

**INVESTIGATOR AND
EXPOSITOR OF
PROPHECY, PP. 1-227**

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Investigator and Expositor of Prophecy, pp. 1-227 by Various

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VARIOUS

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OF

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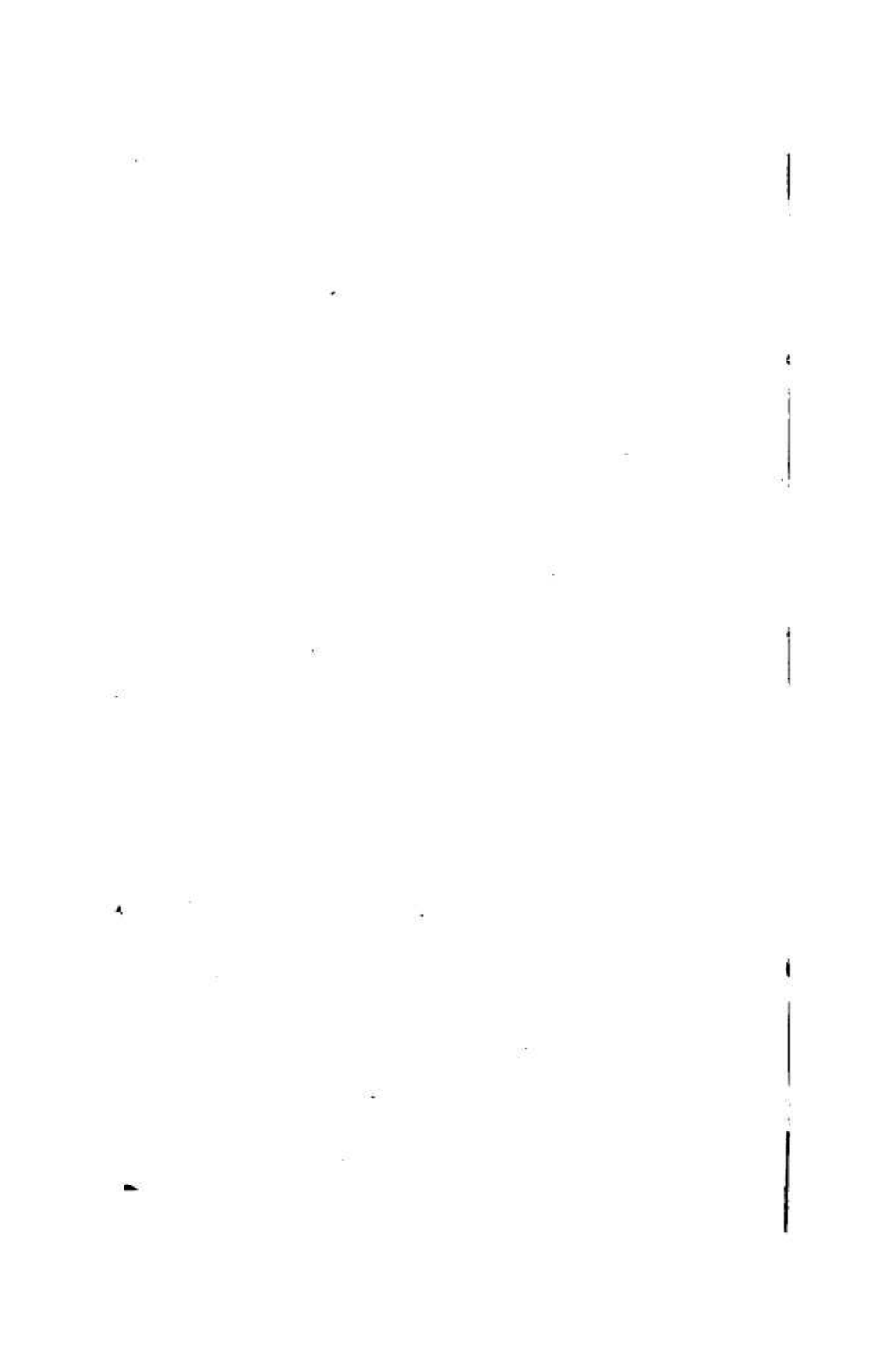
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THE
INVESTIGATOR & EXPOSITOR
OF
PROPHECY.

Introductory Observations.

THE commencement of a *New Series* of the INVESTIGATOR OF ПРОГНѢСЪ, and the commencement of a *New Year* of existence, both invite us to make a few introductory observations.

I. To the Reader who only enters on the perusal of our Work with the present Number, and who is consequently unacquainted with what was written by us in the Postscript of the last Number, we would take the opportunity of stating, what is the difference proposed by us in the Volume now commenced, which gives occasion to our calling it a *New Series*.

The former numbers of the Investigator, amounting now to four volumes, were conducted on the principle of *free discussion*; so that whatsoever views were entertained by serious Christians on the subject of prophecy, we considered ourselves pledged to give them insertion, provided they were advanced with tolerable ability and with gravity. This has produced a mass of communications, containing articles greatly at variance with each other, as regards the prophetic views advocated by their respective authors,

and provoking on some points considerable controversy. The result has been, that though much learned and interesting matter has been brought before the public, the student of prophecy, who was only entering on the investigation thereof, found himself embarrassed in the outset by contradictory interpretations and conflicting views. Besides which, the matter which we had ourselves previously designed to bring forward, and which we sometimes considered important in the way of information, was continually postponed, from the necessity of giving immediate insertion to the papers of Correspondents, who were committed in discussion: and thus the Work was, in another important point of view, rendered less useful to the inquirer.

