

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE BOOK OF

THE PROPHET DANIEL

Daniel was of noble birth, if not one of the royal family of Judah. He was carried captive to Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiachin, B. C. 606, when a youth. He was there taught the learning of the Chaldeans, and held high offices, both under the Babylonian and Persian empires. He was persecuted for his religion, but was miraculously delivered; and lived to a great age, as he must have been about ninety-four years old at the time of the last of his visions. The book of Daniel is partly historical, relating various circumstances which befell himself and the Jews, at Babylon; but is chiefly prophetic, detailing visions and prophecies which foretell numerous important events relative to the four great empires of the world, the coming and death of the Messiah, the restoration of the Jews, and the conversion of the Gentiles. Though there are considerable difficulties in explaining the prophetic meaning of some passages in this book, we always find encouragement to faith and hope, examples worthy of imitation, and something to direct our thoughts to Christ Jesus upon the cross and on his glorious throne.

CHAPTER 1

The captivity of Daniel and his companions. (1-7) Their refusal to eat the king's meat. (8-16) Their improvement in wisdom. (17-21)

Daniel 1:1

Vs. 1-7: Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, took Jerusalem, and carried whom and what he pleased away. From this first captivity, most think the seventy years are to be dated. It is the interest of princes to employ wise men; and it is their wisdom to find out

and train up such. Nebuchadnezzar ordered that these chosen youths should be taught. All their Hebrew names had something of God in them; but to make them forget the God of their fathers, the Guide of their youth, the heathen gave them names that savored of idolatry. It is painful to reflect how often public education tends to corrupt the principles and morals.

Daniel 1:8

Vs. 8-16: The interest we think we make for ourselves, we must acknowledge to be God's gift. Daniel was still firm to his religion. Whatever they called him, he still held fast the spirit of an Israelite. These youths scrupled concerning the meat, lest it should be sinful. When God's people are in Babylon they need take special care that they partake not of her sins. It is much to the praise of young people, not to covet or seek the delights of sense. Those who would excellencies in wisdom and piety, must learn betimes to keep the body under. Daniel avoided defiling himself with sin; and we should more fear that than any outward trouble. It is easier to keep temptation at a distance, than to resist it when near. And we cannot better improve our interest in any with whom we have found favor, than to use it to keep us from sin. People will not believe the benefit of avoiding excess, and of a spare diet, nor how much they contribute to the health of the body, unless they try. Conscientious temperance will always do more, even for the comfort of this life, than sinful indulgence.

Daniel 1:17

Vs. 17-21: Daniel and his fellows kept to their religion; and God rewarded them with eminence in learning. Pious young persons should endeavor to do better than their fellows in useful things; not for the praise of man, but for the honor of the gospel, and that they may be qualified for usefulness. And it is well for a country, and for the honor of a prince, when he is able to judge who are best fitted to serve him, and prefers them on that account. Let young men steadily attend to this chapter; and let all remember that God will honor those who honor him, but those who despise him shall be lightly esteemed.

CHAPTER 2

Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (1-13) It is revealed to Daniel. (14-23) He obtains admission to the king. (24-30) The dream and the interpretation. (31-45) Honors to Daniel and his friends. (46-49)

Daniel 2:1

Vs. 1-13: The greatest men are most open to cares and troubles of mind, which disturb their repose in the night, while the sleep of the laboring man is sweet and sound. We know not the uneasiness of many who live in great pomp, and, as others vainly think, in pleasure also. The king said that his learned men must tell him the dream itself, or they should all be put to death as deceivers. Men are more eager to ask as to future events, than to learn the way of salvation or the path of duty; yet foreknowledge of future events increases anxiety and trouble. Those who deceived, by pretending to do what they could not do, were sentenced to death, for not being able to do what they did not pretend to.

Daniel 2:14

Vs. 14-23: Daniel humbly prayed that God would discover to him the king's dream, and the meaning of it. Praying friends are valuable friends; and it well becomes the greatest and best men to desire the prayers of others. Let us show that we value our friends, and their prayers. They were particular in prayer. And whatever we pray for, we can expect nothing but as the gift of God's mercies. God gives us leave in prayer to tell our wants and burdens. Their plea with God was, the peril they were in. The mercy Daniel and his fellows prayed for, was bestowed. The fervent prayers of righteous men avail much. Daniel was thankful to God for making known that to him, which saved the lives of himself and his fellows. How much more should we be thankful to God, for making known the great salvation of the soul to those who are not among the worldly wise and prudent!

