

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

V. Signs, &c.

In our last article we made the statement that if we were within a short distance of Christ's Second Coming, all the signs indicating that event must now be visible to the careful and competent observer. Our Lord has indicated several of these signs. One is, "wars and rumors of wars." This certainly is amply fulfilled. A second is earthquakes in many places. The world just now is passing through a remarkable earthquake period. Ten or fifteen years ago a scientific writer said in an article which appeared in the papers that it was believed by men of science that our world was about to pass through such an earthquake period. Since that article was published, scores of thousands of lives have been lost by earthquakes, besides the destruction of property beyond estimate. The Mediterranean region, Japan, the Pacific islands, Central and South America and even the United States have been terribly shaken up. And there are more to follow. A third sign is famine. Within a few years Brazil, China and Russia have had to suffer this most awful scourge. Many other places have not escaped the famine rod. A fourth sign is pestilence. We need mention only two—cholera and the grip. Who can tell the number of their slain? The generation living when Christ comes must witness all these things for Jesus says, "when ye see all these things come to pass know that he is nigh even at the door." No intelligent person can deny these signs. In Daniel 12, 4 we have two other signs. "Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased." Nobody ever saw such an age for running "to and fro." Men and women are doing so in every sense and for every purpose. They are going either and thither for pleasure, for education, for trade, for political purposes, for war and for religious purposes. Expositions and conventions crowd the trains, steamers and hotels. And knowledge is running at high pressure on every line of thought and experiment. What children know to-day their grandfathers never dreamed of. Our Lord said that the generation that saw him appear would be an unbelieving people, except a small number. Hence his coming will be as the flood in Noah's day and the falling fires on Sodom. The people will not believe in or expect anything of the kind. Therefore it will come as a "snare" upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth." Luke 21, 34-36. Also read Matt. 24, 37-42. This generation is surely unbelieving enough to fulfill that prediction.

As the seed of Abraham is to be reinstated in the Holy land great fertility must set in previously. "But ye O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people of Israel for they are at hand to come." Ezek. 36, 8. The Holy land is now becoming wonderfully fertile. Jerusalem is to be rebuilt. See Jer. 31, 38-40. That renowned city is now being built up again after centuries of desolation. Another fulfillment of prophecy show that the great day is at hand. The latter rain spoken of in Joel 2, 23 must return. The Bishop of Jerusalem said three or four years ago that the "latter rain" returned two years previously, though it had not fallen since the captivity. In Isaiah 62, 10, we read, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high-way; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." That high-way—a railroad—is now built and operated, and owned by a man of the seed of Abraham. In Zech. 12, 7 we read, "The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first." Of late the Jews have been returning to Jerusalem in large numbers, preparatory to the final restoration.

But probably the most marked and visible sign of Christ's coming is the decay of the Turkish empire. The Turk is "the king of the north," spoken of in Dan. 11, 4-5. When he comes to his end, Michael (Christ) delivers Israel, the awful tribulation comes and the dead are raised. That empire has been trembling on its feet by many years and was kept on its feet by England. But the fearful slaughter of Christians in Armenia by the Turks has filled the world with horror. One great newspaper says, "The time is fast approaching when the final break-up of Turkish rule in Europe must be faced." Now the word comes that England is joining with her great rival and enemy, Russia, to destroy Turkish rule forever. Even now it is affirmed that Russia has 20,000 troops on the Turkish borders. There are significant hints thrown out of what is to happen next spring. When that empire falls the earth will shake. "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains, and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye." Isa. 18, 3.

We know of no sign of Christ's coming given us in the Bible but in now in sight and becoming clearer every day. The Bible has mapped out the future. As the great prophetic times run out, all the signs which we have named appear until the crisis is reached. Something happens in the Turkish empire which brings against her some other great power which destroys her from the earth. This event brings the nations into collision and the "great tribulation" follows. At the beginning of the tribulation Christ descends from

heaven, raises his dead saints, translates the living saints and takes them both up into the air to be with him in safety while the tribulation lasts. When the tribulation is over, Christ comes down to earth with all his saints and angels. He restores the seed of Abraham to the Holy land made ready for them by the destruction of the Turkish empire. He sits and judges among the nations and puts an end to war and other evils, begins his grand millennial reign and fills the earth with the knowledge of the glory of God. Then as Daniel says in Chap. 7, 27 "The kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High."

The last sign which we shall name is great and wide spread preparation for war before the crisis comes God says, "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 plowshares into swords and your pruning-hooks into spears." Joel 3, 9-10. Read the chapter to the end. After the slaughter of the multitudes in the valley of decision, God dwells in Zion and Jerusalem is holy, and no stranger passes through her any more to tread her down. For the last quarter of a century the nations have exerted themselves to the utmost in preparing for war. But while they are saying peace and safety the great crash comes. See 1 Thes. 5, 1-3.

NOTES.

Some "wise and prudent" people say very gravely, "You should be careful what you say about our Lord's coming lest you alarm people, and after all he does not come." Very good. But is it not better to warn people than to let that awful day overtake them as the flood did the people in Noah's time? God's command is, Blow the trumpet and warn the people and whoever does not take warning will have to answer for his own blood.

The Bible says that Christ's coming will be as a "snare" upon all the earth. We ask, with the words of Jesus, his prophets, and apostles, and the gospel preached, why should it come as a snare? There must be a cause. Not one minister in a hundred gives the subject a thorough study and therefore they know but little about it. Hence many of them ridicule his speedy coming. Of course most people believe them. We are afraid that blood will be required at their hands. Most of the great religious newspapers treat the theory of Christ's immediate coming with freezing coldness. One such paper in Toronto said not long since, that those writers who claim that Christ will soon appear know no more of the matter than their dopes. Let us remind such ministers and writers that they are filling the world with unbelief and preparing people for an awful, and more than likely, a fatal surprise.

