

16. The Anarchy of Nations

While Daniel in his description of the lower limbs of the great image refers only to the "legs" and "feet," what further detail does he mention in his interpretation?

"And whereas thou saw the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron." "The toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay." Daniel 2:41, 42.

The fact that Daniel, in his interpretation, mentions the "feet" and the "toes" separately, and that two whole verses are occupied with a description of the latter, is indicative of the fact that the toe-kingdoms were to have an existence distinct from the unified Roman Empire which had dominated the civilized world for more than half a millennium. At the same time, as the toes were composed of precisely the same material as the feet, there was to be no such sharp -line of demarcation as there was between the head and breast, the breast and belly, and the belly and legs. In other words the old empire was to merge into and live on in the separated toe-kingdoms.

This is precisely what happened when the old Roman Empire of the West was dissolved and the barbarian kingdoms arose in its place in the fifth century of the Christian era.

As mentioned in the previous study, the barbarians first entered the empire as refugees, seeking the protection of the Romans against the advancing waves of Huns in Central Europe. They became guests of the Romans, accepting territory and titles from their hosts, and came to regard themselves as part of the existing order. Even when succeeding waves of invaders brought to an end the crumbling empire of the West, the barbarians incorporated the Roman heritage into their developing civilization. While, therefore, the ruling power was changed, and the barbarian proportion of the population was greatly increased, the essential features of the Roman order and civilization continued almost in their entirety. In many cases, the uncultured barbarian kings appointed Roman officials to undertake the work of administration. These men naturally continued the Roman forms of government and perpetuated the Latin tongue.

Roman literature and learning were similarly preserved by the monastic establishments of the West, and as education was entirely in the hands of the monks and nuns, the barbarian society was gradually leavened with it.

The ecclesiastical system of Christian Rome, too, built up during the last days of the empire, survived its fall, and eventually gathered all the barbarian nations into its fold.

Thus Rome is not, as Childe Harolde suggests, "The lone mother of dead empires." She still lives in her children.

Did Daniel derive any special significance from the number of toes?

While in the prophecy of the great image no special attention is drawn to the number of toes, in the seventh chapter of Daniel, where the four empires appear again under the symbolism of four beasts, the fourth is mentioned as having "ten horns." Daniel 7:7. We may, therefore, conclude that, although no attention is drawn to the number here, the ten toes do correspond to the ten horns, and that they are intended to represent ten distinct kingdoms occupying the original territory of Western Rome.

The suggestion has been put forward that as the ten toes are divided into two groups of five, the legs represent the Eastern and Western divisions of the empire respectively, and that half of the disintegrated fragments should be looked for in each of these sections. This, however, is quite unjustifiable as the legs of the image were divided from the beginning of their separation from the trunk, whereas the division of the empire did not occur until the last days of its history.

Moreover, the metals of the image represent primarily the territory peculiar to each power and not the territory of previous powers which it absorbed. Thus the silver represents Medo-Persia which absorbed the golden empire of Babylon. The brass represents the Grecian kingdom which absorbed both Medo-Persia and Babylon. The iron kingdom represents the Roman empire outside of the three previous empires—that is, Western Rome. Consequently the toe-kingdoms, which have no admixture of gold, silver, or brass, are all to be looked for in Western Europe.

Of the many barbarian tribes occupying Central Europe east of the Rhine and north of the Danube, the Alemanni and the Franks were closest to the Roman frontiers and constituted the first waves of the invading hordes.

The Alemanni (1) were actually the "first who removed the veil that covered the feeble majesty of Italy." They swarmed over the Rhaetian Alps into what are now Alsace and Lorraine and Switzerland, the last mentioned eventually becoming the heart of their tribal domain.

The Franks (2) originally occupied north-western Germany, and when they first crossed the Roman frontiers they settled in Belgium and north-eastern Gaul. Under Clovis, however, they became very powerful, spreading over the whole of France and giving their name to that country.

To the east of the Alemanni and Franks, on the banks of the Oder, lived two related peoples called the Suevi and the Vandals, while along the Elbe was the territory of a kindred tribe, the Burgundians. In the early fourth century these reached the Roman frontiers and began their penetration.

