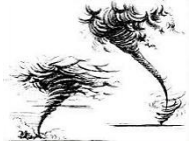


Christ's Second Coming

"What shall be the sign of Thy coming
and of the end of the world?"
- Disciples.



"When ye shall see all these things, know that it
is near, even at the doors." - Jesus.



Matthew 24



Book I

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PREFACE

Through spiritualism, Satan appears as a benefactor of the race, healing the diseases of the people and professing to present a new and more exalted system of religious faith; but at the same time he works as a destroyer. His temptations are leading multitudes to ruin. Intemperance dethrones reason; sensual indulgence, strife, and bloodshed follow. Satan delights in war, for it excites the worst passions of the soul and then sweeps into eternity its victims steeped in vice and blood. It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another; for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God.

Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows. When he was suffered to afflict Job, how quickly flocks and herds, servants, houses, children, were swept away, one trouble succeeding another as in a moment. It is God that shields His creatures and hedges them in from the power of the destroyer. But the Christian world have shown contempt for the law of Jehovah, and the Lord will do just what He has declared that He would—He will withdraw His blessings from the earth and remove His protecting care from those who are rebelling against His law and teaching and forcing others to do the same. Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard. He will favor and prosper some, in order to further his own designs; and he will bring trouble upon others and lead men to believe that it is God who is afflicting them.

While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast. "The earth mourneth and fadeth away," "The haughty people ... do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants

thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." Isaiah 24:4, 5.

Some will be tempted to receive these wonders as from God. The sick will be healed before us. Miracles will be performed in our sight. Are we prepared for the trial which awaits us when the lying wonders of Satan shall be more fully exhibited? Will not many be ensnared and taken? By departing from the plain precepts and commandments of God and giving heed to fables, the minds of many are preparing to receive these lying wonders. We must all now seek to arm ourselves for the contest in which we must soon engage. Faith in God's word, prayerfully studied and practically applied, will be our shield from Satan's power and will bring us off conquerors through the blood of Christ.

INTRODUCTION

CAN anything be learned from the Bible relative to the period of the second advent? is a question unsettled in many minds. This is a grave inquiry; and, from the very nature of the subject, is worthy of close investigation, and a candid answer. It is a matter of painful regret that not a few, under the influence of popular prejudice, have decided that the period of the second advent is a secret, hidden with the Lord. While these may scarcely be reached with this subject, as long as they remain under the influence of those religious teachers who denounce all investigation of it as prying into the secrets of the Almighty, there is still a larger class who wait for evidence before deciding. It is with ardent hope of benefiting these that we write.

We accept the Bible as a revelation from Heaven. What God has revealed in that book, let no man 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 do not designate any period in particular for the second appearing of Christ, then men should at once abandon the vain search for proofs of his soon coming. But if prophecy, in a most clear and harmonious manner, does point to the period of that great event, and if there is evidence that "it is near, even at the doors," the subject at once assumes vast importance.

When the disciples inquire, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus does not reprove them for inquiring into that which was purposely hidden from all men; but he answers that question in the most

definite manner. He even states that there should be signs of that event 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." 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 evidence his declaration that when these signs should be seen, his people should know that it was near, even at the doors, and the case becomes an exceedingly strong one.

No truth of inspiration can be more clearly stated than that God reveals his designs to his prophets, that men and nations may be warned before their accomplishment. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. 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. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world." Heb.11:7.

At a later period, when the nations had become sunken in idolatry and crime, and the destruction of wicked Sodom 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." 2Pet.2:7,8. When he warned his sons-in-law, "he seemed as one that mocked." Gen.19:14. And when "the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter." Lot warned them, and entreated them to desist from their wickedness. And they at once did that which all sinners, since the days of righteous Lot, have been disposed to do to those who faithfully warn them of their sins; namely, they charged him with being a judge.

Before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, a forerunner was sent to prepare the way before the Lord. Those who did not receive Christ, were rejected, "because," as he said to Jerusalem, when warning the people of the destruction

of their city and temple, "thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke 19:44. We have on record the Lord's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem during the time of the generation that rejected him, which was fulfilled in less than forty years from the time of his crucifixion. And, that the Christians in Judea might escape its impending doom, they were told that when they should "see Jerusalem compassed with armies," or, as recorded by Matthew, "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place," they were to "flee to the mountains." Luke 21:20; Matt.24:15. They heeded the admonition, and escaped in safety to Pella. Such is the testimony of inspiration respecting the dealings of God with his people in past ages. And it cannot be supposed that God will change his course relative to the future, when that future is to realize the crowning consummation of all prophetic declarations. Probably no one chapter of the Bible speaks more fully, and more definitely, upon the subject of the second coming of Christ, than Matt.24.

