

gence of superior order, and as such commands the respect and reverence of all who acknowledge it.

Prophecy, then, should be especially studied as that portion of God's word well calculated to light up the future before us, when it would otherwise be dark and gloomy. It is well represented as a "lamp to our feet and a light to our path." Ps. 119:105. As a lamp carried in the hand lights up the path of the traveler by night, revealing every snare and pitfall in the way, so the prophecies may be made the revealer of future events, which, if unperceived till we come upon them, would cause us to stumble in the way of life. They are truly "a light that shineth in a dark place."

"The two great ends of prophecy are, to excite expectation before the event, and then to confirm the truth by a striking and unequivocal fulfillment; and it is sufficient answer to the allegation of the obscurity of the prophecies of Scriptures, that they have abundantly accomplished those objects, among the most intelligent and investigating, as well as among the simple and unlearned in all ages."—*Watson's Dictionary, art. Prophecy.*

"Indeed, God would do nothing (especially respecting Israel) without revealing his secret purpose to his servants the prophets; who, being thus informed of what was about to come to pass, must declare it to the people, that they might take warning and act accordingly. . . . The grand outlines of the plan of divine Providence, and the events of history, to this day, and to the end of the world, were made known to the prophets of Israel and Judah."—*Dr. A. Clarke, on Amos 3:4-8.*

"Predictive prophecy is at once a part and an evidence of revelation. . . . As an evidence, fulfilled prophecy is as satisfactory as anything can be; for who can know the future except the Ruler who disposes future events?"—*Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. Use of Prophecy.*

"The objection which has been raised to Scripture prophecy, from its supposed obscurity, has no solid foundation. . . . It is a language which is definite and not equivocal in its meaning, and as easily mastered as the language of poetry, by attentive persons."—*Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, art. Prophecy.*

THE METALLIC IMAGE.

"This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king." Dan. 2:36.

The vision of the great image as recorded in the second chapter of Daniel, gives a prophetic outline of

the rise and fall of the four principal monarchies of earth; namely, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome. The prophet in interpreting the dream expressly declared that Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was symbolized by the head of gold, and that three other kingdoms should follow in their order, as symbolized by the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs of iron. But the feet and toes of the image were to be an admixture of iron and clay, showing a divided state of the last empire.

It has been well said by Mr. Horne, in the compendium of his "Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures," p. 147, that "A prophecy is demonstrated to be fulfilled when we can prove from unimpeachable authority that the event has actually taken place, precisely according to the manner in which it was foretold." History is agreed that the four kingdoms mentioned did arise, and in the order indicated by the prophecy. Commentators have gathered these evidences, and embellished their productions with statements in harmony with what history has given, as witness the following testimonies:—

THE HEAD OF GOLD.

"The Chaldean monarchy, over which Nebuchadnezzar was the only king of great renown, was represented in the vision by the head of gold."—*Scott, Dan. 2:38.*

"Daniel explains this golden head of the Babylonian empire (in which the Assyrian was now absorbed)."—*Cottage Bible, notes on Dan. 2:31-49.*

"The meaning is, that the Babylonian empire, as it existed under him, in its relation to the kingdoms which should succeed, was like the head of gold seen in the image as compared with the inferior metals."—*Albert Barnes, note on verse 38.*

THE BREAST AND ARMS OF SILVER.

"The Medo-Persian empire, which properly began under Darius the Mede, allowing him to be the same with Cyaxares, son of Astyages, and uncle to Cyrus the Great, son of Cambyses. He first fought under his uncle Cyaxares; defeated Neriglissar, king of the Assyrians, and Cræsus, king of the Lydians; and by the capture of Babylon, B. C. 538, terminated the Chaldean empire. On the death

of his uncle Cyaxares, B. C. 536, he became sole governor of the Medes and Persians, and thus established a potent empire on the ruins of that of the Chaldeans."—*Clarke, on Dan. 2.*

"The breast and the two arms of silver of the image represented that monarchy which succeeded to the Chaldean, and this was the kingdom of the Medes and Persians."—*Scott, on Dan. 2 : 39.*

"The breast and arms of silver are said to indicate a second empire, still rich and splendid, but inferior to the former, which can mean no other than the Persian or Medo-Persian empire, of which Cyrus was properly the founder."—*Cottage Bible, notes on Dan. 2 : 31-49.*

"The empire of the Medes and Persians, whose union was denoted by the breast and two arms of silver, was established on the ruins of that of the Chaldeans on the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, B. C. 538."—*Bagster.*

"The kingdom here referred to was undoubtedly the Medo-Persian, established by Cyrus."—*Barnes's Notes on Dan. 2 : 39.*

SIDES OF BRASS.

"The Macedonian, or Greek empire, founded by Alexander the Great. He subdued Greece, penetrated into Asia, took Tyre, reduced Egypt, overthrew Darius Codomannus at Arbela, Oct. 2, A. M. 3673, B. C. 331, and thus terminated the Persian monarchy. He crossed the Caucasus, and subdued Hyrcania, and penetrated India as far as the Ganges; and having conquered all the countries that lay between the Adriatic Sea and this river, the Ganges, he died A. M. 3681, B. C. 323, and after his death, his empire became divided among his generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus."—*Clarke, on Dan. 2.*

"There can be no reasonable doubt that by this third kingdom is denoted the empire founded by Alexander the Great—the Macedonian empire."—*Barnes.*

"The third kingdom, represented by the belly and thighs of the image formed of brass, must be that of the Macedonians, or Grecians, which succeeded to the Persian monarchy."—*Scott, on Dan. 2 : 39.*

"The third empire is described by a belly (or trunk) and thighs of brass, which very appositely represent the Macedonian empire, founded by Alexander the Great; the Greeks being commonly called brazen-coated, from wearing brazen armor."—*Cottage Bible, notes on Dan. 2 : 31-49.*

THE IRON AND CLAY OF THE IMAGE.

"These verses evidently describe the Roman empire as succeeding to that of the Macedonians."—*Scott, on Dan. 2 : 40-43.*

"The fourth, or Roman empire, was represented by the legs of iron and the feet of iron mixed with clay."—*Cottage Bible.*

"The Roman empire, which conquered nearly the whole world."—*Bagster.*

"The common opinion has been, that the reference is to the Roman empire."—*Barnes.*

"This image represented the four kingdoms that should successively bear rule in the earth, and influence the affairs of the Jewish Church; by *one* image, because *all of one and the same spirit and genius*, and all more or less against the Church. It was the same power, only lodged in four several nations, the two former lying east of Judea, the two latter, west."—*Comprehensive Commentary, on Dan. 2 : 31-45.*

"The images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations or their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome."—*Gibbon's Rome, chap. 38, par. 43.*

THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS.

"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." Dan. 7 : 17.

In repeating the prophetic history of the four great monarchies with which God's ancient people were connected, under the symbol of beasts, it is evident that the design was to reveal characteristics which could not well be symbolized by the metals employed in the image. It was necessary to show these additional features in order definitely to locate the nations symbolized by the former prophecy. It may be asked, Why not have the first symbols of such a character as to show all the features necessary, and save repetition of the subject? The answer is easy. God would impress upon the Babylonian king the power of his truth. The king being a worshiper of images, nothing would so quickly and completely arrest his attention as the view of an image.

So far as that design went, the image fully met it, and the king's attention was called to the God of Daniel. But in order that future generations might have correct data from which to apply the prophecies having a fulfillment in their time, God gave line upon line, and precept upon precept, that unerring judgment might be exercised by the careful student of prophecy, while making an application of its symbols.