Without therefore stating other considerations, which have *personally* weighed with us, it is sufficient to observe, that we hope in the present series to remedy these two principal defects; and by the exclusion of articles, the insertion of which we should deem unprofitable, and by appending notes to those we do insert, whenever we consider the sub-

ject calls for it, to afford the reader a means of investigating Prophecy without that perplexity which was previously complained of.

We hope likewise to make the Investigator and Expositor more of a repertory of information, by giving—

1st. Expositions of various Scriptures, bearing on the subject of Prophecy;—

2ndly. The views of approved Interpreters of former times; including Translations of portions of the earlier Fathers; and Extracts from more recent interpreters, or the substance of their works condensed;—

3rdly. Reviews of the Works of modern Writers; so that the Reader may be apprised of their contents and character;—

4thly. Information of every description, (critical, documentary, political or otherwise,) which we may deem calculated to aid or interest the Reader.

And more especially do we hope and pray, that the Work may be made instrumental, in a ten-fold degree, in arousing the attention of Christians to take heed to the light of prophecy; to consider the signs of the times in which we live; to make practical application of the Word of God to the important events which are so rapidly passing around us; and to stir up the ministers of the Gospel to put their people in remembrance of the things spoken before by the prophets of the Lord; lest haply the day of the Lord do after all overtake themselves and their people as a thief in the night, (contrary to the assurance given to those who are *instructed* in the times and seasons, 1 Thess. v. 1—4,) and find them asleep, or off their watch, when they ought to be "looking for him and loving his appearing."

At the same time however that we wish to divest our publication of

its controversial character, it must not be inferred that we purpose to exclude all that militates against our own opinions; or to prevent reply when sentiments appear countenanced by ourselves, which our readers may be enabled to disprove. Our great aim and object is to elicit truth, and to search and inquire what is really the mind of the Spirit revealed in the word of Prophecy. We are sensible that this is not to be attained unto, in such a manner as to afford confidence and satisfaction, without considering well what can reasonably be advanced on both sides of every disputed point. Were we left, indeed, merely to follow our own taste, we should, for ourselves, prefer the Investigator in its previous controversial form, and conducted on its former principle. For besides the numerous and able articles it contains on general prophetic topics, our attention has been drawn, by the discussion to which it has given rise, to various important subjects and considerations, which we think would probably not have been weighed by us. Besides which, the ground of many opinions and interpretations has been thoroughly discussed and sifted; and while we are thereby enabled to regard some points as more decidedly confirmed, and not to be successfully disputed against by the wit and ingenuity of men; there are others, which we used to take for granted, that we have now been led to conclude cannot so well stand before a well directed and searching criticism.

We shall therefore consider it our duty to bring from time to time before the Reader those opinions which have been, in various ages and in different sections of the Church of Christ, seriously entertained; and though these opinions will necessarily be in numerous respects at variance, we think that the becom-

ing gradually acquainted with them will in several respects be useful, and tend to promote a more complete understanding of the subject. And though we conceive that the Holy Spirit can at any time "shew us things to come," and may vouchsafe to unlearned individuals the right and true apprehension of a prophecy, which may have been hidden from ages and from generations, and from the wise and prudent in our own age; yet the ordinary mode, by which the Spirit teaches, is through the aid of those helps and means which that same Spirit has himself divided to men in the first instance, for the use of the Church and for the perfecting of the saints. We would therefore neither despise, nor reject without inquiry, the wisdom of former interpreters; nor would we turn a deaf ear to the objections made to many of their statements by modern interpreters: both sides deserve attention; and to become acquainted with them will frequently prevent us from the dogmatical conceit that we are advancing something original ourselves; and will teach us likewise from what source many plausible modern theories, and objections to theories, have at different times arisen.

II. As regards the *Year* on which we are now entering, we are naturally led to consider, whether the necessity, importance and interest of the Work in which we are engaged may be said to have diminished; and whether the signs of the times are such, as to form any considerable argument for its continuance.

The state of political parties, and the warfare of principles, have long been such, as to form an unprecedented era in the history of Europe, and even of the world. We have been permitted to conclude another

year of strife and excitement; but such is nevertheless the prospect before us, that men of all parties and of all opinions, religious and political, appear to concur in the conviction, that human affairs are still rapidly hastening forward toward some important crisis. As regards indeed the *nature* of that crisis, great diversity of sentiment exists. Some view it as a general break up of the *social* system, introductory to that great tribulation which is to usher in the coming of the Lord. Others regard it as the break up of worn out *political* systems, which is to terminate in halcyon days, in which the happiness of mankind is to be wonderfully perfected by the general influence of democratic principles, and the partial banishment of religion; who, though she may be tolerated in the closet, or at the family hearth, is no longer to be in any way allowed to utter her voice abroad, or in connexion with the affairs of the state. A third party, viewing only the *missionary* efforts which are simultaneously going forward, consider that we are gradually but rapidly gliding by their means into a millennium of piety and universal holiness to the Lord. Now the *BIBLE* is the only source from which we can form any thing approaching to an accurate judgement of the real character and tendency of the events that are passing around us. The word of Prophecy is specially a light for dark and troublous times:^a and it is by its rays alone that the believer can derive solid comfort, and understand the peculiar duties which devolve upon him, and the peculiar dangers which he has to guard against: and more especially it behoves the priests, the ministers of the altar, to remember that they are placed as watchmen in Israel;—that

^a 2 Pet. i. 19.