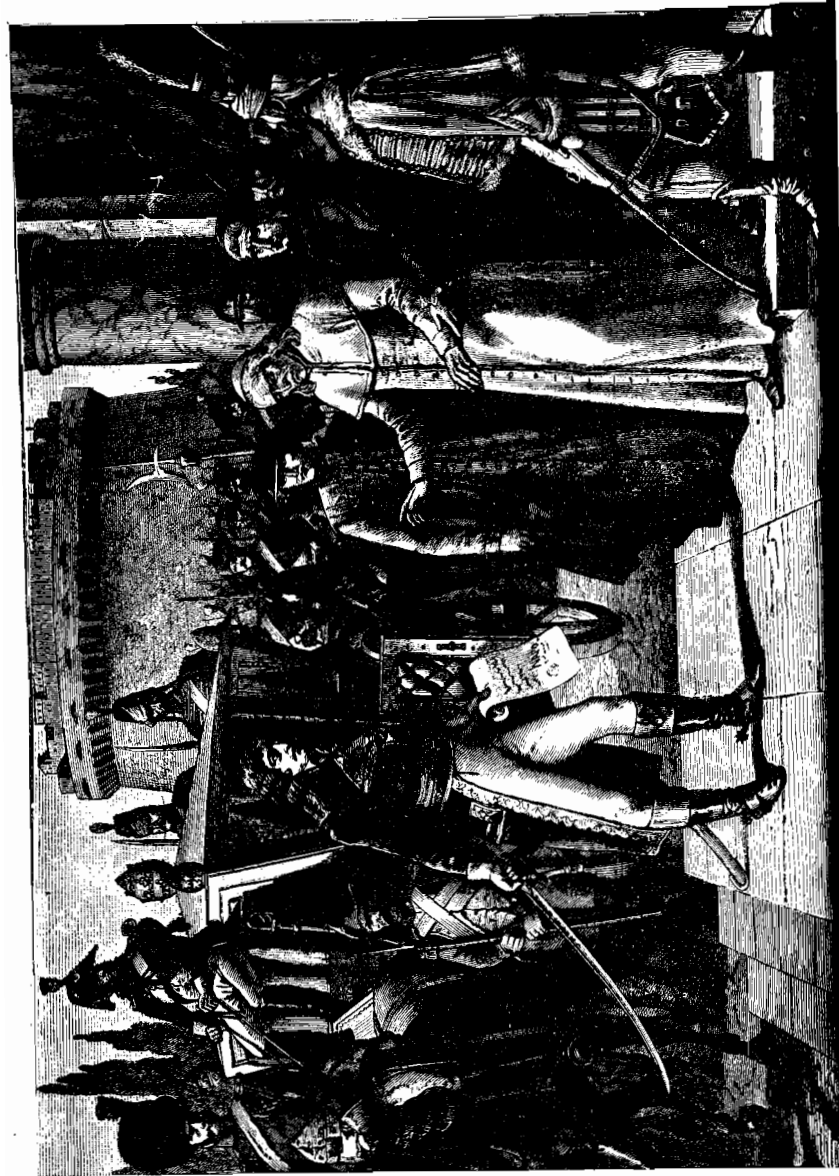
Verse 22: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

The Papacy dominated the state for 1260 years, and used the civil power to punish those she denominated heretics; and so persistent were her efforts to stamp out the true faith, that had not the period of her active persecution, in the providence of God, been shortened, the martyrdom of the true followers of Christ would have continued to 1798, in which event no flesh of the elect would have been saved. But the Reformation under Martin Luther, and those associated with this great reformer, modified this tribulation, and continued to restrain the rage and power of the Papacy until the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773, since which time there has been no general persecution waged against the true people of God.

Thus we are brought, in this prophetic discourse of our Lord, down to the close of the eighteenth century, or very near the present time. We would naturally expect, then, that the instructions and warnings which follow would be applicable to this generation. And such, indeed, we find to be the case.

LO, HERE, AND LO, THERE.

Verses 23-27: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs



and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

In these verses the great theme of Christ's second coming is again vividly brought to view. Satan is ever on the alert to contravene by some device or art the work of God. His most successful plan is to counterfeit and deceive. By this means he gains ready access to all such as desire to evade the force of truth. And having deceived an individual, he not only prevents his salvation, but gains to himself an adherent if not an active agent. So, as the time for the second advent draws near, the enemy becomes particularly active, knowing that he hath but a short time.

In the words last quoted, our Lord seeks to prepare the minds of His people for the deceptions that are to be practiced upon those who live near the time of His second coming. There will be some who will cry, "Lo, here; or Lo, there;" some will even claim to be Christ. They will pretend to represent the truth in regard to Christ's coming in various plausible or fanatical ways. Others, in order to reach other minds, will present theories of human device, accounting for the advent of Christ by various so-called rational schemes. Many sincere people will be led to expect the conversion of the world and a millennium of peace. Others will be persuaded that the coming of Christ means death. And even false

prophets, showing great signs and wonders, will appear. All these will form an atmosphere of deception, the influence of which will stupefy and mislead the people, and, if it were possible, deceive the very elect of God.

In this fearful work will be engaged the notorious deceiver, the trained agents of Satan, the worldly philosopher, worldly preachers, popular ministers, critics of the Bible, and many whose eyes do not discern the signs of the times. The Mormons will call the people to the desert; Spiritualism will invite us to the secret chamber, where Satanic signs and wonders are wrought to captivate the mind and divert it from the truth. Of these "false prophets" Paul speaks in 1 Tim. 4:1:—

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."

In another scripture the apostle places the coming of Christ in connection with—

"The working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thess. 2:9-11.

These are some of the deceptions of which Christ is speaking in the text. It is undoubtedly the work of modern Spiritualism. This work, in its present form, originated in the year 1848, and constitutes, and is to constitute, one of the most prominent signs of the end.

Let no one be deceived by any means. For these

are but subterfuges. They are not the coming of Christ. He has said, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." John 14:3.

The angels said at His ascension,—

"*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.

Paul tells us,—

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." 1 Thess. 4:16.

While men are appearing in different parts of the earth claiming to be Christ returned to earth the second time, and though Satan himself should clothe himself as an angel of light, and appear to men, claiming to be Christ, none of these will be permitted to come, or will have the power to come, as Christ is to come. None need be deceived by any of these; for Christ Himself has told us the *manner* of His coming. To guard us against being deceived by these impostures, He said:—

"As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; *so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*"

He will come literally, personally, the same Jesus who was here upon the earth; not in lowly form as an offering for sin, to be set at naught, abused, and crucified; but in "all His glory," attended with "all the holy angels." Matt. 25:31. We shall know when He comes, for "every eye shall see Him." Rev. 1:7. Most terrible and imposing will be the grandeur of that scene.

None of these false christs will be able to come in this manner. The Roman army did not come to Jerusalem in this way. Death does not come in this way. The deceptive wonders of Spiritualism cannot imitate the glory of Christ's second coming. He will come in power and great glory (verse 30); He will come in the glory of His Father (chapter 16:27); and in the glory of the holy angels (Luke 9:26); all the holy angels will come with Him. Matt. 25:31. His coming will be as visible and as glorious and resplendent as the lightning. When Jesus revealed Himself to Saul of Tarsus, there was a light above the brightness of the sun (Acts 26:13); of the angel who appeared at the tomb after the resurrection of Jesus it is said, "His countenance was like lightning" (Matt. 28:3); and Ezekiel says of the messengers of the Most High, they "ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." Eze. 1:14.

When Jesus comes in the glory of His Father, with so glorious a train attendant, His coming will indeed be as the lightning coming out of the east and shining to the west, and no one will have any more occasion or opportunity to say to his fellow, "See here," than one would have to call another to behold a glare of lightning flashing through the heavens. The vivid lightning flashing out of the distant east, and shining even to the west, lights up the whole heavens. What, then, when the Lord comes in flaming glory, and all the holy angels with Him? The presence of only one holy angel at the sepulchre where Christ lay dead, caused the Roman

guard to shake, and become as dead men. The light and glory of one angel completely overpowered those strong sentinels. The Son of man is coming in His own kingly glory, and in the glory of His Father, attended by all the holy angels. Then the whole heavens will blaze with glory, and the whole earth will tremble before Him.

It is thus that Jesus answers the question, "When shall these things be?" He next proceeds to answer the second question.

WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING?

Verses 29-31: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

DARKENING OF THE SUN.

We have before seen that our Lord speaks in this chapter of the long period of tribulation that was to come upon His followers, and we have also seen how those days of tribulation were shortened for the elect's sake. Christ says that immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened.

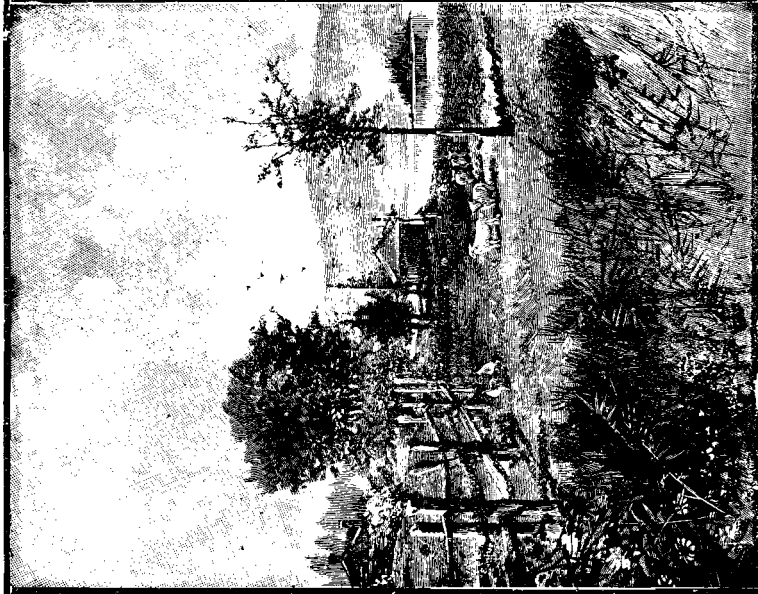
Mark, in his Gospel, gives it as follows:—

"In those days, *after* that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark 13:24.

