

FOREWORD

These, are eventful times. With history-making changes passing rapidly before men's eyes, the questions press upon thoughtful minds in all lands, What do these things mean? What is next in the program of world-shaping events?

Like a great searchlight shining across the centuries, the sure Word of Prophecy focuses its bright beams upon Our Day. In this light we see clearly the trend of events, and may understand what comes next in the program of history fulfilling prophecy.

In the Volume of the Book the living God speaks to Our Day of events of the past that have a lesson for the present, and of things to come. Divine prophecy fulfilled before men's eyes is God's challenge to unbelief. The Word of Holy Writ has been the guiding light through all the ages. It is the lamp to our feet today.

Steadfast, serene, unmovable, the same, Year after year, . . . Burns on forevermore that quenchless flame; Shines on that inextinguishable light." Revelation 3:20.

1. THE BOOK THAT SPEAKS TO OUR DAY

MAN may write a true book, but only God, the source of life, can write a living book. "The word of God . . . lives and abides forever." 1 Peter 1:23. The Bible is the living Word of God. We look at the volume; we hold it in our hands. It is like other books in form and printer's art. But the voice of God speaks from these pages, and the word spoken is alive. It is able to do in the heart that receives it what can be done only by divine power.

The Book That Talks

Far in the heart of Africa a missionary read to the people in their own language from the translated Word of God. They cried; "see! The book talks! The white man has a book that talks!" With that simplicity of speech so common to children of nature, they had exactly described it. This is it book that talks. What the wise man says of its counsels through parents to children, is true of all the book:

"When thou goes, it shall lead thee; when thou sleeps, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakens, it shall talk with thee." Proverbs 6:22. Here is companionship, faithful and true, a blessed guide and guardian and friend. "Holy Bible! book divine! Precious treasure, thou art mine!"

God Its Author

The sixty-six books of Holy Scripture were written by many penmen, over a space of fifteen centuries; yet it is one book, and one voice speaks through all its pages. Spurgeon once said of his experience with this book: "When I see it, I seem to hear a voice springing up from it, saying, 'I am the book of God; man, read me. I am God's writing; open my leaf, for I was penned by God; read it, for He is my author.'"

This book declares of itself: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Timothy 3:16. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1: 21. As the rugged verse of the old hymn puts it:

"Let all the heathen writers join
To form one perfect book:
Great God, if once compared with You, How mean their writings look!
"Not the most perfect rules they gave
Could show one sin forgiven,
Nor lead a step beyond the grave;
But You conducts to heaven."

Our Day In The Light Of Prophecy

It is the voice of the Almighty. Very different it is from the sacred books of the non-Christian religions. In those writings it is man speaking about God; in the Holy Scriptures it is God speaking to man. The difference is as great as heaven is higher than earth. Here it is not man groping in the darkness after God. In this book of God's revelation we see the divine arm reaching down to save the lost, and hear the voice of the loving Father calling to His children, every one and everywhere. "Incline your ear," He calls; "hear, and your soul shall live." Isaiah 55:1

The Word That Creates

We must have something more than instruction; we must have a word of power that is able to tell of sins forgiven, and to conduct us beyond the grave to heaven. One of the greatest of China's sages, Mencius, said, "Instruction can impart information, but not the power to execute." That touches the crucial point. We must have instruction that call Come with power divine to execute. We have it only in God's words. Christ said: "It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.

The words of God are living words. When God spoke in the beginning, "Let there be light," Lo, the light sprang out of the darkness. There was power in the word spoken to bring forth. "Let the earth bring forth grass," was the word of the Lord: and the earth was carpeted with its first rich greensward. So through all the work of creation, the creative power was in the word spoken.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:6, 9.

Even so, when this word speaks instruction to man, there is creative power in the word, if received, to work mightily in the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins. Man must be born again, be re-created. That we know; for Christ says "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again ["from above," margin], he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:1

And the word of God-the Bible from heaven-received by faith, is the agency by which this new birth "from above" is wrought. This is the declaration of our text: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever." 1 Peter 1: 23.

The Word That Works Within

Not only does the word of God give the new birth, making the believer a new man, the past forgiven and a new heart within, but the word that re-creates abides in the believing heart that studies it and clings to it, to work in the life with actual power that is not of the man himself. To the Thessalonians, who had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God," the apostle wrote:

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectively works also in you that believe." 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

The word itself works within, and works effectively. There is nothing mechanical about it. The mere letter profits nothing. The Bible on the center table, unstudied and unloved, has no magic power. But God promises to abide by His Spirit of power in the heart that listens to His voice and trembles at His word. Jesus Himself tells us the secret of this power of the word to work in the believing heart: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14: 23.

