

**MORMONISM AND ENGLAND: A
SERMON, PREACHED IN
WESTMINSTER ABBEY, ON
SUNDAY EVENING, JULY 28,
1867**

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Mormonism and England: A Sermon, Preached in Westminster Abbey, on Sunday Evening,
July 28, 1867 by Chr. Wordsworth

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CHR. WORDSWORTH

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From the Author

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ON SUNDAY EVENING, JULY 28, 1867.

BY

CHR. WORDSWORTH, D.D.

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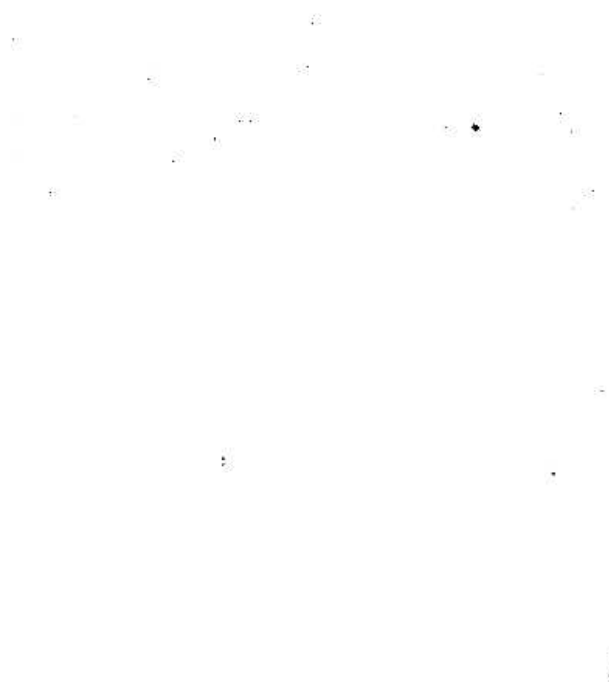
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As many thousand persons have read with deep interest Mr. William Hapworth Dixon's recent work, entitled "New America," it seemed to the Author of the following Sermon that it might not be unprofitable to suggest some inferences, applicable to the present times, that might be derived from it.



SERMON,

§v.

LUKE xvii. 29—30.

“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they platted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”

IN His prophecies concerning the latter days, our Blessed Lord combined two characteristics, which are very different, and might seem at first sight to be contradictory. He foretold a general diffusion of Christianity. “This Gospel of the Kingdom,” He said, “shall be preached in all the World for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the End come¹.” And simultaneously with this pre-announcement He predicted the prevalence of vices altogether

¹ Matt. xxiv. 14.

repugnant to the Gospel. He compared the latter days of the World to the days before the Flood, and to the days before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. "As it was in the days of Noe,—and as it was in the days of Lot,—so shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed¹."

No one can deny, that in our own age a great stimulus has been given to missionary enterprise, and that the Gospel has been preached in lands where its light never dawned before. So far, then, our Lord's prophecy is in course of fulfilment; and in this propagation of Christianity we see evidence of His truth, and a confirmation of our faith in Him.

But let us turn our eyes to the darker features of the prophetic picture. The days before the Flood, the days before the destruction of Sodom,—have they any counterpart in the moral and social phenomena of our own age?

Brethren, the public attention has been lately arrested by a striking description of a state of society which offers some answer to this inquiry. That narrative has been read by thousands in the last six months². Multitudes have been startled by it. But no one, as far as I am aware, has questioned its truth.

You will anticipate me in saying that I refer to

¹ Matt. xxiv. 37—39. Luke xvii. 26—30.

² *New America*; by William Hepworth Dixon. 2 vols. London, 1867, seventh edition.

the vivid picture drawn by a vigorous and impartial hand of that extraordinary community, which has grown in little more than thirty years from six persons to 200,000; the founder of which⁴ was murdered, and which has flourished under persecution; which was exterminated from its original settlement; and went forth in a marvellous exodus, and pursued its way with indomitable perseverance over a trackless waste of about 1500 miles, and by dint of incredible industry has transformed a barren and pestilential wilderness, like the neighbourhood of a Dead Sea surrounded with putrid creeks and bitter wells,—a land watered with brine and sown with salt,—where nothing grew but dwarf sage and wild sunflower, and has changed that dreary desert into a fair landscape waving with rich harvests, and adorned with beautiful parks and blooming gardens, planted with fruitful trees and decked with bright flowers; in a word, has changed a Sodom into Paradise, and has built there its “New Jerusalem.”

Let us now proceed to analyze the moral, social, and religious elements of that earthly Eden, as it appears to the outward eye.

First, be it observed, this Community professes to be a Christian brotherhood. It calls itself a Society of Saints,—Saints of the Latter Days. It asserts

⁴ Joseph Smith—born in 1805.