Daniel 2:24

Vs. 24-30: Daniel takes away the king's opinion of his magicians and soothsayers. The insufficiency of creatures should drive us to the all-sufficiency of the Creator. There is One who can do that for us, and make known that to us, which none on earth can, particularly the work of redemption, and the secret designs of God's love to us therein. Daniel confirmed the king in his opinion, that the dream was of great consequence, relating to the affairs and changes of this lower world. Let those whom God has highly favored and honored, lay aside all opinion of their own wisdom and worthiness, that the Lord alone may be praised for the good they have and do.

Daniel 2:31

Vs. 31-45: This image represented the kingdoms of the earth, that should successively rule the nations, and influence the affairs of the Jewish church.

1. The head of gold signified the Chaldean empire, then in being.
2. The breast and arms of silver signified the empire of the Medes and Persians.
3. The belly and thighs of brass signified the Grecian empire, founded by Alexander.
4. The legs and feet of iron signified the Roman empire.

The Roman empire branched into ten kingdoms, as the toes of these feet. Some were weak as clay, others strong as iron. Endeavors have often been used to unite them, for strengthening the empire, but in vain. The stone cut out without hands, represented the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, which should be set up in the kingdoms of the world, upon the ruins of Satan's kingdom in them. This was the Stone which the builders refused, because it was not cut out by their hands, but it is become the head stone of the corner. Of the increase of Christ's government and peace there shall be no end. The Lord shall reign, not only to the end of time, but when time and days shall be no more. As far as events have gone, the fulfilling this prophetic vision has been most exact and undeniable; future ages shall witness this Stone destroying the image, and filling the whole earth.

Daniel 2:46

Vs. 46-49: It is our business to direct attention to the Lord, as the Author and Giver of every good gift. Many have thoughts of the Divine power and majesty, who do not think of serving God themselves. But all should strive, that God may be glorified, and the best interests of mankind furthered.

CHAPTER 3

Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. (1-7) Shadrach and his companions refuse to worship it. (8-18) They are cast into a furnace, but are miraculously preserved. (19-27) Nebuchadnezzar gives glory to Jehovah. (28-30)

Daniel 3:1

Vs. 1-7: In the height of the image, about thirty yards, probably is unequaled a pedestal, and most likely it was only covered with plates of gold, not a solid mass of that precious metal. Pride and bigotry cause men to require their subjects to follow their religion, whether right or wrong, and when worldly interest allures, and punishment overawes, few refuse. This is easy to the careless, the sensual, and the infidel, who are the greatest number; and most will go their ways. There is nothing so bad which the careless world will not be drawn to by a concert of music, or driven to by a fiery furnace. By such methods, false worship has been set up and maintained.

Daniel 3:8

Vs. 8-18: True devotion calms the spirit, quiets and softens it, but superstition and devotion to false gods inflame men's passions. The matter is put into a little compass, Turn, or burn. Proud men are still ready to say, as Nebuchadnezzar, Who is the Lord, that I should fear his power? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not hesitate whether they should comply or not. Life or death were not to be considered. Those that would avoid sin, must not parley with temptation when that to which we are allured or affrighted is manifestly evil. Stand not to pause about it, but say, as Christ did, Get thee behind me, Satan. They did not contrive an evasive answer, when a direct answer was expected. Those who make their duty their main care, need not be anxious or fearful concerning the event. The faithful servants of God find him able to control and overrule all the powers armed against them. Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst. If He be for us, we need not fear what man can do unto us. God will deliver us, either from death or in death. They must obey God rather than man; they must rather suffer than sin; and must not do evil that good may come. Therefore none

of these things moved them. The saving them from sinful compliance, was as great a miracle in the kingdom of grace, as the saving them out of the fiery furnace was in the kingdom of nature. Fear of man and love of the world, especially want of faith, make men yield to temptation, while a firm persuasion of the truth will deliver them from denying Christ, or being ashamed of him. We are to be meek in our replies, but we must be decided that we will obey God rather than man.