This makes the time in which the sun was to be



Mid-Day.



THE DARK DAY OF MAY 19, 1780.

Morning.

darkened very distinct and definite. The days of tribulation were the 1260 years of papal supremacy, beginning in 538 A. D. and ending with the capture of Rome and the pope by the French in 1798. But we have already seen that the "tribulation," or persecution, of those days was "shortened" for the elect's sake. The active persecution of the church by papal power ceased about 1773. Then, according to Mark's statement, the sun should be darkened between that date and 1798. And thus it was. May 19, 1780, has passed into history as "the dark day."

This is a fact of so general knowledge that we need not consume a great amount of space with proofs. A few references to undoubted authorities will suffice.

Noah Webster's dictionary, edition 1869, under the head of "Explanatory and Pronouncing Vocabulary of Noted Names," says:—

"*The dark day*, 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. Birds sang their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn-yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known."

Tract No. 379 of the American Tract Society says:

"In the month of May, 1780, there was a very terrific dark day in New England, where 'all faces seemed to gather blackness,' and the people were filled with fear."

From another good authority we quote:—

"A solemn gloom of unusual darkness before ten o'clock, —a still darker cloud rolling under the sable curtain from the north and west before eleven o'clock,—excluded the light so that none could see to read or write in the House, even at either window, or distinguish persons at a small distance, or perceive any distinction of dress in the circle of attendants; wherefore, at eleven o'clock adjourned the House till two in the afternoon."—*Journal of the Connecticut House of Representatives*, Friday, May 19, 1780.

Herschel, the great astronomer, says:—

"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."

From another reliable authority we take the following:—

"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.

An extract from a sermon preached at that time will be of interest:—

"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. Travellers 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.*

DARKENING OF THE MOON.

By the remarkable obscuration of the moon on the following night, the next sign, the darkening of the moon, was fulfilled. Concerning this it is only necessary to insert a few historical proofs:—

"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. About midnight, the clouds were dispersed, and the moon and stars appeared with unimpaired brilliancy."—*Stone's History of Beverly.*

Mr. Tenney, of Exeter, N. H., quoted by Mr. Gage, to the Historical Society, speaking of the dark day and dark night of May 19, 1780, says:—

"The darkness of the following evening 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 eye was equally invisible with the blackest velvet."

A contemporary paper contained the following:—

"During the whole time a sickly, melancholy gloom overcast the face of nature. Nor was the darkness of the night

less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day; for notwithstanding there was almost a full moon, no object was discernible but by the help of some artificial light, which, seen from the neighbouring houses and other places at a distance, appeared through a kind of Egyptian darkness which seemed almost impervious to its rays. This unusual phenomenon excited the fears and apprehensions of many people."—*Massachusetts Spy, 1780.*

Concerning a similar phenomenon in the Old World, a reliable work says:—

"Three years later, and Europe with its teeming millions went under as mysterious a cloud, which, though not so dense, yet continued longer and awoke a wonder and fear that was widely felt. A haze, for which no known cause was then assigned (though in subsequent years it has been supposed by some to have been volcanic dust), spread through the entire breadth of the atmosphere over all the continent far into Asia. It appeared in Denmark, May 29, reached France, June 14; Italy, June 16; Norway, June 22; Austria and Switzerland, June 23; Sweden, June 24; and Russia, June 25. By the close of the month it had overspread like a pall all Syria, and on July 18, had penetrated the heart of Asia to the Altai Mountains. The obscurity prevailed a greater portion of the summer, imparting to the sun an unnatural colour of a dull, rusty red, and causing both the days and the nights to wear a weird and gloomy aspect. The atmosphere was highly electric, and nature was greatly convulsed.

"Dr. N. Webster in his valuable 'History of Pestilences,' vol. 2, p. 274, testifies to the general fear. As it was in America on the occurrence of the 'dark day,' so the churches in Europe were crowded with alarmed multitudes supplicating mercy of Heaven. Professor Lalande, the astronomer of France, attempted to quiet the popular fear by ascribing the darkened heavens to exhalations arising out of the earth; but both Webster and Humboldt (Cosmos IV., p. 75) rejected this solution of the mysterious obscurity. Protestant England

shared in the alarm it occasioned; and the poet Cowper sang that all the elements 'preached the general doom.' It was to this unaccountable obscuration of light that he refers in his 'Task':—

“‘Nature seems with dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all.’”

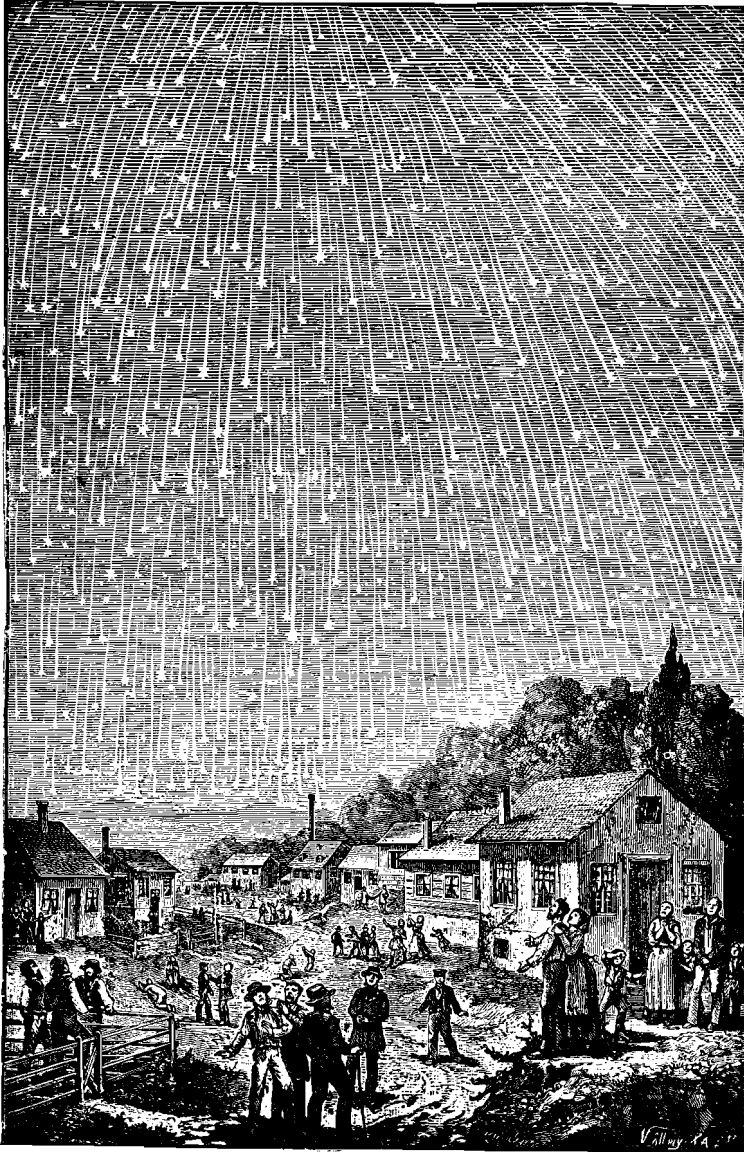
—*Great Consummation.*

Thus the first two signs of Christ's second coming occurred within the specified time, as the Lord had said.

“AND THE STARS SHALL FALL.”

How this sign could be fulfilled is a query with some who say such a thing would be impossible, as the earth itself is but a small body compared with many of the vast worlds of space. But all such queries are out of place, since Christ said the stars should fall, and the sign itself has already been witnessed. On the night of November 13, 1833, the grandest display of celestial fireworks ever beheld took place. From works and testimonies of undisputed authority we take the following descriptions of this remarkable event:—

“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 splendours of this celestial exhibition, the most brilliant sky-rockets and



THE FALLING STARS OF NOV. 13, 1833.

fireworks 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.

Professor Olmstead, of Yale College, a celebrated astronomer and meteorologist of America, 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 fireworks 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 splendour 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 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."

Henry Dana Ward bears this testimony:—

"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 gecn*,' in the only sense in which it is possible to be literally true."—*Journal of Commerce*, Nov 14, 1833.

If a single star seen by a few wise men of the East was a sufficient sign to indicate the first advent of Christ to this world, surely such wonderful signs as this and the darkening of the sun and moon, already described, which were witnessed by thousands of people over a considerable portion of the earth, are sufficient heralds of His second advent.

