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REVIEW SECTION

I.—ALEXANDER MACLAREN, PREACHER

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FOR many reasons—especially for the reason that by his resignation he has just brought his active ministry to a close—it is well that we should make a careful study of Dr. Alexander Maclaren as a preacher. It is as a preacher that he has chosen to be known. Into other paths where he might have won distinction he has resolutely declined to go. During a long life he has concentrated large and various gifts on the one office of preaching.

“More than any other preacher except Robertson,” it has been said of him, “he has altered the whole manner of preaching in England and America, and that immensely for the better.”

Unlike many of our most popular preachers, this influence in his case was not a matter of rapid growth. He said a few years since, that he was very thankful that the early part of his ministry had been spent in a quiet corner of England. There he had leisure to grow and time to think. To those who come to too sudden notoriety he said bluntly: “The trouble with most of you young fellows is that you are pitchforked at once into prominent positions, and have to spend your time attending

meetings, anniversaries, even breakfasts, when you ought to be at home studying the Bible.” His first volume of sermons was issued privately, for the eye of immediate friends only. With reluctance he consented to its being published. Not until he had reached his maturity was he known by his printed sermons, of which there are now some ten volumes

All his life he has been a preacher's preacher. Theological students are always to be seen, and often in large numbers, in his congregation at Manchester. In some cases, no doubt, his influence has been too strong for the disciple who put himself under it. The net has broken by reason of the multitude of fishes. But this is not the fault of the fisher. The simple-minded brother who confessed that “when Dr. Maclaren's sermons were boiled down they went first-rate” was perhaps more frank than others, but certainly he was not alone in his experience. The life which Alexander Maclaren has spent in preaching must be almost without a parallel for length. He was not twenty years old when he preached his first sermon in the pulpit

unjustly sentenced to death, and was executed for high treason on Tower Hill, July 6, 1535. The innocent mirth which had been so conspicuous in his life did not forsake him to the last. As he ascended the scaffold he said: "I pray you see me safe up the steps; as for my coming down, you can let me shift for myself." When he laid his head on the block he desired his executioner to wait until he moved his beard, which he said "had never offended his highness the king." More is justly regarded as one of the noblest and worthiest of the men of his period.

LORD WILLIAM RUSSELL, who has left an imperishable name as one of the most glorious martyrs for English liberty, was executed in Lincoln Inn Fields, July 21, 1683, in the forty-second year of his age. Lord William parted from his beloved wife and children the evening before his execution. His wife stayed with him until eleven o'clock at night. They then parted in solemn silence. When she was gone he said, "The bitterness of death is passed." Archbishop Tillotson and Bishop Burnett accompanied him to the scaffold, and relate that before he laid his head on the block he prayed for the King and for the Protestant religion.

EDGAR ALLAN POE, the American poet, died at the Marine Hospital, Baltimore, November 15, 1849. He had been for several hours delirious, but on the morning of his death he became quiet and seemed to rest for a short time. He gently moved his head and said, "O Lord, help my soul," and expired.

SAINT BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, who was honored with the title of "the mellifluous doctor" and whose writings were termed "the river of paradise," including, as they do, many beautiful hymns now rendered into English, expired August 20, 1153. It is related that his last words were, "God's will be done." Bernard preached and promoted the crusade of 1146.

CHARLES JAMES FOX, the celebrated Whig statesman of England and the eloquent rival of Mr. Pitt, died September 13, 1806, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. His private secretary, Mr. J. B. Trotten, gives a minute

account of the great statesman's last moments, and says that they were singularly serene and peaceful. The evening advanced and sinking nature announced that his end approached. "I die happy," he said, fixing again and again his eyes on Mrs. Fox, and then he calmly expired. His remains were interred in Westminster Abbey, and so near to those of Pitt as to suggest to Sir Walter Scott the well-known couplet:

"Shed upon Fox's grave a tear,
"Twill trickle to his rival's bier."

