

**THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL A
PREPARATION FOR OUR LORD'S COMING: A
SERMON PREACHED AT THE PAROCHIAL
CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW'S, CLIFTON; IN
CONFORMITY WITH THE QUEEN'S LETTER, IN
BEHALF OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE
PROPOGATION OF THE GOSPEL**

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The preaching of the Gospel a preparation for our Lord's coming: a sermon preached at the parochial church of St. Andrew's, Clifton; in conformity with the Queen's letter, in behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel by E. B. Pusey

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IN CONFORMITY WITH THE QUEEN'S LETTER,

IN BEHALF OF THE
SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

BY THE
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REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW, CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH,
AND LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE.

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TO THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

GEORGE,

LORD BISHOP OF NEW JERSEY,

THIS SERMON,

PREACHED IN BEHALF OF A SOCIETY

DEAR TO BOTH IN MEMORY

AND THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS DEPARTED,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARITY

WHICH BELIEVED ALL GOOD

WHEN THE WORLD CENSURED;

AND, WHEN THOSE NEAR SEEMED ESTRANGED,

OWNED US FROM AFAR AS SONS AND BRETHREN;

AND OF THE REFRESHMENT OF HIS SYMPATHY

IN A SEASON

(MAY IT BE SHORTENED)

OF REBUKE, DISTRESS, DIVISION, AND ANXIETY.

MATT. xxiv. 14.

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.

EVERY thing, we know, works together to accomplish the will of God; angels and devils, good and evil, light and darkness, love and hatred, humility and pride, willingly or unwillingly accomplish that will. All bring about His ends, whether by obeying His rule, or opposing and being crushed by it. And so, in prophecy, we have a two-fold description of things which usher in our Lord's Comings, the preaching of righteousness and the ripening of unrighteousness. So it was in God's Judgments, which were eminent types of The End. "The wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and every imagination of his heart was only to do evil continually;" but it was not until Noah, "the preacher of righteousness," had for the allotted "hundred and twenty years," preached in vain, that "the flood came." "The men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceed-

ingly^a," but it was not until "just Lot" had been brought among them, and "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds^b," and had been rejected by them, ("This one came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge,") that they were "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." The first destruction of the chosen city was not until God had "sent His servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them;" "but they mocked His messengers and despised His words and misused His prophets, until the wrath of God arose against His people, till there was no remedy^c." It was not until the Gospel should be preached, as a testimony to them, that that chief image of the consummation of all things, "the end" of Jerusalem, was to "come."

These were but shadows, dimly tracing out an indistinct and faint outline of what is to be: as how should not any image be faint of that great End, which is to complete all God's dispensations towards us, to end this long strife between good and evil, fully to accomplish all His gracious counsel towards His elect, to finish that work which has been begun "from the foundation of the world," to gather in "the fruit of the travail of" our Blessed Redeemer's "soul^d," to complete the number of those, who shall partake of the ineffable condescension and mystery of the Incarnation; to

^a Gen. xiii. 13.

^b 2 Pet. ii. 3.

^c 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

^d Is. liii.

end time, to bring in Eternity, of bliss or misery? Yet though but shadows of what shall come, they furnish us with tokens and heralds of His Coming; what has been, shall be; and it has been given us, as a sign of its approach, and a warning to prepare for it. Before that great and terrible Day come, wickedness is to be fully ripened, ere it be "cast into the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God^e," and the Gospel fully preached; both, it would seem, are to go on together; the tares and the wheat grow on together for the one harvest-time; the rejection of the truth is the last hopeless scaling-up of Anti-Christian error; the same preaching which is a witness to the Gentiles is a testimony against them; "if I had not come and spoken unto them," saith our Lord, "they had not had sin." The two witnesses are to prophesy, clothed in sackcloth, and to be slain, and to rise and to be received into heaven, ere the seventh Angel soundeth; at his sounding, we hear at once that "the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ," and "the nations" to be "angry" and the "dead to be judged^f."

In older prophecy, again, the first and second coming of our Lord are blended; His coming in Person, His Presence as a Teacher by His Spirit, His coming to judge. The cheering prophecy which begins with telling how "the mountain of the Lord's House shall be established on the top of

^e Rev. xiv. 19.

^f Rev. xi. 3.

the mountains, and all nations flow into it, and the law go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," ends with speaking how "the Day of the Lord should be upon every thing proud and lofty, and it shall be brought low," how "men shall go into the clefts of the rocks and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord and for the glory of His Majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth^g;" which our Lord has taught us to understand of the Day of Judgment. The prophet Joel, after foretelling of the "pouring" of God's "Spirit upon all flesh," tells us instantly of the "great and terrible Day of the Lord," "before whose coming the sun should be turned into darkness and the moon into blood^h." The prophet Daniel tells us of "knowledge being increased," but yet that "none of the wicked shall understand, the wise shall understand," as the last sign before that "time of trouble, such as never was, since there was a nation," which is the immediate prelude of the Resurrectionⁱ.

Such, probably, has been the history of the whole conflict between good and evil; the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; the malice of Satan the more stirred, whenever the powers of goodness were the more active; his wrath the hottest when his kingdom was the most threatened; blinding the eyes^j of his worshippers with the thickest mist, when the light of heaven would have

^g Isa. ii. ^h Isa. iii. 28—31. ⁱ Dan. xii. ^j 2 Cor. iv. 4.

shone most brightly into them; stopping their ears^k the more madly, when Apostles' voices might reach them; shouting the more loudly, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and praising "the image which fell down from Jupiter," when otherwise the good tidings of Him Who "came down from heaven" to seek and to save that which was lost," might have come unto them. So we may find it individually; never has Satan so great wrath as when a man is in earnest bent on forsaking him for ever; as though the bad spirit were pictured to us in some of his servants here below, whose passious sleep until opposed, and then burst out in fury; "the spirit," we are told, when bid to "depart" from the child, and "enter no more into him" it had possessed, "cried and rent him sore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead^l;" never, it was observed of old, did he assault persons with so much fury as those often who had been recently baptized, hating that they should become what he had once been, children of the light, that they should be to the glory of Him, Who had conquered him, that they should have escaped his snare, and be placed in the Highest Heavens, and judge himself. Never did he madden his human instruments with so much malice as against those who carried the deepest inroad into his kingdom, the blessed Martyrs.

^k Acts vii. 57.

^l Mark ix. 26.