

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe 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." Verses 37-39.

26. If we have knowledge of the Lord's coming, what is our duty?

"Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Verse 44.

27. What will be the doom of those who say in their hearts that the Lord is not soon coming?

"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, . . . 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 [margin, *cut him off*], and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 24:48-51

IN the sun, and moon, and stars,
Signs and wonders have appeared;
Earth has groaned with bloody wars,
And the hearts of men have feared.

Soon shall ocean's hoary deep,
Tossed with stronger tempests, rise;
Darker storms the mountains sweep,
Fiercer lightnings rend the skies.

Dread alarms shall shake the proud,
Pale amazement, restless fear;
And amid the thunder-cloud
Shall the Judge of men appear.

But, though from his awful face,
Heaven shall fade, and earth shall fly,
Fear not ye, his chosen race,
Your redemption draweth nigh.

REGINALD WEBER.



Our Lord's Great Prophecy.

WHAT special promise did the Saviour make concerning his second coming?

"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.

2. What was to take place before the Lord should return?

"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.

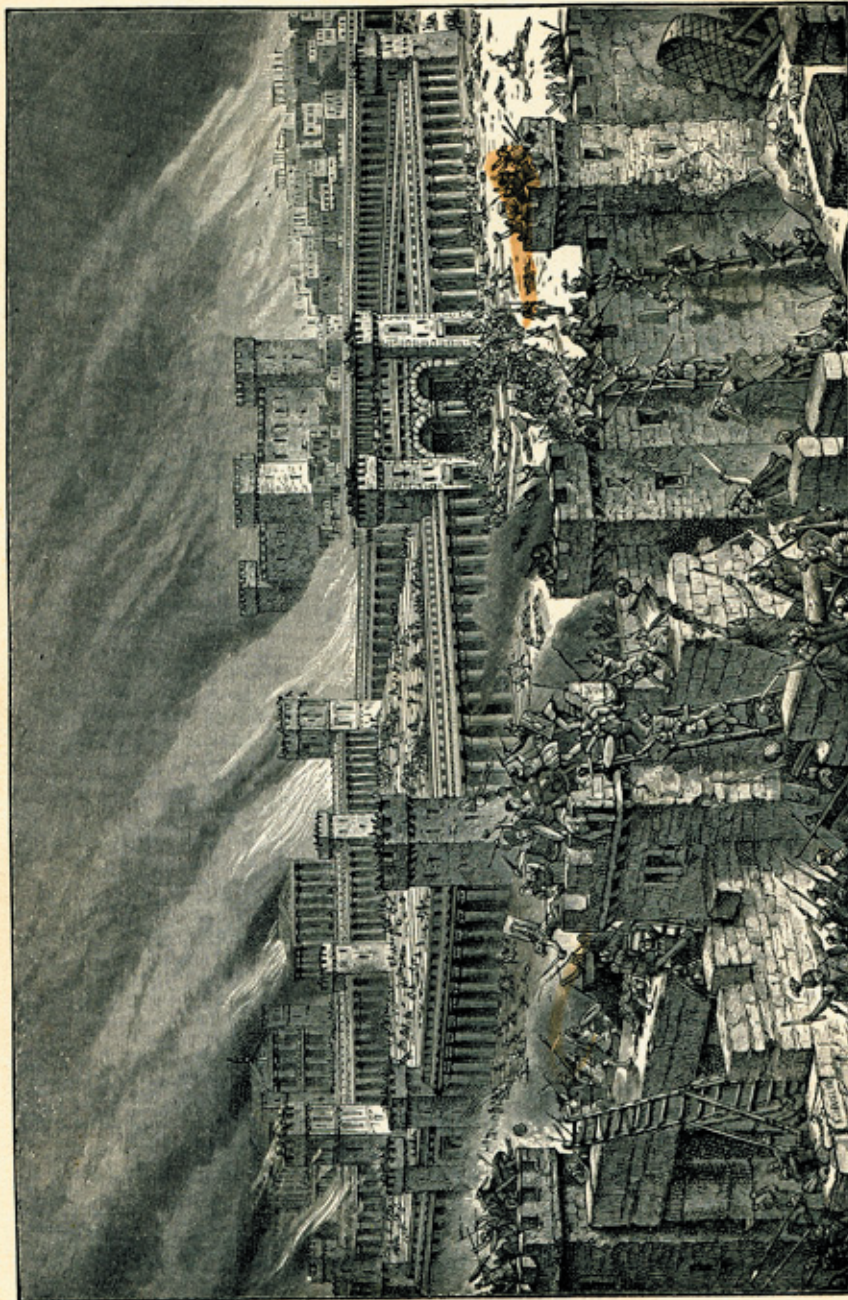
3. Upon hearing Christ say that the time would come when the temple at Jerusalem should be entirely destroyed, what did the disciples ask him?

"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matt. 24:3.

4. Did he intimate that the end was then close at hand?

"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. 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." Verses 4-6.

5. After telling them there would be wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in many places, what did he say these would be?



COPYRIGHTED, 1888.

THE "DESOLATION" OF JERUSALEM.

[36]

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.' — *Burrill's Geography of the Heavens*, p. 163, ed. 1854.

