

## 2. THE GREAT IMAGE

"VERSE 1. And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him."

Daniel was carried into captivity in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. For three years he was placed under instructors, during which time he would not, of course, be reckoned among the wise men of the kingdom, nor take part in public affairs. Yet in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, the transactions recorded in this chapter took place. How, then, could Daniel be brought in to interpret the king's dream in his second year? The explanation lies in the fact that Nebuchadnezzar reigned for two years conjointly with his father, Nabopolassar. From this point the Jews reckoned, while the Chaldeans reckoned from the time he commenced

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to reign alone, on the death of his father. Hence, the year here mentioned was the second year of his reign according to the Chaldean reckoning, but the fourth according to the Jewish. It thus appears that the very next year after Daniel had completed his preparation to participate in the affairs of the Chaldean empire, the providence of God brought him into sudden and wonderful notoriety throughout all the kingdom.

"VERSE 2. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dream. So they came and stood before the king."

The magicians were such as practiced magic, using the term in its bad sense; that is, they practiced all the superstitious rites and ceremonies of fortune-tellers, casters of nativities, etc. Astrologers were men who pretended to foretell future events by the study of the stars. The science, or the superstition, of astrology was extensively cultivated by the Eastern nations of antiquity. Sorcerers were such as pretended to hold communication with the dead. In this sense, we believe, it is always used in the Scriptures. Modern Spiritualism is simply ancient heathen sorcery revived. The Chaldeans here mentioned were a sect of philosophers similar to the magicians and astrologers, who made psychic, divinations, etc., their study. All these sects or professions abounded in Babylon. The end aimed at by each was the same; namely, the explaining of mysteries and the foretelling of future events, the principal difference between them being the means by which they sought to accomplish their object. The king's difficulty lay equally within the province of each to explain; hence he summoned them all. With the king it was an important matter. He was greatly troubled, and therefore concentrated upon the solution of his perplexity the whole wisdom of his realm.

"VERSE 3. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. 4. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live forever; tell they servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation."

Whatever else the ancient magicians and astrologers may have been efficient in, they seem to have been thoroughly

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schooled in the art of drawing out sufficient information to form a basis for some shrewd calculation, or of framing their answers in so ambiguous a manner that they would be equally applicable, let the event turn either way. In the present case, true to their cunning instincts, they called upon the king to make known to them his dream. If they could get full information respecting this, they could easily agree on some interpretation which would not endanger their reputation. They addressed themselves to the king

in Syriac, a dialect of the Chaldean language which was used by the educated and cultured classes. From this point to the end of chapter 7, the record continues in Chaldaic.

"VERSE 5. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me; if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. 6. But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor; therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. 7. They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it. 8. The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. 9. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you; for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed; therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof. 10. The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter; therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 12. For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain."

These verses contain the record of the desperate struggle between the wise men, so called, and the king; the former seeking some avenue of escape, seeing they were caught on their own ground, and the latter determined that they should make known his dream, which was no more than their profession would warrant him in demanding. Some have severely censured Nebuchadnezzar in this matter, as acting the part of

a heartless, unreasonable tyrant. But what did these magicians profess to be able to do ? - To reveal hidden things; to foretell future events; to make known mysteries entirely beyond human foresight and penetration; and to do this by the aid of supernatural agencies. If, then, their claim was worth anything, could they not make known to the king what he had dreamed ? - They certainly could. And if they were able, knowing the dream, to give a reliable interpretation thereof, would they not also be able to make known the dream itself when it had gone from the king ? - Certainly, if there was any virtue in their pretended intercourse with the other world. There was therefore nothing unjust in Nebuchadnezzar's demand that they should make known his dream. And when they declared (verse 11) that none but the gods whose dwelling was not with flesh could make known the king's matter, it was a tacit acknowledgment that they had no communication with these gods, and knew nothing beyond what human wisdom and discernment could reveal. For this cause, the king was angry and very furious. He saw that he and all his people were being made the victims of deception. He accused them (verse 9) of endeavoring to dally along till the "time be changed," or till the matter had so passed from his mind that his anger at their duplicity should abate, and he would either recall the dream himself, or be unsolicitous whether it were made known and interpreted or not. And while we cannot justify the extreme measures to which he resorted, dooming them to death, and their houses to destruction, we cannot but feel a hearty sympathy with him in his condemnation of a class of miserable impostors.

The severity of his sentence was probably attributable more to the customs of those times than to any malignity on the part of the king. Yet it was a bold and desperate step. Consider who these were who thus incurred the wrath of the king. They were numerous, opulent, and influential sects. Moreover, they were the learned and cultivated classes of those times; yet the king was not so wedded

to his false religion as to spare it even with all this influence in its favor. If the system was one of fraud and imposition, it must fall, however

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high its votaries might stand in numbers or position, or however many of them might be involved in its ruin. The king would be no party to dishonesty or deception.

"VERSE 14. Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. 15. He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then, Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. 16. Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation. 17. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions; 18. That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."

In this narrative we see the providence of God working in several remarkable particulars.

1. It was providential that the dream of the king should leave such a powerful impression upon his mind as to raise him to the greatest height of anxiety, and yet the thing itself should be held from his recollection. This led to the complete exposure of the false system of the magicians and other pagan teachers; for when put to the test to make known the dream, it was found that they were unable to do what their profession made it incumbent on them to do.

2. It was remarkable that Daniel and his companions, so lately pronounced by the king ten times better than all his magicians and astrologers, should not sooner have been consulted at all, in this matter. But there was a providence in this. Just as the dream was held from the king, so he was unaccountably held from appealing to Daniel for a solution of the mystery. For had he called on Daniel at first, and had he at once made known the matter, the magicians would not have been brought to the test. But God would give the heathen systems of the Chaldeans the first chance. He would let them try, and ignominiously fail, and confess their utter incompetency, even under the penalty of death, that they might be the better prepared to acknowledge his hand when he should finally reach it down in behalf of his captive servants, and for the honor of his own name.

