

**VISIONS AND
REVELATIONS :
DISCOURSES ON
THE APOCALYPSE**

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Visions and revelations : discourses on the Apocalypse by J. T. Dean

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“What if Earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
Each to other like more than on Earth is thought!”

MILTON.

VISIONS AND REVELATIONS

DISCOURSES ON THE APOCALYPSE

BY

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COLDINGHAM

"The City of God remaineth."

LUTHER.

EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE ST.

1911

PREFACE



FEW books of the New Testament have so appealed to the imagination and heart of the Church as the "Revelation of St. John." In every age the Apocalypse has had its careful students, who have sought to interpret its imagery and explain its message. These writers have, for the most part, been anxious, chiefly, to shew the application of the Book to the circumstances of their own time; and it is not to be denied that the results of their ingenious toil have been often fantastic enough. Yet they have not erred in believing that the Visions of Patmos have a new significance for every age. Their mistake has been their failure, sometimes, to recognise that the pictures and sayings of the Apocalypse had an immediate contemporary meaning, and were directly addressed to men and women who had to live the Christian life under the conditions that prevailed in the Roman Province of Asia at the close of the first century of our era.

The modern historical method, which has been applied with such illuminating effect to the New Testament as a whole, has given new life and reality for us to the "Book of Revelation." Many scholars, of whom the chief is Professor Ramsay of Aberdeen, have by their researches enabled us to see what the state of things actually was in Roman Asia, as it was known to the author of the Apocalypse. The fruits of this fresh knowledge have been a number of able commentaries on this Book. Among these I have found none more helpful than the treatise contributed by Professor Anderson Scott to the Century Bible. His essay is small in size but rich in scholarship. Future students will have the help of the masterly discussion in the Expositor's Greek Testament by Dr. Moffatt; but this advantage has been denied to me, since Dr. Moffatt's work was not published until after my manuscript had left my hands. Of the older books on the subject I have not found any so helpful as the Lectures of Frederick Denison Maurice—that great spiritual master, that high interpreter of dreams.

The aim of the present work, to present a popular exposition of the Apocalypse, has determined the exclusion of any explicit treatment of many topics, such as the Authorship,

Apocalyptic, the Sources of the Imagery—questions which, important and interesting as they are, do not seem to me to be vital to a helpful understanding of the Book. I believe that a work confining itself strictly to exposition may not be without its place and use.

I would take this opportunity of thanking my friends, the Rev. W. H. Macfarlane of Keith, Professor Cairns, and the Rev. John Morrison, B.D., of Edinkillie, who read the lectures in manuscript, and aided me with encouragement and valuable suggestions.

Especially would I express my deep sense of obligation to my friend, the Rev. J. H. Leckie of Cupar, whose sympathetic criticism of the manuscript and careful revision of the proofs have freed the work from many defects in thought and expression.