The cry of these ministers and editors is, "We believe in Christ's coming, but it will be after the Millennium is past." But most of them believe that the Millennium is not here yet, and when it does come it will last a thousand years. Now if Christ does not come till after the Millennium then this generation and many other generations need never give it a thought. But what does Jesus say, "But watch ye at every season making supplication that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come upon the earth and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21, 36, R. V.) It is the post-Millennial teaching that will be mostly responsible for the state the world will be in when Christ comes. That doctrine was not the faith of the early church. It came into the church when she became corrupt and built up its theory on a figurative interpretation of Scripture. See Kurtz's Church History. Vol. 1, P. 149. This post-Millennial theory holds that the preaching of the gospel is to fill the world with the glory of God. If that is so, why does Christ need to come at all? If the gospel fills the world and subjects everything to Christ how does it happen that it is like the people were when "the flood came and took them all away." The whole tenor of the word of the Lord goes to show that our Lord does not tarry till universal peace and righteousness prevail, but he comes after the most terrible tribulation known to earth closes, that he may "destroy them that destroy the earth." The margin reads, corrupt the earth. As we have shown, that tribulation takes place at the end of the times of the Gentiles, when the Turkish empire falls and the seed of Abraham returns to the land given to their fathers, "no more to be plucked up out of their land."

But suppose Christ does not come within the limit of time which we have stated, what then? Will you not be a false prophet and merit the laugh of the multitude? Well, in the first place we are no prophet at all, but only tell what Christ and his prophets have said. As to

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the laugh, we may say it will give us no great concern. If Christ does not come soon, the saints "who love his appearing" will be disappointed, and "the wicked will still do wickedly," and no doubt the next century will be ushered in to the hearts delight of all who do not "love Christ's appearing."

But on the other hand suppose Christ does come at any time between this time and the end of three years, and calls up all his saints to meet him in the air, while the awful tribulation is on the earth, and then comes down to earth "with all his saints, in power and great glory," then who will be the false prophet—then who will be able to raise the laugh? Jesus once said "Woe unto you that laugh now for ye shall mourn and weep." If Christ does not come nobody will be greatly injured by anything we have said. But if he is now "at the door," and will soon appear, is our warning too soon and too strong? Is the world ready for "the great and notable day of the Lord?" We know that it is not, and the Bible says it will not be any better prepared for his coming than the old world was prepared for the flood, and it will cause far greater surprise and terror than did that event. He only is wise who opens his eyes to see the things "that must shortly come to pass." The great prophetic ages are now nearly run out, the signs are all in sight. Let the saints see that their robes are washed and let the wicked tremble. Amen.

N. R. N.

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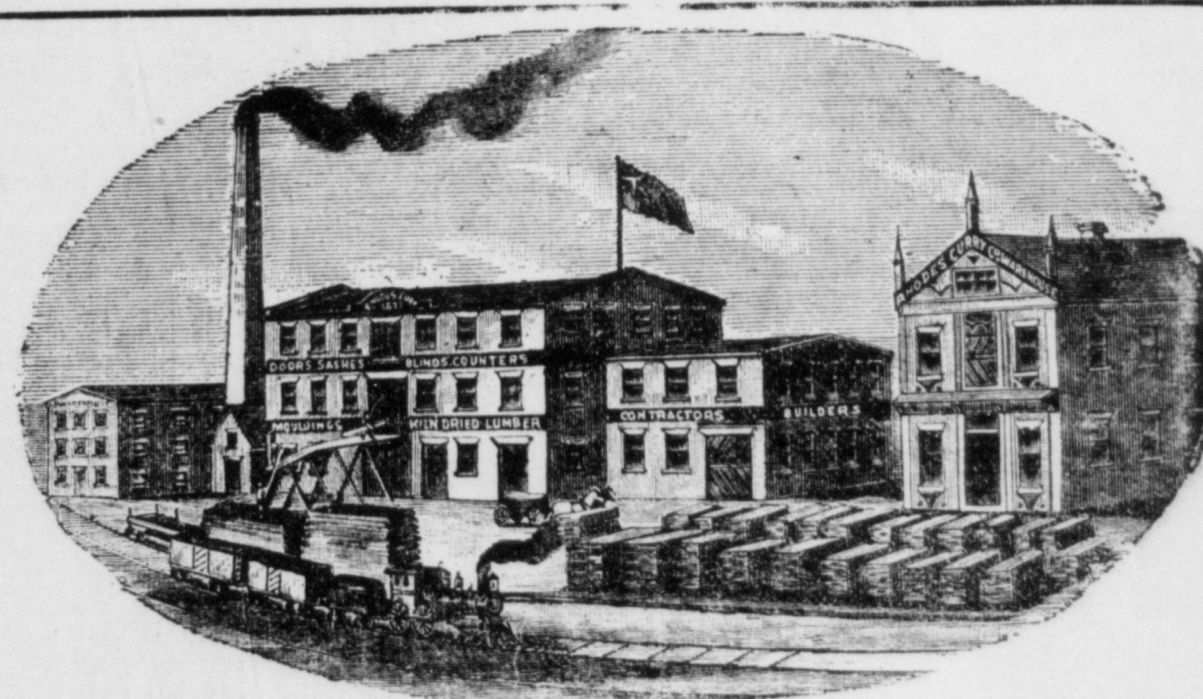
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