Daniel 3:19

Vs. 19-27: Let Nebuchadnezzar heat his furnace as hot as he can, a few minutes will finish the torment of those cast into it; but hell-fire tortures, and yet does not kill. Those who worshipped the beast and his image, have no rest, no pause, no moment free from pain, ^{<6140>}Revelation 14:10,11. Now was fulfilled in the letter that great promise, ^{<2480>}Isaiah 43:2, When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned. Leaving it to that God who preserved them in the fire, to bring them out, they walked up and down in the midst, supported and encouraged by the presence of the Son of God. Those who suffer for Christ, have his presence in their sufferings, even in the fiery furnace, and in the valley of the shadow of death. Nebuchadnezzar owns them for servants of the most high God; a God able to deliver them out of his hand. It is our God only is the consuming fire, ^{<8129>}Hebrews 12:29. Could we but see into the eternal world, we should behold the persecuted believer safe from the malice of his foes, while they are exposed to the wrath of God, and tormented in unquenchable fires.

Daniel 3:28

Vs. 28-30: What God did for these his servants, would help to keep the Jews to their religion while in captivity, and to cure them of idolatry. The miracle brought deep convictions on Nebuchadnezzar. But no abiding change then took place in his conduct. He who preserved these pious Jews in the fiery furnace, is able to uphold us in the hour of temptation, and to keep us from falling into sin.

CHAPTER 4

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the power of Jehovah. (1-18)
Daniel interprets his dream. (19-27) The fulfillment of it. (28-37)

Daniel 4:1

Vs. 1-18: The beginning and end of this chapter lead us to hope, that Nebuchadnezzar was a monument of the power of Divine grace, and of the riches of Divine mercy. After he was recovered from his madness, he told to distant places, and wrote down for future ages, how God had justly humbled and graciously restored him. When a sinner comes to himself, he will promote the welfare of others, by making known the wondrous mercy of God. Nebuchadnezzar, before he related the Divine judgments upon him for his pride, told the warnings he had in a dream or vision. The meaning was explained to him. The person signified, was to be put down from honor, and to be deprived of the use of his reason seven years. This is surely the sorest of all temporal judgments. Whatever outward affliction God is pleased to lay upon us, we have cause to bear it patiently, and to be thankful that he continues the use of our reason, and the peace of our consciences. Yet if the Lord should see fit by such means to keep a sinner from multiplying crimes, or a believer from dishonoring his name, even the dreadful prevention would be far preferable to the evil conduct. God has determined it, as a righteous Judge, and the angels in heaven applaud. Not that the great God needs the counsel or concurrence of the angels, but it denotes the solemnity of this sentence. The demand is by the word of the holy ones, God's suffering people: when the oppressed cry to God, he will hear. Let us diligently seek blessings which can never be taken from us, and especially beware of pride and forgetfulness of God.

Daniel 4:19

Vs. 19-27: Daniel was struck with amazement and terror at so heavy a judgment coming upon so great a prince, and gives advice with tenderness and respect. It is necessary, in repentance, that we not only cease to do evil, but learn to do good. Though it might not wholly prevent the judgment, yet the trouble may be longer before it comes, or shorter when it

does come. And everlasting misery will be escaped by all who repent and turn to God.

Daniel 4:28

Vs. 28-37: Pride and self-conceit are sins that beset great men. They are apt to take that glory to themselves which is due to God only. While the proud word was in the king's mouth, the powerful word came from God. His understanding and his memory were gone, and all the powers of the rational soul were broken. How careful we ought to be, not to do any thing which may provoke God to put us out of our senses! God resists the proud. Nebuchadnezzar would be more than a man, but God justly makes him less than a man. We may learn to believe concerning God, that the most high God lives for ever, and that his kingdom is like himself, everlasting, and universal. His power cannot be resisted. When men are brought to honor God, by confession of sin and acknowledging his sovereignty, then, and not till then, they may expect that God will honor them; not only restore them to the dignity they lost by the sin of the first Adam, but add excellencies majesty to them, from the righteousness and grace of the Second Adam. Afflictions shall last no longer than till they have done the work for which they were sent. There can be no reasonable doubt that Nebuchadnezzar was a true penitent, and an accepted believer. It is thought that he did not live more than a year after his restoration. Thus the Lord knows how to abase those that walk in pride, but gives grace and consolation to the humble, broken-hearted sinner who calls upon Him.