EDMUND BURKE, the Irish orator, died in his retirement at Beaconsfield, July 8, 1798. When it became evident he had not long to live, he sent affectionate messages to his absent friends; he examined himself strictly in the sight of God, and asked forgiveness of all whom he supposed that he had in any degree offended. He gave directions about his funeral. He listened with the deepest attention to Addison's essay on the "Immortality of the Soul," and declared his implicit trust in that mercy "which," he said, "I long sought with unfained humiliation and to which I look forward with a trembling hope." It was in the early hours of Sunday morning, as he was blessing all around him, that after a slight struggle the great orator expired without a groan. "His end," wrote Lawrence on the Sunday morning over the lifeless remains, "was suited to the simple greatness of his mind, which he displayed through life, every way unaffected without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity.

FRANCIS BACON, known as "Lord Bacon," altho his titles of nobility were Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, died at Highgate, London, on Easter Day, April 9, 1626. In his last will he stated: "My name and memory I leave to men's charitable speeches, to foreign nations, and to the next ages." Among his last sayings were the following: "Thy creatures, O Lord, have been my books, but Thy holy Scriptures much more. I sought Thee in the fields and gardens, but I have found Thee, O God, in Thy sanctuary."

EXEGETICAL AND EXPOSITORY SECTION

THE FINAL ANTICHRIST

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ANY satisfactory scriptural statement of the doctrine of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ involves a statement of the Bible doctrine of the person and work of the Devil, who is also called Satan, and symbolized as the Dragon. For this purpose was the Son manifested "that He might destroy the works of the Devil."

In the very beginning of the human race on this planet, the personality and work of this enemy of God and man appear. When the Lord and Lawgiver pronounced the penal sentence on the disobedience of our first parents, and promised deliverance through the seed of the woman, He outlined the great

conflict that has been in constant progress for six thousand years—the heel of the Son of Man shall be bruised, the Serpent's head shall be crushed.

From that day to this, the development of all human history has been along two lines or in two channels—the seed of the woman and the seed of the Serpent—light and darkness—good and evil—the sons of God and the children of the Devil. To as many as received the promised seed of the woman, God gave the privilege to be called His sons; to His rejecters, Jesus said: "Ye are of your father, the Devil, and his works ye will do." No one will grasp the divine philosophy of human history who fails to accept the fact of the personality and influence of these two wondrous beings—the Christ of God and His implacable enemy, the Devil.

From the fall of man to the baptism of Jesus by His great forerunner, John, the Old Testament does not fail to outline the person and work of the Devil, as influential in the pre-Christian history of the race.

He contends for the body of Moses, he accuses Job, he moves David to number the Theocratic people, he inspires the false prophets to lie to the people, he leads the idolatrous nations of the Old World captive at his will. His subtle power and malignity are felt and seen in all lands and among all peoples. The great volume of godlessness, iniquity, and vice in all the earth has a higher than human source, and is directed and controlled by a wisdom and cunning not of this world. Nor will any force less than Satanic account for the awful and abounding wickedness of our day and generation.

When the fulness of the time came, the Son of God was manifested on earth in Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman, the Deliverer and Restorer. Immediately after His baptism into the place of His people and inauguration into His messianic work, His antagonist and malignant enemy appears on the scene.

The temptation as recorded by the evangelists is not subjective, but objective; there were two real persons—the Son of Man, and Satan, the god of this world. They met face to face in antagonism and conflict. When the Devil showed our Lord all the kingdoms of this world, and offered the power and glory of them if Jesus would worship him, the Tempter said: "To whomsoever I will, I give it." I can not accept the interpretation that this saying was false; for he is said in the Scriptures to be the God of this world, the Prince of the power of the air, the Dragon, who later on does transfer his usurped dominion to the final Antichrist—whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders (*dunamis, semeion, teras*).

The Son of Man refused to secure the messianic kingdom by acceptance of the dominion tendered Him by the god of this world; His way to the crown is by the cross and through blood; and Luke tells us: "The devil, having ended all his temptations, departed from him for a season."

One of the marked features of our Lord's personal ministry was His contact with and power over the demons or unclean spirits (mistranslated "devils"), the subjects and

servants of Satan. Not a few, but many of these demons, who had made their homes in human habitations, were exorcised by the Lord Jesus; and their presence and power are recorded also in the apostolic history, while the epistles of the apostles warn of seducing spirits and the doctrines or teachings of demons. So that we are warranted in the affirmation that these satanic and demoniac influences have never ceased, and will not cease, until the final Antichrist is consumed in the *epiphaneia tas Parousias* of the Lord Christ, when He returns to this earth in like manner as He was taken up.

