

**THE HOPE OF ISRAEL, A
REVIEW
OF THE ARGUMENT FROM
PROPHECY**

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The Hope of Israel, a review of the argument from prophecy by F. H. Woods

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F. H. WOODS

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PROPHECY**

MS. D.

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

*A REVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT
FROM PROPHECY*

BY

F. H. WOODS, B.D.

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ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

VICAR OF CHALFONT ST PETER

γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀληθειάν, καὶ
ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς

ST JOHN viii. 32

124 361

24 | 9 | 12

EDINBURGH

T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET

1896

P R E F A C E

THE chapters of this book are, with very few alterations, the Warburtonian Lectures delivered in Lincoln's Inn Chapel in the years 1890-4. The object, stated generally, which Bishop Warburton had in view in founding the lectureship, was to strengthen that branch of Christian evidences which rests upon the fulfilment of Prophecy. While endeavouring to keep that object in view, I yet felt unable to follow the exact lines suggested by the terms of the endowment. It is obvious that the argument from Prophecy must require modification from time to time, as fresh light is continually thrown on exegesis by modern scholarship and criticism. The great advance which has been made in these last of late years has indeed so largely affected it that in its old form it was already beginning to do more harm than good to the cause of Christian truth, and it clearly needed nothing short of recasting altogether, if it was to meet modern needs. The utmost that this book can claim to be is a step in this direction, or it would be fairer to say, now that so many efforts have been made, directly or indirectly, with a similar pur-

pose, a forwarding of the movement already inaugurated by others. This, at any rate, is my purpose in now publishing these lectures in a book form, in the hope that I may tempt others to work in the same field with more complete results. It is probable that many books will have yet to be written before the argument from prophecy can take the place which it deserves to take among Christian evidences.

The form in which these lectures were originally composed has many drawbacks. (1) Being written at intervals, sometimes of many months, and extending over a period of nearly four years, attention had to be concentrated in each lecture on some special branch or aspect of the question, so as to make it, as far as possible, lead to some definite result and be complete in itself. Such being the case, it was difficult to maintain a continuous and well connected line of reasoning throughout. (2) For the same reason it was necessary, for the purpose of each lecture, to repeat arguments which I had already used, and sometimes to gather up briefly what had been said more fully, in a way which some readers of a continuous work would feel to be tedious. (3) In such a long interval of time it was inevitable that the subject should grow in my mind, as I continued to read and think, and that between the beginning and the end there should be, if not a serious change in my general view of the

question, at least some differences in the way in which certain aspects of it presented themselves. (4) New works on the subject of Prophecy, and on other subjects clearly bearing upon it, as especially Biblical criticism and exegesis, have appeared in such numbers since I first began my lectures, that statements then made as comparatively new to English ears, have since become so trite, that very many readers will have already made up their minds to accept or reject them.

Bearing these disadvantages in view, it was my original intention to re-write the whole in a form which I hoped would be at once more complete and more readable. From doing so I was prevented from several causes, and have contented myself with merely correcting a few unnecessary repetitions and the like. I do not, however, altogether regret my change of purpose, for, after all, the very defects which I have mentioned may be in a measure an advantage to those readers who have not the leisure or the wish to read the book continuously. Besides, even now, one is surprised to find how many well-read Englishmen seem ignorant of what may be called the commonplaces of Biblical criticism.

One thing I have made my aim throughout, the rejection of all arguments which, to the best of my judgment, the genuine results of Biblical criticism have rendered unsound. If I have by over-caution in this respect not included argu-

ments which may still be used by scholars with perfect good faith and honesty, I trust that the defect will be forgiven in consideration of my honest intention. But it is certainly wiser to err on this side than on the other. I feel sure that the convincing power of prophecy will eventually prove so strong to those who have learnt to prize the religious beauty of the Prophets, that it will need no doubtful support.

I should add that, by the courtesy of the Editor, the Rev. James Hastings, these lectures were published in 1893-5 in the *Expository Times*, under the title "*Hebrew Prophecy and Modern Criticism.*"

I feel it quite impossible to acknowledge all my obligations to other works, but the reader will readily recognise among others, my indebtedness to Kuenen's *Hexateuch*; the late Professor Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel*; Dr Driver's *Isaiah and his Times*; and the works of other well-known critics and commentators, which, when I have *consciously* borrowed from them, are quoted in the margin.

CHALFONT ST PETER VICARAGE,
The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1896.

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