CHAPTER 5

*Belshazzar's impious feast; the hand-writing on the wall. (1-9)
Daniel is sent for to interpret it. (10-17) Daniel warns the king of
his destruction. (18-31)*

Daniel 5:1

Vs. 1-9: Belshazzar bade defiance to the judgments of God. Most historians consider that Cyrus then besieged Babylon. Security and sensuality are sad proofs of approaching ruin. That mirth is sinful indeed, which profanes sacred things; and what are many of the songs used at modern feasts better than the praises sung by the heathens to their gods! See how God struck terror upon Belshazzar and his lords. God's written word is enough to put the proudest, boldest sinner in a fright. What we see of God, the part of the hand that writes in the book of the creatures, and in the book of the Scriptures, should fill us with awful thoughts concerning that part which we do not see. If this be the finger of God, what is his arm when made bare? And what is He? The king's guilty conscience told him that he had no reason to expect any good news from heaven. God can, in a moment, make the heart of the stoutest sinner to tremble; and there needs no more than to let loose his own thoughts upon him; they will give him trouble enough. No bodily pain can equal the inward agony which sometimes seizes the sinner in the midst of mirth, carnal pleasures, and worldly pomp. Sometimes terrors cause a man to flee to Christ for pardon and peace; but many cry out for fear of wrath, who are not humbled for their sins, and who seek relief by lying vanities. The ignorance and uncertainty concerning the Holy Scriptures, shown by many who call themselves wise, only tend to drive sinners to despair, as the ignorance of these wise men did.

Daniel 5:10

Vs. 10-17: Daniel was forgotten at court; he lived privately, and was then ninety years of age. Many consult servants of God on curious questions, or to explain difficult subjects, but without asking the way of salvation, or the path of duty. Daniel slighted the offer of reward. He spoke to Belshazzar as to a condemned criminal. We should despise all the gifts and

rewards this world can give, did we see, as we may by faith, its end hastening on; but let us do our duty in the world, and do it all the real service we can.

Daniel 5:18

Vs. 18-31: Daniel reads Belshazzar's doom. He had not taken warning by the judgments upon Nebuchadnezzar. And he had insulted God. Sinners are pleased with gods that neither see, nor hear, nor know; but they will be judged by One to whom all things are open. Daniel reads the sentence written on the wall. All this may well be applied to the doom of every sinner. At death, the sinner's days are numbered and finished; after death is the judgment, when he will be weighed in the balance, and found wanting; and after judgment the sinner will be cut asunder, and given as a prey to the devil and his angels. While these things were passing in the palace, it is considered that the army of Cyrus entered the city; and when Belshazzar was slain, a general submission followed. Soon will every impenitent sinner find the writing of God's word brought to pass upon him, whether he is weighed in the balance of the law as a self-righteous Pharisee, or in that of the gospel as a painted hypocrite.

CHAPTER 6

The malice of Daniel's enemies. (1-5) His constancy in prayer. (6-10) He is cast into the lion's den. (11-17) His miraculous preservation. (18-24) The decree of Darius. (25-28)

Daniel 6:1

Vs. 1-5: We notice to the glory of God, that though Daniel was now very old, yet he was able for business, and had continued faithful to his religion. It is for the glory of God, when those who profess religion, conduct themselves so that their most watchful enemies may find no occasion for blaming them, save only in the matters of their God, in which they walk according to their consciences.

