

**EIGHT SERMONS
ON "THE SIGNS OF
THE TIMES"**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649569458

Eight Sermons On "The Signs of the Times" by Harvey Marriott

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HARVEY MARRIOTT

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ON "THE SIGNS OF
THE TIMES"**

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EIGHT

J.H. 1828.

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SERMONS

ON

“THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES,”

RECENTLY

PREACHED AT MARGARET'S CHAPEL

IN THE CITY OF BATH.

BY THE

REV. HARVEY MARRIOTT,

RECTOR OF CLAVERTON, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD KEPPON.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY

RICHARD CRUTTWELL, ST. JAMES'S-STREET, BATH;

AND PUBLISHED BY

HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY, LONDON;

AND JOHN UPHAM, BATH.

1828.

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IT is not with the rash attempt to explain unfulfilled prophecy, nor with the desire of scrutinizing presumptuously into the hidden ways of God, that the Author ventures to submit the following Sermons to the public eye. He would strongly endeavour, in the transactions of public, as well as in the most minute circumstances of private life, so far only to trace "the finger of God," as shall make these events, what they seem always intended to be, illustrative of spiritual good. In the wonders of providential guidance, whether manifested in the Word, in the Works, or in the Ways of God, he would gladly have his own mind led to see God's love manifested throughout, in tender mercy warning, or in parental love inviting, all to seek after and to

accept "the unsearchable riches of Christ." He would wish, should it so please God to bless such instrumentality, to call the attention of those into whose hands these Sermons may happen to fall, to the solemn consideration of these peculiarly eventful times; and that each may strive, through the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of eternal truth, to become a practical illustration, in heart and manner of life, of the true believer's most ardent and daily prayer of "Thy Kingdom come:" that each may thus glorify the Saviour in being more and more conformed to his image, and so made "meet for the inheritance of his Saints in light,"—here in the rich enjoyment of present peace, and hereafter in the full fruition of purchased glory.

SERMON I.

"THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES."

ST. MATTHEW XVI. 2, 3.

He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, it will be fair weather : for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather to-day : for the sky is red, and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky ; but can ye not discern the signs of the times ?

IT was the Saviour's rebuke to the Pharisees and Sadducees, (men, for the most part, shrewd, watchful, and learned in earthly things,) that they were regardless of those signs of their times, which called them powerfully to the consideration of heavenly things. Not to watch, therefore, for such ways of speaking to the understanding and to the hearts of mankind, as Almighty God, in his providence, uses and appoints, from external marks thereof, is a sinful omission of an enjoined duty. It is a duty

forcibly pressed upon all of us in God's Word. The Lord Jesus Christ, in another part of his Gospel, most strongly puts it before us thus: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is:—And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." (St. Mark xiii. 33, 37.) This command for *general* watchfulness is not more plainly enjoined in sacred Scripture, than apparent as a duty from the acknowledged shortness of human life, and the manifest, because the experienced, uncertainty of every thing human. But the passage in the text has more immediate relation to the Christian duty of deducing spiritual good from whatever seems to mark a *peculiar* dispensation from local or from contemporaneous events, designated, in Scripture language, "signs of the times."

It can scarcely be matter unknown to the congregation which I now address, that this subject has, of late years, been more and more dwelt upon; that it has been issuing from the press for public perusal, as well as preached from the pulpit for congregational attention and deeper thoughtfulness. My brethren, I would not withhold, in this place, the consideration of a subject, so generally discussed, from

something of discussion here. If Christ hath shown us that periods exist when the divine counsels are made more manifest to the world, and that, in those periods, unless we consider the "signs of the times," we are guilty of sin; and when so many Christians, wise and good, in various parts of Christendom, are deeming themselves not presumptuous in proclaiming those "signs" now, I could not but feel myself sufficiently called upon to speak upon these things here; and it is my earnest wish and prayer so to speak of them, that I may not justly incur censure, either from the careless and sinful livers of this world, that I needlessly alarmed their fears; or from the really awakened servants of Christ, that I unwarrantably excited their hopes.

We are now again arrived at the season of Advent. This sacred day, the first of that hallowed period, once more calls upon us to consider signs of the Redeemer's advent past, prophetic assurances of his second advent yet to come: to consider, in all its solemn consequences, *who* came once, and why he came; to remember *who* will come again, and for what he will come. Matter full of the deepest interest is again brought collectedly before us,

that we may acknowledge, in saving faith, the Redeemer's first advent, that so we may be ready to receive him, with shouts of praise and thanksgiving, at his awful second advent. The duty, therefore, of considering "the signs of the times," all of which point and are designed to lead us to Christ, will furnish, I trust, matter of profitable thought for spiritual application of what this holy season brings more especially before us. It is a subject, which, I am quite aware, needs the utmost circumspection in the handling of it; and as a preliminary caution against what may be an erroneous inference from the consideration of it at all, I would venture to express my own opinion that it seems safer to regard "the signs," if we think we live among them, than to say much, precisely, upon what we may suppose to be *the thing signified*. "The finger of God" may be, and oftentimes is, seen, when his ultimate counsels are entirely hidden, as to the particular issue of passing events, whether in public or in private life; and if, therefore, we would be really guided by the "wisdom which cometh from above," we shall be slower in the interpretation of what *is*, in the expectation of what *may be*, than active and