A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF MATTHEW 24

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 Pharisees for their sins, and had declared the doom of the Jews, their city, and their temple. Chap.23. The disciples supposed that the temple would stand forever. And they called the attention of Christ to its magnificence and strength, as if to convince him that he was mistaken.

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 but deeply interest the disciples. And 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, it matters not; since Christ, in his answer in this chapter, has distinctly spoken of each separately, and has given each its place in the prophetic history of events.

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?" These questions relate, first, to the destruction of Jerusalem; and, second, to Christ's second coming at the end

of the Christian 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. Christ here speaks to his disciples; hence his words are addressed to the church ever after. Mark the caution given by our Lord as he commences to answer these questions.

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 heart of man, 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.

A LIST OF FALSE CHRISTS AS THEY HAVE APPEARED DURING THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION

1. Caziba, who set himself up 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 defense of this false Messiah, they lost five or six hundred thousand souls. This was in the former part of the second century.
2. In the reign of Theodosius the younger, in the year of our Lord 434, another impostor arose, called Moses Cretensis. He pretended to be a second Moses, sent to deliver the Jews who dwelt in Crete.
3. In the reign of Justin, about 520, another impostor appeared, who called himself the son of Moses. His name was Dunaan. He entered into a city of Arabia Felix, and there he greatly oppressed the Christians; but he was taken prisoner, and put to death by Elesban, an Ethiopian general.
4. In the year 529, the Jews and Samaritans rebelled against the Emperor Justinian, and set up one Justin for their king; and accounted him the Messiah.

The emperor sent an army against them, killed great numbers of them, took their pretended Messiah prisoner, and immediately put him to death.

5. In the year 571, was born Mahomet, in Arabia. At first he professed himself the Messiah who was promised to the Jews. By this means, he drew many of that unhappy people after him. In some sense, therefore, he may be considered in the number of false Messiahs.

6. About the year 721, in the time of Leo Isaurus, arose another false Messiah in Spain; his name was Serenus. He drew great numbers after him, to their no small loss and disappointment, but all his pretensions came to nothing.

7. The twelfth century was fruitful in false Messiahs; for about the year 1137, there appeared one in France, who was put to death, and many of those who followed him.

8. In the year 1138, the Persians were disturbed with a Jew who called himself the Messiah. He collected together a vast army. But he, too, was put to death, and his followers treated with great inhumanity.

9. In the year 1157, a false Messiah stirred up the Jews at Corduba, in Spain. The wiser and better sort looked upon him as a madman, but the great body of the Jews in that nation believed in him. On this occasion almost all the Jews in Spain were destroyed.

10. In the year 1167, another false Messiah arose in the kingdom of Fez, which brought great troubles and persecution upon the Jews that were scattered through that country.

11. In the same year an Arabian set up for the Messiah, and pretended to work miracles. When search was made for him, his followers fled.

12. Not long after this, a Jew, who dwelt beyond Euphrates, called himself the Messiah, and drew vast multitudes of people after him.

13. In the year 1174, a magician and false Christ arose in Persia, who was called David Almusser. He pretended that he could make himself invisible; but he was soon taken and put to death, and a heavy fine laid upon his brethren the Jews

14. In the year 1176, another of these impostors arose in Moravia. But the reign of delusion is short, and his fate appears to have been similar to that of his predecessor.

15. In the year 1199, a famous cheat and rebel appeared in Persia, called David el David. He was a man of learning, a great magician, and pretended to be the Messiah. He raised an army against the king, but was taken and imprisoned.
16. We are told of another false Christ in this same century, by Maimonides and Solomon; but they take no notice either of his name, country, or good or ill success. Here we may observe that no less than ten false Christs arose in the twelfth century, and brought prodigious calamities and destruction upon the Jews in various quarters of the world.
17. In the year 1497, we find another false Christ, whose name was Ismael Sophus, who deluded the Jews in Spain. He also perished, and as many as believed in him were dispersed.
18. In the year 1500, Rabbi Lemlem, a German Jew of Austria, declared himself a forerunner of the Messiah, and pulled down his own oven, promising his brethren that they should bake their bread in the Holy Land next year.
19. In the year 1509, one whose name was Plefferkorn, a Jew of Cologne, pretended to be the Messiah. He afterward affected, however, to turn Christian.
20. In the year 1534, Rabbi Salomo Malcho, giving out that he was the Messiah, was burnt to death by Charles the fifth, of Spain.
21. In the years 1615, a false Christ arose in the East Indies, and was greatly followed by the Portuguese Jews, who were scattered over that country.
22. In the year 1624, another in the Low Countries pretended to be the Messiah of the family of David, and of the line of Nathan. He promised to destroy Rome, and to overthrow the kingdom of Antichrist, and the Turkish Empire.
23. In the year 1666, appeared the false Messiah Sabatai Sevi, who made so great a noise, and gained such a number of proselytes. He was born at Aleppo, imposed on the Jews for a considerable time; but afterward, with a view of saving his life, turned Mahometan, and was at last beheaded.
24. The last false Christ that had made any considerable number of converts, was one Rabbi Mordecai, a Jew of Germany; he appeared in the year 1682. It was not long before he was found out to be an impostor, and was obliged to fly from Italy to Poland, to save his life.