Daniel 6:6

Vs. 6-10: To forbid prayer for thirty days, is, for so long, to rob God of all the tribute he has from man, and to rob man of all the comfort he has in God. Does not every man's heart direct him, when in want or distress, to call upon God? We could not live a day without God; and can men live thirty days without prayer? Yet it is to be feared that those who, without any decree forbidding them, present no hearty, serious petitions to God for more than thirty days together, are far more numerous than those who serve him continually, with humble, thankful hearts. Persecuting laws are always made on false pretenses; but it does not become Christians to make bitter complaints, or to indulge in revilings. It is good to have hours for prayer. Daniel prayed openly and avowedly; and though a man of vast business, he did not think that would excuse him from daily exercises of devotion. How inexcusable are those who have but little to do in the world, yet will not do thus much for their souls! In trying times we must take heed, lest, under pretense of discretion, we are guilty of cowardice in the cause of God. All who throw away their souls, as those certainly do that live without prayer, even if it be to save their lives, at the end will be found to be fools. Nor did Daniel only pray, and not give thanks, cutting off some part of the service to make the time of danger shorter; but he performed the whole. In a word, the duty of prayer is founded upon the sufficiency of God as an almighty Creator and Redeemer, and upon our

wants as sinful creatures. To Christ we must turn our eyes. Thither let the Christian look, thither let him pray, in this land of his captivity.

Daniel 6:11

Vs. 11-17: It is no new thing for what is done faithfully, in conscience toward God, to be misrepresented as done obstinately, and in contempt of the civil powers. Through want of due thought, we often do that which afterwards, like Darius, we see cause a thousand times to wish undone again. Daniel, that venerable man, is brought as the vilest of malefactors, and is thrown into the den of lions, to be devoured, only for worshipping his God. No doubt the placing the stone was ordered by the providence of God, that the miracle of Daniel's deliverance might appear more plain; and the king sealed it with his own signet, probably lest Daniel's enemies should kill him. Let us commit our lives and souls unto God, in well-doing. We cannot place full confidence even in men whom we faithfully serve; but believers may, in all cases, be sure of the Divine favor and consolation.

Daniel 6:18

Vs. 18-24: The best way to have a good night, is to keep a good conscience. We are sure of what the king doubted, that the servants of the living God have a Master well able to protect them. See the power of God over the fiercest creatures, and believe his power to restrain the roaring lion that goeth about continually seeking to devour. Daniel was kept perfectly safe, because he believed in his God. Those who boldly and cheerfully trust in God to protect them in the way of duty, shall always find him a present help. Thus the righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead. The short triumph of the wicked will end in their ruin.

Daniel 6:25

Vs. 25-28 If we live in the fear of God, and walk according to that rule, peace shall be upon us. The kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever, are the Lord's; but many are employed in making known his wonderful works to others, who themselves remain strangers to his saving grace. May we be doers, as well as believers of his word, least at the last we should be found to have deceived ourselves.

CHAPTER 7

Daniel's vision of the four beasts. (1-8) and of Christ's kingdom. (9-14) The interpretation. (15-28)

Daniel 7:1

Vs. 1-8 This vision contains the same prophetic representations with Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The great sea agitated by the winds, represented the earth and the dwellers on it troubled by ambitious princes and conquerors. The four beasts signified the same four empires, as the four parts of Nebuchadnezzar's image. Mighty conquerors are but instruments of God's vengeance on a guilty world. The savage beast represents the hateful features of their characters. But the dominion given to each has a limit; their wrath shall be made to praise the Lord, and the remainder of it he will restrain.

Daniel 7:9

Vs. 9-14: These verses are for the comfort and support of the people of God, in reference to the persecutions that would come upon them. Many New Testament predictions of the judgment to come, have plain allusion to this vision; especially **Revelation 20:11,12**. The Messiah is here called the Son of man; he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was found in fashion as a man, but he is the Son of God. The great event foretold in this passage, is Christ's glorious coming, to destroy every antichristian power, and to render his own kingdom universal upon earth. But ere the solemn time arrives, for manifesting the glory of God to all worlds in his dealings with his creatures, we may expect that the doom of each of us will be determined at the hour of our death; and before the end shall come, the Father will openly give to his incarnate Son, our Mediator and Judge, the inheritance of the nations as his willing subjects.