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3. It appears that the first intimation Daniel had of the matter was the presence of the executioners, come for his arrest. His own life being thus at stake, he would be led to seek the Lord with all his heart till he should work for their deliverance. Daniel gains his request of the king for time to consider the matter, - a privilege which probably none of the magicians could have secured, as the king had already accused them of preparing lying and corrupt words, and of seeking to gain time for this very purpose. Daniel at once went to his three companions, and engaged them to unite with him in desiring the mercy of the God of heaven concerning this secret. He could have prayed alone, and doubtless would have been heard; but then, as now, in the union of God's people there is prevailing power; and the promise of the accomplishment of that which is asked, is to the two or three who shall agree concerning it. Matt.18:19,20.

"VERSE 19. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever; for

wisdom and might are his; 21. And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding; 22. He revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. 23. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee; for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

Whether or not the answer came while Daniel and his companions were yet offering up their petitions, we are not informed. If it did, it shows their importunity in the matter; for it was through a night vision that God revealed himself in their behalf, which would show that they continued the supplications, as might reasonably be inferred, far into the night, and ceased not till the answer was obtained. Or, if their season of prayer had closed, and God at a subsequent time sent the answer, it would show us that, as is sometimes the case, prayers are not unavailing though not immediately answered. Some think the matter was made known to Daniel by his dreaming the same dream that Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed; but

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Matthew Henry considers it more probable that "when he was awake, and continuing instant in prayer, and watching in the same, the dream itself and the interpretation of it were communicated to him by the ministry of an angel, abundantly to his satisfaction." The words "night vision" mean anything that is seen, whether through dreams or visions.

Daniel immediately offered up praise to God for his gracious dealing with them; and while his prayer is not preserved, his responsive thanksgiving is fully recorded. God is honored by our rendering him praise for the things he has done for us, as well as by our acknowledging through prayer our need of his help. Let Daniel's course be our example in this respect. Let no mercy from the hand of God fail of its due return of thanksgiving and praise. Were not ten lepers cleansed? "But where," asks Christ sorrowfully, "are the nine?" Luke 17:17.

Daniel had the utmost confidence in what had been shown him. He did not first go to the king, to see if what had been revealed to him was indeed the king's dream; but he immediately praised God for having answered his prayer.

Although the matter was revealed to Daniel, he did not take honor to himself as though it were by his prayers alone that this thing had been obtained, but immediately associated his companions with himself, and acknowledged it to be as much an answer to their prayers as to his own. It was, said he, "what we desired of thee," and thou hast made it "known unto us."

"VERSE 24. Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and said thus unto him: Destroy not the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation."

Daniel's first plea is for the wise men of Babylon. Destroy them not, for the king's secret is revealed. True it was through no merit of theirs or their heathen systems of divination that this revelation was made; they were worthy of just as much condemnation as before. But their own confession of utter impotence in the matter was humiliation enough for them, and Daniel was anxious that they should so far partake of

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the benefits shown to him as to have their own lives spared. Thus they were saved because there was a man of God among them. And thus it ever is. For the sake of Paul and Silas, all the prisoners with them were loosed. Acts 16:26. For the sake of Paul, the lives of all that sailed with him were saved. Chapter 27:24. Thus the wicked are benefited by the presence of the righteous. Well would it be if

they would remember the obligations under which they are thus placed. What saves the world to-day? For whose sake is it still spared? - For the sake for the few righteous persons who are yet left. Remove these, and how long would the wicked be suffered to run their guilty career? - No longer than the antediluvians were suffered, after Noah had entered the ark, or the Sodomites, after Lot had departed from their polluted and polluting presence. If only ten righteous persons could have been found in Sodom, the multitude of its wicked inhabitants would, for their sakes, have been spared. Yet the wicked will despise, ridicule, and oppress the very ones on whose account it is that they are still permitted the enjoyment of life and all its blessings.

"VERSE 25. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation."

It is ever a characteristic of ministers and courtiers to ingratiate themselves with their sovereign. So here Arioch represented that he had found a man who could make known the desired interpretation; as if with great disinterestedness, in behalf of the king, he had been searching for some one to solve his difficulty, and had at last found him. In order to see through this deception of his chief executioner, the king had but to remember, as he probably did, his interview with Daniel (verse 16), and Daniel's promise, if time could be granted, to show the interpretation thereof.

"VERSE 26. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? 27. Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians,

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the soothsayers, show unto the king; 28. But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these."

Art thou able to make known the dream? was the king's doubtful salutation to Daniel, as he came into his presence. Notwithstanding his previous acquaintance with Daniel, the king seems to have questioned his ability, so young and inexperienced, to make known a matter in which the aged and venerable magicians and soothsayers had utterly failed. Daniel declared plainly that the wise men, the astrologers, the soothsayers, and the magicians could not make known this secret. It was beyond their power. Therefore the king should not be angry with them, nor put confidence in their inefficient superstitions. He then proceeds to make known the true God, who rules in heaven, and is the only revealer of secrets. And he it is, says Daniel, who maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.

"VERSE 29. As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter; and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart."