"No language, indeed, can come up to the splendor of that magnificent display; and I hesitate not to say that no one who did not witness it can form an adequate conception of its glory. It seemed as if the whole starry heavens had congregated at one point near the zenith, and were simultaneously shooting forth, with the velocity of lightning, to every part of the horizon; and yet they were not exhausted; thousands swiftly followed in the track of thousands, as if created for the occasion." — *Christian Advocate and Journal*, Dec. 13, 1833.

A star or a meteor, prepared for the occasion, went before the wise men to direct them to the Saviour. It is not necessary that the planetary worlds should fall in order that the prophecy of Matt. 24:29 may be literally fulfilled.

"The spectacle must have been of the sublimest order. The apostle John might have had it before him when he indited the passage referring to the opening of the sixth seal: '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.' — *Edward Dunkin, F. R. A. S. of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich*, in *"The Heavens and the Earth,"* p. 186.

21. When the trees put forth their leaves, what does it indicate?

"Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." Matt. 24:32.

22. What just as surely indicates the Lord's speedy coming?

"So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Verse 33.

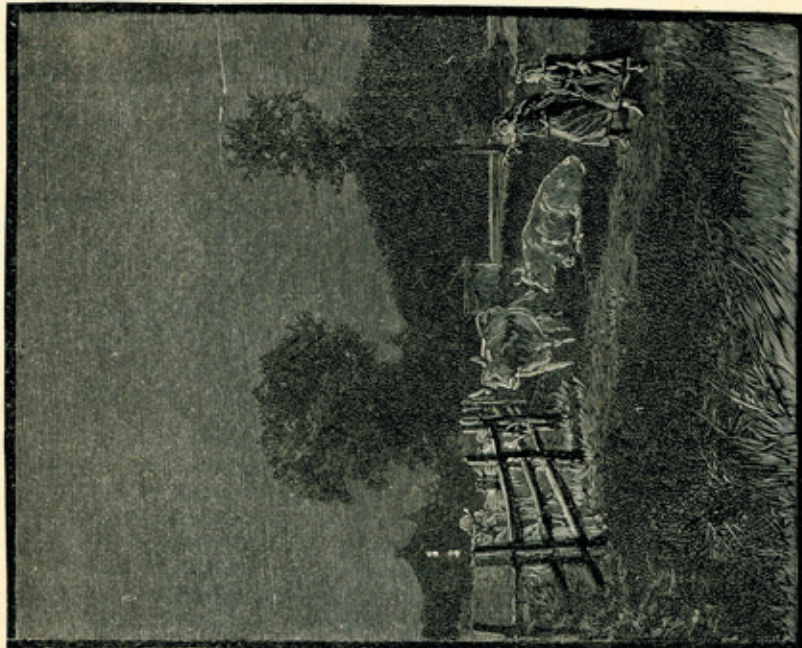
23. How near is the Lord's coming when these signs have been fulfilled?

"Verily I say unto you, *This generation shall not pass*, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Verses 34, 35. As though he said, This generation of which I speak; the one that actually sees the last sign, has seen *all* of them in the sense that we have seen the progress of science. We have not actually lived during its entire development, but we look back and say we have seen it. So in this case. The same original word here used and translated "this," also occurs in Luke 17:34: "I tell you in *that* night [the night of which I speak] there shall be two in one bed."

24. Can we know the *day and hour* of his coming?

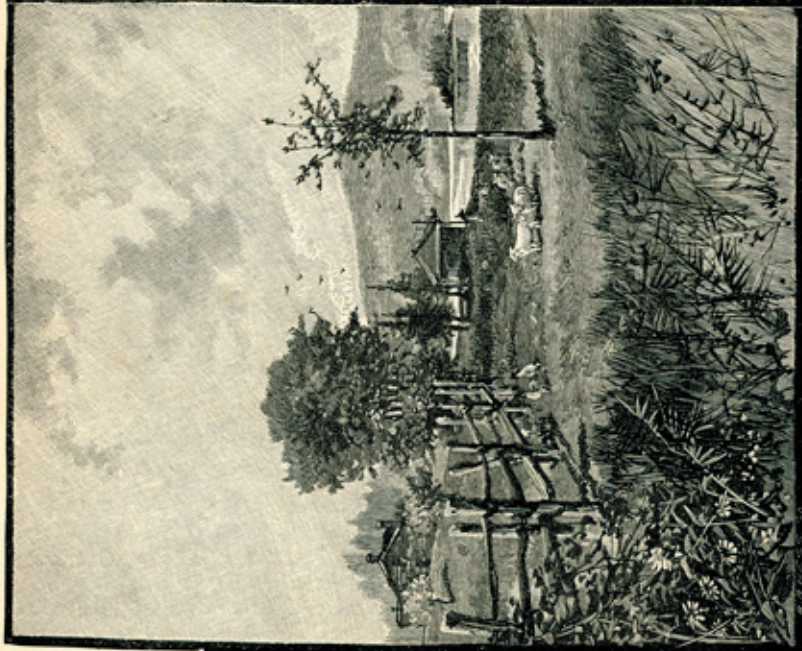
"But of that day and hour *knoweth no man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Verse 36.