No wonder, then, that believing and receiving the word brings divine power into the life, making it possible for transformations of character to be wrought, for victories to be won and obedience rendered to every command of God.

Simply believing God's word touches the current of everlasting power, even as the trolley arm of the electric car reaches up and touches the current of power flowing through the wire overhead. The faith that takes the living word brings the power divine into the heart to move all the spiritual mechanism of life's service.

Our Day In The Light Of Prophecy

The Word Our Safety and Defense

When Christ came to live as our example in the flesh, and to give His life a sacrifice for sin, He, the divine Son of God, made Himself like unto His brethren. "I can of Mine own self do nothing," He said. John 5:30. Tempted and tried, He found His defense in the Holy Scriptures. When Satan came to tempt Him to sin, the Savior said, "It is written." He clung to the sure defense. Again the tempter came. He was met with the word, "It is written again." The third time it was the same weapon of defense, "It is written." Matthew 4: 1-11.

Christ found safety only in the Scriptures of truth. So the Bible is the Christian's shield against the enemy's attacks. As Jesus studied the Scriptures and kept the word ever in His heart for a defense against temptation, so must every Christian study and meditate ' upon God's Holy Word if its counsels and precepts are to be his defense in the moment of sudden temptation to sin. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart," said the psalmist, "that I might not sin against Thee." Psalm 119: 11. It was the only way for Christ, our Pattern; it is the only way for us.

The Bread of Life

The word of God is the daily food for the soul. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4. Who has not, in hurried times, missed a meal, working on through the day, never thinking of the prolonged fast? But after a time there came a sense of weakening force, a lack of physical power. What was the trouble? At once the reason was evident—one had not taken food, and the system was calling for a renewal of its forces. Just so the spiritual life must needs be fed by the word of God.

Do we at times feel a sense of weakening of the spiritual power, a letting. down of the vital forces of the soul? Ah, in the hurry of life we have neglected to feed upon the living bread. We can no more sustain spiritual vigor and health without feeding daily upon God's Holy Word than we can' maintain physical power without eating our daily bread. Eat of the life-giving word. The taste for it grows with the partaking.

There is life in "every word." The psalmist found the Lord's testimonies "sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb," or, as the marginal reading has it, than "the dropping of honeycombs." Psalm 19: 10. We get the picture of the honeycomb inverted, the cell caps broken open, the sweetness dripping down. Just so every word of the Lord is a cell full of sweetness and life for the soul that feasts upon the Holy Scriptures.

The Source of All Doctrine

The Bible is the complete and perfect rule of faith and doctrine. Here every doctrine of salvation is found. Inspiration has declared it in the words of the apostle Paul to Timothy:

"From a child thou has known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'" 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

The divine command is, "Study." For every generation there has been a message borne by this living word, making call to reformation of life, or giving warning and comfort. "The Bible is not a collection of truths formulated in propositions, 'I said Dr. Samuel Harris, of Yale, "but God's majestic march through history, redeeming men from sin."

In every age God has been ruling and overruling, witnessing by His Spirit through the living word. The experiences recorded of past ages have their special lesson for the present time: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4.

It speaks in every tongue to the human heart. Its power to transform has been shown through all the centuries in every clime and among every race. One of the Gospels was put into the Chiluba tongue of Central Africa. After a time a Garenganze chief came to Dan Crawford, the missionary, changed from the spirit of a fierce, wicked barbarian to that of a teachable child. Explaining his conversion, the chief said: "I

Our Day In The Light Of Prophecy

was startled to find that Christ could speak Chiluba. I heard him speak to me out of the printed page, and what he said was, "Follow me!"

Of the Bible's universal speech to all mankind, Dr. Henry van Dyke has said: "Born in the East, and clothed in Oriental form and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet, and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. It comes into the palace to tell the monarch that he is the servant of the Most High, and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is the son of God. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word of peace for the time of peril, a word of comfort for the day of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people, and its counsels whispered in the ear of the lonely. The wise and the proud tremble at its warnings, but to the wounded and penitent it has a mother's voice.