Not only here in Matt. 24 are the premonitory signs of the coming of Christ given, but the Lord through His prophets of old also foretold them. Thus:

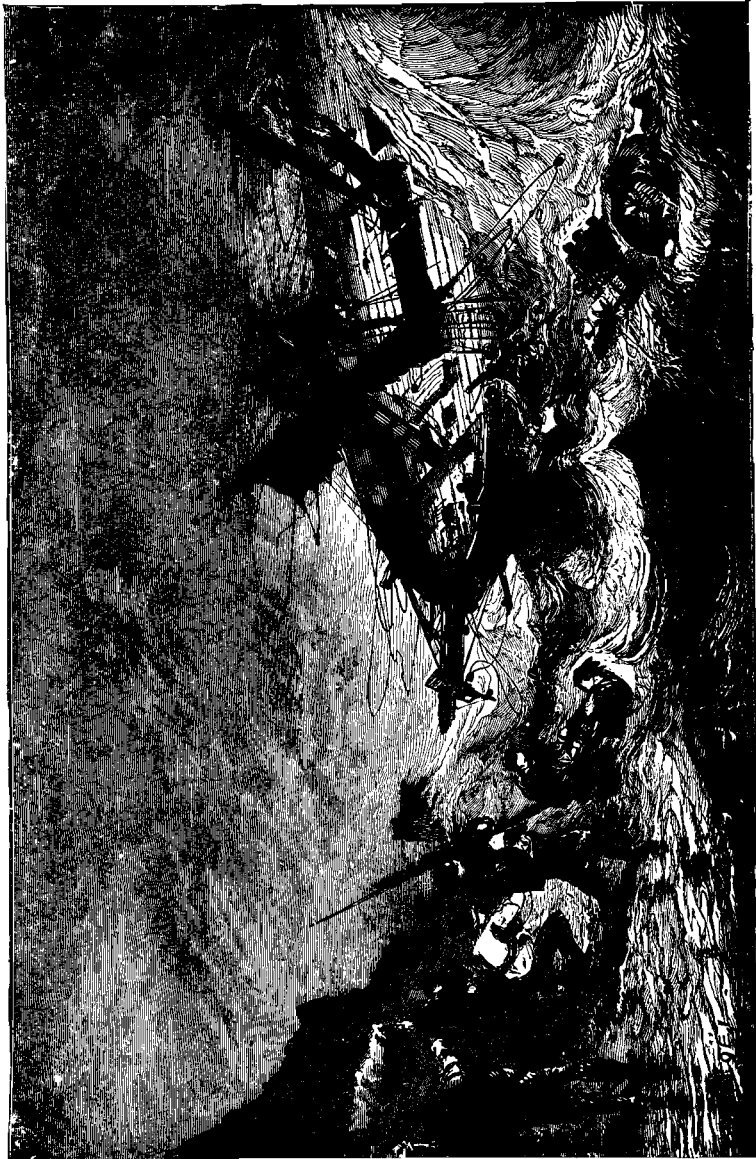
"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come." Joel 2:31.

"The sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." Isa. 13:10.

John the Revelator also says:—

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 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. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." Rev. 6:12-14.

The fourth and fifth seals of Revelation 6 apply to the papal persecution, which continued well into the eighteenth century. The great earthquake with which the sixth seal was to open occurred in 1755, and is known as the great earthquake of Lisbon, which



DISASTERS AT SEA.

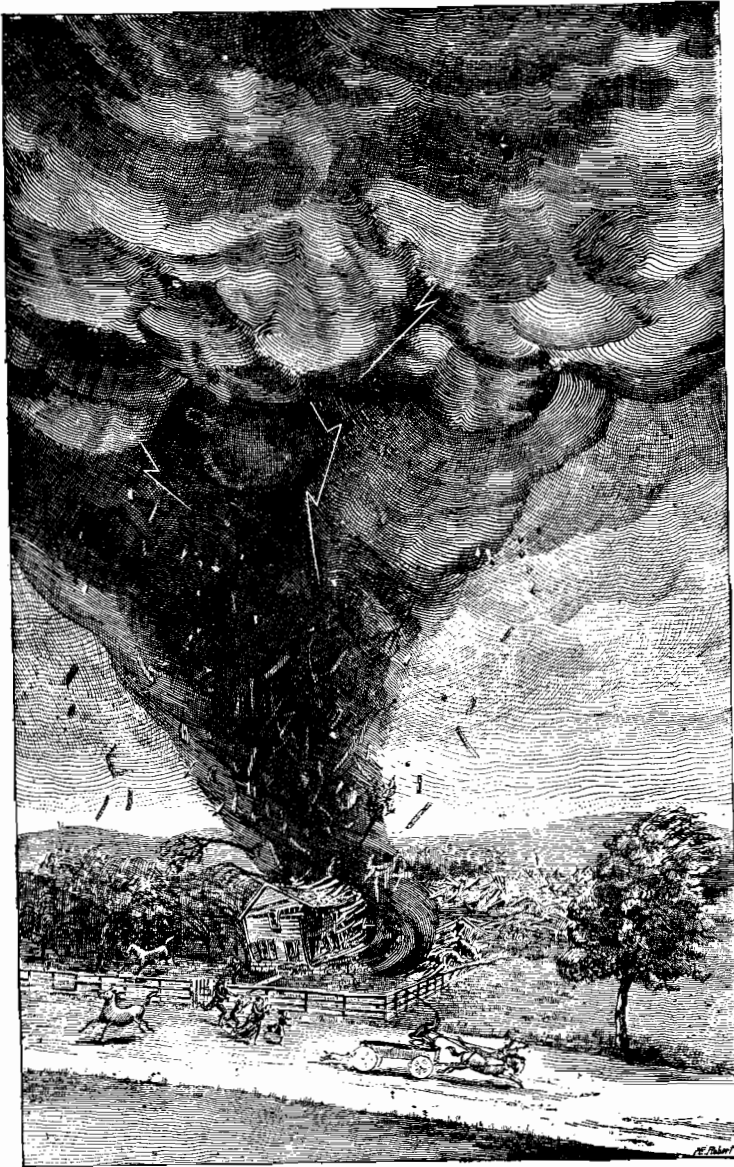
agitated no inconsiderable part of the earth, and destroyed many thousands of lives, 60,000 in Lisbon alone. The darkening of the sun and moon followed in 1780, and the falling of the stars in 1833. Consequently the next event which we are to expect under this seal is the departing of the heaven as a scroll. This takes place when Christ comes, as the remaining verses of the chapter show. We must therefore be living down very near that event.

THE SEA AND THE WAVES ROARING, AND MEN'S HEARTS FAILING THEM.

In the gospel as written by Luke, we have some additional specifications not recorded by Matthew, which are worthy of notice here. And they rightfully belong to this exposition, since the records of both Matthew and Luke are versions of the same discourse. The passage from Luke to which reference is made reads as follows:—

“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; men's hearts failing them for fear; and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” Luke 21: 25-27.

The signs in the sun, moon, and stars are here spoken of less specifically than by Matthew, while other features, which Matthew does not notice, are introduced between those signs and the shaking of the powers of heaven. These are of peculiar interest because we are living in the very days when the things of which Luke speaks are coming to pass.



A MODERN CYCLONE.

The signs in the sun, moon, and stars are in the past, but the violent commotions upon the earth, which cause anxiety, perplexity, and distress among nations and in the hearts of men, are now upon us. The expression, "the sea and the waves roaring," fitly describes the unusually frequent and terrific storms and commotions at sea of recent years. The tidal waves and volcanic upheavals at sea have, in the last two or three decades, been marked with extraordinary violence. On land, cyclones and earthquakes have carried on a fearful work of destruction of late. Many instances might be cited to substantiate this statement, but the events are too familiar to require it. Hardly a week passes but some great calamity of this kind is recorded.

The times we live in are anomalous to any that have ever preceded us. For some years there have been universal and active preparations for war, and yet almost universal peace. To secure the greatest efficiency of armed forces for defensive and offensive purposes has been the prime consideration of the various nations of the world. Europe echoes to the tread of vast hosts of war, while the nations are driven to their wits' end to provide for their support. It is well known that these costly preparations are not for show; and the hearts of men quail in view of the culmination which, though delayed, must soon be reached.

But while the "dogs of war" have been chained, and angel hands are holding the winds of strife (see Rev. 7:1-3), internal struggles and dissensions are rending the very vitals of the great nations of



earth. Within the confines of its own border, each of these nations is harbouring elements of the deadliest nature. Trouble is brewing that has for the people in many instances far more terror than foreign complications. For some time the ominous mutterings of an oncoming storm have been heard in every land, and it requires no remarkable acumen to discern the rapid approach of the crisis. Anarchy, Nihilism, Communism, strikes, riots, assassinations, and dynamitards are sending consternation and dismay to the hearts of the bravest of men. The wide-spread poverty, caused largely by the unscrupulous and insatiable greed for gain on the part of the rich, has so estranged the capitalist and the labouring man that fearful outbreaks and deeds of violence are feared on every hand.

The apostle James speaks directly concerning this matter in a prophetic glance at the present time. He says:—

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasures together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.” James 5:1-6.

The apostle locates the circumstances he here refers to in the last days. He denounces the rich

men who have heaped together treasures at this time, the rust and canker of which will be a witness against them. They live in pleasure and wantonness, while the cries of those whose wages they have kept back by fraud enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts, and distress and poverty drive many to suicide.

There is a universal cry of hard times in all the world. It is hard to obtain money; and yet there never was so much money in the world as at present. But it is being collected—gathered in heaps—by the powerful few, while the limited means of the masses are dwindling lower and lower. The poorer classes witness the absorption of wealth by the money-kings, with feelings that are gradually being aroused to the point of desperation by the sense of their inability to secure a more equitable distribution of the things of this world. The labourers cry, and God hears their cry.

That these things are taking place to-day, no one can for a moment deny. Such colossal fortunes the world has heretofore, at most, but dreamed of. There are men living to-day who have risen in wealth from obscure stations to become lords of untold millions. Their wealth passes the bounds of just computation; for it includes the power of oppression, by which it may be indefinitely increased. The lavish expenditure of these means for selfish pleasure often amounts to wantonness.

What, then, is to be done? Shall anarchy and violence be resorted to? Shall the labourer seize the torch and the weapons of death? Shall the

country be devastated by strikes, strife, and civil war? Shall our communities be rent with murder, arson, treason, and intense personal hatred and enmity? Shall we advocate a reign of terror? No one possessing the natural instincts of humanity could contemplate such a condition of affairs except with horror. There are ghouls of society who gloat in blood; but such persons are not true citizens, they are not neighbours, they certainly are not Christians.