Here, then, we have a record of twenty-four false Christs who arose at different periods during about thirteen hundred years of the Christian age, and deceived "many," as the Lord had said.

Verses 6-8. "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 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."

Wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, have occurred at different periods since these words were spoken. Therefore, these, as they have ever existed, cannot be regarded as the especial signs of the end. It may be urged, however, with a good degree of consistency, that the Scriptures teach that these calamities would exist in the last days to that extent as to constitute a sign of the approaching Judgment. We wish to keep the important fact distinctly before the mind, that the sacred Scriptures do teach when men may not, and when they may, look for the second appearing of Jesus Christ.

The sacred writers had so uniformly associated such judgments 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 clearly taught that they should not expect the end in their day. 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 an especial message. These sometimes assert that it was right for the disciples to look for Christ in their day, and that it has been scriptural and right for all Christians to look for the second appearing of Christ in their time, from the days of the chosen twelve to the present time. And they decide that no more can be learned and believed upon this subject in our time, than by the Christians of past generations, and that the public mind should not now be moved upon this great 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 cited 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 rumors 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 near our time, the Lord gives 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."

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 covered at least seventeen centuries.

A LIST OF CALAMITIES COVERING SEVENTEEN CENTURIES

"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 13 cities, and over 100,000 lives.

"In Rome, A.D. 169, 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, Sept. 17th, 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. 590, the plague killed 10,000 daily 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. 1005, 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, 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. 1345, in London, 50,000 died of plague and famine, and were buried in one graveyard; 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. 1450, in Milan, 60,000 died of plague.

"In A.D. 1611, in Constantinople, 200,000 died of plague. "In A.D. 1625, in London, 35,000 died of plague

"In A.D. 1626, in Lyons, 600,000 died of plague. "In A.D. 1665, in London, 68,000 died of plague.

"In A.D. 1755, in the East, 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 lives in Constantinople.

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 the church. 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 wicked men and demons could invent. 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.

FALSE PROPHETS

Verse 11. "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." In the common use of the word, a prophet is one that foretells; but the word sometimes means simply a teacher. Prophets of God declare the future, being instructed by good angels and the Spirit of God. False Prophets make predictions by the agency of wicked spirits and the power of Satan. And while this is true of those who are under the direct inspiration of superior beings,

good or evil, consecrated teachers of divine truth may be regarded as God's prophets; and teachers of error may be properly 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 great name, are clearly expressed by the sacred writers. We here quote from three of them.

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

Joel 2:1. "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."

2Tim.4:1,2. "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 and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

False prophets do not reprove the people for their sins, they 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 to please the unconverted mind. The inspired writers have also spoken definitely of the testimony and work of false prophets. We here give several for example.

Eze.13:9,10. "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 land 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."

Jer.6:13,14. "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.14:13,14. "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." After stating the duty of the faithful servant of God to preach the word, to reprove, 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." 2Tim.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 reproof, searching declarations of the word of God. They love to be deceived by the teachings of false prophets, and "say to the seers, See not, and to the prophets, Prophesy 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. Many of them even dare to teach that the moral code of the ten commandments is abrogated. And as the result of such a course, and of such teaching, we see, in the professed church of Jesus Christ, that

INIQUITY ABOUNDS

Verse 12. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." It is evident that both the abounding of iniquity, and the waxing cold of the love of many, are fulfilled in 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, common, unconverted sinners are not here referred to as apostatizing. And, again, the prevalence of iniquity in the unconverted world alone, would stimulate the church to greater diligence, and more godliness, instead of being a cause of apostasy. Hence the iniquity here mentioned is in the very heart of the professed church, diffusing its chilly influence through the

whole body. As the result, the love of many has grown cold. 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, 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." 2Tim.3:1-5. Here is a catalogue of sixteen sins, all resting upon those who have 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, they are covered all over with popular sins. And by reason of their example, and their chilly influence, many are led from the humble path to Heaven, and their love becomes cold.

THE END

VERSE 13. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." The word end, wherever used in this chapter, refers to the end of the age, and to nothing else. It is the end associated in the New Testament with the second appearing of Jesus Christ. The disciples did not ask their Lord (see verse 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 (see 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, as follows: And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations, and then shall death come. Absurdity!

