The Prophet Daniel, a key to the visions and prophecies of the Book of Daniel

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THE PROPHET DANIEL

A KEY TO THE VISIONS AND PROPHECIES
OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

BY

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SECOND EDITION 5,000 COPIES

PUBLICATION OFFICE "OUR HOPE"
80 SECOND STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.
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THE PROPHET DANIEL

Introduction

The Book of Daniel with its great prophecies, both fulfilled and unfulfilled, is one of the most interesting portions of God’s Holy Word. Before we follow this blessed book in a series of studies a few general remarks on Prophecy and its importance may be in order.

Prophecy is history prewritten. The center of all Prophecy and the goal as well is the Lord Jesus Christ. His sufferings and His Glory, His two Comings, as Man of Sorrows to suffer and to die, as King of Glory to reign were beheld and written in advance by the holy men of God through the power of God’s Spirit. The entire history of the chosen people Israel is written in the prophetic Word. All their sufferings and wanderings, what has befallen them in the past; their present lot, scattered among all the nations of the earth; what is yet to come upon them in tribulation and judgment, as well as blessing and peace, are found prewritten in the Bible. The history of nations, the times of the Gentiles, the present age in which we live, its course and end, the coming glories in a future age, all this and much more God has been
pleased to reveal to us in His Word. By far the greater part of the Bible is Prophecy.

In view of such a marvellous Book with divine and infallible predictions concerning this earth and its future, the destiny of nations, one can hardly understand why the professing church of to-day should almost completely ignore and neglect the study of Prophecy. Yet such is the case. The study of a Book like Daniel, or the great New Testament prophetic book, the Revelation, is frowned upon by many. The great majority of professing Christians have little desire to know what God has said concerning the future. They rather listen to the theories or dreams of the human mind than to God's plan, how He is going to bring this earth to a knowledge of Himself. This rejection of what God says about the future appears strange and inconsistent, when one thinks of the natural eagerness and curiosity of the human heart to know the future. Thousands of fortune tellers, astrologers, demon possessed mediums, who ask the dead, make a fine living throughout Christendom and profit greatly by the desire of thousands to know a little about the future. It is said that the great rulers of Europe, the rulers of the so-called Christian nations, employ and have employed clairvoyants and mediums. And here in the Bible God has uncovered the future, but a few of His people pay any attention to it. We say it is strange indeed. But behind this fact looms up the dark shadow of the enemy of the Truth, Satan.
And this almost absolute neglect of the study of Prophecy has avenged itself. On account of it Christendom has sunk into the deplorable condition in which it is to-day. The denial of the inspiration of the Bible has become widespread. If Prophecy were intelligently studied such a denial could not flourish as it does, for Prophecy gives the clearest and most conclusive evidence, that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God. Because the study of Prophecy has been set aside scepticism has come in. One of the most powerful answers to infidelity is Prophecy.

The prophetic Word neglected leaves man ignorant of God's plan and the future and man becomes the easy prey of lying inventions and delusive theories. For this reason we see about us among Christians an unscriptural optimism, which holds in theory and practice, the very opposite from what the Bible teaches; an optimism, which has no use for the solemn declarations of the Word, that this age is an evil age and that it will close with apostasy and judgment. All the present evil conditions, the denial of the faith, the indifference and worldliness of professing Christians are the result of ignoring Prophecy.

And if we, His people, have learned to "love His appearing" and know of the coming manifestation of our ever blessed Lord, the consummation to which all prophecy points, we too must beware of neglecting Prophecy. It is the lamp, which shineth in a dark place till the Day dawn. Never before is there such need of this lamp as now. The dark
place, the present age, becomes darker. The darker the night, the more the lamp is needed and the brighter shine its rays. When the Daydawn, with the blessed Morningstar comes, then we do not need the lamp any more. But now we are cast upon that lamp; we cannot do without it. We need to turn more to the sure Word of Prophecy. Many of God’s people had a far greater interest in Prophecy years ago. We have grown somewhat cold in the study of it and have advanced but little in it. Such neglect must result in spiritual loss. The prophetic Word puts before our hearts “things not yet seen.” As we look in faith upon these unseen and future things we shall estimate present things in their light and that will determine our character and conduct as Christians. We shall walk then in separation from that which is ripening for judgment and our service will be rendered with God’s purposes in view.

At the present time we behold a world progress, a progress in civilization, an extension of commerce as well as great religious movements on a large scale, which the age has never witnessed before. These very things are used by the “god of this age” to blind the eyes to the real conditions of the age. We too, dear friends, shall share this blindness in a certain degree, if we neglect a closer study of Prophecy.

But a continued study of Prophecy is impossible unless we are separated from the world and live in the real enjoyment of our fellowship with God. And the continued prayerful study of Prophecy
must result in separation and in the enjoyment of the nearness of God, and that is what we all want. The statement one hears sometimes from good Christian people, "I have not much use for Prophecy," is a bad testimony for the spiritual condition of the one who speaks thus.

The Importance of the Book of Daniel. The importance of the Book of Daniel in many ways cannot be overestimated. Sir Isaac Newton said, "to reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion." We might say to ignore the great prophecies, which were given to this wonderful man of God, leaves us without any knowledge of the prophetic Word concerning "things to come." These prophecies, which were given at a time when Israel was set aside nationally when the times of the Gentiles began, give a vista of the centuries down to the end, when God resumes His relation with His earthly people and sets up His own Kingdom from above. Our Lord refers to Daniel in His great prophetic Olivet Discourse. Hence that discourse can only be correctly understood in the light of the Book of Daniel. The last Book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, the only prophetic Book of the New Testament, would ever be a sealed Book, if we had not the prophecies of Daniel, and the prophecies of Daniel would in part remain sealed if we had not Revelation. Both books, the one written by the man greatly beloved and the other by the beloved disciple, must be studied together and are the keys to the entire prophetic Word.

The Authenticity of the Book. No other book
has been so much attacked as the Book of Daniel. It is fitted to be the battlefield between faith and unbelief; such it has been. For about 2,000 years wicked men, heathen philosophers and infidels have hammered away against it; but the Book of Daniel has proven to be an anvil upon which the critics' hammers have been broken into pieces. The Book has survived all attacks and we need not fear that the weak and puerile critics, the most subtle infidels of Christendom in our day can harm the Book. It has been denied that Daniel wrote the book during the Babylonian captivity. Kuenen and Wellhausen and their imitating disciples like Canon Farrar, Driver and others of inferior calibre claim that the work was not written in the Exile, but centuries later. Daniel had nothing to do with the Book at all; a holy and gifted Jew wrote it instead and it is avowed fiction. Such are a few of the infidel statements made against this sublime book. These critics follow the wicked assailant of Christianity of the third Century, Porphyry, who contended that the Book of Daniel is a forgery, that it was written during the time of the Maccabees, after Antiochus Epiphanes, so clearly foretold in this book, had appeared. The whole reasoning method of the destructive Bible-Criticism may be reduced to the following: Prophecy is an impossibility, there is no such thing as foretelling events to come. Therefore a book which contains predictions must have been written after the events which are predicted. But how could the man who committed such a forgery be a pious Jew? No, the Book of Daniel is