

# **THE STRUCTURE OF PROPHECY**

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The Structure of Prophecy by James Douglas

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**JAMES DOUGLAS**

**THE STRUCTURE  
OF PROPHECY**



THE STRUCTURE OF PROPHECY.

BY

JAMES DOUGLAS OF CAVERS.

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## NOTE.

THE following Treatise contains the substance of Five Lectures on Prophecy. The object was to give a rapid and general outline of the Structure of the Prophetic writings.

The Author has only to add his fervent wish and prayer, that a writer might speedily be raised up to give the world a standard work on the whole of Prophecy, where the comment might be fully in accordance with the Divine text ; and partaking of the permanence of the original, might endure to all generations.



Figure 1. Relationship between the number of species and the number of individuals for 10 different species.



## THE STRUCTURE OF PROPHECY.

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THE Bible forms a perfect whole. All the parts correspond, reflect mutual light, and balance each other as a complete system. The truths of the Bible, like the stars of the firmament, revolve around a common centre, and keep each other in their due place and distance. Prophecy forms a large part of the Bible. It is not separated from the rest of the Scriptures, it does not even form particular tractates, but springs up from every part, without being marked off by any distinct line of demarcation. The whole of the Scriptures, looking to the future as well as to the past and to the present, are stamped with the Divine mind of their Author, with whom a thousand years are as one day ; and who embraces not only all the ages of time, but the past and the

coming eternity in one unbroken and continuous view.

The attempt to cut out prophecy from the sacred writings would be equally vain and impious. The continuity of life throughout the whole prevents such an excision being effected, without obliterating the Bible itself. Yet it is not uncommon to neglect prophecy on the ground of its being hard to be understood ; and many stand aloof, impressed with fear, as they behold one after another bewildered, of those, who have attempted to pry, by the assistance of revelation, into the secrets of futurity.

It is, however, the neglect of prophecy which gives rise to the chief heresies concerning prophecy, and the same observation holds good with respect to doctrines ; if any truth be disregarded, some exaggerated form of error comes to supply its place. We are neither to add to the word of God nor to diminish aught from it. The neglect of prophecy eventually does both, since it consigns a large and most important portion of inspiration to rest in silence and darkness. But, as Addison observed of rooms shut up and deserted in a house, that they soon acquire the reputation of being haunted, filled with strange sounds, and tenanted by unreal apparitions ; so neglected prophecy soon finds interpreters to give their own comments on what has been deemed too mysterious

for explanation, and eyes, which at first beheld nothing in the darkness of futurity but mist and vacuity, soon perceive with Saul, under the direction of the Pythoness of Endor, mighty shapes ascending, and hear voices predictive of future events.

We have many and excellent commentaries on the Scriptures for devotional purposes, where the same train of thought which has delighted and profited the Church, generation after generation, is over and over again reproduced, with some variety of form; but a new commentary is desirable, in addition to these, which should point out the general structure of the Bible, indicate how all the parts join in together, fitly framed and compacted, and place the eye of the observer in that point of view where all is seen in the fairest light, and justest proportion. Such a work would explain the Prophecies as well as the other portions of Scripture, tracing each stream of prophecy to its fountain, and observing how each prediction springs out of the circumstances which attended its origin, is in accordance with the situation of the Church at the time of its delivery, and is in correspondence with the peculiar portion of Scripture to which it immediately belongs. But even in addition to such a Commentary, a larger and more peculiar work on Prophecy is wanted fully to expand the view, to trace each of the more important steps of