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." This is the first sign of the end given by our Lord in answer to the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" But this verse, by many, is supposed to prove that all men will be converted, and that then there will be one thousand years in which all will know the Lord, from the least to the greatest." Some hold that the one thousand years of Rev.20, are prophetic, each day in the year representing a year, making three hundred and sixty-five thousand

years. And many of these, very men teach that nothing can be known of the period of the second advent. But would they not know when their supposed millennium, whether it be literal time, or prophetic, had commenced? Certainly they would. Then they would know when it would terminate, and bring the coming of the Son of Man, and the Judgment. If those enjoying the millennium could not tell when it commenced, then it would hardly be worth having. If they could tell when it commenced, most certainly they could tell when it would close. These men should be the very last to oppose the view that the prophetic word points to the very generation that shall witness the second advent.

But the text does not say that every individual will even hear this gospel of the kingdom. It does not state that any one will be converted and made holy by it. And we find it far from intimating that a world would be converted, and remain so one thousand years, and that those who should enjoy that happy period would know nothing of when it would terminate by the coming of the Son of Man, and the unveiled glories of Jehovah, Jesus, and the mighty angels. The text simply states: First. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world. Second. "For a witness unto all nations. Third. "And then [not one thousand years later, nor three hundred and sixty-five thousand; but THEN] shall the end come." If we understand the phrase, "this gospel of the kingdom," to be the gospel in the common acceptation of the word, is not the work very nearly accomplished?

J. Litch, in his "Prophetic Expositions," p. 147, under the heading, "Signs of the Times," says: "Rev. J. O. Choules, author of a voluminous work, a History of Missions, from the apostolic age down to the present day, being asked, last May (1842), if he knew of any nation which never had received the gospel, replied that he did not; but he thought the promise implied something more than its being barely preached in each nation. The same question was proposed to Rev. Mr. James, general financial agent of the American Bible Society, and nearly the same answer was elicited. Dr. Nathan Bangs, for many years at the head of the Methodist missionary operations, was asked the question last July, and after reflecting some time, replied that he believed there was a tribe, somewhere upon the north-west coast of North America, to whom it had never been preached."

Wm. Miller, in his "Lectures," p. 288, says: "Is not this sign already accomplished? Bible translated into more than two hundred different languages; missionaries sent among all nations known to us on the globe. The gospel has now spread over the four quarters of the globe. It began in Asia. In the apostles' days, that quarter was full of light. From thence it went into Africa; and, for a number of centuries, Africa stretched out her hands unto God. Europe, too, has had a long visitation of gospel blessings; and now America, the last quarter of the globe, is reaping a harvest of souls for the last day. The gospel, like the sun, arose in the east, and will set in the west."

But if the term, "this gospel of the kingdom," be understood as applying to the proclamation of, or to that portion of the gospel which relates to, the coming and kingdom of Christ, the fulfillment is equally evident. And it seems necessary to so understand the passage, as it was given in answer to the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Campbell's translation of this verse decidedly favors this view of the subject: "And this good tidings of the reign shall be published through all the world, for the information of all nations, and then shall come the end." Whiting's version also gives the same idea: "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the world, for a testimony to all nations, and then will the end come."

J. Litch, in his lecture on Matt. 24, Advent Herald, Nov. 23, 1850, says: "Many supposed the wars of Napoleon were the wars of the last days, to precede the millennium; and that the battle of Waterloo was the battle of Armageddon, as it is called. But the discussion of the subject of prophecy drew forth inquiry, and a few discovered the true light, the doctrine of Christ's personal reign on earth, and began to teach it. Among these was a Spanish Roman Catholic, who wrote an able and voluminous work under the anonymous signature of Ben Ezra. His work fell into the hands of Edward Irving, the celebrated and eloquent advocate of the doctrine of the pre-millennial advent of Christ. It opened his eyes to the glorious truth, and led him to devote himself most zealously to its advocacy. He first translated Ben Ezra, and subsequently wrote and published several valuable works on the subject. For a time, the excitement on the subject in England, under his labors, was as intense as it subsequently was in this country, under the labors of Mr. Miller. Thousands flocked to hear him wherever he went, and listened with wonder at the strange and glorious truths he brought forth from the word of God. The cause received an impulse under

his efforts which it will never lose till time shall end. Many of the clergy of the Established Church, as well as dissenting ministers of all denominations, caught the theme, and joined to spread it abroad."