What, then, shall we do? This is a question of great importance just now. Inspiration long ago foresaw the situation. The pitying Saviour long since anticipated the sufferings that were to come upon this generation; and having, through His servant, outlined the present condition of affairs so clearly, He certainly would not leave His followers uninformed as to the course He would have them pursue. We have to read only two verses further in James's letter to find the counsel we need:—

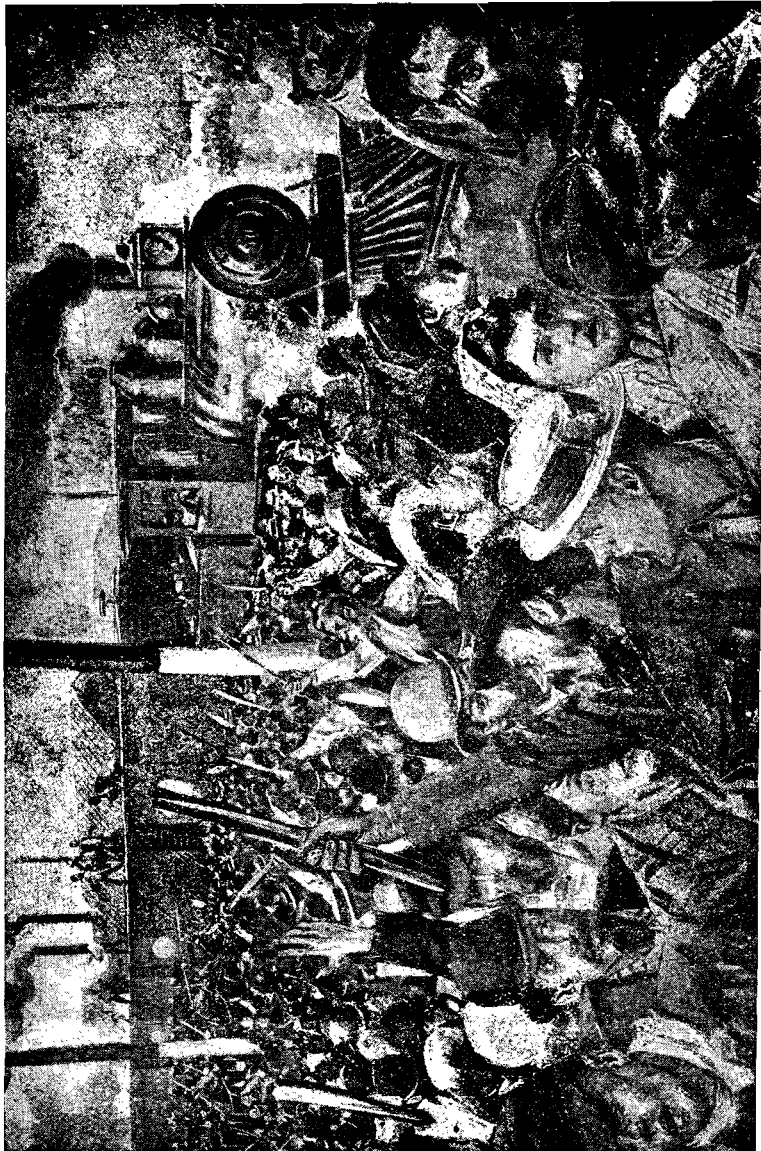
“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” James 5:7, 8.

Oppression and revolt, combination and intrigue, strife and bloodshed, will not cease till Jesus comes. So long as this present evil world stands, so long will these things exist and increase. “The wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand.” “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.” Dan. 12:10; 2 Tim. 3:13. Supreme selfishness, which, in the absence of divine

grace, controls all men, is not touched with the feelings of another's need or woe.

Those who are weary of strife, those who through misfortune or oppression have been made to feel their need of relief, will find rest to their souls in looking for the coming of the Lord. It is vain to match evil with evil, or to try to cure wrong with wrong, and seek to right matters by retaliation. The gospel of Christ, which uproots selfishness, and implants in the heart the principle of supreme love to God and equal love to our neighbour, is the only remedy for these ills. All, therefore, that we can really do to counteract the annoyances of this life must be done through the gospel of peace. In this time of perplexity, distress, and fear, let every Christian hold up Christ and cling to Him. Let His patient suffering be exemplified in whatever circumstances may come. Just a little beyond, there is relief.

Strikes, boycotts, lock-outs, unions, or any other human devices or demonstrations do not destroy the love of money, which is the root of all evil. They only increase the distress, as the experience of the past few years shows. For never were these things so much in vogue as now, and never was life so insecure, business so uncertain, and labour in such distress as at present. The employment of arbitrary force provokes greater efforts on the opposite side, and thus the breach is widened, and the strife becomes more bitter. We do not argue the merits or demerits of the case. That there is deep wrong involved, the fruits plainly show. It is our task only to point out the one remedy available alike to all. That remedy



CHICAGO RIOT, 1894.

is the gospel of Christ, which is soon to close in a glorious triumph for those who have patiently and faithfully wrought His will.

“THE POWERS OF HEAVEN SHALL BE SHAKEN.”

We do not apprehend that this circumstance will occur as a sign of Christ's coming, but rather that it will constitute one of the events closely connected with His coming, as the sign of the Son of man in heaven is seen immediately following this shaking. See Matt. 24:29, 30. An evident distinction may be drawn between the *signs* of the advent and the *circumstances* connected with it. This event, the shaking of the powers of heaven, we must regard as being future. It holds the same place in the events of this chapter, that the departing of the heavens as a scroll does in the events of the sixth seal of Revelation 6. Both follow the falling stars. The Scriptures plainly teach that, prior to the resurrection of the just by the voice of the Son of God, the voice of God the Father will shake the heavens and the earth, when will be fulfilled the shaking of the powers of the heaven. This is not the voice of the Son of God as He descends to raise the dead. It comes from the throne of God in the temple of heaven.

“The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.” Joel. 3:16.

“Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger.” Isa. 13:13.

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little

while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.” Hag. 2:6.

Paul quotes from the words of the Lord by Haggai, and comments as follows:—

“Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken.” Heb. 12:26, 27.

This shows that the shaking of the powers of the heaven, by which we understand is meant the shaking of the sun, moon, and stars, is a final work.

“THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN.”

Neither is this one of the signs showing that the coming of the Son of man is soon to take place, but that it is actually taking place; that He is coming. It is “the *sign* of the Son of man *in heaven*.” It is that which indicates His position. When Christ ascended from the Mount of Olivet, “a cloud received Him” from the sight of His disciples. They still gazed at the cloud as it rolled upward, bearing the Saviour toward the Father's throne; but they could not see His person. When He comes “in like manner” as He was taken up to heaven, the cloud will appear, small in the distance, but as it draws near, it will signify to those who are looking for His return, that He is there, and that soon His presence will fill the earth with matchless glory. To those who are unprepared it will be the signal of terror and dismay. In Rev. 14:14, the holy seer records the scene in the following words: “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man.”

This is not a mass of vapour but a cloud of resplendent glory. He comes "with power and great glory." He will "come in the glory of His Father" (Matt. 16:27); in His own glory, "and all the holy angels with Him." Matt. 25:31. The glory of the Father, of the Son, and of all the holy angels—this glory will constitute the cloud which attends Him on the way. Of its intensity we can form no just conception. In the presence of one angel the Roman guard "did quake and become as dead men;" but there are ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of them in this throng. Above the brightness of their glory is that of the Father and the Son. At first the cloud is only perceptible: but as it approaches, it attracts attention, and at length every eye is fastened intently upon the wonderful spectacle. The trumpet resounds, the voice of the archangel awakens the dead, and they come forth to share in the glorious revelation of their Redeemer. All nature is convulsed with her coming dissolution. Each moment the glory draws nearer, and soon the wicked can no longer endure the sight.

"And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Verse 30.

Again attention is directed to the parallel language of Rev. 6:15-17:—

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the

mountains and rocks. Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

The prophet Isaiah describes the same thrilling event from the other standpoint—that of the waiting people of God:—

"He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:8, 9.

The apostle Paul gives a vivid description of the event with its attendant circumstances as follows:—

"But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:13-17.

The once slighted, insulted, and crucified Saviour, now King of kings and Lord of lords, is coming near the earth! His glory blazes everywhere! The saints hope and rejoice with trembling. But what an hour for the wicked! The tribes of the earth

inourn. Amid the ruins of shivered creation, they hold one general prayer-meeting. Kings and great men, rich men, chief captains and mighty men, free and bond,—all, yes, all unite in the general wail. As the Son of man in the glory of His Father, attended by all the holy angels, draws still nearer, consternation fills every breast. They hide in dens and in the rocks of the mountains. Their only hope is to be concealed from the glory of that scene. They know it is too late to pray for mercy; that probation for the human family has ended forever. Describing their condition, the prophet Isaiah says:—

“And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.” Isa. 2:19-21.

But rocks cannot shelter them from the burning glory manifested by the King of kings, attended by the whole heavenly host. When “the Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father,” “and all the holy angels with Him,” no sinner can endure the scene and live. The exceeding brightness of Christ and that vast multitude of angels, brighter than a thousand suns at noonday, will pierce the sinner’s lowest hiding place, and will “make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.” Zeph. 1:18. The Son of man will be seen “coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

But before His coming, a great work will be done for His people. Should He suddenly burst upon them now, they could not endure “the power and great glory” of the scene. This subject is well illustrated by the following words of the prophet:—

“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Hosea 6:3.

The morning is a beautiful figure of the opening glory of the day of God. The day-star first appears, then the dawn of day; and as the light of day increases, the eyes are enabled to endure it, and view the sun shining in his strength. But should the light of the sun burst upon the world suddenly at midnight, no human eye could endure it.