The Burgundians (3) at first settled in Savoy and Northern Italy, then extended their territory from the Rhone to the Loire and south to Vienne, but eventually were pushed back into the Rhone Valley by the expanding Franks.

The Vandals (4), after being defeated by the Franks, turned south and crossed the Pyrenees into Spain. Soon after this they were invited into Africa by the Roman governor Bonifacius, on whom they turned and established there the great Vandal kingdom.

The Suevi (5) might be regarded as camp followers of the more powerful Vandals. They accompanied the Vandals into Spain, and settled along the western coast in the territory which is now Portugal. Further to the east of the barbarian tribes already mentioned, perhaps even in the Scandinavian peninsula, was the home of the Goths. When they began to move, they first migrated southward in two great groups known as the Visigoths (West Goths) and Ostrogoths (East Goths). Eventually they were diverted westward by the arrival of the Hun hordes from Central Asia.

The Visigoths (6) arrived in Western Europe first, crossed northern Italy, and settled in south-western Gaul. There they stayed until they were driven south across the Apennines by Frankish pressure into the vacated Vandal territories in Spain.

When the Ostrogoths (7) entered the Roman Empire, they came down on to the east coast of the Adriatic, and for a time were content to occupy what is now Yugoslavia.

Meantime two other peoples, the Lombards and Heruli, of Vandal connections, were caught by Hun and Gothic pressure and also began to move into the crumbling Western empire.

The Lombards (8) consolidated in what is now Northern Italy and Austria, and gave their name to Lombardy.

The Heruli (9) moved into Italy to occupy the whole Italian peninsula and were actually instrumental in deposing the last Roman emperor of the West. Odoacer, their leader, became the first barbarian king of Italy.

Finally, the Anglo-Saxons (10) who originated on the Baltic shores of Denmark and northern Germany, became detached from the trans-continental migrations and, crossing the North Sea, settled in the British islands as far west and north as Wales and the Scottish border, where they laid the foundations of the English nation.

Truly it has been said: "It is in Rome that all the states of the earlier European world lose themselves; it is out of Rome that all the states of the later European world take their beginning." -C. Delisle Burns in "Comparative Politics," page 327.

What dangerous dis-equilibrium did the prophet declare would persist among the fragments of the broken empire?

"The kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle (margin)... They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Daniel 2:42, 43.

The fragmentary kingdoms derived from the old empire were to differ in size and strength, and in consequence there would be a constant temptation on the part of the larger, stronger ones to absorb the smaller and weaker ones, with occasionally some especially powerful monarch seeking to unite the broken fragments into one whole. In the incessant conflicts, the number of the divisions would doubtless change from time to time, but, declared the prophet, the empire would never again be united under one rule. "They shall not cleave one to another."

True to the prophecy, when the barbarian kingdoms emerged, they were diverse in territorial extent and military power. Gibbon refers to "the powerful monarchies of the Franks and the Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Sueves and Burgundians," and no sooner were they established than they began to struggle for supremacy or survival.

Toward the close of the eighth century, Charles the Great, King of the Franks, had brought under his dominion the whole of France and considerable portions of Germany, Italy and Spain. Friendly relations developed between Charles and Pope Leo III, and on Christmas day AD. 800, Charles was crowned in Rome "devout Augustus" and "Emperor of the Romans," and the so-called Holy Roman Empire was

founded.

Actually the whole plan was a subtle attempt on the part of the Papacy to set up its own universal spiritual kingdom. But prophecy had declared that no union of the toe-kingdoms would endure, and true to the inspired Word, the Carolingian Empire quickly melted away, and the Papacy's dream of a Holy Roman Empire vanished with it. As the prophet had declared a millennium and a half before, they could "not cleave one to another."

Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, the consolidation of the racial groups in Europe into exclusive national states, with their own languages, traditions, and laws, gave rise to another movement toward assimilation, though from very different motives. Each state now felt that its security and independence depended upon its being superior to all others; so there began an era of national expansion, each nation seeking to absorb its weaker neighbors, or to form alliances which would keep the balance of power in its own favor.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, Charles V of Spain made a bid for the domination of Europe and at the end of his life had united Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Spain, Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia under his imperial rule. But the growing spirit of nationalism soon got to work and the union did not long survive his retirement and death.