"Nor has the influence of Rev. Joseph Wolfe been unfelt. He has visited and proclaimed 'the gospel of the kingdom,' in the four quarters of the globe, to Protestants, Catholics, Mohammedans, Jews, and pagans. The seed thus sown will not be lost. A work similar to that of Ben Ezra, in Spain, appeared in Germany, the productions of Bengle. This, by the evangelical portion of the German people, is esteemed as a standard work on prophecy. It has been widely circulated and read as far as the German language extends throughout continental Europe. It was from this source the Russian Milkeaters, of whom an account was given in the Advent Herald a few years since, obtained their information on the speedy second advent of Christ.

"The great American movement on this subject, and the diffusion of information with regard to it, within the last ten years, is too well known to need extended remarks in this place. Neither labor nor sacrifice was regarded in the wide and rapid extension of the good news of the kingdom, as far as the English language could make it known. It was sent to the four quarters of the globe, and to the islands of the sea, upon the wings of all the winds."

E. R. Pinney, in his exposition of Matthew 24, says: "As early as 1842, second-advent publications had been sent to every missionary station in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, both sides of the Rocky Mountains. We find this doctrine in Tartary, about twenty-five years ago, and the time for the coming of Christ to be in 1844. This fact is obtained from an Irish missionary in Tartary, to whom the question was put by a Tartar priest, when Christ would come the second time. And he made answer that he knew nothing at all about it. The Tartar priest expressed great surprise at such an answer from a missionary who had had come to teach them the doctrines of the Bible, and remarked 'that he thought everybody might know that, who had a Bible.' The Tartar priest then gave his views, stating that Christ, he thought, would come about A.D. 1844. The missionary wrote home a statement of the facts, which were published in the Irish Magazine, in 1821. The commanders of our vessels, and the sailors, tell us they touch at no point where they find this proclamation has not preceded them, and frequent inquiries respecting it are made of them."

"I noticed, in a late number of the Voice of Truth, that a brother traveling on the lakes, met with a Russian gentleman, direct from his country, who informed him that the doctrine of 'Christ's coming, and the end of the world,' had been preached there, but was received only by the lower classes. Rev. Mr. Mansfield had an interview with a Moravian missionary, stationed in Antigua, who said that several years since, the doctrine of the immediate coming was extensively preached in Germany, and that the whole of the south of Germany was aroused upon the subject.

The Advent Shield, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 86, 87, says: "We look upon the proclamation which has been made, as being the cry of the angel who proclaimed, 'The hour of his judgment is come.' Rev.14:6,7. It is a sound which is to reach all nations; it is the proclamation of 'the everlasting gospel,' or 'this gospel of the kingdom.' In one shape or other, this cry has gone abroad through the earth wherever human beings are found, and we have had opportunity to hear of the fact. Within the last six years, publications treating on the subject have been sent to nearly every English and American missionary station on the globe; to all, at least, to which we have had access."

An English writer, Mourant Brock, thus remarks: "It is not merely in Great Britain that the expectation of the near return of the Redeemer is entertained, and the voice of warning raised, but also in America, India, and on the continent of Europe. I was lately told by one of our German missionaries, that in Wirtemberg there is a Christian colony of several hundreds, one of the chief features of which is, the looking for the second advent. And a Christian minister from near the shores of the Caspian Sea, has told me that there is the same daily expectation among his nation. They constantly speak of it as 'the day of consolation.' In a little publication, entitled, 'Millennium,' the writer says that he understands that in America about three hundred ministers of the word are thus preaching 'the gospel of the kingdom;' whilst in this country, he adds, about seven hundred of the Church of England are raising the same cry." - Advent Tracts, Vol. II, p. 135.

The Signs of the Times, for Feb. 14, 1844, says: "A brother, the captain of a vessel now in England, writes his friends that his vessel lay at Newport, in Wales, forty days, on account of storms, during which time a continued concourse of individuals thronged him to inquire about the coming of the Lord,

having heard that he was an Adventist. Among these were ministers and laymen that received the truth gladly, and embraced it with all their hearts

Eld. R. Hutchinson, *Midnight Cry*, Oct.5, 1843, says: "I send about 1,500 copies of the *Voice of Elijah* [an Advent paper], to Europe every fortnight, besides what I scatter over the Provinces. This I have done regularly for the last four or five months. The result, eternity will unfold."

Speaking of Eld. Hutchinson, and of his *Voice of Elijah*, F. G. Brown says: "He has forwarded them to the Canadas, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, France, Germany, Constantinople, Rome, etc., etc."

"But it will be asked, Is the news that such a truth is preached a sufficient proclamation to fulfill the prophecy? Rev.14:6,7; Matt.24:14. The answer is, If it was sufficient in the days of the apostles, it is now. That it was then, is clear from Acts 19:8-10, where Paul preached or taught in Ephesus two years, so that all they in Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord Jesus. They could not all have heard a sermon, but they heard the sound of the gospel. In this sense, I have no doubt but the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world."