So will the people of God be prepared to meet their coming King. They must first break away from the love and cares of this world, and consecrate all to the Lord. Then will they, in due time, share the outpouring of the Holy Spirit “as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth.” The day-star will arise in their hearts. 2 Peter 1:19. Those who have taken heed to the sure word of prophecy through the dark, watching night, will then raise their heads in triumph. They are filled with faith and with the Holy Spirit. Glory is poured upon them till they can gaze on Christ and angels. The trumpet sounds. The angels are dispatched to the graves of the righteous. The voice of the Son of God awakes the sleeping saints of all ages. They come forth in immortal perfection: and as they

leave the earth, the living saints are changed. The "elect from one end of heaven to the other," each with an angel bright and strong to lead the way, are caught up to meet the Lord, who waits in mid-heaven to receive the purchase of His blood. Language cannot describe the scene that follows. We can only contemplate the rapture that will fill each breast, and pray that we may be prepared to participate in that grand and final gathering of the saved.

WHAT A GATHERING THAT WILL BE!

At the sounding of the trumpet, when the saints are gathered home,

We will greet each other by the crystal sea;

When the Lord Himself from heaven to His glory bids them come,

What a gathering of the faithful that will be!

When the angel of the Lord proclaims that time shall be no more,

We shall gather, and the saved and ransomed see:

Then to meet again together, on the bright, celestial shore,

What a gathering of the faithful that will be!

At the great and final Judgment, when the hidden comes to light,

When the Lord in all His glory we shall see;

At the bidding of our Saviour, "Come, ye blessed, to My right,"

What a gathering of the faithful that will be!

When the golden harps are sounding, and the angel bands proclaim

In triumphant strains the glorious jubilee,

Then to meet and join to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb,

What a gathering of the faithful that will be!

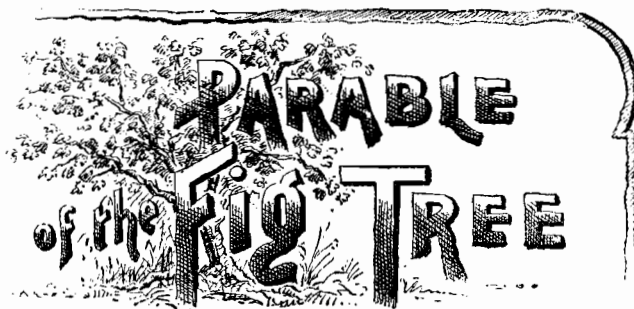
What a gathering of the loved ones, when we meet with one another,

At the sounding of the glorious jubilee!

What a gathering, when the friends and all the dear ones meet each other

What a gathering of the faithful that will be!

—J. H. Kurzenknabe.



Verses 32, 33: "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it ["He," R.V.] is near, even at the doors."

THIS parable is probably the most forcible figure that could be used with which to illustrate this subject. When the trees of the field begin to put forth their leaves, and the tender grass springs up, and the ground is being covered with its green velvet carpet, we know that summer is nigh. It is a certainty with us that summer is coming when we see these signs in nature. We know that summer is nigh. "So likewise," or, with the same certainty, we may *know* that Christ's coming is near when the signs which He foretold as heralds of His coming have appeared. How near?—Even at the doors. And how near may that be?—

Verse 34: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

It is sometimes claimed that the generation spoken of was the one then living. If so, then that generation must have seen all these things: for the Scriptures cannot be broken. But this we know was not the case. They did not see these signs. "All these things" must include the signs and circumstances of which Christ had just been speaking. In the preceding verses He gives the parable of the fig-tree, and addresses those who are to be living at that time directly: "So likewise *ye*, when *ye* shall see all these things, *know* that it is near." And then He says, "*This* generation shall not pass." What generation?—Evidently the one living at the time of which He was speaking, the one which was to see "these things come to pass." Not only does such an interpretation do no violence to the text, but it is obviously the only one that can be reasonably entertained in regard to it.

Paul speaks in the first person of those who will be living when Jesus comes. He says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." 1 Cor. 15:51, 52. And again, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." 1 Thess. 4:17. The things here mentioned by the apostle did not take place in his day. They have not yet taken place. Notwithstanding, he speaks of them as though they would take place in his day, and as if he would probably be alive when Christ came.

The proclamation of the coming and kingdom of

Christ is given to the last generation. God sent Noah to preach to the last generation before the flood, not to any preceding one. The very generation which was destroyed by the waters of the flood saw Noah build the ark, and heard his warning voice. So God has raised up men to give the solemn warning to the world at the right time that Christ is coming again. The end of all things is therefore at hand. The very generation of men that live after these signs have appeared, and who hear and reject the warning message of Heaven based on them, will witness that event, and drink the cup of the unmingled wrath of God. And those of this very generation who receive the message, suffer disappointments, and patiently endure the trials of the waiting position, will also witness the coming of Christ, and exclaim, "Lo, this is our God; we have *waited* for Him, and He will save us." Isa. 25:9.

Christ gave the signs of His coming. Then He added the parable of the fig-tree to show the meaning of the signs, that men might know when His coming was near. With what emphasis our Lord gave utterance to this sentiment! It is a rebuke upon our unbelief. As we read it, God help us to believe it: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." And as though this were not enough to lead us to unwavering faith, He adds these forcible words:—

Verse 35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

The word and promises of men may fail: but Christ has given assurance that His word, and His

word in reference to this solemn truth, will stand though heaven and earth fail.

“THE DAY AND HOUR.”

Verses 36, 37: “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

This has become a very familiar passage of Scripture because of the frequent use that is made of it to prove that nothing can be known of the proximity of Christ's second coming. But if we pause a moment and lay beside this verse those we have just studied, we shall be able to discover the exact truth at once.

“When ye shall see these things, know that it is *near*, even at the doors.”

“*This generation* shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.”

“But of that *day* and *hour* knoweth no man.”

The additional knowledge imparted in this last expression is that while men may know when Christ's coming is near, “even at the doors,” none know of the “day” and “hour.” The former we may know, and every Christian is commanded to know. The latter no man knoweth. One may know that an event is near, and yet not know the day or the hour when it will take place. That this is the scriptural teaching upon this point may be readily proved by a reference to 1 Thess. 5:1-4:—

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For

BUSH FIRES.



when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief."

An evident distinction is here drawn between two classes. Upon one class the day of the Lord will come as a thief. Those of the other are not in darkness that that day should come as a thief upon them. The children of God are children of light. Their Heavenly Father knows the end from the beginning, and He has promised to reveal His secret to His people through His servants the prophets. Amos 3:7. Those, therefore, who believe and study what the Lord has revealed through His prophets are in a position to know of the future what others do not and cannot know; and hence the Lord has said:—

"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chron. 20:20.

The apostle Peter also bears testimony to the same truth. He says:—

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19.

The dark place here spoken of is the future. The past is lighted up by history; the present is brought to our knowledge by press and telegraph; but the future no human art or wisdom can penetrate. Prophecy throws its gleam into those dark regions, yet unexplored, and marks out the path of history centuries in advance. As we pass along the

pathway of the past, we may, if we will, with the Bible in our hands, recognise the heavenly waymarks set up here and there, everyone of which is a monument to the wisdom and knowledge of God and the faithfulness of His word. Those who have no eyes to discern these things, no ears to hear, nor hearts to understand their significance, will pass on, and the final event will come upon them unawares. Not so with those who take heed to the things God has spoken. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Ps. 25:14.

We would not detract an iota from the force of the verse under consideration. It means just what it says. No man knows the definite time of Christ's coming. The day and hour, and even the year of the second advent are purposely hidden. Some of the prophetic periods reach to the time of the end (1798; Dan. 11:33-35), while others extend still further down as late as 1844 (Dan. 8:14); but none of them reach to the coming of the Son of man. The prophecies clearly point to the period of the second advent, but do not give the definite time of that event.

But to claim upon the strength of this passage that nothing should or could be known of the approach of Christ's coming, is to claim more than the text will warrant. More than this, it is not inconsistent with the text nor improbable that prior to that event the Lord will in His own way reveal that which has hitherto been withheld. Those who claim that the text proves that nothing may be known of the period of the second advent, make it

prove too much for their own unbelief. As recorded by Mark, the declaration reads: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." If the text proves that *men* will know nothing of the period of the second advent, it also proves that *angels* will know nothing of it, and also that *the Son* Himself will know nothing of it, till the event takes place! This position proves too much, and cannot, therefore, be correct. Christ will know of the period of His second advent to this world. The holy angels who wait around the throne of Heaven to receive messages relative to the part they act in the salvation of men, will know of the time of this closing event of salvation. And so will the waiting, watching people of God understand. An old English version of the passage reads, "But that day and hour no man *maketh known*, neither the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." This is the correct reading, according to several of the ablest critics of the age. The word *know* is used in the same sense here that it is by Paul in 1 Cor. 2:2: "For I determined not to know [make known] anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Men will not make known the day and hour, angels will not make it known, neither will the Son; but the Father will make it known. Says Alexander Campbell:—

"Macknight argues that the term *known* is here used as a causative, in the Hebrew sense of the conjugation *hiphil*, that is to *make known*. . . . His [Christ's] answer is just equivalent to saying, The Father will make it known when it pleases

Him; but He has not authorised man, angel, or the Son to make it known. Just in this sense, Paul uses the term *know*, 1 Cor. 2:2: 'I came to you *making known* the testimony of God; for I determined to *make known* nothing among you but a crucified Christ.'

Albert Barnes, in his "Notes on the Gospels," says:—

"Others have said that the verb rendered *knoweth* means sometimes to *make known*, or to reveal, and that the passage means, 'That day and hour none maketh known, neither the angels, nor the Son, but the Father.' It is true the word has sometimes that meaning, as 1 Cor. 2:2."

When the patriarch's work of warning and building was finished, God said to him, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." "For yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights." So when the waiting, watching, weeping, toiling time shall be finished, and the saints shall all be sealed, and shut in with God, then, we conclude, will the voice of the Father from heaven make known the definite time. See Rev. 16:17; Joel 3:16; Jer. 25:30.