Louis XIV of France, in the seventeenth century, fought nine nations and annexed great territories, but succeeded only in turning practically the whole of Europe against him and losing nearly all he had gained.

In the nineteenth century, Napoleon set out on a career of conquest which brought him almost to the position of dictator of Europe. He even went so far as to strike medals picturing himself as Caesar, crowned with the ancient laurel garland of victory. But at Waterloo, the great French emperor awakened to the sad realization that his dream was not to be.

It was the revival of the ideal of an all-powerful Roman Empire in the mind of Emperor Wilhelm II and his advisers, in the early twentieth century, which led them to match the strength of German aims against European nationalism.

"From childhood," declared the Kaiser, "I have been under the influence of five men, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Theodoric II, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon. Each of these dreamed a dream of world empire-they failed. I am dreaming a dream of German world empire-and my mailed fist shall succeed."

At last the day for which he looked came, and with all his accumulated resources he struck. But his calculations did not work out. The colossal upheaval of 1914-1918, with its sacrifice of ten millions of the world's youth, not to mention the millions more who were maimed for life. The orphans, war victims, and refugees, and the wastage of more than £30,000,000,000 in four short years, only served to reveal yet once more the truth of the divine forecast, "They shall not cleave."

But while World War I demonstrated the intensity of the antipathies among the toe-kingdoms, it neither sublimated them in a new world power nor did it dissipate them.

Steadily building up the power of Fascist Italy, Mussolini made no secret of his determination to build a new Roman Empire.

The German nation, though crushed by its defeat in World War I remained essentially military-minded, and within a quarter of a century of the defeat of Kaiser Wilhelm II's aspirations, Hitler set in motion new Germanic hordes, resolved that the Third Reich would accomplish what the second could not.

But after five and a half nightmare years in which forty millions died by bitter, torture, famine, and disease, and a continent was reduced to a shambles, the Word was again miraculously vindicated.

The prophecy which could not fail has not failed. And if any other dictator makes bold in the future to try again, he will discover, as every other would-be conqueror has discovered, that the "sovereign" states of Europe will never again be merged in a united European state. The map of Europe will continue to resemble a patchwork quilt. There will always be the "strong" powers and the "brittle," the large and the small, the economically rich and the poor. "They shall not cleave one to another!"

Did the prophet suggest that any means other than military conquest would be used to reintegrate the nations of Europe?

"And whereas thou saw iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Daniel 2:43.

Beside the attempts to restore the unity of Europe by force of arms, the prophet declared that there would also be a "mingling" of the diverse peoples of Europe through "the seed of men," but such efforts toward European reintegration would be equally unavailing. The nations still would "not cleave."

The first and obvious reference of this mingling of the "seed of men" is to the alliances effected by intermarriage between the descendants of the various European rulers. This, of course, was no new method. From earliest times neighboring peoples have sought peaceful relations by such means, but never has it attained so prominent a place in political diplomacy as in European history.

The policy was initiated at the very beginning of the history of the toe-kingdoms by Theodoric the Ostrogoth who married Audefieda, daughter of Childeric, king of the Salian Franks, and in turn married two of his daughters to Sigismund, king of the Burgundians and Alaric II, king of the Visigoths. His sister, Amalafriada, was also married to Thrasamund, king of the Vandals.

"This family compact," writes Hodgkin, "binding together all the kingdoms of the West in a great confederacy, filling all the new barbarian thrones with the sons, the grandsons, or nephews of Theodoric, was a matrimonial state-system surpassing anything that Hapsburg or Bourbon ever succeeded in accomplishing." - "Italy and Her Invaders," Vol. 3, page 355.

But he has to add: "When it came to the tug-of-war between one barbarian chief and another, this family compact, like so many others in later days, snapped with the strain."

