

**LECTURES ON THE
PROPHECY OF ZECHARIAH**

by

RALPH WARDLAW

L E C T U R E S

ON THE

PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH,

BY THE

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EDITED BY HIS SON,

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P R E F A C E.

IT is the ambition of some to be specially distinguished as "STUDENTS OF PROPHECY." To such a distinction my revered father made no claim. But as a STUDENT OF GOD'S WORD the prophetic page was not neglected by him. He found there a field of pleasant and profitable research; and sought to throw light upon it, and unfold its treasures for the benefit of others.

Of this he has left abundant evidence, not only in these Lectures on ZECHARIAH, but in numerous other lectures, on most if not all the prophetic books of the Old Testament; and in a complete series of expository discourses on the APOCALYPSE. And of his mode of handling prophetic questions, he presented to the Public a specimen or two during his life-time;—one, a Discourse on "THE PURPOSES OF DIVINE MERCY TO THE SEED OF ABRAHAM;" the other, a Discourse on "THE MILLENNIUM."

These Lectures have been selected, because among the Author's latest productions—having been composed and delivered when he was in his seventy-second year; because the portion of Scripture which they seek to elucidate, while possessing many points of great interest, is apt to be overlooked; and because it introduces greater variety into the character of these posthumous volumes, and shows the Author's facility in giving to every theme a *practical* bearing.

It is in the interpretation of Prophecy there is a twofold danger—the extreme of *literalism* on the one hand, and of *spiritualism* on the other. This the Author deeply felt; and he made it his aim, to discover the “happy medium” where he had a full persuasion the truth lay. How far he has, in this, been successful the reader must judge. It need be no matter of surprise if at times there is room for hesitation or dissent.

It will be seen that the return of the Jews to their own land, and their possession, hereafter, of a distinct political existence, is regarded as the teaching of this and other parts of the Sacred Record. This was the Author’s opinion from an early period; and it gained strength in later years. The question is somewhat fully discussed in this volume; and the general results of the discussion are in singular harmony with those at which Dr. David Brown arrives in his recent work entitled “*The Restoration of the Jews.*”

While availing himself of the valuable work of Dr. Henderson on the Minor Prophets, the Author ventures to differ from his friend on some points of criticism; and frequently diverges widely from him in his view of the Prophet’s meaning.

This Volume, like those which have preceded it, is commended to the BLESSING OF GOD.

J. S. WARDLAW.

LECTURE I.

ZECH. I. 1—6.

“ In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. Beye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord. Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? But my words, and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.”

NEAR the close of the Book of Revelation, and therefore of the whole Book of God, we have the statement—“ *The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*” The meaning seems to be, that the scheme of redemption, contained in that testimony, is the *great theme* of prophecy; that to which, whether more or less directly, the whole relates;—its living soul;—its essential pervading element; bereft of which, it would lose at once all its zest,—all its interest, all its real value, leaving nothing behind but what was vapid and worthless. That such should be the case, was what might reasonably have been anticipated. The fall of man changed entirely the character, and position, and prospects, of the race,—and the whole aspect of futurity. The race became apostate, depraved, outcast, accursed. Then came the first intimation of the plan of mercy; which had been previously

in the form of a matured purpose, in the mind of the God-head. The first promise was the first prophecy. It came from the lips of Jehovah Himself,—in terms intentionally obscure, but of which the full import was to be gradually unfolded—“I will put enmity between thee (the serpent, the Devil, and Satan) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed:—it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This first prophecy was the germ of the whole scheme. Here was “*the testimony of Jesus*,” in its original embryo. From that hour, the grand problem of the divine administration towards our world was,—the working out of this divine plan of salvation; the restoration of an apostate race, guilty and depraved, to the favour and to the moral image of God,—in a way not merely consistent with the claims of law and government, and with the honour of all the attributes of the divine character, but that should place them all in a brightness of manifestative glory, such as should fill the intelligent creation with adoring wonder. This, I repeat, was the problem to be worked out. It became, therefore, the leading star of the whole of the divine government of our world;—the spirit of *providence*, as well as of prophecy. Supposing the plan to exist, it could not be otherwise, than that everything else should be subordinated to it; all the plans and measures of God’s providential administration so regulated as to be subservient to its successful and final completion. Thus it was before “the fulness of the time;” thus it has been since; thus it shall be to the end. We may speculate, and speculate truly, respecting the designs of providence, in particular courses of events, towards this or that nation, or this or that section of the inhabited earth, in regard to their temporal prosperity or declension, weal or woe; but we must not forget that in the whole of this extensive and complicated administration, there have been from the first, and there are now, higher ends, towards which all events are made to converge, and in the attainment of which they all shall issue. Before “the fulness of time,” the whole was a preparation for the Saviour’s *first* coming; and now all is bearing forward toward the promised