

The Only Key to Daniel's Prophecies

(By W.S. Auchincloss.)

The Bible Treasury, New Series 5: 237

An examination by W. Kelly of a book of that name.

This is a bold title, but such a thing is not so uncommon across the Atlantic. Dr. Sayce counts it "a great advance on previous interpreters" to make these prophecies "end with the beginning of the Christian Church, instead of lengthening out into a still unknown future." Most Christian students in Europe and elsewhere will agree that neither Mr. A. nor the Assyriologist know anything of value about the matter. If it were not that Mr. A. sincerely believes that the book is "a most important part of the word of God," his "only key" should have no notice here; if he really understood Daniel, he would find it incomparably more important than all he sees of it as yet.

Perhaps his strange omission of Dan. 2 accounts for much. Nebuchadnezzar's first dream, to say nothing of the second in Dan. 4, is of immense moment. There the four Gentile empires or world-powers, according to the prophet's interpretation, are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; paralleled by Daniel's own vision of the same powers, as beasts out of a great sea: all at the end of the age rising up into collision with the Son of man coming in power and glory to establish His kingdom universal and everlasting. By attempting to squeeze all this into near about the First Advent, the book is shorn of its chief value. Every vision goes on to that future judgment of the quick. It is the Lord's judicial dealing with the last phase of the powers, which as God's first act shall be destroyed, and then "the whole earth" is to be filled forthwith with His kingdom.

Neglecting Dan. 2, Mr. A. makes a false start with Dan. 7, in taking the lion as not Babylon but the Medo-Persian empire; then the bear as Greece. What a blunder! In the leopard he gets right as the Macedonian or Greek. But his notion about the ten horns of Rome how grotesque! 1 Marius, 2 Sylla, 3 Pompey, 4 Crassus, 5 Julius Caesar, 6 Brutus, 7 Casius, 8 Octavius, 9 Antony, 10 Lepidus. For the ten horns are concurrent vassal monarchs supplanted in part by a subsequent little one who becomes sovereign of all, and by his audacious wickedness brings down final and fiery destruction on all, and makes open the way for the public kingdom in righteousness of the Son of man, when the saints of the high or heavenly places shall take the kingdom. For the saints are to reign with Christ. To apply this to the First Advent, or to events since, is preposterous. It is the same fourth or the Roman Empire, which played its part in crucifying the Lord of glory, which (Rev. 12; 13; 17; 19) is to rise again by Satan's energy, but for perdition. Then the Lord will take His great power and reign, instead of the kingdom of God to faith as now, when all enormities are done in the world unjudged of Him. To make this accomplished A.D. 70 or so is to bring Daniel's prophecy and all others into contempt. It is to be carried away by a human idea. See p. 20.

Mr. A. is less astray as to Dan. 7 in the preliminary part; but he is wholly wrong as usual in the most momentous conclusion of the matter, of which Antiochus Epiphanes was but a type of "the king of the north" in the latter day, the antagonist of the Roman Emperor about Jerusalem and its sanctuary. Both are to perish with their adherents, successively, at our Lord's coming again. What in the past can compare with this? Then, and not till then, will come the days of heaven upon the earth. Earthly judgments precede them; for "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26: 9).

The latter rain of the Spirit will as it were fertilize it. The gospel does not, nor is it its nature to,

govern the world; and the so-called church (no matter which) has made an awful mess in attempting it. Its true work is to gather saved souls out of it for Christ and heaven.

Similarly Mr. A. is entirely ignorant of the true bearing of the last of the seventy weeks. For the Roman siege and subsequent trials are supposed to have taken place before v. 27. After the 69 weeks began a great gap created by Messiah's cutting off; and the last verse (Dan. 9: 27) is about "a" (not "the") covenant for seven years, which the future chief of the Roman empire will make and break, depriving the Jews of their rites; whereon the great catastrophe follows (Dan. 9).

The prophecy in Dan. 11 is similar: only it is not the western power that figures; but the wilful king, the Antichrist in Palestine "in the time of the end," and his enemy, "the king of the north," the then monarch of Turkey in Asia, as "the king of the south" is of Egypt. It is the hour of judgment for all powers, the last of which is Gog, the lord of all the Russias; after which Daniel himself is to appear and stand in his lot among the risen saints of the high places. Thus there ought to be no such mistake as men make in foreclosing prophecies, which all end with the Lord's appearing, and then only.

Mr. A. ought not to have confounded Darius the Mede, the ad interim and complimentary king after Babylon's fall before Cyrus succeeded, with Darius the Persian, who was conventionally chosen after Cambyses and the impostor Gomates. Ezra 4 makes this certain, Ahasuerus answering to the former, and Artaxerxes to the latter. Then comes Darius (Hystaspis) King of Persia.