We still wait for the approaching end. But when the purpose of God in the proclamation of the coming reign of Christ shall be fully accomplished, then will the end come.

WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE?

OUR Lord having passed over the important events in the Christian age down to the end, in verses 5-14, goes back and introduces the destruction of Jerusalem, at verse 15, in answer to the inquiry, "When shall these things be

Verses 15-20: "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whose 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.

The "abomination of desolation" is called "armies" in Luke 21:20, and refers to the Roman army. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." 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 what was there predicted take place, they must make their escape.

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. But one, "such as never was," is just before the people of God.

Jesus recognizes the existence of the Sabbath in verse 20, as late as the destruction of Jerusalem, as verily as he does the seasons of the year. The Sabbath, is the uniform term of both Testaments to designate the very day on which Jehovah rested after the creation, the day upon which he put his blessing, and which he set apart for man. Jesus does not speak of the Sabbath as being only a seventh part of time, or one day in seven, and no day in particular. 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. But if the term, the Sabbath, means only a seventh part of time, or one day in seven, and no day in particular, then we may read this definition into the text as follows: But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a seventh part of time! or on one day in seven. If such a prayer could be answered, pray tell us when the disciples could take their flight.

Verse 21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world in this time, no, nor ever shall be." The "great tribulation" here mentioned is that of the church of Jesus Christ, and not the

tribulation of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem. We offer the following reasons:-

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." But it is not true that the tribulation of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem was the greatest tribulation of the world ever witnessed. The tribulation of the inhabitants of the cities of the plain when God rained on them fire and brimstone, or, the tribulation when God destroyed all men from the face of the earth, save eight souls, by the flood, was certainly greater than that at the destruction of Jerusalem.

2. The tribulation of the Christian church has been 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 world; 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 thousands of all nations. "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.

3. If this tribulation be applied to the Jews, nor any other class of unbelieving men, it cannot be harmonized 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, we apply the "tribulation" spoken of in Matt.24:21, 29, to the church of Christ, extending down through the 1260 years of papal persecution; and the "trouble" mentioned in Dan.12:1, to the unbelieving world, to be experienced by them in the future.

4. The period of tribulation was shortened for the elect's sake. Who are the elect here mentioned? The Jews? No; their house had been pronounced desolate. They were left of God in their hardness of heart and blindness of mind. Says Paul, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." The elect were the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. And where were they when tribulation was upon the Jews? They had fled to the mountains. How absurd, then, to say that the days

of the tribulation of the Jews, in the city of Jerusalem, were shortened for the sake of the elect, who had fled from the place of tribulation.

5. 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 persecution, 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 arrogance, its work of death on the saints, and its duration as a persecuting power, under the symbol of the little horn. "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. Chap.7:25. It is generally admitted that "a time and times and the dividing of time" is 1260 years. Commencing the 1260 years A.D. 538, they reach to A.D. 1798, when Berthier, a French general, entered Rome, and took it. The pope was taken prisoner and shut up in the Vatican. The papacy was stripped of its civil power. Here ended the period of tribulation spoken of by our Lord, which was

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 was clothed with civil power to punish heretics for 1260 years; and had not the period of tribulation of the elect in the providence of God been shortened, the martyrdom of the church would have continued to 1798, in which event, in all human probability, 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 consume the power of the papacy until 1700, since which time, according to all church history, there has been no general persecution against the church. In

this was fulfilled the words of the prophets: "The earth helped the woman." Rev.12:16. "They shall be holpen with a little help." Dan.11:34. We are brought in this prophetic discourse of our Lord, down into the eighteenth century, very near the present time. We should naturally expect, then, that the instructions and warnings of the next verse would be applicable to this generation.

Verses 23,24: "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; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Here is a description of the spiritual deception of the present age. False Christs arose soon after the first advent of Christ, to deceive the Jews in regard to that event (see verse 5); likewise false Christs and false prophets have arisen at this day to deceive the people on the subject of the second advent. The Shakers say, "Lo, here is Christ. His second coming is in the person of Ann Lee." "Lo, he is there," say many of the popular ministers of these times. "His second coming is at the conversion of sinners, or at the death of saints." So they have as many second comings of Christ as there are sinners converted, and saints die. Senseless theology this!" Lo, here," exclaim a host of Spiritualists, and they "show great signs and wonders." If possible, they would deceive the very elect. And we regard it as a safe conclusion, that they will yet deceive all others but the elect.

