

## The Book of Daniel.\*

The announcement of any new book by Dr. Farrar is sure of a welcome by numerous admiring readers in America, as well as in Great Britain. They hailed with pleasure the recent dignity to which he was raised, as Dean of Canterbury, a position of learned leisure, which he will doubtless turn to good account; although his presence in the great metropolis will be much missed, especially by the visitors from this side of the Atlantic, who were wont to swell the crowd that filled St. Margaret's Westminster, when he was rector. It is needless to say that from a rhetorical and literary point of view, this treatise on Daniel is worthy of the reputation which the Dean has made for himself. This portion of Scripture might be supposed to have special attractions for Dr. Farrar, as it had for great masters of rhetoric before him, Edward Irving, John Cumming, and Morley Punahon, and for this reason probably, the task of treating it was assigned him by the publishers of the Expositor's Bible. But the other authors named did not bother themselves with questions of authenticity and genuineness. They were content to deal with the book as it came before them. And perhaps it had been well if Dr. Farrar had followed their prudent example. He has chosen, however, to throw himself into the vortex of critical controversy; although he modestly says by way of preface, that he does not lay any claim to original investigation on the subject or even to the scholarship necessary for conducting one. What he claims to have done is to have read impartially the writings of others, and to have weighed their conclusions fairly. No one will accuse him of being consciously biased. There is the ring of hearty sincerity in the man's soul, and it comes out in all his utterances. But a calm judicial attitude of mind is not what any one would look for in the impassioned Dean of Canterbury. He does not possess the coolness of temperament requisite for balancing nice questions of grammar and ethnology. So that those who still hold to the genuineness and authenticity of Daniel will not be greatly moved when they hear that Dean "Farrar with others, is convinced by evidence from every quarter—from philosophy, history, the testimony of the inscriptions, and the manifold results obtained by the higher criticism, that the book of Daniel is the work of some holy or gifted Chasid in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes." As to the events in the historical section, he speaks of these pictures as powerful parables, rich in spiritual instructions, but not primarily concerned with historic accuracy, nor even necessarily with ancient tradition. And as to the apocalyptic section of the book, which he interprets as referring to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, he regards it as written after the event, but in the fictitious form of a prophecy put into the mouth of Daniel, who is supposed to have lived centuries before. Such is the conclusion in brief, at which Dr. Farrar arrives.

Let us see now the process by which he reached this conclusion. He has supplied it at least in part. First, he questions whether there ever was such a person as Daniel. True, he is confronted with the reference in Ezekiel xxviii, 3; but he gets over the difficulty by assuming that the person referred to in this passage is a myth, and he argues that the prophet Ezekiel was not likely to refer to a contemporary in such high terms, when he might have quoted Joseph, or other of the genuine persons of Hebrew history, of greater note than Daniel. But such an argument is quite of a piece of much that passes under the name of the higher criticism—utter presumption, as much as to say, that the writer ought to have written differently from what he did. The further objection is then urged, that if there ever was such a person as Daniel, how comes it that there is no trace of him in the history or monumental remains of the empires of the East? But to hold that because so far nothing in the ruins of Babylon has been brought to light, affording any clue to Daniel's stay in that great city, therefore no credence should be given to the story of the Book of Daniel, is surely most inconclusive. Does Dean Farrar mean to say that there is a trace of every other prime minister that has ruled in Babylon except Daniel? He would need to be able to prove this, or his argument as to the silence of the monuments goes for nothing, but this is impossible for him to do.

Dr. Farrar seems to accept the critical views of Rev. A. A. Bevan, M.A., of Cambridge, in his commentary on Daniel, while he objects, strenuously to Hengstenberg's dictum, that there are few books whose divine authority is so fully established by the testimony of the New Testament, and in particular by our Lord Himself, as the Book of Daniel. He holds "that it is dangerous,

irreverent and unwise to stake the divine authority of our Lord on the maintenance of those ecclesiastical traditions of which so many have been scattered to the winds forever." Most sober-minded students will, however, hold with Hengstenberg rather than Farrar. He succeeds better in his attack upon the historical references to Darius, Belshazzar and the musical instruments of Greek origin, mentioned in connection with the edict of Nebuchadnezzar, and the apparent contradictions between one portion of the Book and another. But all these difficulties have been dealt with by Pusey and others, in a way to satisfy their minds, and it may be safely averred that the men who defend the historical references, were at least equal in acumen and learning to Dr. Farrar, and far surpass him in judicial calmness.

Of course, when the Dean leaves criticism for exposition, he is as usual brilliant, his gifts of poetic description, and his aptitude for picturesque combinations imparting a fascination to his every sentence, although even this part of the treatise is vitiated by the author's critical views. He protests, indeed, that the moral lessons derivable from the Book of Daniel, do not depend upon any theory as to its authorship or antiquity. But that is an impossible assumption. Whatever may be the case with a mental acrobat like Dean Farrar, the ordinary mind is unconsciously influenced by the notion of authority surrounding the genuine scriptures. A sentence from Shakespeare may be as pregnant with truth, as felicitously stated, as anything in the writings of the Apostles John and Paul; but it does not carry with it the weight that is attached to anything that can be vouched for on the implied authority: "Thus saith the Lord."

In his discussion of the apocalyptic portion of Daniel, he objects to the specific character of the prophecies put into the mouth of Daniel four hundred years before the events referred to in them. This is the ground taken by those who attack the 45th Chapter of Isaiah, in which the name of Cyrus is introduced; a total departure from every method of God's providence and of God's manifestation of His will to the minds of the prophets—that is to say they want God's predictions to be general, rather than particular as it is the special glory of prophecy to inculcate high moral and spiritual lessons. Here is the old presumption of higher criticism, laying down *a priori* what ought to have been said in scripture. He discusses at length the twenty weeks problem, and concludes that it is perfectly impossible for us to identify, or exactly equiparate the three and a half years, the two thousand three hundred 'evening-morning,' the seventy-two weeks and the twelve hundred and ninety days," since we do not know either the *terminus a quo*, from which, or the *terminus ad quem*, to which the writer reckoned. And one of the inconsistencies of the treatise is in declaring that while the main portion of the Book of Daniel was written after the days of Antiochus the illustrious, yet it closes with real prophecy, passing from the contemporary fact into a region of ideal anticipations, which were never actually fulfilled. One is tempted to ask if part of the Book of Daniel is admittedly an enigmatic sketch, relating to the future, why should the whole not have been? The real reason of the attack upon both Isaiah and Daniel is unbelief in specific prophecy, and while Dean Farrar set out ostensibly to judge impartially between the champions of diverse views, he has ended in being an earnest special pleader on the side of the "Higher Critics."

In the late Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland an attempt was made to enter process against Professor Drummond on charges of heresy, based on statements found in his book entitled "The Ascent of Man." Professor Drummond was absent on the continent, and after some discussion, a resolution was offered by Principal Rainey declaring that, inasmuch as the Assembly was not in any way responsible for the book, it was not necessary to take any action. The resolution was adopted. This action of the Assembly does not either endorse or condemn Professor Drummond's book. It simply declares that the General Assembly is not in any way responsible for it, and, therefore, does not need any action with reference to it. The discussion on the whole was favorable to Professor Drummond, and the vote stood two hundred and seventy-four to one hundred and fifty-one.

The Kiel canal cost \$38,500,000 and was eight years in building. It shortens the route of vessels from 100 to 425 miles between the Baltic and German ocean; 1,500 or 2,000 vessels have been wrecked annually, it is claimed in passing around Jutland, and the canal will avoid that peril. The German fleet can maintain itself with much greater safety in these waters in case of war.

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