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*“The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light”*

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# THE TESTIMONY OF BIBLE PROPHECY

BY DR. WILBUR M. SMITH (U.S.A.)

The Bible assumes that we should know something of the future. When God came to Abraham and told him what He was going to do with Sodom, He was talking to him about the future. When He gave him the great covenant, "I will make of thee a great nation . . . and make thy name great," He was talking about the future. When Jacob, on his dying bed, spoke his prophecy, it was for the future. In John 16:13 we read of the Holy Spirit that "he will reveal (show) things to come." In the fourth chapter of the book of Revelation, the apostle John is carried up into heaven and shown "things which must be hereafter." The Scriptures assume that we will know, from their study, things to come.

There have been many nonsensical statements made out of Biblical passages, of which we can be ashamed. They are silly and foolish, and they have brought disrepute on prophetic study. For example, the other day I was working on the subject of the kings of the East coming over the Euphrates River and I found a book in my library, written in 1844, on the kings of the East. I thought, "Now here's something good." But do you know who these kings of the East were for the writer of this book? The officers of the East India Company of London! Such statements are nonsense.

In too many volumes we find all kinds of dates and foolish calendar schemes. Once in Baltimore, a man brought me a manuscript after hearing me preach on the second advent. In this manuscript he had it all worked out when the Lord would be here. He said, "Now about the passage that 'no man knoweth the day or the hour': no man knoweth the *day*, because the Lord is coming in the *night-time*; and no man knoweth the *hour*, because He's coming on the *half-hour*." That was his explanation.

During World War I, Kaiser Wilhelm was said to be the Anti-christ—they had him all worked out on 666, only it didn't add up. They were six short so they added the six to 660! But even though there have been many careless and foolish interpretations of prophecy, it is still true that you and I should be able to see

the way things are to shape up from the study of the Word of God.

Of course there are those who say, "You ought not to look into the future. You ought not even to try to predict what is to come." But there is a strong answer for this. It is that men who have no use for the Word of God are always writing about the future. Bertrand Russell himself, about fifteen years ago, edited a book called *Dare We Look Into the Future?*, though when he got through looking at the future, he nearly dropped dead.

Charles Beard, America's greatest historian, edited a book, the very title of which suggests interest in the future. No Bible student at all, no defender of our faith, he called it, *Whither Mankind*. When a man edits a book of twenty chapters by twenty authors on such a subject, he is looking into the future.

In this volume, Beard said:

"All over the world the people who scan the horizon of the future are attempting to assess the value of civilization and speculating about its destiny. For one reason or another, the intellectuals of all nations are trying to peer into the coming days to discover whether the curve of contemporary civilization now rises majestically for a distant zenith or in reality has already begun to sink rapidly toward the end."

Don't let anyone tell you that you and I should not try to foresee the future, when the whole secular world would give its eyes if it could do so, when its leaders are trying to look into the future and are writing in this vein.

Having noted that the Christian is fully justified in examining the future, I want to point out six different statements by Biblical scholars of a hundred years ago, who foretold the very movements that are now in evidence in this world. First, let us look at an ancient, four-volume work by Edward B. Elliott:

*Horae Apocalypticae*, published in 1844, probably the most scholarly work on Revelation ever written. It cost the author thirty years of work. In many places he is wrong, but it is a great work. At the end of the fourth volume, he talks about the signs of the times. He writes:

"There are signs for prophetic students, not for the man of the world, the philosopher, which inevitably point toward

our coming to the end of the age. First, the interest felt by Protestant Christians for the conversion and restoration of Israel—an interest unknown for eighteen centuries but now strong, fervent and prayerful. Second, the universal preaching of the gospel, according to Christ's command, a sign of which Augustine said that could we but see it, we might indeed think the time of the consummation was at hand. Third, the marked political ascendancy of the chief nations of the old Roman world, seething in rebellion and bringing our attention back again to the Mediterranean basin. Fourth, this revolutionary, internal upheaval of the European nations with infidel and democratic agitation according with Christ's and the apostles' description of the last days, and the preparation for a deadly conflict with new and increased powers of destruction, such as thus far the world has not yet seen."

This statement was written 105 years ago, in 1844. Elliott foresaw a great missionary movement, a new interest in the Jew, revolutions in Europe and the development of enormous destructive powers.

Patrick Fairbairn is another very interesting student of prophecy. Writing in 1829 on the restoration of the Jew, Fairbairn said:

"If these predictions of Ezekiel do not prove the future restoration of literal Israel to the land of their fathers, it may be asked in what language could such a promise be made? We may as well deny the literal restoration of Israel. An instant dispersion was a part of the punishment of their transgressions. So will the restoration to Palestine be attained when forgiven of the Lord.

