

sent His Son," when the preparation was complete, every decree fulfilled. Four thousand years! what time of preparation God takes for His work!

When at length all is ready, how noiselessly, how secretly, how obscurely He comes. "While all things were in silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, the almighty Word leapt down from heaven from His royal throne."

The Word is still dwelling among us. His Advent has not ceased. The first advent in Bethlehem was only a step to His advent in the Christian heart. He was born in the crib to gain entrance to the heart. The crib is the porch from which He knocks at the door of the heart. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him." Each Christmas is the day of his special coming. What is *our* preparation going to be? Of the Bethlehemites it was said:—"He came unto His own and they received Him not." The Church assigns four weeks of preparation in memory of the four thousand years preceding the first Advent. They are a *holy season*, to be sanctified by flight of sin and its occasions, by prayer and penance, and worthy reception of Sacraments. A voice of one crying in the desert: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight its paths. Every valley shall be filled, every mountain shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways plain, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."