Verses 25,26: "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." Our Lord is here dwelling upon what he has just before told them. His subject is still the teachings of those who say, "Lo, here is Christ!" "Lo, he is there!" If the Mormons say, "Behold, he is in the desert," at Salt Lake City, "go not forth;" yet many of their disciples have gone. Or if you hear proclaimed from the lips of the professed ministers of Jesus, "Behold, he is in the secret chamber," Christ's second coming is spiritual, at death, or at conversion, believe it not. And why not believe such mystical teachings? The reason is given in the next verse.

Verses 27,28: "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. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." We are very happy that our Lord has not only pointed out false Christs and false prophets, and has warned us against their mystical teachings, but he has in contrast set before us

the manner of his second coming in the plainest terms. 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 new sepulcher where Christ lay in death, caused the Roman guard to shake, and become as dead men. The light and glory of one angel completely over-powered 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.

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 heavens 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."

We have before seen that our Lord speaks in this chapter of the long period of tribulation upon his followers, and we have also seen how those days of tribulation were shortened for the elect's sake. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened," etc. We refer the reader to the noted dark day of May 19, 1780, as the fulfillment of this declaration. Mark this: It does not read, after those days, but "after the tribulation of those days." The days (1260 years, Dan.7:25) reached to 1798, eighteen years this side of the dark day in 1780. Mark 13:24, makes this point still plainer. "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened." That is, before the 1260 years closed, but after the tribulation or martyrdom of the saints ceased, the sun was darkened. Those who would point to the future, or to the past, prior to the eighteenth century, for the darkening of the sun here mentioned, will do well to read again Mark 13:24: "But in those days, after that tribulation,

"THE SUN SHALL BE DARKENED"

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

In May 19, 1780, there was a remarkable fulfillment of the predicted darkening of the sun; and in reference to the facts and date, there can be no doubt; for, besides the historical accounts, which all agree, there were many aged persons, with whom men of the present generation have mingled and conversed, who witnessed it, and have testified to it.

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

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

"ANNIVERSARY OF THE DARK DAY. - The dark day, May 19, 1780, is thus described by Mr. Stone, in his history of Beverly: 'The sun rose clear, but soon assumed a brassy hue. About 10 o'clock, A.M., it became unusually dark. The darkness continued to increase till about one o'clock, when it began to decrease. During this time, candles became necessary. The birds disappeared and were silent, the fowls went to their roosts, the cocks crew as at day break, and everything bore the appearance and gloom of night. The alarm produced by this unusual aspect of the heavens was great.' " - Portsmouth Journal, May 20, 1843.

The supernatural darkening of the sun, May 19, 1780, has been so universally understood that Noah Webster's dictionary, in the edition for 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. For several days previous, the wind had been variable, but chiefly from the south-west and the north-east. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known."

"From Robert Sears' Guide to Knowledge, published in New York, 1844, we extract the following: 'On the 19th of May, 1780, an uncommon darkness took place all over New England, and extended to Canada. It continued about fourteen hours, or from ten o'clock in the morning till midnight. The darkness was so great that people were unable to read common print, or tell the time of the day by their watches, or to dine, or transact their ordinary business, without the light of candles. They became dull and gloomy, and some were excessively frightened. The fowls went to roost. Objects could not be distinguished but at a very little distance, and everything bore the appearance of gloom and night. Similar days have occasionally been known, though inferior in the degree or extent of their darkness. The causes of these phenomena are unknown. They certainly were not the result of eclipses.'"

"THE MOON SHALL NOT GIVE HER LIGHT."

"The moon shines with a borrowed light, and therefore if the sun from whom she borrows her light is turned into darkness, she must fail, of course, and become bankrupt." - Matthew Henry.

"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," - Portsmouth Journal, May 20, 1843, - Extract from Stone's History of Beverly.

Mr. Tenny, 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 eyes was equally invisible with the blackest velvet.

Dr. Adams, speaking of the dark night, says: At nine it was a darkness to be felt by more senses than one, as there was a strong smell of soot. Almost every one who happened to be out in the evening, got lost in going home. The darkness was as uncommon in the night as it was in the day, as the moon had fullled the day before."

THE STARS SHALL FALL FROM HEAVEN

We here give an extract from an article written by Henry Dana Ward, in regard to the falling stars of Nov. 13, 1833: published in the Journal of Commerce, Nov. 15, 1833. "At the cry, look out of the window, I sprang from a deep sleep, and with wonder saw the east lighted up with the dawn and meteors. The zenith, the north, and the west also, showed the falling stars, in the very image of one thing, and only one, I ever heard of. I called to my wife to behold; and while robing, she exclaimed, 'See how the stars fall!' I replied, 'That is the wonder!' and we felt in our hearts that it was a sign of the last days. For, truly, 'the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.' Rev.6:13. This language of the prophet has always been received as metaphorical. Yesterday, it was literally fulfilled. The ancients understood by aster, in Greek, and stella, in Latin, the smaller lights of heaven. The refinement of modern astronomy has made the distinction between stars and heaven and meteors of heaven. Therefore, the idea of the prophet, as it is expressed in the original Greek, was literally fulfilled in the phenomenon of yesterday.

