

Monday of the Second Week of Advent

The Liturgical Year

Dom Prosper Gueranger

Come, let us adore the King our Lord, who is to come.

From the Prophet Isaias

Chapter 13

The burden of Babylon, which Isaias the son of Amos saw. Upon the dark mountain lift ye up a banner, exalt the voice, lift up the hand and let the rulers go into the gates. I have commanded my sanctified ones, and have called my strong ones in my wrath, them that rejoice in my glory. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, as it were of many people: the noise of the sound of kings, of nations gathered together. The Lord of hosts has given charge to the troops of war, to them that come from a country afar off, from the end of heaven: the Lord and the instruments of his wrath, to destroy the whole land.

Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is near, it shall come as a destruction from the Lord. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every heart of man shall melt, and shall be broken. Gripings and pains shall take hold of them, they shall be in pain as a woman in labour: every one shall be amazed at his neighbour, their countenances shall be as faces burnt. Behold, the day of the Lord shall come, a cruel day, and full of indignation, and of wrath, and fury, to lay the land desolate, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

For the stars of heaven, and their brightness shall not display their light: the sun shall be darkened in his rising, and the moon shall not shine with her light. And I will visit the evils of the world, and against the wicked for their iniquity: and I will make the pride of infidels to cease, and will bring down the arrogance of the mighty.

The Church puts before us again, in the Office of to-day, the terrible spectacle of the last coming of Jesus Christ. The sinful Babylon, of which Isaias speaks, is the world grown old in its crimes; the *cruel day, full of indignation and wrath*, is that on which the Messiah will return to judge the world, with His sign glittering in the clouds. The words used by the prophet to describe the terror of the inhabitants of Babylon are so expressive, that it is difficult to meditate upon them seriously and not tremble. You, then, who, in this second week of preparation for the birth of our Saviour, are still wavering and undecided as to what you intend to do for the day of His coming, reflect upon the connection that there is between the two comings. If you receive your Saviour in the first, you need be in no fear for the second; but if you despise the first, the second will be to your destruction, nor will the cries of your despair save you. The Judge will come on a sudden, at midnight, at the very time when you persuade yourself that He is far off from you.

Say not that the end of the world is not yet come, and that the destinies of the human race are not filled up: it is not the world that is here in question, it is you individually. True the day of the Lord will be terrible, when this world shall be broken up as a vessel of clay, and the remnants of creation shall be a prey to devouring flames; but, long before that day of universal terror, your own day of judgement will come. The inexorable Judge will

come to you, you will stand before His face, you will have none to defend you, and, the sentence He will pass will be eternal; and though the nature of that sentence, whether for or against you, will not be known to the rest of the world until the last and general judgement, still is this His coming to you, at your own judgement, terrible above measure.

Remember, therefore, that what will make the terror of the last day so great is, that then will be solemnly and publicly confirmed what was judged irrevocably, though secretly, between your own soul and her Judge; just as the favourable sentence, which the good receive at the happy moment of their death, will be repeated before the immense assembly of men and angels on the last day. Is it wise, then, Christians, to put off your conversion, on the plea of the day of the Lord not having to come for ages, when it might be this night that your soul were required of you? The Lord is coming: lose no time; prepare to meet Him; a humble and contrite and converted heart is sure to find acceptance.

Canticle of the Last Judgement

(It is an interpolation of appropriate sentence into the Responsoy Libera: it was occasionally so sung in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries)

R. Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death, on that dread day; When heaven and earth are to be moved; When thou shall come to judge the world by fire.

V. The Angels and Archangels shall fear; but the impious, where shall they be? When heaven and earth are to be moved.

V. What, therefore, shall I wretched sinner say? Or what shall I do? Who can take no good before so great a Judge, when thou shall come to judge the world by fire.

V. The just shall scarce be saved: and I a sinner, where shall I appear? When heaven and earth are to be moved.

V. Oh Light eternal, deliver me from darkness, lest I fall into the dismal fire of torment; When thou shall come to judge the world by fire.

V. All the tribes of the earth shall mourn; When heaven and earth are to be moved.

V. And then a voice from heaven: Arise ye dead that sleep in your graves, and come to the judgement of Jesus; When thou shall come to judge the world by fire.

V. Praise the Lord, Oh my soul! I will praise the Lord, while I live; and in the flesh. I shall see God; When thou shall come to judge the world by fire.

V. When God the Son of the Virgin, shall come to judge the world, he will say to the just on his right hand: Come my beloved children, I have prepared a kingdom to be given unto you. Oh happy word! Happy promise! Happy Giver! And happy gift! When heaven and earth are to be moved.

V. After this, he will say to them that are on his left: I know you not, ye workers of iniquity: the glory of the world deceived you; go to that deep abyss with the devil and his ministers. Oh what grief! What sadness! What wailing! What weeping! When thou shall come to judge the world by fire.

V. Even now the King is preparing for his judgement; the day, terrible beyond all thought is at hand; and who will be our refuge! The Virgin Mother, the hope of all. May she pray to her Son for us! Oh Jesus, our King, hear, we beseech thee, our prayers, and we shall be saved. When heaven and earth are to be moved.

Y. Oh God, the Creator of all things, who hast formed me from the slime of the earth, and hast wonderfully redeemed me by thine own Blood, and on the day of judgement will make this my now corruptible body to rise

again from the grave; hear, Oh hear me, and mercifully lead my soul into the bosom of thy patriarch Abraham; When thou shall come to judge the world by fire.

Prayer from the Ambrosian Liturgy

(In the third week of Advent)

Oh Jesus, almighty Son of God, mercifully come and save Thy people on the day of Thy Nativity; and deign, with thy wonted compassion, to deliver us from all the anxieties and fears of this present time. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.