

**AIDS TO PROPHETIC
ENQUIRY,
PP. 4-100**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649427420

Aids to Prophetic Enquiry, pp. 4-100 by B. W. Newton

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A I D S

TO

PROPHETIC ENQUIRY.

BY

B. W. NEWTON.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET AND CO. BERNERS STREET.

1848.



LONDON :
Printed by J. Dennett, 121, Fleet Street.

and now extensively circulated. We almost instinctively feel a reverence for those who (though they may have been mistaken) have written and acted in the fear of God. This, however, must not deter us from openly exposing their errors, being persuaded of this, that they themselves, if they could now speak, would not ask that any thing they have said or done contrary to Christ and his truth should be spared. Their earnest desire would be that every thing which through them may be acting prejudicially on the Church of God, might be frustrated in its results. And that must be prejudicial to the Church of God which either subverts any of the great substantive facts that He has revealed, or which presents those facts in different order and connexion from that in which He has been pleased to set them in his word.

To those then who expect the pre-millennial advent of the Lord Jesus (and to such principally I now write) it is sufficient to say that the Book we are considering denies that Advent to be personal. On this ground only I might ask that its claim should be rejected, for it claims to be regarded as a true exposition of the prophetic testimonies of God. *As such* it must utterly be rejected. All who have learned to wait for God's Son from heaven, will feel too distinctly the solemn force of the concluding part of the nineteenth of Revelation, to admit of its being explained away on the ground of symbols or figurative language, or on any other ground. To such the quotation of the passage which I cite at the foot of this page would be sufficient to secure their condemnation of the work.*

* "Seeing I have but slightly touched upon the millennium or the thousand years reign of the saints on earth, I shall desire you to think a little further on this, as the greatest event that is to happen before the end of the world. I dare not indeed expatiate upon this vast subject; only I shall suggest a few things concerning it. The first is, that this is to begin immediately after the total and final destruction of Rome papal, in or about

There are, however, a few other points to which I would desire briefly to direct their attention.

One of the great objects of God in giving enlarged acquaintance with the Scripture, especially prophetic Scripture, is to bring into his Church a more distinct recognition of the principles which throughout this dispensation should have characterised his people, and marked them as distinct both from Israel and from the nations. The leading nations of the earth, up to the very end of the present dispensation, are symbolized in the Scripture by fierce beasts which know not Christ nor subjection to his laws,—and Israel is left to grope in judicial blindness and sin; but in contrast with both, the people of God stand peculiar in their principles and testimonies, commanded indeed to fight, but to fight only with spiritual weapons—holding both the shield and the sword, yet entering no path unsuited to those whose feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Such, while the Apostles lived, were the principles and the position of the children of God. Such *ought* they to have been throughout the dispensation. But they soon abandoned this position, and mingling with the nations, learned their ways; and now as the latter days are closing in, God, whose word we have neglected, seeks, in mercy, to awaken us from our slumber, and to lead us back to that sure word of prophecy which marks the course of these nations, and their evil end. Many have read in the light of that word the history and the doom both of Israel and the nations, and have seen the necessity of seeking to recover those principles which give a characteristic separateness to the children of God.

the year 2000; and that therefore Christ himself will have the honour of destroying that formidable enemy, by a new and remarkable appearance of himself, as I said before. But, secondly, we must not imagine *that this appearance of Christ will be a personal one,*" &c.—*Fleming*, pp. 30, 93.

Any book, therefore, especially any book on Prophecy which counterworks this end; any book which tends to rivet the principles which have so long and so ruinously sunk the Church into identification with the nations and deprived it of its peculiar testimonies, is most earnestly to be deprecated at a moment like the present. The principles of this book did not and could not raise Mr. Fleming into dissociation from the nations or their ways. On the contrary, his principles (and it was their necessary result) led him to ask that their swords should be unsheathed for the maintenance or protection of the truths of God. A war between France and England was the immediate result of the influence he exerted over the monarch of the day. This was the practical result of his prophetic principles. How indeed could it be otherwise? For if angels coming forth with golden vials from the temple of God, and "clothed in linen pure and bright," are symbols really employed by God to designate the struggles and victories of Protestant over Popish nations, who would not desire to set such agency in action—who would not long to be engaged in conflicts worthy of being represented by symbols such as these?

But it is not so. They who are commanded to follow Him, who, "when He was reviled, reviled not again," are not commissioned to wield the sword of destruction. If any thing could have justified its use by a disciple, it would have been the hour when Jesus was betrayed. But if even the defence of his sacred Person did not justify it—if even then it was said, "Put up thy sword within its sheath, for they that take the sword shall perish by the sword;" how much more does it become us to allow it to continue sheathed till it shall please another, wiser and more mighty than we—Himself to take hold on judgment and to terminate the age in which it has pleased Him to appoint that truth should suffer. The very distinctive feature

of the Church at present is meek and patient suffering. How then ought we to shrink from the principles of a system which destroys our apprehension of the Church's present calling—recognizes not the distinction as drawn in Scripture between the coming dispensation, in which truth is to triumph, and the present in which it is appointed to suffer, and conceives that the sword of the earthly potentate is the fitting instrument whereby Christ's people are to be made to conquer.

But even if we could persuade ourselves to glory in those evil and cruel wars by which, after the true power and vigour of the Reformation had departed, the Protestant kingdoms fought for mastery; if we could deceive ourselves into the belief that the agency of those guilty kingdoms so contending with the Papacy may fitly be represented by holy angels clothed in white, and that their triumphs were celebrated with thankgivings in heaven; even if there were nothing in all this to shock us—if angels so clothed in white could fitly represent the agencies of England, and Holland, and Sweden contending with the Pope, shall we likewise say that these same holy symbols are employed also to designate that agency which in 1793 overthrew the throne of the French monarchs, and is now, in 1848, destroying, as is supposed, the authority of the Pope? This we must believe, if we receive the interpretations of Mr. Fleming. The triumphs of revolutionists and infidels must be the triumphs of Christ and of his truth.

I have no desire to shield Popery or its abominations. A system which solemnly and deliberately pronounces those who teach the blessed doctrine of justification by faith and the imputed righteousness of Christ, to be accursed, must be itself accursed.* (Gal. i.) But shall we, because we see the wickedness of Po-

* Conc. Trid. Canon IX. Si quis dixerit solà fide impium justificari, ita ut intelligat nihil aliud requiri, quod ad justificac-