"Its great words grow richer, as pearls do when they are worn near the heart. No man is poor or desolate who has this treasure for his own. When the landscape darkens and the trembling pilgrim comes to the valley named the Shadow, he is not afraid to enter. He takes the rod and staff of Scripture in his hand; he says to friend and comrade, 'Good-by, we shall meet again,' and comforted by that support, he goes toward the lonely pass as one who climbs through darkness into light." - The Century Magazine.

In the days of His life on earth, Jesus was a welcome guest in humble homes in Judah and Galilee. "The common people heard Him gladly." His presence brought peace and comfort to the home. He is no longer with us in bodily presence; but He is the same Savior still." Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Hebrews 13: 8. By His Spirit, through the living word of Holy Scripture, He enters the home where faith receives Him, and speaks again the gracious salutation, "Peace be to this house."

Christ the Central Theme

All the Bible bears witness of Christ as the Savior of the world. He Himself said of the Scriptures, "They are they which testify of Me." John 5:39. "To Him give all the prophets witness." Acts 10:43. We see Him as the coming Messiah in promise and prophecy, in type and shadow. His is the divine, living personality standing out in every book that makes up the Sacred Volume. As we read with loving heart, the Author seems near in every page.

"Reading, methinks I bend Before the cross. Where died my King, my Friend. The whole world's loss
For love of Him is gain."

And having beheld Him giving His life as the divine sacrifice, and rising in triumph over death to be our great High priest in the heavenly temple, as we read these Sacred Scriptures yet again, in every book, from Genesis to Revelation, we see Him as the coming King of kings, coming to take His children to the eternal home of the saved. The whole book is a bright window through which we gaze on coming glory.

"And yet again I stand
Where the seer stood,
Gazing across the strand,
Beyond the flood:
The gates of pearl afar,
The streets of gold,
The bright and morning Star
Mine eyes behold."

"The Word of God . . . lives and abides forever." 1 Peter 1:23. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Matthew 24: 35.

2. THE WITNESS OF THE CENTURIES

The Sure Word of Prophecy

“We, have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed.” 2 Peter 1:19. The prophetic scriptures afford infallible evidence that the voice, of the living God speaks in Holy Writ. One of the distinguishing marks of divinity is the power that foretells and records the course of history long ages before the events come to pass.

God's Challenge

God's challenge to false religious systems in olden time was this: “Declare us things for to come. Show the things that sm. to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods.” Isaiah 41:22,23. And all the gods of the nations were silent; for they are no gods. The Lord alone, the one who speaks by the Holy Scriptures, is able to tell the end from the beginning.

“I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand.” Isaiah 46:9,10. By this means God has borne witness of Himself through the ages, that it might be known that the Most High rules above all the kingdoms of men, and that men might recognize His purpose to put an end to sin and bring eternal salvation to His people. “I have spoken it,” He declares, “I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.”

The fulfillment of the word of prophecy in history is a fascinating story. To the Lord, the future is an open book, even as the present. The word is spoken, telling of the event to come; it is written on the parchment scroll by the prophet's pen. Time passes; centuries come and go. Then, when the hour of the prophecy arrives, lo, there appears the fulfillment. And it is seen in matters pertaining to individuals, as well as in the affairs of cities and empires.

The Word Fulfilled after Long Waiting

In the dream divinely given to the lad Joseph, it was plainly foretold that his brothers would one day come as suppliants before him. His father rebuked him for telling the dream, saying, “Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?” Genesis 37:10. The brothers sold the lad into slavery, to be well rid of him. Yet twenty years later, all unconscious of his identity, there same brethren presented themselves before the prime minister of Egypt, and “fell before him on the ground.” Genesis 44:14.

Again: the wicked stronghold of Jericho had been utterly destroyed. Joshua declared: “Cursed be the man ... that rises up and builds this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.” Joshua 6: 26. The hands of angels had thrown down its walls, and its ruin was to stand as a memorial. More than five hundred years later, when the apostate Ahab was ruling, and Israel and Judah had departed from the Lord, Hiel the Bethelite set out to rebuild Jericho. “He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born.”

But accident and death may come at any time. The work on the walls went on, no one thinking of the neglected Scriptures with their warning of long ago. So the full account runs:

“He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.” 1 Kings 16:34.

The fate of some of the mightiest cities the world ever MILW has borne testimony through the centuries to the fulfillment of the prophetic word.