"And how wonderfully has the Lord reserved the future to fulfill these prophecies that they will return to Palestine! They have no inheritance in other lands. They have always cherished a passionate love and a desire to return to their own. Throughout their long captivity they have been kept subjected to the influence of the world and yet never identified with the world, and in the plenitude of God's grace and mercy, God will bring His people Israel back to Israel's land and back to Israel's ancient faith, and Zion

shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness."

One hundred and twenty years ago this man foresaw what you and I are now beholding—the return of God's people to their land. I'm not saying that they are returning there in the fulness of God's will, but still they are coming back to the land of promise.

Consider next the words of grand old Bishop Ryle, in his *Notes on the Gospels*. This passage was first published in 1873.

"Nothing is so calculated to chill the heart and dampen the faith of a Christian as indulgence in unscriptural expectations. Let us dismiss from our minds the vain idea that nations will ever give up wars before Jesus Christ comes again. So long as the devil is the prince of this world and the hearts of the many are unconverted, so long must there be strife and fighting. There will be no universal peace until that Prince of Peace shall come and then, and then only, shall man learn war no more.

"Let us cease to expect that missionaries and ministers will ever convert the world and teach mankind altogether to love one another. They will do nothing of the kind. They were never intended to do it. They will call out a witnessing people who will serve Christ in every land and die for Him, but the bulk of mankind will continue to refuse the gospel. The nations will always go on wrangling and fighting until the end. The last days of the earth will be its worst. The last war will be the most fearful and terrible war that has ever desolated the earth."

When Bishop Ryle was writing eighty years ago, he was writing with the Word of God in his hand, and what he says still stands today.

Only recently I came upon still other statements which were so astonishing I could hardly believe them. They were in an article on Gog and Magog, published in June, 1888, in a magazine, *The Prophetic News and Israel's Watch*. This article was the work of a British writer, Walter Scott, who, sixty years ago, when Russia was still slumbering, wrote as follows:

"Russia is evidently destined to become the master of Asia. Her frontier line across Asia will be 5,000 miles in

length. . . . It is well known that the Russian policy is one of steady aggression not only in Europe but in Asia, and probably the most ambitious and grasping of modern kingdoms, the most faithless in public honour and treaty engagement, the character ascribed to her in the prophetic Scriptures. Coupled with her frequent outbreaks of undisguised and disastrous hostility to the things of God and in the yet more awful future exhibits, Russia is in a most unfavorable light.

“Russia has for ages meditated on the conquest of Asia and India and China. Great Britain, with the United States, stands face to face with this Russian power, and these two sides will come into one final awful struggle. We judge that the tide of Russian conquest will flow on to the frontiers of China. The ascendancy of Russia in the east, the revival of the old Roman Empire in the west, necessitates the meeting of these two dominating opposing powers, and the great Jewish question must be settled at Jerusalem; the city of the Great King (remember, the only thing Jerusalem was good for in 1888 was for tourists who were interested in archaeology), leading to the millennial triumph of Israel and her headship over the nations of the world. We believe, from the place assigned to Russia in the Word of God, that her legions will sweep over the plains and mountains of Asia and become the dominant power over all the East until she falls forever on the mountains of Judea. Thus will she command for a time the powers north of Palestine and east of the Euphrates.”

What an astonishing statement!

Let us look, now, at another remarkable evidence of foreknowledge, this time concerning Israel. If you will look at the Jewish quarterly and monthly magazines now being published, you will find an undertone of fear. The Jews are afraid today of what is going to happen when they come to vote for their constitution, because there are two opposing elements in Israel today. There is an orthodox element which wants to go back to the *Torah*, and all the Levitical laws. Then there is a wild, unbelieving, anarchistic, materialistic, non-supernatural group. The anti-supernaturalists, who have no use for the Scriptures and are

not interested in God, or in the Passover, or in sacrifices, are going to give trouble to the orthodox group, and so there is likely to be a real battle in Israel when this matter of a constitution comes up. (Some weeks after delivering this message, I read a dispatch from Jerusalem in the *New York Times* for June 7, 1949, headed, "Jerusalem Jews in Religious Conflict; Zealot Group Declares War on 'Pagans'.")