The present is emphatically the waiting, watching time. It is the especial period of the patience of the saints. The Lord appeals to us thus:—

"Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Mark 13:35-37.

One of the fatal consequences of not watching is distinctly stated in Rev. 3:3:—

"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a

thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

In consequence of not watching, the people will remain in ignorance of the approach of that hour. And the unavoidable inference is that by watching they will be aware of and prepared for its coming. In answer to the agonising prayer of the Son of God, "Father, glorify Thy name," there came a voice from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The disciples understood these words from heaven, while the people that stood by said it thundered. John 12:27-29. So will the waiting disciples of Christ understand the voice of God when He shall speak from on high; but the unbelieving world will not understand it.

NOAH'S TIME AND OURS.

In comparing Noah's days and ours, the Lord continues:—

Verses 38, 39: "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 into 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."

A picture of the present condition of the mass of mankind is here drawn. The people of the last generation will be like those before the flood while the ark was preparing. While Noah preached, and warned them of the coming flood, they mocked. He built the ark; and they scoffed and jeered. He was a preacher of righteousness. His works were calculated to emphasise, and send home to the heart, what he preached. Every righteous sermon, and

every blow struck in building the ark, condemned a careless, scoffing world. As the time drew nearer, the people grew more careless, more hardened, more bold and impudent, and their condemnation surer. Noah and his family stood alone. And could one family know more than all the world? The ark was a matter of ridicule, and Noah was regarded as a wild fanatic.

But the Lord calls Noah into the ark, and by the hand of Providence the beasts are led in, and the Lord shuts the door. This is regarded at first by the scoffing multitude as something wonderful; but it is soon explained away by the wiser ones, so as to calm their fears, and they breathe easier.

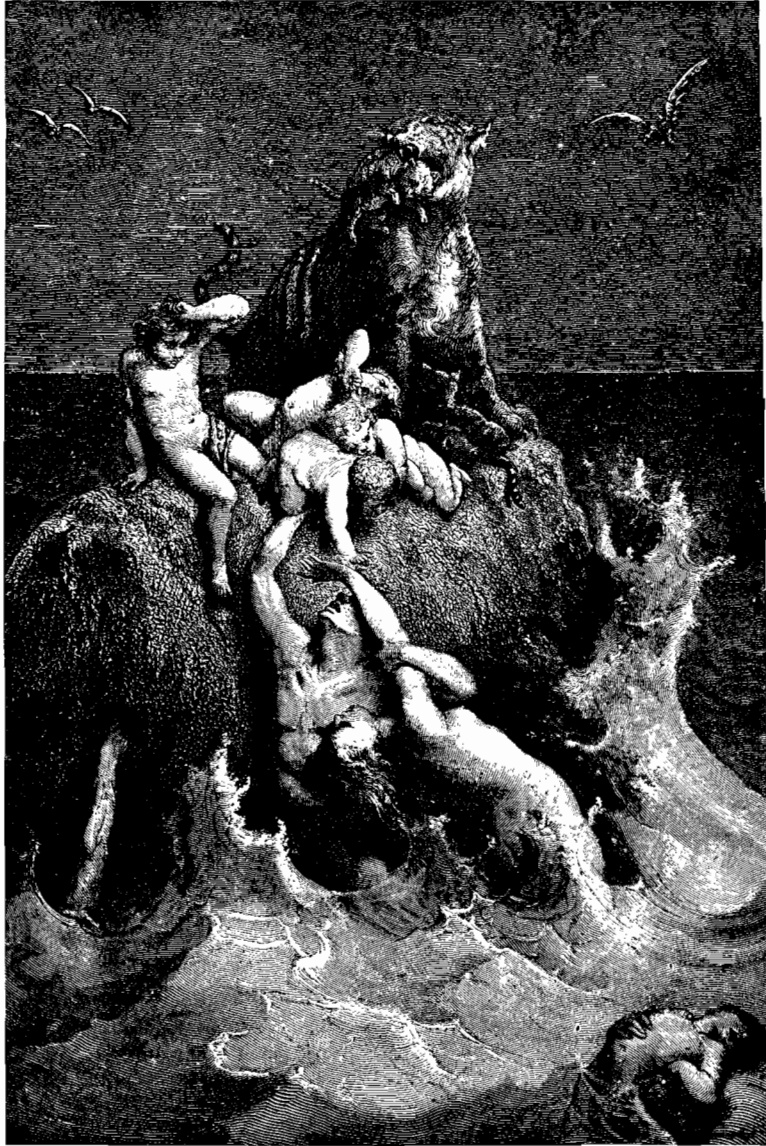
The day of expectation finally arrives. The sun rises as usual, and the heavens are clear. "Now where is old Noah's flood?" is heard from a thousand impious lips. The farmer is caring for his herds and lands, and the mechanic is pursuing his work of building. On this very day, some are being joined in marriage. With many it is a day of unusual feasting and sports. And while all are looking to long years of future prosperity and happiness, suddenly the heavens gather blackness. Fear fills every heart. The windows of heaven open, and the rain descends in torrents. "The fountains of the great deep are broken up," and here and there come gushing up rivers of water. The valleys are fast filling up, and thousands are swept away in death. Awful death! and made still more awful by being in consequence of slighted mercy! But where is Noah?—Ah! safe in the ark, borne upon the billows; safe from the flood, for God "shut him in."

By some people, the evidences of the soon coming of Christ are considered insufficient to base faith upon. But the testimony and acts of one man in the case of Noah, condemned the people destroyed by the flood. The evidences then were sufficient, otherwise the world would not have been condemned. But evidences many times more convincing, it would seem, come pouring in upon us that the day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly.* We follow down the several prophetic chains of Daniel and of the Revelation, and we find ourselves in every instance standing just before the day of wrath. We see the signs spoken of by prophets, by Christ, and by the apostles, fulfilling or fulfilled. And at the right time, and in the right manner, a solemn message arises in different parts of the world: "Blow ye the

* If we may believe the testimony of the Book of Jasher (twice mentioned in the Bible, Josh. 10 : 13 ; 2 Sam. 1 : 18), it would appear, however, that signs very similar to those which presage the destruction now awaiting the world, were given the people living just before the flood. Referring to a time very shortly before that event, it says:—

"And on that day the Lord caused the whole earth to shake, and the sun darkened, and the foundations of the world raged, and the whole earth was moved violently, and the lightning flashed, and the thunder roared, and all the fountains of the earth were broken up, such as was not known to the inhabitants before. And God did this mighty act in order to terrify the sons of men, that they might do no more evil upon earth. And still the sons of men would not return from their evil ways, and they increased the anger of the Lord at that time, and did not even direct their hearts to all this. And at the end of seven days, in the six hundredth year of the life of Noah, the waters of the flood were upon the earth. And all the fountains of the deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." Chapter 6, verses 11-14.

And this agrees perfectly with the idea that as it was then, so shall it be now. They had signs and a warning message; we have signs and a warning message.



THE FLOOD.

trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Joel 2:1. Wherever we look, we see prophecy fulfilling. While the knowledge of God and the spirit of holiness are departing, spiritual wickedness, like a flood, covers the land.

But these evidences are considered insufficient to rest faith upon. Well, what kind of evidence would the unbelieving have? "When the signs of the end are fulfilled," says the skeptic, "they will be so plain that no one can doubt." But if the signs are of such a nature, and are fulfilled in such a manner, as to compel all to believe in the coming of Christ, how can it be as it was in the days of Noah? Men were not then compelled to believe. But eight believing souls were saved, while all the world besides sank in their unbelief beneath the waters of the flood. God has never revealed His truth to man in a manner to compel him to believe, or to shut out the possibility of a doubt. Those who have wished to doubt His word, have ever found a wide field in which to doubt, and a broad road to perdition; while those who have wished to believe, have ever found an everlasting rock upon which to rest their faith, and the narrow road to life eternal.

Just before the end, the world will be hardened in sin, and indifferent to the claims of God. Men will be careless in regard to the warnings of danger, and blinded by cares, pleasures, and riches. An unbelieving generation will be eating, drinking, marrying, building, planting, and sowing. It is right to

eat and drink to sustain nature, but the sin is in excess and gluttony. The marriage covenant is holy, and was ordained of God; but God's glory is seldom thought of in contracting marriage in these days of lust and sin. Building, planting, and sowing, necessary for convenient shelter, food, and clothing, are right; but the world has gone wholly after these things, so that men have no time nor disposition to think of God, heaven, Christ's coming, and the judgment. This world is their god, and all their energies of body and mind are made to serve it. And the evil day is put far away.

The faithful watchman who sounds the alarm as he sees destruction coming, is held up before the people from the pulpits of our land, and by the religious press, as a fanatic, a teacher of dangerous heresies; while in contrast is set forth a long period of peace and prosperity to the church. So the people are quieted to sleep. The scoffer continues to scoff, and the mocker mocks on. But that day is coming. Thus saith the prophet of God:—

"Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt. And they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them. . . . Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." Isa. 13:6-9.

Most dreadful day! and is it near?—Yes; it hasteth! It hasteth greatly! And what a description given by another prophet! Read it; and as you read, try to realise how dreadful will be that day:—

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy; for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zeph. 1: 14-18.

But the Lord will be the hope of His people then. As just before the flood He told Noah to go into the ark, so at this time He will say to His people:—

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Isa. 26: 20.

Then those who have slighted God's warning message of mercy will seek a shelter from the storm, and will not find it.*

PEACE AND SAFETY.

The attitude of the religious world toward this most important subject is worthy of more than passing

* After Noah had entered the ark, and the rain had begun to descend, the record in the Book of Jasher says:—

"And the sons of men assembled together, about seven hundred thousand men and women, and they came unto Noah to the ark. And they called to Noah, saying, Open for us that we may come to thee in the ark, and wherefore shall we die?"