"And how did they fall? Neither myself, nor one of the family, heard any report; and were I to hunt through nature for a simile, I could not find one so apt to illustrate the appearance of the heavens, as that which St. John uses in the prophecy before quoted."

"The stars fell 'even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.' Here is the exactness of the prophet.

"The falling stars did not come as if from several trees shaken, but from one: those which appeared in the east, fell toward the east; those which appeared in the north, fell toward the north; those which appeared in the west, fell toward the west; and those which appeared in the south (for I went out of my residence into the park), fell toward the south. And they fell not as a ripe fruit falls. Far from it; but they flew, they were cast, like the unripe fruit, which at first refuses to leave the branch; and when, under a violent pressure, it does break its hold, it flies swiftly, straight off, descending; and in the multitude falling, some cross the track of others, as they are thrown with more or less force; but each one falls on its own side of the tree. Such was the appearance of the above phenomenon to the inmates of my house."

Prof. Olmstead, of Yale College, says: "The extent of the shower of 1883 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. 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. This is no longer to be regarded as a terrestrial, but as a celestial, phenomenon; and shooting stars are now to be no more viewed as casual productions of the upper regions of the atmosphere, but as visitants from other worlds, or from the planetary voids."

The People's Magazine, Boston, January, 1834, on the falling stars of Nov. 13, 1833, says: "The Rockingham (Va.) Register calls it, A rain of fire, - thousands of stars being seen at once; some said it began with considerable noise.

The Journal of Commerce informs us that 'three hundred miles this side of Liverpool the phenomenon was as splendid there as here; and that in St. Lawrence County there was a snowstorm during the phenomenon, in which the falling stars appeared like lightning; . . . that in Germantown, Pa., they seemed like showers of great hail.'

"The Lancaster (Pa.) Examiner says: 'The air was filled with innumerable meteors or stars; . . . hundreds of thousands of brilliant bodies might be seen falling at every moment, . . . sloping their descent toward the earth, at an angle of about forty-five degrees, resembling flashes of fire.

This is important testimony as to the vast extent of the falling stars, and also as to their emanating from a single point in the heavens. It was the greatest display of celestial fire-works recorded on the pages of history. It was no atmospheric, or terrestrial phenomenon, common to the upper regions of the earth; but a display of the divine power, baffling the science of man.

POWERS OF THE HEAVENS SHAKEN

This event 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 Rev.6. Both follow the falling stars. Please compare Matt.24:29, 30, with Rev.6:12, 17. 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 heavens. This will probably take place at the pouring out of the seventh vial into the air. Rev.16:17. Then it is said, "And there came a great voice out of the temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done." 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. "Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Heb.12:26. "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.

We would not speak too positively of future events; but venture the opinion that the voice of the Father will shake the heavens and the earth before the sign of the Son of Man appears. The people of God will be safe. Islands may disappear, and mountains be thrown down; but the saints will remain unharmed. Earthquakes may break up the earth's surface, so that kings and nobles, rich and poor, bond and free, may hide "themselves in dens and in the rocks of the mountains," still God will be the hope of his people.

SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN

This is not one of the signs which show that the Son of Man is near; but "the sign of the Son of Man in heaven." It is that which signifies his position. When Christ ascended from the mount of Olivet, "a cloud received him "from the sight of the 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 apparently increase in size. It will signify to those who are looking for his return, that he is there, soon to burst forth from the cloud in matchless glory. This cloud will be the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.

THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH MOURN

During the pouring out of the seven last plagues, and at the time of the shaking of the powers of the heavens, a large portion of the wicked will doubtless be destroyed. A portion still remain, to view scenes still more terrible, and to endure anguish more dreadful. The sign is soon in heaven. 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 mourn. 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. Here is a copy of that dreadful prayer: "Mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon 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.6:16, 17.

But rocks cannot shelter them from the burning glory manifested by the King of kings, attended by the whole heavenly host. The presence of but one angel before Joseph's sepulcher, caused the keepers to fall like dead men. Then 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 that vast multitude of angels, brighter than a thousand suns at noonday, will pierce the sinner's lowest hiding-place, and will "make a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zeph.1:18. Or, as Paul says, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness [bright shining, Macknight's translation] of his coming." O Christian brother, we

warn you to watch and be ready to receive your Saviour with joy. Backslider, arouse, and return to the Lord while he may be found. And, poor sinner, though you have never tasted of the pardoning love of Christ, you, too, may come and find pardon, and a shelter from approaching wrath.