Here is brought out another of the commendable traits of Nebuchadnezzar's character. Unlike some rulers, who fill up the present with folly and debauchery without regard to the future, he thought forward upon the days to come, with an anxious desire to know with what events they should be filled. His object in this was, doubtless, that he might the better know how to make a wise improvement of the present. For this reason God gave him this dream, which we must regard as a token of the divine favor toward the king, as there were many other ways in which the truth involved in this matter could have been brought out, equally to the honor of God's name, and the good of his people both at the time and through subsequent generations. Yet God would not work for the king independently of his own people; hence, though he gave the dream to

the king, he sent the interpretation through one of his own acknowledged servants. Daniel first disclaimed all credit for himself in the transaction, and then to modify somewhat the feelings of pride which it would have been natural for the king to have, in view of being thus noticed by the God of heaven, he informed him indirectly, that, although the dream had been given to him, it was not for his sake altogether that the interpretation was sent, but for their sakes through whom it should best be made known. Ah! God had some servants there, and it was for them that he was working. They are of more value in his sight than the mightiest kings and potentates of earth. Had it not been for them, the king would never have had the interpretation of his dream, probably not even the dream itself. Thus, when traced to their source, all favors, upon whomsoever bestowed, are found to be due to the regard which God has for his own children. How comprehensive was the work of God in this instance. By this one act of revealing the king's dream to Daniel, he accomplished the following objects: (1) He made known to the king the things he desired; (2) He saved his servants who trusted in him; (3) He brought conspicuously before the Chaldean nation the knowledge of the true God; (4) He poured contempt on the false systems of the soothsayers and magicians; and (5) He honored his own name, and exalted his servants in their eyes.

"VERSE 31. Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing- floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Nebuchadnezzar, practicing the Chaldean religion, was an idolater. An image was an object which would at once command his attention and respect. Moreover, earthly kingdoms, which, as we shall hereafter see, were represented by this  
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image, were objects of esteem and value in his eyes. With a mind unenlightened by the light of revelation, he was unprepared to put a true estimate upon earthly wealth and glory, and to look upon earthly governments in their true light. Hence the striking harmony between the estimate which he put upon these things, and the objects by which they were symbolized before him. To him they were presented under the form of a great image, an object in his eyes of worth and admiration. With Daniel the case was far different. He was able to view in its true light all greatness and glory not built on the favor and approbation of God; and therefore to him these same earthly kingdoms were afterward shown (see chapter 7) under the form of cruel and ravenous wild beasts.

But how admirably adapted was this representation to convey a great and needful truth to the mind of Nebuchadnezzar. Besides delineating the progress of events through the whole course of time for the benefit of his people, God would show Nebuchadnezzar the utter emptiness and worthlessness of earthly pomp and glory. And how could this be more impressively done than by an image commencing with the most precious of metals, and continually descending to the baser, till we finally have the coarsest and crudest of materials, - iron mingled with the miry clay, - the whole then dashed to pieces, and made like the empty chaff, no good thing in it, but altogether lighter than vanity, and finally

blown away where no place could be found for it, after which something durable and of heavenly worth occupies its place? So would God show to the children of men that earthly kingdoms were to pass away, and earthly greatness and glory, like a gaudy bubble, would break and vanish; and the kingdom of God, in the place so long usurped by these, should be set up, to have no end, and all who had an interest therein should rest under the shadow of its peaceful wings forever and ever. But this is anticipating.

"VERSE 36. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37. Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the

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beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold."

Now opens one of the sublimest chapters of human history. Eight short verses of the inspired record tell the whole story; yet that story embraces the history of this world's pomp and power. A few moments will suffice to commit it to memory; yet the period which it covers, commencing more than twenty-five centuries ago, reaches on from that far-distant point past the rise and fall of kingdoms, past the setting up and overthrow of empires, past cycles and ages, past our own day, over into the eternal state. It is so comprehensive that it embraces all this; yet it is so minute that it gives us all the great outlines of earthly kingdoms from that time to this. Human wisdom never devised so brief a record which embraced so much. Human language never set forth in so few words, so great a volume of historical truth. The finger of God is here. Let us heed the lesson well.

With what interest, as well as astonishment, must the king have listened, as he was informed by the prophet that he, or rather his kingdom, the king being here put for his kingdom (see the following verse), was the golden head of the magnificent image which he had seen. Ancient kings were grateful for success; and in cases of prosperity, the tutelar deity, to whom they attributed their success, was the adorable object upon which they would lavish their richest treasures and bestow their best devotions. Daniel indirectly informs the king that in this case all these are due to the God of heaven, since he is the one who has given him his kingdom, and made him ruler over all. This would restrain him from the pride of thinking that he had attained his position by his own power and wisdom, and would enlist the gratitude of his heart toward the true God.

The kingdom of Babylon, which finally developed into the golden head of the great historic image, was founded by Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah, over two thousand years before Christ. Gen.10:8-10: "And Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty

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hunter before the Lord; wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel [margin, Babylon], and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." It appears that Nimrod also founded the city of Nineveh, which afterward became the capital of Syria. (See marginal reading of Gen.10:11, and Johnson's Cyclopaedia, art. Syria.) The following sketch of the history of Babylon, from Johnson's Universal Cyclopaedia, art. Babylon, is according to the latest authorities on this subject:

"About 1270 B.C., the Assyrian kings became masters of Chaldea, or Babylonia, of which Babylon was the capital. This country was afterward ruled by an Assyrian dynasty of kings, who reigned at Babylon, and sometimes waged war against those who reigned in Assyria proper. At other times the kings of Babylon were tributary to those of Assyria. Several centuries elapsed in which the

history of Babylon is almost a blank. In the time of Tiglathpileser of Assyria, Nabonassar ascended the throne of Babylon in 747 B.C. He is celebrated for the chronological era which bears his name, and which began in 747 B.C. About 720 Merodach-baladan became king of Babylon, and sent ambassadors to Hezekiah, king of Judah (see 2 Kings 20, and Isa.39). A few years later, Sargon, king of Assyria, defeated and dethroned Merodach-baladan. Sennacherib completed the subjection of Babylon, which he annexed to the Assyrian empire about 690 B.C. The conquest of Nineveh and the subversion of the Assyrian empire, which was effected about 625 B.C., by Cyaxeres the Mede, and his ally Nabopolassar, the rebellious governor of Babylon, enabled the latter to found the Babylonian empire, which was the fourth of Rawlinson's 'Five Great Monarchies,' and included the valley of the Euphrates, Susiana, Syria, and Palestine. His reign lasted about twenty-one years, and was probably pacific, as the history of it is nearly a blank; but in 605 B.C. his army defeated Necho, king of Egypt, who had invaded Syria. He was succeeded by his more famous son, Nebuchadnezzar (604 B.C.) who was the greatest of the kings of Babylon."