"And Noah with a loud voice answered them from the ark, saying, Have you not all rebelled against the Lord, and said that He does



notice, both because of its effect upon the cause of truth, and also because it of itself is a sign of the times. While it is true that many individuals in the different religious denominations recognise with more

not exist? and therefore the Lord brought upon you this evil, to destroy and cut you off from the face of the earth. Is not this the thing that I spoke to you of one hundred and twenty years back, and you would not harken to the voice of the Lord, and now do you desire to live upon earth?

"And they said to Noah, We are ready to return to the Lord; only open for us that we may live, and not die.

"And Noah answered them, saying, Behold, now that you see the trouble of your souls, you wish to return to the Lord. Why did you not return during these hundred and twenty years, which the Lord granted to you as the determined period? But now you come and tell me this on account of the troubles of your souls. Now also the Lord will not listen to you, neither will He give ear to you on this day; so that you will not now succeed in your wishes.

"And the sons of men approached in order to break into the ark, to come in on account of the rain; for they could not bear the rain upon them. And the Lord sent all the beasts and animals that stood round the ark. And the beasts overpowered them, and drove them from the place; and every man went his way, and they again scattered themselves upon the face of the earth. And the rain was still descending upon the earth, and it descended forty days and forty nights, and the waters prevailed greatly upon the earth; and all flesh that was upon the earth, or in the waters, died, whether men, animals, beasts, creeping things, or birds of the air; and there only remained Noah and those that were with him in the ark." Chap. 6, verses 17-26.

The people then would not believe until it was too late. And so it will be again in the end of the world. Peter says that men now are "willingly ignorant" that by the word of the Lord "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3: 3-7. "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are." Luke 13: 25.

or less distinctness the fact that we are living in the last days, with many of these it does not become a practical truth. Outside of these there are many who ridicule the idea as preposterous and outlandish; and in opposition to the message that Christ is soon coming, raise the cry of, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Jer. 8: 11. Such teaching is also alluded to by the prophet in Eze. 13: 10, 11.

The groundwork of the peace and safety cry is the doctrine of the temporal millennium. This teaches that the world is now entering, or about to enter upon a period of universal peace and good-will; that the moral tone of the world is improving; that men and nations are learning righteousness; and that the gospel of Christ is about to become the controlling principle in public and private life. And, further, it teaches that this happy state will continue for one thousand years, which period of time the word millennium literally signifies, at the end of which the Lord will come. However, if this doctrine be true, it will make but little difference to this generation or to the one living at the close of the period whether He comes or not. The verses we have just considered, which liken the last days to those of Noah, wholly disprove this position. In addition to what Matthew states, Luke gives a still more forcible version of our Saviour's words:—

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they

did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17: 26-30.

Paul writes in his epistles to Timothy as follows:—

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 1 Tim. 4: 1.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." 2 Tim. 3: 1-5.

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Verse 13.

In very many scriptures it is plainly declared that when Christ comes, He comes not only to reward and save His people, but also to punish His enemies. Looking forward to the last days, He exclaims, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18: 8.

With this the idea of a thousand years of peace and righteousness before Christ comes might be dismissed as utterly out of the question. But space will be given for the consideration of one or two passages supposed to teach it, which will represent the whole class. The first and chief is found in Isa. 2: 2-4:—

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top

of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Almost the same language is used in Micah 4: 1-3. It is enough to call attention to the authorship of the propositions contained in the text. They come from the people. "Many *people* shall go and say, Come ye," etc. Inspiration asserts that in the last days the mountain, or power, of the Lord's house or church shall be established in the tops of the mountains, or civil power. Undoubtedly it will. Everything is tending to the union of church and state; and the professed church of Christ is riding on a high tide to civil power in all lands. But farewell to godliness and spiritual power. When this is accomplished, however, in a general chorus thousands will proclaim the dawning millennium.

How the Lord regards the people who are saying these things is shown in the succeeding verses:—

"Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots; their land also is full of idols; they worship the

work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made." Isa. 2:6-8.

Now let us see what God says on the same point and concerning the same time:—

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong, Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about; thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get yon down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Joel 3:9-16.

Mark, this is not what the *people* say, but what the *Lord* says of the very same time when the people are preaching a good time coming.

Another verse referred to, and representing quite a numerous class of similar ones, is found in Num. 14:21:—

"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

There is no occasion to modify or limit the meaning of these words: for their utmost significance will be realised. But when?—When sin and the curse are wiped away: after the purifying fires of



PEACE ON EARTH.

the day of the Lord have burned up the last work and relic of rebellion, and the earth made new in Edenic glory comes again from the hand of its Maker, as beautiful, yea, more beautiful, if possible, than at first. It would not be within the limits of this pamphlet to follow out this subject, but the reader is referred to the following scriptures: Isa. 65:17-22; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21 and 22, and to the work "The Saints' Inheritance," price 6d., obtainable from the publishers of this work.

In that state, this and all kindred scriptures will meet a fulfilment that is ample and complete. But for such a condition of things this side of the coming of Christ, neither the Bible nor the trend of events gives any promise whatever.

Judging of the probability of the conversion of the world from the existing state of things, it would seem to be far from striking. The following table gives a comparatively accurate showing of the present religious status of the world:—

Jews and Parsees	...	...	15,470,000
Greek Catholics	...	...	84,136,000
Protestants	...	...	114,815,500
Brahminical Hindoos	...	...	120,000,000
Mohammedans	...	...	122,400,000
Roman Catholics	...	...	255,000,000
Pagans	...	...	227,000,000
Buddhists	...	...	482,000,000
Unclassified	...	...	51,050,000

Concerning the very small proportion of this number classed in the list of Christians, Bishop Foster has very aptly said:—

"There are some who too fondly anticipate a millennium. There is a lack of information on the progress of Christianity.

The facts are misstated daily in pulpits all over the country. Ministers hesitate to present the worst side for fear of causing discouragement, and they create hopes that are never realised. We are not at the dawn of a millennium. Compared with the work to be done, the past is nothing. Our children's children for ten generations to come must labour harder than we are doing, to accomplish the conversion of the world. The world's population is 1,500,000,000. Of these, Christians number less than a third; and half of that third belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestants number 114,000,000. They are divided into 500 sects. And this number of their strength includes, also, all the thieves, ex-convicts, the debased, besotted, and the speckled and streaked in Christendom."—*Northwestern Christian Advocate* of Dec. 2, 1885.

Further on in the same article the bishop said:—

"Before us we have the great problem—the 1,100,000,000 of pagans to convert to Christianity. That is the solid rock that looms up in our path. Look at it; see what work has been done in 1800 years, and how much is yet to be accomplished. In India, after more than a hundred years of mission work, we have 600,000 native converts and 2,000,000 Christians among 260,000,000 heathen. Can we remove that solid boulder that is as old as the hills? . . . Our Methodist Church we think the most divine and ineffable. We boast that we are going to conquer the world, and come from our palaces and princely farns to subscribe fifty cents a head for the undertaking! It is a burning disgrace, that excites pity and disgust."

And as to the prospects for universal peace, the following recent statement of the armament of Europe does not indicate that the nations are really contemplating such a happy consummation:—

NATION.	MEN.	HORSES.	CANNON.
Russia	1,519,810	181,000	2,084
Germany	835,000	96,000	2,022
Austria	856,980	58,125	1,600
England	478,800	—	—
France	1,850,000	—	—

The remaining states of Europe make up with the above a total of about 5,000,000 men.

THE FINAL SEPARATION.

Verses 40, 41: "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

This language shows the final separation between the righteous and the wicked. There is no elaborate explanation as to how the circumstances will meet their fulfilment, but that is not the essential force of the text. The line will in some cases be drawn between those who are intimately related. Some members of the same family will be taken away by the judgments of God, while others will be left to receive their coming Lord.

THOSE WHO WATCH WILL KNOW THE TIME.

Verses 42-44: "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

The injunction to watchfulness is repeatedly given by our Saviour in connection with His teaching in reference to His second advent. These injunctions must apply especially to those who live down near that event. This fact is convincing evidence that the Lord is not displeased with those who look forward to His coming, and study His word in reference to it. No one watches for that which he does not expect, and indifference or aversion toward the coming of Christ is sure evidence of coldness toward Christ

Himself. If we love Jesus, we shall love His appearing; and if we love His appearing, we shall be eagerly watching and waiting for it. But if we knew the hour when He would come, we should not *watch* for His coming; nor could we with eagerness *expect* His coming if we had no knowledge of its approach. The course of time has been measured off in definite periods down to the beginning of the present generation. The time from the end of the prophetic periods to the coming of Christ is emphatically the waiting, watching time. Those who watch, as our Lord commands, will eventually know the time. No man will make it known, for it is not revealed to man in the Scriptures. Angels will not make it known, though they may minister to, and communicate with, the children of men. Neither will the Son. But the Father will make it known when He speaks again from heaven.

It is undoubtedly true that the unscriptural and irrational course pursued by many so-called Adventists in repeatedly setting a time of their own for the Lord to come has had the effect to disgust many with the whole matter. This is the enemy's work. He has ever sought thus to obscure every truth by bringing it under the shadow of reproach. But it is unwise to be thus misled. Probably there is no prophecy that better describes the present state of unbelief in the world in regard to the second advent, caused partly by fanatical time-movements, than the following:—

"Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every

vision faileth? Tell them, therefore, Thus saith the Lord God: I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am the Lord: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged; for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord God." Eze. 12:22-25.

The burden of this prophecy is time; therefore the word here mentioned that the Lord will speak, will be the time. Rev. 3:3 is also to the point:—

Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

Those who do not watch, will not know the hour. Those who watch will know the hour.

