

Many are teaching abstinence from flesh : the abolition of marriage, either avowed or virtual, is being unscrupulously preached. And these signs are appearing, as Paul predicted that they would, coincidentally with an apostasy, or falling away, from the great truths respecting the Godhead and incarnation of the Lord Jesus.

Again, the monstrous theory of a plurality of "Christs" has been invented, and is being taught, not, we may be sure, without a plan for its application to coming events. Already signs and wonders are being shown by prophets who will, perhaps, ere long proclaim their Messiahs; already the cry has been raised, Behold, He is in the secret chambers; and, as we have seen reasons for supposing, we may probably ere long hear rumours that He is in the wilderness.

Lastly; the characteristic features of the days of Noah are reappearing, and, above all, a free communication has been established between the spirits of the air and the human race with a view, apparently, to a sojourn once more of Nephilim upon earth. Unlawful secrets, known in past times only to those few who seem to have acted as Satan's agents in directing the course of this world, are now recklessly offered to all men. The remembrance of that appalling scene, when their brethren were hurled by omnipotent lightnings into pits of darkness, would seem to be fading from the minds of the fallen angels; and the usual course of sin, most frightful of insanities, is urging them on to the brink of the precipice from the abysmal depths of which the groans of their blasted

False Christs and false prophets.

Recurrence of the characteristics of the days of Noah. Union of the two worlds and preparation for the descent of the Nephilim.

companions ascend. Meanwhile, numbers of the puny inhabitants of earth are ready, at their bidding, to essay any deeds of madness. For not a few even of the learned and wise, unable by reason of vanity to maintain the bare conception of a God, unless His awful majesty be displayed before their eyes, have resolved, either avowedly or virtually, that there is none greater than themselves, or, at least, than their possibility.

All things seem to be prepared for the fulfilment of the solemn prediction in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, when Michael, leading the van of the host which will come with Christ to take the kingdom, shall drive the rebel High Ones down to earth. And in the following chapter we see the consequences of that marvellous event : the peoples of Satan's last refuge, of the only remaining portion of his once vast dominions, must be organised for the final struggle. And so, out of the troubled sea of anarchy and perplexity of nations, there arises, in greater majesty and power than it ever before possessed, the resuscitated empire of Rome under the immediate direction and government of the Wicked One.

But of far more intense interest to those who love the Lord Jesus, and long for His appearing, is that which is signified as taking place just previously to the expulsion of the Devil and his angels from heaven.* For without going into details, which we have considered elsewhere,† we may mention our conclusion that the birth and rapture of the man child refer to

The waiting Church will be removed before the fallen angels are driven down to earth.

* Rev. xii. 1-5.

† In "The Great Prophecies" (Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton).

the completion of the mystic Christ—of which the personal Christ is the Head and His Church the body—as manifested by the sudden translation of all waiting saints, whether dead or alive, to meet their Lord in the air.

It thus appears that this long expected event will precede Satan's banishment from heaven, and, therefore, also its results, the revival of the Roman empire, and the revelation of the Man of Sin. Like Enoch, the Church of Christ will be called away before earth is for a time abandoned to the Nephilim, before the fearful woes of the end.

If, then, the fallen angels appear to be already preparing for their descent; if the great Therefore, in all probability, the Lord is at hand. will at last evolve the

Lawless One, be even now spreading; who can be sure of a day or an hour? Who of Christ's watching people can tell, when he rises in the morning, whether he will not have left the scenes of earth before close of day? Who, when he retires to rest, knows whether he will be awakened by the returning light, or by the summons of the Master, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God? Are we not living in solemn times: is not the air full of warnings: does it not behoove every believer to arise, gird up his loins, and trim his lamp? Is it not the sound of the King's chariot which we hear: should not every sleeping servant rouse himself and prepare to meet the Lord with joy?

It may be that His voice will be heard in the morning, when the sun is high and men are hurrying to their various occupations: it may be that He will call at even, when the west is crimson with the setting sun,

and the weary are seeking their homes after the toil and excitement of the day: it may be that His summons will startle the midnight air, and bring forth His own from the darkness of their chambers or their graves into the dazzling glory of His presence: it may be that at early dawn He will speak the word, and in an instant be surrounded by the myriads of His elect, countless as the dewdrops that spring from the womb of the morning and glisten in the reddening beams of the sun. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh." *

"Surely I come quickly"† was His last message to His widowed Church: let no man think that he has the Spirit of Christ till he can fervently respond, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

* Matt. xxiv. 13.

† Rev. xiii. 20.