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Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the first year of his reign, and the third year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah (Dan. 1:1), B.C.606. Nebuchadnezzar reigned two years conjointly with his father, Nabopolassar. From this point the Jews computed his reign, but the Chaldeans from the date of his sole reign, 604 B.C., as stated above. Respecting the successors of Nebuchadnezzar, the authority above quoted adds:

"He died in 561 B.C., and was succeeded by his son Evil-merodach, who reigned only two years. Nabonadius (or Labynetus), who became king in 555 B.C., formed an alliance with Croesus against Cyrus the Great. He appears to have shared the royal power with his son, Belshazzar, whose mother was a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. Cyrus besieged Babylon, which he took by stratagem in 538 B.C., and with the death of Belshazzar, whom the Persians killed, the kingdom of Babylon ceased to exist."

When we say that the image of Daniel 2 symbolizes the four great prophetic universal monarchies, and reckon Babylon as the first of these, it is asked how this can be true, when every country in the world was not absolutely under the dominion of any one of them. Thus Babylon never conquered Grecia or Rome; but Rome was founded before Babylon had risen to the zenith of its power. Rome's position and influence, however, were then altogether prospective; and it is nothing against the prophecy that God begins to prepare his agents long years before they enter upon the prominent part they are to perform in the fulfilment of prophecy. We must place ourselves with the prophet, and view these kingdoms from the same standpoint. We shall then, as is right, consider his statements in the light of the location he occupied, the time in which he wrote, and the circumstances by which he was surrounded. It is a manifest rule of interpretation that we may look for nations to be noticed in prophecy when they become so far connected with the people of God that mention of them becomes necessary to make the records of sacred history complete. When this was the case with Babylon, it was, from the standpoint of the prophet, the great and overtowering

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object in the political world. In his eye, it necessarily eclipsed all else; and he would naturally speak of it as a kingdom having rule over all the earth. So far as we know, all provinces of countries against which Babylon did move in the height of its power, were subdued by its arms. In this sense, all were in its power; and this fact will explain the somewhat hyperbolic language of verse 38. That there were some portions of territory and considerable numbers of people unknown to history, and outside the pale



of civilization as it then existed, which were neither discovered nor subdued, is not a fact of sufficient strength or importance to condemn the expression of the prophet, or to falsify the prophecy.

In 606 B.C. Babylon came in contact with the people of God, when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and led Judah into captivity. It comes at this point, consequently, into the field of prophecy, at the end of Jewish theocracy.

The character of this empire is indicated by the nature of the material composing that portion of the image by which it was symbolized the head of gold. It was the golden kingdom of a golden age. Babylon, its metropolis, towered to a height never reached by any of its successors. Situated in the garden of the East; laid out in a perfect square sixty miles in circumference, fifteen miles on each side; surrounded by a wall three hundred and fifty feet high and eighty-seven feet thick, with a moat, or ditch around this, of equal cubic capacity with the wall itself; divided into six hundred and seventy-six squares each two and a quarter miles in circumference, by its fifty streets, each one hundred and fifty feet in width, crossing each other at right angles, twenty-five running each way, every one of them straight and level and fifteen miles in length; its two hundred and twenty-five square miles of inclosed surface, divided as just described, laid out in luxuriant pleasure-grounds and gardens, interspersed with magnificent dwellings, this city, with its sixty miles of moat, its sixty miles of outer wall, its thirty miles of river wall through its center, its hundred and fifty gates of solid brass, its hanging gardens, rising terrace above terrace, till they equaled in height the walls themselves, its temple of Belus, three miles in

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circumference, its two royal palaces, one three and a half, and the other eight miles in circumference, with its subterranean tunnel under the River Euphrates connecting these two palaces, its perfect arrangement for convenience, ornament, and defense, and its unlimited resources, this city, containing in itself many things which were themselves wonders of the world, was itself another and still mightier wonder. Never before saw the earth a city like that; never since has it seen its equal. And there, with the whole earth prostrate at her feet, a queen in peerless grandeur, drawing from the pen of inspiration itself this glowing title, "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," sat this city, fit capital of that kingdom which constituted the golden head of this great historic image.

Such was Babylon, with Nebuchadnezzar, in the the prime of life, bold, vigorous, and accomplished, seated upon its throne, when Daniel entered its impregnable walls to serve a captive for seventy years in its gorgeous palaces. There the children of the Lord, oppressed more than cheered by the glory and prosperity of the land of their captivity, hung their harps on the willows of the sparkling Euphrates, and wept when they remembered Zion.

And there commenced the captive state of the church in a still broader sense; for, ever since that time, the people of God have been in subjection to, and more or less oppressed by, earthly powers. And so they will be, till all earthly powers shall finally yield to Him whose right it is to reign. And lo, that day of deliverance draws on apace.

Into another city, not only Daniel, but all the children of God, from the least to greatest, from the lowest to highest, from first to last, are soon to enter; a city not merely sixty miles in circumference, but fifteen hundred miles; a city whose walls are not brick and bitumen, but precious stones and jasper; whose streets are not the stone-paved streets of Babylon, smooth and beautiful as they were, but transparent gold; whose river is not the mournful waters of the Euphrates, but the river

of life; whose music is not the sighs and laments of broken-hearted captives, but the thrilling paeans of victory over death and the grave,

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which ransomed multitudes shall raise; whose light is not the intermittent light of earth, but the unceasing and ineffable glory of God and the Lamb. Into this city they shall enter, not as captives entering a foreign land, but as exiles returning to their father's house; not as to a place where such chilling words as "bondage," "servitude," and "oppression," shall weigh down their spirits, but to one where the sweet words, "home," "freedom," "peace," "purity," "unutterable bliss," and "unending life," shall thrill their bosoms with delight forever and ever. Yea; our mouths shall be filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing, when the Lord shall turn again the captivity of Zion. Ps.126:1,2; Rev.21:1-27.