The Witness of Nineveh

Nineveh was founded by Nimrod. He built not only his capital here by the Tigris, but other towns

Our Day In The Light Of Prophecy

round about, conceiving first of all the idea of grouping the capital and its suburbs into one great city, the "Greater Nineveh," as we would say in these days of Greater London and Greater New York. At the dawn of history Nineveh was "a great city." Genesis 10:11,12. In Jonah's day it was an "exceeding great city." Sennacherib, of the Bible story, was its beautifier. Rawlinson says:

"The great palace which he raised at Nineveh surpassed in size and splendor all earlier edifices." Second Monarchy," chap. 9.

In the book of Jonah, says Records of the Past, "Nineveh is stated and that being an exceeding great city of three days journey; the explanation that Calah on the south and Khorsabad on the north were included seems very probable. The distance between these two points is about thirty miles, which, at ten miles a day, would take the time required."- Vol. XII, part 1, January and February, 1913. A description is preserved on the clay cylinder in the king's own words: "For the wonderment of multitudes of men. I raised its head 'the palace which has no rival'. I called its name."-Taylor Cylinder, "Records of the Past." Vol. XII, part 1.

At the preaching of Jonah the city had repented; but in later years pride of conquest and luxury and wealth were filling it with blood. The prophet Nahum warned it of certain doom, appealing to those who had any fear of God to turn to Him. The message was:

"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows them that trust in Him." Nahum 1:7. Some, no doubt, heeded the warning and turned to God for refuge. But the city's life of sin ran on. Then the prophet Zephaniah spoke the word, just as the stroke was to fall: "Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God." Zephaniah 3:1,2.

Prophecies uttered against the mighty city had declared: "He will make an utter end of the place thereof." "The palace shall be dissolved ["molten," margin]." "She is empty, and void, and waste." Nahum 1:8; 2:6,10. "How is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in." Zephaniah 2:15.

The Medes and the Babylonians overthrew Nineveh. The king immolated himself in his burning ("molten") palace. Nineveh became a desolation. Describing a battle that took place there in the seventh century of our era, between the Romans and the Persians, the historian Gibbon bears testimony to the fact that it has indeed become "empty, and void, and waste."

"Eastward of the Tigris, at the end of the bridge of Mosul, the great Nineveh had formerly been erected: the city, and even the ruins of the city, had long since disappeared. The vacant place afforded a spacious field for the operations of the two armies." - "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chap. 46, par. 24.

And to this day, the site of Nineveh is pointed out across the river from Mosul, only mounds of ruins, these almost obliterated by the drifting sands of centuries. The word spoken is fulfilled, though at the time it was spoken it little seemed to proud and prosperous Nineveh that such a fate could ever be hers.

"Before me rise the walls Of the Titanic city, brazen gates, Towers, temples, palaces enormous piled,
Imperial Nineveh, the earthly queen! In all her golden pomp I see her now, Her swarming streets, her splendid festivals. "Again I look, and Lo! Her walls are gone, her palaces are dust, The desert is, around her, and within Like shadows have the mighty passed away."

From Nineveh's mounds we seem to hear a voice that says: "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: but the word of the Lord endures forever." 1 Peter 1:24,25.

The Burden of Tyre

Tyre was the greatest maritime city of antiquity. Its inhabitants, the Phoenicians, traded in the ports of all the known world. Ezekiel describes the heart of the seas as its borders. "Thy builders have perfected thy beauty" he says. He tells how all countries traded in its marts and contributed to its wealth and then, obeying the word of the Lord, the prophet bears a message of rebuke and warning, "the burden of Tyre,"- and pronounces the coming judgment:

"Thus said the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to

Our Day In The Light Of Prophecy

come up against thee. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, said the Lord God.” Ezekiel 26:3-5.

The accounts of travelers bear witness that the prophecy has been fulfilled. As to the site of the island city of Ezekiel's day, Bruce, nearly a century ago, said that he found it a “rock whereon fishers dry their nets.” (See “Keith on the Prophecies,” p. 329) In more recent times, Dr. W. M. Thomson found the whole region of Tyre suggestive only of departed glory:

“There is nothing here, certainly, of that which led Joshua to call it 'the strong city' more than three thousand years ago (Joshua 19:29), nothing of that mighty metropolis which baffled the proud Nebuchadnezzar and all his power for thirteen years, until 'every head' in his army I was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled, in the hard service against Tyrus (Ezekiel 29:18), nothing in this wretched roadstead and empty harbor to remind one of the times when merry mariners did sing in her markets no visible trace of those towering ramparts which so long resisted the utmost efforts of the great Alexander. All have vanished utterly like a troubled dream, and Tyre has sunk under the burden of prophecy. . . . As she is now, and has long been, Tyre is God's witness; but great, powerful, and populous, she would be the infidel's boast. This, however, she cannot be. Tyre will never rise from her dust to falsify the voice of prophecy.