Daniel 7:15

Vs. 15-28: It is desirable to obtain the right and full sense of what we see and hear from God; and those that would know, must ask by faithful and fervent prayer. The angel told Daniel plainly. He especially desired to

know respecting the little horn, which made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. Here is foretold the rage of papal Rome against true Christians. St. John, in his visions and prophecies, which point in the first place at Rome, has plain reference to these visions. Daniel had a joyful prospect of the prevalence of God's kingdom among men. This refers to the second coming of our blessed Lord, when the saints shall triumph in the complete fall of Satan's kingdom. The saints of the Most High shall possess the kingdom for ever. Far be it from us to infer from hence, that dominion is founded on grace. It promises that the gospel kingdom shall be set up; a kingdom of light, holiness, and love; a kingdom of grace, the privileges and comforts of which shall be the earnest and first-fruits of the kingdom of glory. But the full accomplishment will be in the everlasting happiness of the saints, the kingdom that cannot be moved. The gathering together the whole family of God will be a blessedness of Christ's coming.

CHAPTER 8

Daniel's vision of the ram and the he-goat. (1-14) The interpretation of it. (15-27)

Daniel 8:1

Vs. 1-14: God gives Daniel a foresight of the destruction of other kingdoms, which in their day were as powerful as that of Babylon. Could we foresee the changes that shall be when we are gone, we should be less affected with changes in our own day. The ram with two horns was the second empire, that of Media and Persia. He saw this ram overcome by a he-goat. This was Alexander the Great. Alexander, when about thirty-three years of age, and in his full strength, died, and showed the vanity of worldly pomp and power, and that they cannot make a man happy. While men dispute, as in the case of Alexander, respecting the death of some prosperous warrior, it is plain that the great First Cause of all had no more of his plan for him to execute, and therefore cut him off. Instead of that one great horn, there came up four notable ones, Alexander's four chief captains. A little horn became a great persecutor of the church and people of God. It seems that the Mohammedan delusion is here pointed out. It prospered, and at one time nearly destroyed the holy religion God's right hand had planted. It is just with God to deprive those of the privileges of his house who despise and profane them; and to make those know the worth of ordinances by the want of them, who would not know it by the enjoyment of them. Daniel heard the time of this calamity limited and determined; but not the time when it should come. If we would know the mind of God, we must apply to Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; not hid from us, but hid for us. There is much difficulty as to the precise time here stated, but the end of it cannot be very distant. God will, for his own glory, see to the cleansing of the church in due time. Christ died to cleanse his church; and he will so cleanse it as to present it blameless to himself.

Daniel 8:15

Vs. 15-27: The eternal Son of God stood before the prophet in the appearance of a man, and directed the angel Gabriel to explain the vision.

Daniel's fainting and astonishment at the prospect of evils he saw coming on his people and the church, confirm the opinion that long-continued calamities were foretold. The vision being ended, a charge was given to Daniel to keep it private for the present. He kept it to himself, and went on to do the duty of his place. As long as we live in this world we must have something to do in it; and even those whom God has most honored, must not think themselves above their business. Nor must the pleasure of communion with God take us from the duties of our callings, but we must in them abide with God. All who are intrusted with public business must discharge their trust uprightly; and, amidst all doubts and discouragements, they may, if true believers, look forward to a happy issue. Thus should we endeavor to compose our minds for attending to the duties to which each is appointed, in the church and in the world.

CHAPTER 9

Daniel considers the time of the captivity. (1-3) His confession of sin, and prayer. (4-19) The revelation concerning the coming of the Messiah. (20-27)

Daniel 9:1

Vs. 1-3: Daniel learned from the books of the prophets, especially from Jeremiah, that the desolation of Jerusalem would continue seventy years, which were drawing to a close. God's promises are to encourage our prayers, not to make them needless; and when we see the performance of them approaching, we should more earnestly plead them with God.

Daniel 9:4

Vs. 4-19: In every prayer we must make confession, not only of the sins we have been guilty of, but of our faith in God, and dependence upon him, our sorrow for sin, and our resolutions against it. It must be our confession, the language of our convictions. Here is Daniel's humble, serious, devout address to God; in which he gives glory to him as a God to be feared, and as a God to be trusted. We should, in prayer, look both at God's greatness and his goodness, his majesty and mercy. Here is a penitent confession of sin, the cause of the troubles the people for so many years groaned under. All who would find mercy must thus confess their sins. Here is a self-abasing acknowledgment of the righteousness of God; and it is evermore the way of true penitents thus to justify God. Afflictions are sent to bring men to turn from their sins, and to understand God's truth. Here is a believing appeal to the mercy of God. It is a comfort that God has been always ready to pardon sin. It is encouraging to recollect that mercies belong to God, as it is convincing and humbling to recollect that righteousness belongs to him. There are abundant mercies in God, not only forgiveness, but forgivenesses. Here are pleaded the reproach God's people was under, and the ruins God's sanctuary was in. Sin is a reproach to any people, especially to God's people. The desolations of the sanctuary are grief to all the saints. Here is an earnest request to God to restore the poor captive Jews to their former enjoyments. O Lord, hearken and do. Not hearken and speak only, but