"VERSE 39. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth."

Nebuchadnezzar reigned forty-three years, and was succeeded by the following rulers: His son, Evil-merodach, two years; Neriglissar, his son-in-law, four years; Laborosoarchod, Neriglissar's son, nine months, which, being less than one year, is not counted in the canon of Ptolemy; and lastly, Nabonadius, whose son, Belshazzar, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, was associated with him on the throne, and with whom that kingdom came to an end.

In the first year of Neriglissar, only two years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, broke out that fatal war between the Babylonians and the Medes, which was to result in the utter subversion of the Babylonian kingdom. Cyaxares, king of the Medes, who is called "Darius" in Dan. 5:31, summoned to his aid his nephew, Cyrus, of the Persian line, in his efforts against the Babylonians. The war was prosecuted with uninterrupted success on the part of the Medes and Persians, until, in the eighteenth year of Nabonadius (the third year of his son Belshazzar), Cyrus laid siege to Babylon, the only city in all the East which held out against him. The Babylonians, gathered within their impregnable walls, with provision on hand for twenty years, and land within the limits of their broad city sufficient to furnish food for the inhabitants

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and garrison for an indefinite period, scoffed at Cyrus from their lofty walls, and derided his seemingly useless efforts to bring them into subjection. And according to all human calculation, they had good ground for their feelings of security. Never, weighed in the balance of any earthly probability, with the means of warfare then known, could that city be taken. Hence, they breathed as freely and slept as soundly as though no foe were waiting and watching for their destruction around their beleaguered walls. But God had decreed that the proud and wicked city should come down from her throne of glory; and when he speaks, what mortal arm can defeat his word?

In their very feeling of security lay the source of their danger. Cyrus resolved to accomplish by stratagem what he could not effect by force; and learning of the approach of an annual festival, in which the whole city would be given up to mirth and revelry, he fixed upon that day as the time to carry his purpose into execution. There was no entrance for him into that city except he could find it where the River Euphrates entered and emerged, passing under its walls. He resolved to make the channel of the river his own highway into the stronghold of his enemy. To do this, the water must be turned aside from its channel through the city. For this purpose, on the evening of the feast-day above referred to, he detailed three bodies of soldiers, the first, to turn the river at a given hour into a large artificial lake a short distance above the city; the second, to take their station at the point where the

river entered the city; the third to take a position fifteen miles below, where the river emerged from the city; and these two latter parties were instructed to enter the channel, just as soon as they found the river fordable, and in the darkness of the night explore their way beneath the walls, and press on to the palace of the king, where they were to meet, surprise the palace, slay the guards, and capture or slay the king. When the water was turned into the lake mentioned above, the river soon became fordable, and the soldiers detailed for that purpose followed its channel into the heart of the city of Babylon.

But all this would have been in vain, had not the whole city, on that eventful night, given themselves over to the most

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reckless carelessness and presumption, a state of things upon which Cyrus calculated largely for the carrying out of his purpose. For on each side of the river, through the entire length of the city, were walls of great height, and of equal thickness with the outer walls. In these walls were huge gates of solid brass, which when closed and guarded, debarred all entrance from the river-bed to any and all of the twenty-five streets that crossed the river; and had they been thus closed at this time, the soldiers of Cyrus might have marched into the city along the river-bed, and then marched out again, for all that they would have been able to accomplish toward the subjugation of the place. But in the drunken revelry of that fatal night, these river gates were all left open, and the entrance of the Persian soldiers was not perceived. Many a cheek would have paled with terror, had they noticed the sudden going down of the river, and understood its fearful import. Many a tongue would have spread wild alarm through the city, had they seen the dark forms of their armed foes stealthily treading their way to the citadel of their strength. But no one noticed the sudden subsidence of the waters of the river; no one saw the entrance of the Persian warriors; no one took care that the river gates should be closed and guarded; no one cared for aught but to see how deeply and recklessly he could plunge into the wild debauch. That night's work cost them their kingdom and their freedom. They went into their brutish revelry subjects of the king of Babylon; they awoke from it slaves to the king of Persia.

The soldiers of Cyrus first made known their presence in the city by falling upon the royal guards in the very vestibule of the palace of the king. Belshazzar soon became aware of the cause of the disturbance, and died vainly fighting for his imperiled life. The feast of Belshazzar is described in the fifth chapter of Daniel; and the scene closes with the simple record, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."

Thus the first division of the great image was completed. Another kingdom had arisen, as the prophet had declared.

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The first instalment of the prophetic dream was fulfilled.

But before we take leave of Babylon, let us glance forward to the end of its thenceforth melancholy history. It would naturally be supposed that the conqueror, becoming possessed of so noble a city, far surpassing anything in the world, would have taken it as the seat of his empire, and maintained it in its primitive splendor. But God had said that that city should become a heap, and the habitation of the beasts of the desert; that their houses should be full of doleful creatures; that the wild beasts of the islands should cry in their desolate dwellings, and dragons in their pleasant places.