“Dim is her glory, gone her fame, Her boasted wealth has fled.
On her proud rock, alas! her shame, The fisher's net is spread.
The Tyrian harp has slumbered long, And Tyria's mirth is low.
The timbrel, dulcimer, and song Are hushed, or wake to woe.”

“The Land and the Book,” Volume II, Pages 626, 627.

The Desolation of Babylon

Yet another city of ancient times there was, the mightiest of them all, whose fate was a subject of prophecy, and whose history bears special testimony for us today. For, more than any other, the Lord used that city as a symbol of the pride of life and the exaltation of the selfish heart against God. Let us study briefly the desolation pronounced upon Babylon of old.

While Babylon was still the mightiest city of the world, with the period of greatest glory yet before it, the Lord revealed its ignoble end. By the prophet Isaiah He declared: “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.” Isaiah 13:19-22.

Never could a more doleful future have been pictured for a city full of splendor, the metropolis of the world: About one hundred and seventy-five years after this word was written on the parchment scroll, the Medes and Persians were at the gates of Babylon. Her time had come, and Chaldea's rule was ended.

“Fallen is the golden city? in the dust, Spoiled of her crown dismantled of her state.
She that bath made the Strength of Towers her trust, Weeps by her dead, supremely desolate!”
“She that beheld the nations at her gate. Thronging in homage, shall be called no more
‘Lady of Kingdoms!’- Who shall mourn her fate? Her guilt is full, her march of triumph over.”

But still, under Medo-Persia, and later under the Greeks, the city itself was populous and prosperous and beautiful. The skeptic of the time may have pointed to it as evidence that here, at least, the Hebrew prophet had missed the mark.

Apollonius, the sage of Tyana, who lived in the days of Nero and the apostles, has left an account of Babylon as he saw it, as late as the first century of our era. Still the Euphrates swept beneath its walls, dividing the city into halves, with great palaces on either side. He says: “The palaces are roofed with bronze, and a glitter goes off from them; but the chambers of the women and of the men and the porticoes

Our Day In The Light Of Prophecy

are adorned partly with silver, and partly with golden tapestries or curtains, and partly with solid gold in the form of pictures.” And of the king's judgment hall he reported:

“The roof had been carried up in the form of a dome, to resemble in a manner the heavens, and that it was roofed with sapphire, a stone that is very blue and like heaven to the eye. And there were images of the gods, which they worship, fixed aloft, and looking like golden figures shining out of the ether.”- Philostratus, “Life of Apollonius,” book 1, chapter 25.

Evidently Babylon was still “the land of graven images,” and the desolation foretold by the prophet had not yet befallen its palaces. But that prophetic word, written eight hundred years before, was still upon the scroll of the Book, the sure Word of God, who sees the end from the beginning.

The view given us by Apollonius is perhaps the last glimpse we have of Babylon's passing glory. Even then for centuries the walls had been a quarry from which stones were drawn for Babylon's rival, Seleucia, on the Tigris. And Strabo the Greek geographer, who also wrote in the first century, had described Babylon as “in great part deserted, adding, “No one would hesitate to apply to it what one of the comic writers said of Megalopolitae, in Areadia, ‘The great city is a great desert.’” – “Geography,” book 16, chap. 1.

Already pagan writers had begun to describe its condition in the terms of the prophecy uttered so long before. And now what is its state? The doom foretold has fallen heavy upon the city, upon its palaces, and “upon the graven images of Babylon.” For a century and more, travelers' accounts have frequently borne witness to the exact fulfillment of the prophecy in the remarkable desolation of that city, once mistress of the world.

“Babylon shall become heaps,” said the prophecy, “and owls shall dwell there.” This is what Mr. Layard, the English archeologist, found on his visit in 1845:

“Shapeless heaps of rubbish cover for many an acre the face of the land.... On all sides, fragments of glass, marble, pottery, and inscribed brick are mingled with that peculiar nitrous and blanched soil, which, bred from the remains of ancient habitations, cheeks or destroys vegetation, and renders the site of Babylon a naked and a hideous waste. Owls [which are of a large gray kind, and often found in flocks of nearly a hundred] start from the scanty thickets, and the foul jackal skulls through the furrows.”-“Discoveries Among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon,” chapter 21, Page 413.

