

Deuteronomy

Last night we began to speak about the matter of God's predictions in the Bible. His predicting the future and what it means to us. I'd like tonight to call your attention briefly to two chs. in the book of Deuteronomy. In Deut. 18:21-22 (reading text . . . If a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if it follow not nor come to pass that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken presumptuously. Thou shalt not be afraid of him.)

You notice it says here, If one claims to represent God and tells you what's going to come to pass and it doesn't come, you know that he is not a true prophet. Notice he says it in a negative way. He doesn't say, If someone tells you what's going to happen in the future you know that man is a prophet of God. He doesn't say that. It is negative. Because telling the future correctly is only one side of a prophecy. People can sometimes predict the future quite accidentally, and hit things very exactly. Then there are psychic forces undoubtedly in the world. I know of people who have a feeling something terrible is going to happen and it does. I'm glad I'm not that way. When I have a feeling something terrible is going to happen, generally nothing happens. If something bad does happen it's generally when I don't have the least expectation of it. I'm rather glad I'm not psychic. But I know there are people who have a certain feeling for certain things that are in the air that we don't understand altogether. So the fact that someone predicts the future does not prove that that person is a true prophet.

There are those also who are directed by evil spirits. There is no doubt about that. And I don't think the evil spirits know what the future is. But they know a good many factors so they can make better guesses than we can as to what is going to happen, and they may even know some things they are going to do and can predict them. God orders us not to have anything to do with that sort of thing. It is definitely wrong for the Christian, to have anything to do with that sort of thing. Nevertheless this is given as a definite sign == a negative sign that one is not a true prophet if he makes a prediction and it proves not to be so.

We noticed last night a little bit a few illustrations of how hard it is to predict the future. We often have the feeling we can tell what's ahead. Usually we prove to be wrong. I remember back in 1944 a friend of mine told me that he knew a man who was a member of the Hague Tribunal at that time. That's pretty well forgotten today. But the Hague Tribunal had been established with very large gifts from Carneige and it was supposed to iron out all difficulties between the nations. This man who was in the minister who was in the Hague Tribunal, he said, I'm on my way to the Hague Tribunal; we are going to deal with disagreements among nations. There can never be another great war because we now have this system of settling things peaceably." My friend said, The Bible says there will be wars and rumours of wars until the Lord comes. You are mistaken in thinking the Hague Tribunal is going to put an end to war." But the man was sure they now had something that would do away with wars.