Isa.13:19-22. It must first be deserted. Cyrus removed the imperial seat to Susa, a celebrated city in the province of Elam, east from Babylon, on the banks of the River Choaspes, a branch of the Tigris. This was probably done, says Prideaux (i.180), in the first year of his sole reign. The pride of the Babylonians being particularly provoked by this act, in the fifth year of Darius Hystaspes, B.C. 517, they rose in rebellion, which brought upon themselves again the whole strength of the Persian empire. The city was once more taken by stratagem. Zopyrus, one of the chief commanders of Darius, having cut off his own nose and ears, and mangled his body all over with stripes, fled in this condition to the besieged, apparently burning with desire to be revenged on Darius for his great cruelty in thus mutilating him. In this way he won the confidence of the Babylonians till they at length made him chief commander of their forces; whereupon he betrayed the city into the hands of his master. And that they might ever after be deterred from rebellion, Darius impaled three thousand of those who had been most active in the revolt, took away the brazen gates of the city, and beat down the walls from two hundred cubits to fifty cubits. This was the commencement of its destruction. By this act, it was left exposed to the ravages of every hostile band. Xerxes, on his return from Greece, plundered the temple of Belus of its immense wealth, and then laid the lofty structure in ruins. Alexander the Great endeavored to rebuild it; but after employing ten thousand men two months to clear away the rubbish, he died from excessive drunkenness and debauchery,

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and the work was suspended. In the year 294 B.C., Seleucus Nicator built the city of New Babylon in its neighborhood, and took much of the material and many of the inhabitants of the old city, to build up and people the new. Now almost exhausted of inhabitants, neglect and decay were telling fearfully upon the ancient city. The violence of Parthian princes hastened its ruin. About the end of the fourth century, it was used by the Persian kings as an enclosure for wild beasts. At the end of the twelfth century, according to a celebrated traveler, the few remaining ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace were so full of serpents and venomous reptiles that they could not, without great danger, be closely inspected. And to-day scarcely enough even of the ruins is left to mark the spot where once stood the largest, richest, and proudest city the world has ever seen. Thus the ruin of great Babylon shows us how accurately God will fulfill his word, and make the doubts of skepticism appear like wilful blindness.

"And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." The use of the word kingdom here, shows that kingdoms, and not particular kings are represented by the different parts of this image; and hence when it was said to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of gold," although the personal pronoun was used, the kingdom, not the person of the king, was meant.

The succeeding kingdom, Medo-Persia, is the one which answers to the breast and arms of silver of the great image. It was to be inferior to the preceding kingdom. In what respect inferior? Not in power; for it was its conqueror. Not in extent; for Cyrus subdued all the East from the Aegean Sea to the River Indus, and thus erected the most extensive empire that up to that time had ever existed. But it was inferior in wealth, luxury, and magnificence.

Viewed from a Scriptural standpoint, the principal event under the Babylonish empire was the captivity of the children of Israel; so the principal event under the Medo-Persian kingdom was the restoration of Israel to their own land. At the taking of Babylon, B.C.538, Cyrus, as an act of courtesy, assigned the first place in the kingdom to his uncle, Darius.

But two years afterward, B.C.536, Darius died; and in the same year also died Cambyses, king of Persia, Cyrus' father. By these events, Cyrus was left sole monarch of the whole empire. In this year, which closed Israel's seventy years of captivity, Cyrus issued his famous decree for the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of their temple. This was the first instalment of the great decree for the restoration and building again of Jerusalem (Ezra 6:14), which was completed in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, B.C.457, and marked, as will hereafter be shown, the commencement of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, the longest and most important prophetic period mentioned in the Bible. Dan.9:25.

After a reign of seven years, Cyrus left the kingdom to his son Cambyses, who reigned seven years and five months, to B.C.522. Eight monarchs, whose reigns varied from seven months to forty-six years each, took the throne in order till the year B.C.336, as follows: Smerdis the Magian, seven months, in the year B.C.522; Darius Hystaspes, from B.C.521 to 486; Xerxes from B.C.485 to 465; Artaxerxes Longimanus, from B.C.464 to 424; Darius Nothus, from B.C.423 to 405; Artaxerxes Mnemon, from B.C.404 to 359; Ochus, from B.C.358 to 338; Arses, from B.C.337 to 336. The year 335 is set down as the first of Darius Codomanus, the last of the line of the old Persian kings. This man, according to Prideaux, was of noble stature, of goodly person, of the greatest personal valor, and of a mild and generous disposition. Had he lived at any other age, a long and splendid career would undoubtedly have been his. But it was his ill-fortune to have to contend with one who was an agent in the fulfilment of prophecy; and no qualifications, natural or acquired, could render him successful in the unequal contest. "Scarcely was he warm upon the throne," says the last-named historian, "ere he found his formidable enemy, Alexander, at the head of the Greek soldiers, preparing to dismount him from it."

The cause and particulars of the contest between the Greeks and Persians we leave to histories specially devoted to such matters. Suffice it here to say that the deciding point was

reached on the field of Arbela, B.C. 331, in which the Grecians, though only twenty in number as compared with the Persians, were entirely victorious; and Alexander thenceforth became absolute lord of the Persian empire to the utmost extent that it was ever possessed by any of its own kings.

"And another third kingdom of brass shall bear rule over all the earth," said the prophet. So few and brief are the inspired words which involved in their fulfilment a change of the world's rulers. In the ever-changing political kaleidoscope, Grecia now comes into the field of vision, to be, for a time, the all-absorbing object of attention, as the third of what are called the great universal empires of the earth.

After the fatal battle which decided the fate of the empire, Darius still endeavored to rally the shattered remnants of his army, and make a stand for his kingdom and his rights. But he could not gather, out of all the host of his recently so numerous and well-appointed army, a force with which he deemed it prudent to hazard another engagement with the victorious Grecians. Alexander pursued him on the wings of the wind. Time after time did Darius barely elude the grasp of his swiftly following foe. At length two traitors, Bessus and Nabarzanes, seized the unfortunate prince, shut him up in a close cart, and fled with him as their prisoner toward Bactria. It was their purpose, if Alexander pursued them, to purchase their own safety by delivering up their king. Hereupon Alexander, learning of Darius's dangerous position in the hands of the traitors, immediately put himself with the lightest part of his army upon a forced pursuit. After several days' hard march, he came up with the traitors. They urged Darius to mount on horseback for a more speedy flight. Upon his refusing to do this, they

gave him several mortal wounds, and left him dying in his cart, while they mounted their steeds and rode away.