Through the centuries the method of alliance by intermarriage was continued, but although two or more nations were sometimes brought together for a few years, the spirit of nationalism always proved too great, and before long the states were independent of each other again. Immediately before World War I the sovereigns of Europe were almost all connected by marriage. But even these ties of blood failed to prevent the outbreak of that terrible cataclysm. Since then so many European thrones have been emptied by revolution that such "mingling" is no longer practicable.

There is, however, another way in which the nations of Europe have sought peaceably to "mingle" in order to restore amity in Europe. This comprises the series of attempts, also going far back in the history of the divided empire, to establish a federation of independent nations in the West as an alternative to military domination. As early as the beginning of the fourteenth century the French writer, Pierre Dubois, proposed the formation of a league of states under the suzerainty of Philip of France with super national authority for the settlement of differences between individual nations, and with the power of economic boycott to enforce its decisions.

About the same time, Dante, in Italy, broached a similar scheme in his *De Monarchia*, advocating a central organization and a system of international law for a united Europe. The hostility of the developing nations of the time, however, precluded even the discussion of such propositions.

A more grandiose proposal was launched toward the end of the sixteenth century by the Duc de Sully, a minister of Henry IV of France, who set forth his "Grand Desigri" for an international league of fifteen nations, headed by France. To secure the settlement of all differences by arbitration, and to maintain an armed force for the coercion of delinquent powers. Twelve European sovereigns, including Elizabeth of England, signified their willingness to consider such a scheme, but before anything definite could be done, Henry was murdered and the plan fell through.

In 1712, the Abbe de St. Pierre, secretary to the French diplomat who arranged the Treaty of Utrecht, suggested a scheme similar to the Grand Design for European federation of twenty-four states under a president picturesquely called the "Prince of Peace," but got no further than any earlier proposal.

Before the eighteenth century was out no fewer than twenty-five more schemes for preserving the peace of Europe had been published. Nor was there any slackening in the nineteenth century, one of the planners, Sineriz, a Spaniard (1839), prophetically adding a new reason for European federation, namely that a united Europe would be necessary if the continent was to hold its own against a united America!

Chief of the European planners in the nineteenth century was the idealist Czar Alexander I of Russia, who induced every sovereign of Europe except the Pope, the prince-regent of England, and the sultan of Turkey, to unite in a Holy Alliance for the perpetual preservation of the peace of Europe. But after thirty-three years of rather strained co-operation, the Concert of Europe was dissolved in the revolutions of 1848.

A new attempt at co-operation, also originating with the Czar of Russia, was made at the close of the nineteenth century, and at the Hague conferences in 1899 and 1907 twenty-six and forty four states respectively were brought together. A number of lesser disputes were settled, but the major antagonisms proved irreconcilable, and eventually blazed forth in the cataclysm of 1914-1918.

With the close of World War I it was realized by the leading statesmen that unless something effective was speedily devised in the way of co-operation between the nations, civilization must inevitably annihilate itself. Speaking in Italy, President Wilson declared in words strikingly reminiscent of the Word of prophecy, "We shall have to find a new cement to hold the nations together." The cement he suggested

was the League of Nations, but, like all the earlier cements which had been tried, it crumbled in the fierce flames of war, and the great structure it held together collapsed.

But the end of the struggle for European unity is still not yet, for to-day new and urgent attempts are being made to organize a "United States of Europe" capable of maintaining its independence and territorial integrity in the face of the growing power of the Soviet system.

Now on the strength of Daniel's prophecy these attempts might be dismissed as doomed to failure like every earlier plan. Such a judgment, however, needs some qualification. Actually, a very important prophecy in the seventeenth chapter of the Revelation reveals that for a brief period just before the end a loose federation of a very special character is destined to arise in Europe with profound consequences to the world and the people of God. We shall discuss this in the appropriate place, but here it can be emphasized that, though such a federation may become a transient reality, it will never bring about the organic union of the several European states. There were ten barbarian kingdoms in the West when Rome broke up and there will be ten sovereign nations in the territory of the old Roman Empire when God finally intervenes.

"They shall not cleave" was the divine forecast. "They have not cleaved," is the verdict of history; and we may be confident that they will not ever cleave until God Himself takes a hand to Cause "Wars to Cease to the end of the earth."