The amazing thing is that what these Jewish papers now fear was predicted in 1844 in the writings of George Bush, professor of Hebrew in New York City University. In his book, *The Valley of Vision, or the Dry Bones of Israel Revived*, Mr. Bush writes:

"Nor do we see room to doubt that the best informed and finest men of Israel will be the leaders of the new movement back to Palestine. Being the most familiar with the Hebrew language, they will be the best qualified to judge of the soundness of Biblical interpretation. . . . Christian interpreters drawn to the more elaborate investigation of the Holy Scriptures, delving into the depths of prophecy, will bring to the astonished eyes of their Jewish brethren the treasures of an outlook which their sages have overlooked and for which their hearts have longed. This awakened impulse will spread from synagogue to synagogue. Rents and schisms will come in Israel, thundering parties dividing the liberal from the orthodox, drawing down the thunders of rabbinic denunciation against the innovators of modernism.

"Even now we hear rumours and rumblings in the congregations of Europe that there is a division in Judaism and in the midst of this ferment of the Jewish mind, the exposition of prophecy and the interpretation of the Word of God for the Jews will come in as a new element of disturbance and will precipitate violence among the Jews themselves. The result will be a revolution throughout the great body of Israel which in the end will elevate the Scriptures and depress the *Talmud*, and the Word of God will be given more consideration than the traditions of the elders."

Keep in mind that this was written, not in 1949 in Palestine, but in 1844 in New York.



One of Europe's great students of prophecy was Auberlen, who lived to be only forty years old but who wrote books worthy of a man of seventy. Auberlen, in his book on Daniel and Revelation, which he wrote in Switzerland in 1852, includes this statement on the future of philosophy:

"The false prophet asserts that the forms and doctrines of Christianity are of no importance, under which specious pretense men will try to get rid of everything in Christianity which came down from above, which is supernatural—a divine redemption, a divine regeneration, a divine life and a divine Saviour. It is evident that the philosophic tendencies in modern Europe are rationalistic and materialistic, and out of this will come our final apostasy, an alienation from a holy God, a deification of man; and then will come the thousands and thousands, rejecting Christianity to bow down to the forces of power and to the false gods of our modern age. Science, with its mysteries and discoveries, will dominate the minds of modern men."

Think for a moment of the scope of these various statements concerning the future. The writers we have noted foresaw, a hundred years ago, the return of the Jews to Palestine, the return of the Jews to the Word of God, the rising significance of Jerusalem, convulsions and revolutions in Europe, the ascendancy of Russia, the increase of war, the dominion of science and the growth of apostasy. Where did they get this foreknowledge? For each one, the source of insight was a study of the Word of God.

What, then, should be our conclusions? *First* of all, we should be more and more persuaded by this kind of study that we have a Book in our hands that came down from God. They did not get these conclusions from philosophy or science. Cicero never talked like this to the Roman forum. There is no book of philosophy like this. These men did not get their foreknowledge out of anything man ever wrote. Thus our confidence in the Word of God is substantiated and sustained and strengthened.

*Secondly*, you and I have a hope that maketh not ashamed. Men have a lot of hopes that do make them ashamed. What kind of mood do you think German officers are in today who expected a few years ago to sit on the thrones of the world?

They had a hope, but it was a hope that made them ashamed. You and I have a hope of which we never need be ashamed, and if this Book's prophecies are coming true regarding these dark days, the prophecy that the Lord is coming back is coming true, too, and He is our hope.

*Third* and last, I think you and I ought to have a deeper prayer life than we've ever had before. Do you remember the ninth chapter of Daniel? Daniel knew by books that the end of the captivity was at hand and Israel was going back. What did Daniel do? He didn't run out and say, "Listen, men, throw down those shovels, let's go on a strike. We're going back to Palestine. The time is up." He didn't get up on a housetop and shout. He got down on his knees and wept before God. In fact, his prayer is five times longer than the prophecy of the seventy weeks in the same chapter. Now I am interested in prophecy, but the wonderful things that are happening on this earth should not leave us excited and unbalanced. They should lead us into the closet where we can shut the door and talk to God.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).—From *The Moody Monthly*, Chicago, by permission.

## WORLD LEADERS IN THE FINAL CRISES

BY W. W. FEREDAY

### IV. GOG (Ezekiel, 38:39)

The Four-Empire system of powers shown in the prophecies of Daniel and Zechariah, which began with Nebuchadnezzar, and which will be brought to a summary end by the appearing of the Son of Man, has no place in the book of Ezekiel. Nebuchadnezzar personally is mentioned, but merely as an instrument used by God in his own day. Ezekiel's prophecies have a feature not found elsewhere in the Scriptures; the nations which surrounded the land of Israel are spoken of as "trees of Eden in the