When Alexander came up, he beheld only the lifeless form of the Persian king. As he gazed upon the corpse, he might have learned a profitable lesson of the instability of human fortune. Here was a man who but a few months before, possessing many noble and generous qualities, was seated upon the throne of universal empire. Disaster, overthrow, and desertion

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had come suddenly upon him. His kingdom had been conquered, his treasure seized, and his family reduced to captivity. And now, brutally slain by the hand of traitors, he lay a bloody corpse in a rude cart. The sight of the melancholy spectacle drew tears even from the eyes of Alexander, familiar though he was with all the horrible vicissitudes and bloody scenes of war. Throwing his cloak over the body, he commanded it to be conveyed to the captive ladies of Susa, himself furnishing the necessary means for a royal funeral. For this generous act let us give him credit; for he stands sadly in need of all that is his due.

When Darius fell, Alexander saw the field cleared of his last formidable foe. Thenceforward he could spend his time in his own manner, now in the enjoyment of rest and pleasure, and again in the prosecution of some minor conquest. He entered upon a pompous campaign into India, because, according to Grecian fable, Bacchus and Hercules, two sons of Jupiter, whose son he also claimed to be, had done the same. With contemptible arrogance, he claimed for himself divine honors. He gave up conquered cities, freely and unprovoked, to the absolute mercy of his blood-thirsty and licentious soldiery. He himself often murdered his own friends and favorites in his drunken frenzies. He sought out the vilest persons for the gratification of his lust. At the instigation of a dissolute and drunken woman, he, with a company of his courtiers, all in a state of frenzied intoxication, sallied out, torch in hand, and fired the city and palace of Persepolis, one of the then finest palaces in the world. He encouraged such excessive drinking among his followers that on one occasion twenty of them together died as the result of their carousal. At length, having sat through one long drinking spree, he was immediately invited to another, when after drinking to each of the twenty guests present, he twice drank full, says history incredible as it may seem, the Herculean cup containing six of our quarts. he thereupon fell down, seized with a violent fever, of which he died eleven days later, in May or June, B.C. 323, while yet he stood only at the threshold of mature life, in the thirty-second year of his age.

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The progress of the Grecian empire we need not stop to trace here, since its distinguishing features will claim more particular notice under other prophecies. Daniel thus continues in his interpretation of the great image: -

"VERSE 40. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these things, shall it break in pieces and bruise."

Thus far in the applications of this prophecy there is a general agreement among expositors. That Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Grecia are represented respectively by the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, and sides of brass, is acknowledged by all. But with just as little ground for diversity of

views, there is strangely a difference of opinion as to what kingdom is symbolized by the fourth division of the great image, - the legs of iron. On this point we have only to inquire, What kingdom did succeed Grecia in the empire of the world? for the legs of iron denote the fourth kingdom in the series. The testimony of history is full and explicit on this point. One kingdom did this, and one only, and that was Rome. It conquered Grecia; it subdued all things; like iron, it broke in pieces and bruised. Gibbon, following the symbolic imagery of Daniel, thus describes this empire: -

"The arms of the Republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and 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."

At the opening of the Christian era, this empire took in the whole south of Europe, France, England, the greater part of the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the south of Germany, Hungary, Turkey, and Greece, not to speak of its possessions in Asia and Africa. Well, therefore, may Gibbon say of it: -

"The empire of the Romans filled the world. And when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. To resist was fatal; and it was impossible to fly."

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It will be noticed that at first the kingdom is described unqualifiedly as strong as iron. And this was the period of its strength, during which it has been likened to a mighty Colossus, bestriding the nations, conquering everything, and giving laws to the world. But this was not to continue.

"VERSE 41. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken."

The element of weakness symbolized by the clay, pertained to the feet as well as to the toes. Rome, before its division into ten kingdoms, lost that iron tenacity which it possessed to a superlative degree during the first centuries of its career. Luxury, with its accompanying effeminacy and degeneracy, the destroyer of nations as well as of individuals, began to corrode and weaken its iron sinews, and thus prepared the way for its subsequent disruption into ten kingdoms.

The iron legs of the image terminate, to maintain the consistency of the figure, in feet and toes. To the toes, of which there were of course just ten, our attention is called by the explicit mention of them in the prophecy; and the kingdom represented by that portion of the image to which the toes belonged, was finally divided into ten parts. The question there naturally arises, Do the ten toes of the image represent the ten final divisions of the Roman empire? To those who prefer what seems to be a natural and straightforward interpretation of the word of God, it is a matter of no little astonishment that any question here should be raised. To take the ten toes to represent the ten kingdoms into which Rome was divided seems like such an easy, consistent, and matter-of-course procedure, that it requires a labored effort to interpret it otherwise. Yet such an effort is made by some - by Romanists universally, and by such Protestants as still cling to Romish errors.

A volume by H. Cowles, D.D., may perhaps best be taken as a representative exposition on this side of the question.

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The writer gives every evidence of extensive erudition and great ability. It is the more to be regretted, therefore, that these powers are devoted to the propagation of error, and to misleading the anxious inquirer who wishes to know his whereabouts on the great highway of time.

We can but briefly notice his positions. They are, (1) That the third kingdom was Grecia during the lifetime of Alexander only; (2) That the fourth kingdom was Alexander's successors; (3) That the latest point to which the fourth kingdom could extend, is the manifestation of the Messiah: for (4) There the God of heaven set up his kingdom; there the stone smote the image upon its feet, and commenced the process of grinding it up.

Nor can we reply at any length to these positions.

1. We might as well confine the Babylonian empire to the single reign of Nebuchadnezzar, or that of Persia to the reign of Cyrus, as to confine the third kingdom, Grecia, to the reign of Alexander.

2. Alexander's successors did not constitute another kingdom, but a continuation of the same, the Grecian kingdom of the image; for in this line of prophecy the succession of kingdoms is by conquest. When Persia had conquered Babylon, we had the second empire; and when Grecia had conquered Persia, we had the third. But Alexander's successors (his four leading generals) did not conquer his empire, and erect another in its place; they simply divided among themselves the empire which Alexander had conquered, and left ready to their hand.

