

will, according to this theory, remain forever in a condition of unconsciousness, virtually annihilation. Passages of Scripture are quoted and interpreted in support of these views. Adventist preachers are often remarkably well read in the Scriptures, and expert in the use they make of them.

At the present time the Adventists seem to be more than usually expectant. The *World's Crisis*, the leading publication of the sect, a weekly journal issued at Boston, published, a few days ago, an article in which the following graphic description of present conditions appears:

"That a universal crisis of some kind is imminent most thinking men anxiously admit. The popular pulse is feverish with expectation of startling events. The angry unrest of the nations; the huge military preparations; the social discontent; the terrible lapse of commercial integrity; the uncertain trend of religious opinion; the frightful decadence of popular morality; the reckless rush for sensual pleasure at all costs and hazards, and the shocking disregard of the sacredness of human life, conspire to create a general sense of impermanency and distrust. The race is nervous and agitated. All grades of men are eager for the latest news, as if any hour might disclose startling and revolutionary changes. It is as the hot breath of colliding forces presaging dark, wild tempests. Mighty empires tremble under mutual menace, as grand old forests at premonitory blasts of cyclonic fury. Thrones set in boasted impregnability and guarded by a million bayonets throb with an indefinable fear. Kings smile in hollow pretence of peace, and guarantees are formed not meant to be kept. And national honor is a forgotten virtue. As if to make the all-pervading peril more perilous still, the two giant forces of the wide world—money and muscle—are madly and incurably estranged. The toilers and the monopolists stand menacing each other in mutual hate. Lawless hordes are nursing dreams of sceptres and thrones, though the way to them be through carnage and blood. And nature itself, as if in alliance with rampant evil, is ill at ease. The seas and waves roar ominously. The mountains and planes shake with unwonted, life-destroying ague fits. The powers of the heavens are tremulous, as if upon the verge of dissolution. Conscious of the general disorder, men's hearts are failing them, in fear of what is coming on the nations and the whole world. What is the meaning of these strangely distempered times, this universal and perilous disorder in state and church and home, this unwonted perturbation of nature, these supernatural omens, terrestrial

and celestial? The answer lies not in natural causes. Science and philosophy afford no solution. The highest human wisdom is at bay. Courts and senates are perplexed and silent. But in the light of the open scriptures he that runs may read what is the awful significance of these wonders. They mean one thing; they can mean nothing else. They signify the wrath to come. They mean the great day of the Lord is at hand. They forebode the end of all mortal things. They witness the return of Christ the Lord 'nigh even at the doors.' They foreshow resurrection scenes and judgment scenes hovering over us. They blazon the swift doom of a godless race. They herald the dawning of the glad day of translation joy to the righteous of every land and every age. They summon the friends of Christ to lift up their drooping heads and sing the songs of hope, so long delayed, now ready to be crowned."

A "Prophetic Conference" of Adventists has been sitting in Worcester, Mass., this week, mainly for the purpose of examining all scriptural prophecies which seem to point to the present time, and to indicate that the coming of the Savior is nigh. A prominent elder of the sect, named W. A. Burch, of New Bedford, Mass., has lately given to the press some of the reasons why the branch of Adventists which he represented look for the early coming of the Savior. He says:

We believe that the Savior is to come the second time to this earth, personally and visibly, as he went away. Biblical predictions as to the first advent and other important events have been fulfilled literally, and this will be no exception to the rule.

We believe the second advent to be a necessity in the plan of redemption. Without it there will be no resurrection, no judgment, no rewards or punishments; the seed of the woman will not bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii, 15); the curse will not be removed from the earth; the time will not come when "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (Rev. xxi, 4), and when the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed (1 Cor. xv, 26); in short, without it, "then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." As mortal beings we are absolutely dependent upon the second advent for future life and immortality. * * * We do not expect the conversion of the world, look for no second probation, but believe the wheat and the tares will "grow together until the harvest," many in the broad way and few in the narrow way, while "in the last days perilous times shall come," and evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." Such are our times.

We believe that the Savior will come at an appointed time. We cannot hasten it by earnest effort nor delay it by unbelief or indifference. "At the time appointed the end shall be" (Daniel viii, 19). "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii, 31). The flood, the exodus, the return of the Jews from Babylon, the restoration of Tyre, the first advent and some other events of prophecy took place at the close of specified periods of time.

Jesus went forth preaching, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark i, 15), and at last proclaimed to the city of Jerusalem: "They shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke xix, 44). * * *

We believe from the fulfilment of prophecy that the second advent is very near, but we do not, as a body, believe that the definite time will be known. We are to "know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matthew xxiv, 33), because certain signs have appeared, but we are not to know the day or the hour. We are to know "the watch," to use the illustration of the Savior, but not "the hour" (Matthew xxiv, 44). "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left." "Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

While we thus believe, it is also our conviction that the prophetic dates were given to afford us an approximate knowledge of the time of the advent, and if the prophets searched what or "what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter i, 11), surely we ought likewise to take heed to the sure word of prophecy, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise," (Peter, i, 19). Accordingly, as we compare prophecy with history, we find various periods of probability, of which from time to time some speak in our meetings, and this leads others to announce to the world that we have "set another time," etc. While we do not set times, we feel in duty bound to give to others the benefit of any light we may have on the subject. And we do not deny that at the present time many among us view this year with more than ordinary interest as possibly the year of our Lord's return.

We do not know that he will come this year. We make no predictions, but we advise all to be ready. And if he should not come, we have set no time in thus viewing a passing year with more than ordinary interest, and as the signs thicken that indicate that