hearken and do; do that for us which none else can do; and defer not. Here are several pleas and arguments to enforce the petitions. Do it for the Lord Christ's sake; Christ is the Lord of all. And for his sake God causes his face to shine upon sinners when they repent, and turn to him. In all our prayers this must be our plea, we must make mention of his righteousness, even of his only. The humble, fervent, believing earnestness of this prayer should ever be followed by us.

Daniel 9:20

Vs. 20-27: An answer was immediately sent to Daniel's prayer, and it is a very memorable one. We cannot now expect that God should send answers to our prayers by angels, but if we pray with fervency for that which God has promised, we may by faith take the promise as an immediate answer to the prayer; for He is faithful that has promised. Daniel had a far greater and more glorious redemption discovered to him, which God would work out for his church in the latter days. Those who would be acquainted with Christ and his grace, must be much in prayer. The evening offering was a type of the great sacrifice Christ was to offer in the evening of the world: in virtue of that sacrifice Daniel's prayer was accepted; and for the sake of that, this glorious discovery of redeeming love was made to him. We have, in verses 24-27, one of the most remarkable prophecies of Christ, of his coming and his salvation. It shows that the Jews are guilty of most obstinate unbelief, in expecting another Messiah, so long after the time expressly fixed for his coming. The seventy weeks mean a day for a year, or 490 years. About the end of this period a sacrifice would be offered, making full atonement for sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness for the complete justification of every believer. Then the Jews, in the crucifixion of Jesus, would commit that crime by which the measure of their guilt would be filled up, and troubles would come upon their nation. All blessings bestowed on sinful man come through Christ's atoning sacrifice, who suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Here is our way of access to the throne of grace, and of our entrance to heaven. This seals the sum of prophecy, and confirms the covenant with many; and while we rejoice in the blessings of salvation, we should remember what they cost the Redeemer. How can those escape who neglect so great salvation!


CHAPTER 10

Daniel's vision near the river Hiddekel. (1-9) He is to expect a discovery of future events. (10-21)

Daniel 10:1

Vs. 1-9: This chapter relates the beginning of Daniel's last vision, which is continued to the end of the book. The time would be long before all would be accomplished; and much of it is not yet fulfilled. Christ appeared to Daniel in a glorious form, and it should engage us to think highly and honorably of him. Let us admire his condescension for us and our salvation. There remained no strength in Daniel. The greatest and best of men cannot bear the full discoveries of the Divine glory; for no man can see it, and live; but glorified saints see Christ as he is, and can bear the sight. How dreadful soever Christ may appear to those under convictions of sin, there is enough in his word to quiet their spirits.

Daniel 10:10

Vs. 10-21: Whenever we enter into communion with God, it becomes us to have a due sense of the infinite distance between us and the holy God. How shall we, that are dust and ashes, speak to the Lord of glory? Nothing is more likely, nothing more effectual to revive the drooping spirits of the saints, than to be assured of God's love to them. From the very first day we begin to look toward God in a way of duty, he is ready to meet us in the way of mercy. Thus ready is God to hear prayer. When the angel had told the prophet of the things to come, he was to return, and oppose the decrees of the Persian kings against the Jews. The angels are employed as God's ministering servants,  Hebrews 1:14. Though much was done against the Jews by the kings of Persia, God permitting it, much more mischief would have been done if God had not prevented it. He would now more fully show what were God's purposes, of which the prophecies form an outline; and we are concerned to study what is written in these Scriptures of truth, for they belong to our everlasting peace. While Satan and his angels, and evil counselors, excite princes to mischief against the church, we may rejoice that Christ our Prince, and all his mighty angels, act against our enemies; but we ought not to expect many to favor us in this

evil world. Yet the whole counsel of God shall be established; and let each one pray, Lord Jesus, be our righteousness now, and thou wilt be our everlasting confidence, through life, in death, at the day of judgment, and for evermore.