The prophecy said, “Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there.” The words might be construed to mean that the famous site would never become the place of a Bedouin village. But it is literally true, say travelers, that the Arabs avoid the place even for the temporary pitching of their tents. They consider the spot under a curse. They call the ruins Mudjelibe, “the Overtumed.” (See “Encyclopedia of Islam,” art. “Babil.”)

As late as 1913, Missionary W. C. Ising visited the site where Professor Koldeway was excavating the ruins of Nebueliadnezzar's palace. He wrote: “Involuntarily one is reminded of the prophecy in the thirteenth of Isaiah and many other places, which, in course of time, have been fulfilled to the letter. No one is living on the site of ancient Babylon, and whatever Arabs are employed by the excavators have built their mud huts in the beds of the ancient river, which at the present time is shifted half a mile farther west.”- European Division Quarterly, Fourth Quarter, 1913.

Egypt and Edom

The massive ruins by the Nile bear witness to prophecy fulfilled. When Egypt rivaled Babylon, the word was spoken: “It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt, itself any more above the nations.” Ezekiel 29:15. It was not utterly to pass, as Babylon, but to continue in inferior state. Thus it came to Pass. Once populous Edom famed for wisdom and counsel, now lies desolate, according to the word: “Edom, shall be a desolation. Every one that goes by it shall be astonished.” Jeremiah 49:17.

The Testimony Of History

Thus the centuries bear testimony to the fulfillment of the prophetic word. The panorama of all human history moves before us in these writings of the prophets. Flinging their “colossal shadows” across the pages of Holy Writ, as Farrar says, we see – “The giant forms of empires on their way To ruin.” It is no human book that thus from primitive times forecasts the march of history through the ages.

Our Day In The Light Of Prophecy

The Lord not only spoke the word in warning and entreaty for those to whom it first came but it is written in the scriptures of truth as a testimony to all time, that the Bible is the word of God, and that all His purposes revealed therein and all the promises of the blessed Book are certain and sure. The prophets who bore messages from God to Nineveh, and Babylon, and Tyre, spoke messages also for our day.

Fulfilled prophecy is the testimony of the centuries to the living God. The evidence of prophecy and its fulfillment is God's challenge and appeal to men to acknowledge Him as the true God and the Holy Scriptures as His word from heaven. "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of My mouth, and I showed them. I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I showed it thee.... Thou has heard, see all this; and will not you declare it?" Isaiah 48:3-6.

Surely no one can look at the evidence in history of the fulfillment of prophecy without seeing that of a truth the One who spoke these words knew the end from the beginning. And finding the living God in the sure word of prophecy, one must be prepared to listen to His voice in all the scriptures, when it speaks of sin and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. Further, the prophetic word also has much to say of yet future, of the course of history in modern times. It behooves us to give heed to what that word speaks concerning our own times and the events that are to take place upon the earth before the end. The apostle Peter exhorts us the study in these words:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19.

3. PROPHETIC OUTLINE OF THE WORLD'S HISTORY

THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL 2

"There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." In a dream by night the Lord gave to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a clear historical outline of the course of world empire to the end of time and the coming of the eternal kingdom.

The king was a thoughtful monarch; and having reached the height of his power, he was one night meditating upon "what should come to pass hereafter." Not for his sake alone, but for the enlightenment and instruction of men in all time, the Lord answered the wondering question of the king's meditation by giving him the dream. "He that reveals secrets," said Daniel the prophet, "makes known to thee what shall come to pass."

And that we may know at the beginning that there is nothing fanciful and uncertain about this great historic outline reaching to the end of the world, we note first the assurance with which the prophet closed his interpretation: "The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

The details of the dream had been taken from the king's mind, while conviction as to the wondrous import of it remained. This was in God's providence, to show the folly of the worldly-wise men of Babylon, and to bring before the king the prophet of the Lord with a divine message. The prophet Daniel, under the inspiration of God, brought his dream again to the king's mind:

"Thou, O king, saw, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. "This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

"Thou saw till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors. And the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." The prophet next declared the interpretation. And now follows the history of the world in miniature.