25. What will be the moral condition of the world when the Lord comes?



COPYRIGHTED, 1889.

MID-DAY.



MORNING.

THE DARK DAY OF MAY 19, 1780.

"All these are the *beginning of sorrows*." Verse 8. With all these things taking place as only the *beginning of sorrows*, the disciples certainly could not look for the Lord's coming in their generation.

6. To what extent is the gospel to be preached before the end?

"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*." Verse 14. The word *then*, as here used, is an adverb of time, meaning "at that time." The gospel to be so preached is not to *convert* the world; but is to be simply a "witness" unto all nations, that they may be condemned who do not obey it.

7. What has been already admitted concerning the progress of the gospel?

"Within a year, Central Africa, the last remaining stronghold of barbarism, has been opened up, and missionaries are now preaching the truth in the territory of one of its fiercest and most powerful kings. If the doctrine of the pre-millennialists be correct, — that the gospel is to be preached, not to convert the world, 'but for a witness unto all nations,' and that when it is so preached we are to expect the end, — then it may well be that the end is nearer than most of us think." — *Christian Union*, Nov. 13, 1878.

8. After giving a general summary of matters, how did the Lord particularize the events of the future?

"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)." Matt. 24 : 15.

9. How is this same thought expressed elsewhere?

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Luke 21 : 20.

10. What did our Lord say was to follow this destruction of the city?

"For *then shall be great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matt. 24 : 21.

11. How long was the papal power to hold sway over the saints?

"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.

12. What is the meaning of the expression, "time and times and the dividing of time"?

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there *a thousand two hundred and threescore days*." Rev. 12 : 6. The period here given is again expressed in verse 14, by "time, times, and half [dividing of] a time." Twelve hundred and sixty days, then, is here meant by the expression "time, times, and half a time." But these days themselves are *symbolic*, and must refer to some *literal* period of time.

13. What does a symbolic day indicate?

"This shall be a sign [symbol] to the house of Israel. . . . And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: *I have appointed thee each day for a year.*" Eze. 4:3-6.

NOTE. — These symbolic days would therefore indicate an equal number of literal years. The papacy received its power to correct heretics in A. D. 538, by the confirmation of Justinian, the Roman emperor. The time to which the papal power over the saints would extend (1260 years), ended in 1798. For further explanation of this point, see reading on "A Remarkable Symbol," p. 29.

14. What did the Lord say would be done in view of the rigor of that persecution?

"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: *but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*" Matt. 24:22. The days of persecution simply, were to be shortened, and not the days predicted for the Roman power to bear rule. The Reformation under Wickliffe, Luther, and others softened public sentiment, which in a measure restrained the rage of the papacy, and so modified the tribulation.

15. Did the Lord say he would return *immediately* after the tribulation ceased?

"*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." Matt. 24:23, 24.

16. What did he say would immediately follow?

"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." Verse 29.

17. How is this expressed by Mark?

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark 13:24. That is, in the days of the papal power, but after the tribulation ceases, shall these events take place. The persecution was the strongest under the direction of the Jesuits. This order was founded by Ignatius Loyola, and established by Pope Paul, Sept. 27, 1540. It finally became so distasteful to the popes, on account of its continually growing power, that by a papal bull the order was dissolved, July 21, 1773. From this time on there is no record of any open persecution of the saints. Then, according to the last text quoted, somewhere between 1773, when the persecution ended, and 1798, the time to which the prophetic days extended, we must look for the first of these signs given by our Lord — the darkening of the sun.

18. Was there such a phenomenon? If so, when did it occur? — On May 19, 1780.

NOTES. — "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 Historical Collections.*

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

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

The inquiry may be raised, Why was the darkening of the sun confined to so limited a district as a portion of the Western Hemisphere, if it was to be a sign of the Lord's coming? to which we reply: God has given to the inhabitants of the Old World many signs of Christ's second coming; and why should not others be favored in this respect? Shall we criticise Him who is too wise to err? The inhabitants of the Old World can say: On our territory mighty kingdoms arose and fell, according to the sure word of prophecy. Here the pope lost his temporal power at a time marked by prophecy — a sure indication of the end near; and here great nations are taking the lead in preparing for the last great battle. It is for God to distribute the signs according to his wisdom and good pleasure, and it is for us to accept them with submission and gratitude, whether we witness them ourselves, or whether others witness them and report them to us. The Jews never saw the star that led to the spot where the Saviour was born, nor did most of them witness many of the Saviour's mighty miracles. Were they therefore justified in not believing on him?

19. When did the moon refuse to shine?

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

The darkness of the night was as supernatural as that of the previous day, from the fact, as stated by Dr. Adams, that "the moon had full the day before."

20. When did the stars fall, as predicted in the prophecy? — November 13, 1833.

NOTES. — "But the most sublime phenomenon of shooting stars of which the world has furnished any record, was witnessed throughout the United States on the morning of the 13th of November, 1833. The entire extent of this astonishing exhibition has not been precisely ascertained; but it covered no inconsiderable portion of the earth's surface. . . . The whole heavens seemed in motion, and suggested to some the awful grandeur of the image