The Apostle John says that even in his day there were many Antichrists; Jude also describes them as existing when he wrote; Peter predicts their coming and teaching in the "last days"; while in the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians Paul outlines in striking and somber colors the features of the final Antichrist.

The Greek word *anti* is used in the New Testament in two senses, viz., *anti*, instead of; *anti*, opposed to.

The Antichristian spirit is manifested sometimes as a substitute for Christ, at other times as the opposer of Christ, at other times as both—the counterfeit Christ, the enemy of Christ.

When John says "Now are there many Antichrists," he refers to many forms of the manifestation of this satanic spirit—sometimes imitating, counterfeiting the real Christ; at other times opposing and hindering the work of Christ as carried on in and by His people.

Our Lord Himself tells us: "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ." In the book of Acts there is an authentic record of this Antichristian spirit at work in a certain man of Samaria, named Simon, to whom all gave heed, saying: "This man is the great power of God." Beyond doubt or cavil, the record teaches that this man was possessed of more than mortal power. In the thirteenth chapter, Barnabas and Saul reached Cyprus and preached the word of God. Elymas the sorcerer withstood them, and Saul, filled with the Holy Ghost, called him "a child of the devil." In the epistles and in the Revelation, the counterfeiting, hindering, and opposing Antichristian spirit is clearly set forth; at times as an angel of light, at others a roaring lion.

The devout child of God, who looks out to-day upon what is occurring in the world,

can not fail to see many plausible substitutes presented in attractive forms for the real Christ—the gospel of culture as a substitute for the gospel of conversion; the gospel of reform instead of the gospel of regeneration; the gospel of environment instead of the new heart and right spirit; the gospel of conformity to the world instead of the gospel of separation from the world; the gospel of fatherhood and brotherhood instead of the gospel of forgiveness through blood; the gospel of world-conversion for the Lord's return; the sword of Cæsar instead of the sword of the Spirit. The defection of the visible Church from the Lord Jesus is not confined to any one era, or land, or race. This defection has been continuous, it has characterized every century of Christian Church history; there is no promise that it will cease until the Lord returns in power and glory from the heavens.

From the foregoing summary of Bible teaching as to the satanic and demoniac influences exerted on the world, we are prepared to discuss the doctrine of the final Antichrist. Perhaps the fundamental Scripture on this subject is 2 Thess. ii. :

"Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him: to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is *just at hand*: let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped: so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work; only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to naught by the manifestation of his coming: even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Biblical exegetes have labored to reconcile the apparent contradiction of the teachings of the Apostle Paul as contained in his first letter and his later instruction as set forth in his second letter.

In the first the return of Jesus is presented as an object of desire, in the second as an object of dread; in the first it is imminent, in the second it is not immediate. The explanation of this contradiction is to be found in the proper translation of the Greek word "*ἔνεστανεν*." This word does not mean "*at hand*," as used in the King James version, nor "*just at hand*," as used in the American version. Its derivation and its use in the New Testament alike demand that the word be translated "*now present*."

The statement of the second letter is: "Do not be troubled or shaken in mind, as that the day of the Lord is '*now present*,' and your dead have not been raised. You will remember that when with you, I told you that the Lord would descend from heaven and that the dead in Christ would rise first, and I comforted you with these words. Since I left, false teachers, like Hymenæus and Philetus, have misled you from the truth, saying that '*the Resurrection is past already*,' and have overthrown the faith of some" (2 Tim. ii. 18).

I beseech you by the Parousia of our Lord and our gathering together with Him, believe not that He has returned, that "the Resurrection is past." Let no man beguile you in any wise, for before the return of the Lord and the resurrection of His saints there will be, and must be, a falling away and the revelation of Antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition.

When Paul wrote this letter there was something (he does not say what) that restrained, hindered the full revelation of this Antichrist. The spirit of lawlessness was at work; there were many Antichrists; but the final one, the son of perdition, would not be manifested until his own proper season had come. With God there is a perfect chronological order, and the Lord in His providence would restrain the coming and revelation of this man of sin until the divinely appointed season.