The present watching, waiting position requires much faith and patience. Says Paul:—

"Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God [in proclaiming the coming of Christ], ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Heb. 10:35-39.

Says James: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts;

for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:7, 8.

Jesus says: "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3:10.

The present position and present duty of God's people are defined in Rev. 14:12: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT.

Verses 45-47: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods."

In this figure, Christ is represented as the Lord of the household of faith (see Mark 13:34, 35; Heb. 3:6), leaving His house, and committing the work of caring for His church to His servants. A blessing is promised those servants who are found faithfully discharging this duty when their Lord comes. They are to feed the flock of God, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers. Acts 20:28. They must preach the word. 2 Tim. 4:2. They should watch for souls as they that must give account. Heb. 13:17. They will not only give meat to the household, but they will give it "in due season." They will preach "*present* truth." 2 Peter 1:12.

Meat in due season when Christ's coming draws near, will be "the gospel of the kingdom." It will include the proclamation of His coming. It will be

a message adapted to prepare the world for so solemn an event. Like the message of Noah, it will be a definite and solemn warning, appropriate for the time. To give this then will be to give meat in due season. And thus will the faithful servant do.

Suppose, for a moment, that when Noah had received his message concerning the coming flood to give to the world, he had with worldly wisdom reasoned thus: "As such a thing never has occurred, and from all appearances seems very unlikely to occur, and hence to preach it will subject me to reproach, it would be better to avoid any particular allusion to such an unwelcome subject. To preach it will excite only ridicule. I can retain my own private convictions, and preach the principles of righteousness in the ordinary way, telling the people that to do right is right, and to do wrong is wrong, and that if they are only prepared for death, they will be prepared for the flood or any other event that may come." What would we say had he pursued such a course? Would this have been giving meat in due season?—No. Noah would thus have proved most unfaithful to his trust, and the blood of his fellow-men would have been upon him. He certainly would not have been a faithful and wise servant. He would have been doing as thousands are doing now.

A solemn responsibility is placed on the watchmen. Says the Lord:—

"Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman; if when he seeth the sword come upon the land,

he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me." Eze. 33:2-7.

When Jesus comes, the faithful servant will be found proclaiming His coming and teaching the necessary preparation. The Saviour speaks of such as "faithful and wise."

1. He is faithful. As a faithful watchman, he will give timely warning when he sees the sword coming. His work just before the end, is seen in the following scriptures:—

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Joel 2:1.

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isa. 58:1.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto

fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." 2 Tim. 4:1-5.

2. He is wise. "He that winneth souls is wise." He must be wise. He will hold forth the truth in its harmony and beauty, and thus expose error and win men to the truth. When it becomes his duty to "reprove and rebuke," it will be done at a proper time and place, and then with all "long-suffering and doctrine." He will study to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15.

THE EVIL SERVANT.

Verses 48-51: "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

What the evil servant says and does, shows most clearly the position and work of the faithful and wise servant. The evil servant says, "My Lord delayeth His coming," because the faithful servant is proclaiming the coming of his Lord. The evil servant smites the faithful servant, because he teaches the soon coming of his Lord. The faithful servant, true to his commission to preach the "gospel of the kingdom" to a fallen church and a scoffing world, toils on, and for this the evil servant smites him; not with the fist, perhaps, but with the tongue of obloquy and reproach,

which, however, tends to provoke active persecution and deeds of violence. That there should be professed servants of Christ engaged in smiting those who are faithfully warning the world, need not cause surprise in view of the past, but must cause sorrow in the heart of every lover of truth. The wicked servant says in his heart, and some are saying with their lips, The Lord is not coming.* The world is now just starting out upon its career of knowledge and enjoyment, says the scoffer. Where is the promise or indication of His coming? 2 Peter 3:3, 4. He may come to-night; He may not come in a million years. Thus they quiet the awakened conscience, and neutralise the truth. Such men will be found criticising and discounting the Scriptures, and subjecting them to the tests of human philosophy and science, falsely so-called. The only safety for the people is to look beyond such watchmen to the sure word of God. Let them take the Bible for themselves, and there discerning the truth, embrace it, and live according to it.

* The following remarks of a Disciple minister are a sample of the attitude of many toward this subject:—

"People take too literal a view of Christ's words, when He made that remarkable prophecy of the end of the world. He said that many would work miracles, heal the sick by laying on of hands, and raise the dead; that there would be plagues, earthquakes, and wars; but I do not take it all in a literal sense. I do not believe that the end of the world is near at hand. I think He will come again, but the time for that is not yet at hand. We are a long, long way from the end of the world."—*D. R. Lucas, in Des Moines Daily News, May 10, 1887.*



THE impression prevails to some extent that he who teaches that Christ is soon coming is acting the rôle of an alarmist. If so, we have seen that the great Teacher has placed Himself at the head of the class. No one has spoken more positively upon this point than He has done. He said, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again*, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14: 2, 3. There is nothing ambiguous about that language. A child can understand it. It means that Jesus will come again. In the remarkable chapter we have here reviewed, the Saviour takes up the subject specifically, and not only affirms the *fact* of His coming, but foretells in explicit language the events which He would have us recognise as signs of the *near approach* of His coming and the end of the world. And in the closing words of the last book of

the Bible, through the prophet John, He says, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22: 12.

But the message of Christ's second coming is not sensational in its essential character. It is a solemn, practical truth. It is full of warning and admonition to sinners and worldly professors, and full of comfort to the faithful followers of Christ. It is spoken of in the Scriptures as a fact, established upon the word which never fails. When speaking of His second advent, the Saviour said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." Matt. 24: 35. To disbelieve in His coming would be to doubt one of two of the greatest events in the gospel plan. What the harvest is to seed-time, Christ's second advent is to His first. To doubt that He ever came to earth would be to subvert the gospel. To disbelieve His second coming would nullify in the mind the object of His first coming,—salvation,—and rob the sacrifice of its glorious reward. When He appears the second time, it is "without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9: 28.

The apostle Paul speaks of the second advent as "that blessed hope." Titus 2: 13. Jesus says: "And when these things [these signs of His coming] *begin* to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." And again, "When ye see these things *come* to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Luke 21: 28, 31. Christ's kingdom is at His appearing. 2 Tim. 4: 1. The prophet Isaiah anticipates the

feelings of God's people who will witness the event, and expresses them in the following manner: "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: This is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9.

At His coming, the dead in Christ will be raised to everlasting life. The righteous living will be changed to immortality. Then all tears will be wiped away, and "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Why should we not rejoice in such a prospect? Who would not welcome such a Friend? Who would not rejoice in the prospect of such a consummation?

But all will not rejoice then. There will be dismay and anguish; for many will not be prepared for that event. While one prophet records the exclamations of joyful anticipation of those who have waited for His coming, another has foreseen and recorded the cry of despair of those who have failed to prepare for it: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:15-17. A vast number will thus lament. All who cannot join

the shout of welcome will unite in the wail of despair. There will be but two classes in that day. And to one of those classes each one living will belong. To which shall I belong? Solemn question. To which party will you belong, reader? On which side of the ark will you be then? No one can *wait* for Christ who is not prepared for His coming. Only the precious blood of Jesus, that cleanses from sin, can prepare us to receive Him, and fit us to dwell in His presence. Have you an interest in His forgiving love? Is your peace made with God? If so, His coming will have no terror to you; for He comes to save His waiting people.



THE COMING OF THE LORD.

COMING, coming, coming! *Who?*
 Christ, the Lord of life and glory,
 He who once for me and you
 Died!—oh, depth of sin's sad story!
 Coming, not a helpless stranger,
 Cradled in the friendless manger;
 Coming, Lord of earth and heaven!
 King! to whom all power is given,
 Judge! at whose all-searching bar
 All must stand, just what they are;
 And the wicked tell with shame
 Why they've cursed His holy name.

Coming, coming, coming! *How?*
 Clothed in strange, unearthly splendour,
 Glory men ne'er dream of now,
 Grandeur earth ne'er had attend her.
 At His sight the heavens shall wither,
 From His presence earth shall flee,
 Islands move, and mountains thither
 Seek the caverns of the sea.
 Every eye shall then behold Him,
 All the nations feel His ire;
 While the brightness that enfolds Him
 Is to them consuming fire.
 Thunders all the air shall thrill,
 All the heavens with lightnings blaze,
 And the universe stand still,
 While through all its realms is heard
 That profound, omnific word
 Which to life the dead shall raise.

Coming, coming, coming! *Why?*
 To redeem His purchased treasure,
 All His saints o'er sin who sigh,
 All who make His will their pleasure;

To bring back within their borders
 His whom hades holds to-day;
 To arrest sin's wild disorders,
 And the monster Death to slay.
 Coming to fulfil His plan,
 Make His oath and promise good,
 Which secures repentant man
 Life eternal through His blood.

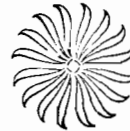
Coming, coming, coming! *When?*
 Ah! that question solemn, thrilling!
 For when He appeareth, then
 All these earthly scenes, fulfilling
 His sure word, shall have an end.
 And behold the day is near!
 Signs in earth and heaven portend
 That the Lord will soon appear.

Angry thrones, through wars, proclaim it;
 Scoffers by their scoffing name it;
 And the mute and solemn sky
 Has hung forth its prophecy.
 Coming! while we wait and dally.
 Coming! while we sleep in sin.
 Swift as light o'er hill and valley,
 That great day is coming in.
 Sinner, rouse thee to thy fate.
 Saint, be watchful at thy gate.
 Saviour, fit us all to appear
 At Thy coming, now so near.

—*U. Smith.*

SWIFTER than a weaver's shuttle
 Pass our days in rapid flight.
 Soon will come the day unmeasured
 When we'll know no more of night.
 There's a little time to labour,
 Just a little space to pray,
 Then the Master comes in beauty
 And begins that endless day.

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