CHAPTER 11

The vision of the Scriptures of truth.

Daniel 11:1

Vs. 1-30: The angel shows Daniel the succession of the Persian and Grecian empires. The kings of Egypt and Syria are noticed: Judea was between their dominions, and affected by their contests. From ver. 5-30, is generally considered to relate to the events which came to pass during the continuance of these governments; and from ver. 21, to relate to Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a cruel and violent persecutor of the Jews. See what decaying, perishing things worldly pomp and possessions are, and the power by which they are gotten. God, in his providence, sets up one, and pulls down another, as he pleases. This world is full of wars and fightings, which come from men's lusts. All changes and revolutions of states and kingdoms, and every event, are plainly and perfectly foreseen by God. No word of God shall fall to the ground; but what he has designed, what he has declared, shall infallibly come to pass. While the potsherds of the earth strive with each other, they prevail and are prevailed against, deceive and are deceived; but those who know God will trust in him, and he will enable them to stand their ground, bear their cross, and maintain their conflict.


Daniel 11:31

Vs. 31-45: The remainder of this prophecy is very difficult, and commentators differ much respecting it. From Antiochus the account seems to pass to antichrist. Reference seems to be made to the Roman empire, the fourth monarchy, in its pagan, early Christian, and papal states. The end of the Lord's anger against his people approaches, as well as the end of his patience towards his enemies. If we would escape the ruin of the infidel, the idolater, the superstitious and cruel persecutor, as well as that of the profane, let us make the oracles of God our standard of truth and of duty, the foundation of our hope, and the light of our paths through this dark world, to the glorious inheritance above.


CHAPTER 12

The conclusion of the vision of the Scriptures of truth. (1-4) The times of the continuance of these events. (5-13)

Daniel 12:1

Vs. 1-4: Michael signifies, “Who is like God,” and his name, with the title of “the great Prince,” points out the Divine Savior. Christ stood for the children of our people in their stead as a sacrifice, bore the curse for them, to bear it from them. He stands for them in pleading for them at the throne of grace. And after the destruction of antichrist, the Lord Jesus shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and He shall appear for the complete redemption of all his people. When God works deliverance from persecution for them, it is as life from the dead. When his gospel is preached, many who sleep in the dust, both Jews and Gentiles, shall be awakened by it out of their heathenism of Judaism. And in the end the multitude that sleep in the dust shall awake; many shall arise to life, and many to shame. There is glory reserved for all the saints in the future state, for all that are wise, wise for their souls and eternity. Those who turn many to righteousness, who turn sinners from the errors of their ways, and help to save their souls from death,  James 5:20, will share in the glory of those they have helped to heaven, which will add to their own glory.

Daniel 12:5

Vs. 5-13: One of the angels asking how long it should be to the end of these wonders, a solemn reply is made, that it would be for a time, times, and a half, the period mentioned ch.  7:25, and in the Revelation. It signifies 1260 prophetic days or years, beginning from the time when the power of the holy people should be scattered. The imposture of Mohammed, and the papal usurpation, began about the same time; and these were a twofold attack upon the church of God. But all will end well at last. All opposing rule, principality, and power, shall be put down, and holiness and love will triumph, and be in honor, to eternity. The end, this end, shall come. What an amazing prophecy is this, of so many varied events, and extending through so many successive ages, even to the general resurrection! Daniel must comfort himself with the pleasing prospect of

his own happiness in death, in judgment, and to eternity. It is good for us all to think much of going away from this world. That must be our way; but it is our comfort that we shall not go till God calls us to anther world, and till he has done with us in this world; till he says, Go thou thy way, thou hast done thy work, therefore now, go thy way, and leave it to others to take thy place. It was a comfort to Daniel, and is a comfort to all the saints, that whatever their lot is in the days of their lives, they shall have a happy lot in the end of the days. And it ought to be the great care and concern of every one of us to secure this. Then we may well be content with our present lot, and welcome the will of God. Believers are happy at all times; they rest in God by faith now, and a rest is reserved for them in heaven at last.