The coming of this lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with "all power, signs, and lying wonders"*—the three words used in the New Testament to describe the works of our Lord. The Devil transfers to this lawless one, this son of perdition, his superhuman power to deceive men by signs and wonders. Connected in time with the coming of this man of sin is the falling away

* "Δυναμις," "σημειον," "τερας."

of the last days. Falling away from the Lord Jesus Himself, from Him as Son of God and Head of the church; from Him in His person and work as Mediator and Redeemer.

The final Antichrist seats himself in the temple of God, in visible Christendom, poses as Christ, tho rejecting much if not all that is distinctively Christian; exalting himself above all that is called God, and setting himself forth as God.

The characteristics of this final Antichrist are set forth with startling distinctness. He is inside, not outside the pale of visible Christendom; he is in close alliance with the Devil, and wields superhuman power; he works miracles to deceive men; he is destroyed, consumed in the epiphany of the personal return of our Lord.

All attempts to locate this man of sin at any period in the past have been failures, for the simple but satisfactory reason that the Antichrist has not yet been revealed. The "restraint" which existed in Paul's day still continues, and while the many Antichrists of the past possess some of the features of this one, no one of them has possessed all, nor has any one of them been consumed in the brightness of Christ's presence. Not Mohammed, nor the Turkish empire, nor any Pope, nor the Papal line, nor Napoleon Bonaparte, no one of these, nor any person or corporation or empire in the past history of the race, is entitled to the wicked distinction of being branded as the man of sin, the son of perdition. This Antichrist belongs not to the past, but to the future; he is yet to come, and his coming immediately precedes the second advent of the Son of God. The careful observer of the trend of the times must be deeply impressed with the changed conditions of all human interests and activities. There are now no walls of exclusion nor hermit nations; the whole world is one, as never before in human history. Tidal waves of influence, from remote regions and far-away peoples, sweep round the globe and touch all centers of thought and life. Need I name Cecil Rhodes in South Africa, J. G. Paton in the New Hebrides, Dewey in Manila Bay? We think, we talk, we travel literally by lightning, and morning by morning the transactions of the whole world are on our breakfast-tables in the daily papers. Monster corporations, the mere figures of whose capitalization daze and bewilder, reach out hands almost omnipotent to grasp and control the commerce of man-

kind. Some great captain of industry from his office in some world's center dictates prices and terms, not merely to his own hirelings, but to other captains of industry, to other corporations, to governors, to kings, emperors, senates, and cabinets.

It needs no prophetic gift to enable one to see how easy it will be, when the "restraint" is removed and the appointed season has rolled around, for some son of man, aided by and filled with the spirit of Satan, to grasp the scepter of supreme earthly power, seat himself in the very temple of God, and boldly proclaim himself the divine one and demand for himself the adoration due to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nero was worshiped as God in Rome. Narayan Sheshadri told me, in this city, thirty years ago, that he had been worshiped as God in India. Dr. Gunsaulus spoke of Henry Ward Beecher as the "immortal Son of God." The deification of humanity is the accepted creed of Pantheism, Naturalism, Socialism, and all forms of corrupt and apostate Christianity, and the statement of the apostle, that the final Antichrist will claim and receive divine homage, rests not only upon the authority of God, but is confirmed by the teachings of history and the trend of forces now at work wide over all the world. Never before have the forces that make for righteousness and the forces that make for wickedness been brought into such close, fierce, and deadly conflict; and as all these forces emanate from personal wills, we may be assured that the two great antagonists, Christ and Satan, are gathering their strength, forces, and friends for the final contest for supremacy.

We are not left in darkness or in any doubt as to the issue and end.

The peoples under the leadership of Antichrist may rage tumultuously against the Lord and His Christ, false teachers may arise, the love of many may wax cold, iniquity may abound, if possible even the elect may be deceived by the signs and lying wonders wrought by Satanic power; but when the Lord Himself in bodily presence shall return to this earth in like manner as He was taken up, then in the epiphany of that powerful and glorious personality there shall be destroyed the beast, false prophet, apostate church, and the man of sin, the final Antichrist; for these and all enemies shall be cast into the lake of fire, burning with brimstone.