"Chronologically," says Professor C., "the fourth empire must immediately succeed Alexander, and lie entirely between him and the birth of Christ." Chronologically, we reply, it must do no such thing; for the birth of Christ was not the introduction of the fifth kingdom, as will in due time appear. Here he overlooks almost the entire duration of the third diversion of the image, confounding it with the fourth, and giving no room for the divided state of the Grecian empire as symbolized by the four heads of the leopard of chapter 7, and the four horns of the goat of chapter 8.

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"Territorially," continues Professor C., "it [the fourth kingdom] should be sought in Western Asia, not in Europe; in general, on the same territory where the first, second, and third kingdoms stood." Why not Europe? we ask. Each of the first three kingdoms possessed territory which was peculiarly its own. Why not the fourth? Analogy requires that it should. And was not the third kingdom a European kingdom? that is, did it not rise on European territory, and take its name for the land of its birth? Why not, then, go a degree farther west for the place where the fourth great kingdom should be founded? And how did Grecia ever occupy the territory of the first and second kingdoms? - Only by conquest. And Rome did the same. Hence, so far as the territorial requirements of the professor's theory are concerned, Rome could be the fourth kingdom as truthfully as Grecia could be the third.

"Politically," he adds, "it should be the immediate successor of Alexander's empire, ...changing the dynasty, but not the nations." Analogy is against him here. Each of the first three kingdoms was distinguished by its own peculiar nationality. The Persian was not the same as the Babylonian, nor the Grecian the same as either of the two that preceded it. Now analogy requires that the fourth kingdom, instead of being composed of a fragment of this Grecian empire, should possess a nationality of its own, distinct from the other three. And this we find in the Roman kingdom, and in it alone. But,

3. The grand fallacy which underlies this whole system of misinterpretation, is the too commonly taught theory that the kingdom of God was set up at the first advent of Christ. It can easily be seen how fatal to this theory is the admission that the fourth empire is Rome. For it was to be after the diversion of that fourth empire, that the God of heaven was to set up his kingdom. But the division of the Roman empire into ten parts was not accomplished previous to A.D. 476; consequently the kingdom of God could not have been set up at the first advent of Christ, nearly five hundred years before that date. Rome must not, therefore, from their standpoint, though it answers admirably to the prophecy in every particular, be allowed to

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be the kingdom in question. The position that the kingdom of God was set up in the days when Christ was upon earth, must, these interpreters seem to think, be maintained at all hazards.

Such is the ground on which some expositors appear, at least, to reason. And it is for the purpose of maintaining this theory that our author dwindles down the third great empire of the world to the insignificant period of about eight years! For this, he endeavors to prove that the fourth universal empire was bearing full sway during a period when the providence of God was simply filling up the outlines of the third! For this, he presumes to fix the points of time between which we must look for the fourth, though the prophecy does not deal in dates at all, and then whatever kingdom he finds within his specified time, that he sets down as the fourth kingdom, and endeavors to bend the prophecy to fit his interpretation, utterly regardless of how much better material he might find outside of his little inclosure, to answer to a fulfilment of the prophetic record. Is such a course logical? Is the time the point to be first established? - No; the kingdoms are the great features of the prophecy, and we are to look for them; and when we find them, we must accept them, whatever may be the chronology or location. Let them govern the time and place, not the time and place govern them.

But that view which is the cause of all this misapplication and confusion is sheer assumption. Christ did not smite the image at his first advent. Look at it! When the stone smites the image upon its feet, the image is dashed in pieces. Violence is used. The effect is immediate. The image becomes as chaff. And then what? Is it absorbed by the stone, and gradually incorporated with it? - Nothing of the kind. It is blown off, removed away, as incompatible and unavailable material; and no place is found for it. The territory is entirely cleared; and then the stone becomes a mountain, and fills the whole earth. Now what idea shall we attach to this work of smiting and breaking in pieces? Is it a gentle, peaceful, and quiet work? or is it a manifestation of vengeance and violence? How did the kingdoms of the prophecy succeed the one to the

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other? - It was through the violence and din of war, the shock of armies and the roar of battle. "Confused noise and garments rolled in blood," told of the force and violence with which one nation had been brought into subjection by another. Yet all this is not called "smiting" or "breaking in pieces."

When Persia conquered Babylon, and Greece Persia, neither of the conquered empires is said to have been broken in pieces, though crushed beneath the overwhelming power of a hostile nation. But when we reach the introduction of the fifth kingdom, the image is smitten with violence; it is dashed to pieces, and so scattered and obliterated that no place is found for it. And now what shall we understand by this? - We must understand that here a scene transpires in which is manifested so much more violence and force and power than accompany the overthrow of one nation by another through the strife of war, that the latter is not worthy even of mention in connection with it. The subjugation of one nation by another by war, is a scene of peace and quietude in comparison with that which transpires when the image is dashed in pieces by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands.

Yet what is the smiting of the image made to mean by the theory under notice? - Oh, the peaceful introduction of the gospel of Christ! the quiet spreading abroad of the light of truth! the gathering out of a few from the nations of the earth, to be made ready through obedience to the truth, for his second coming, and reign! the calm and unpretending formation of a Christian church, - a church that has been domineered over, persecuted, and oppressed by the arrogant and triumphant powers of earth from that day to this! And this is the smiting of the image! this is the breaking of it into pieces, and violently removing the shattered fragments from the face of the earth! Was ever absurdity more absurd?

From this digression we return to the inquiry, Do the toes represent the ten divisions of the Roman empire? We answer, Yes; because, -

1. The image of chapter 2 is exactly parallel with the vision of the four beasts of chapter 7. The fourth beast of chapter 7 represents the same as the iron legs of the image.

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The ten horns of the beast, of course, correspond very naturally to the ten toes of the image; and these horns are plainly declared to be ten kings which should arise; and they are just as much independent kingdoms as are the beasts themselves; for the beasts are spoken of in precisely the same manner; namely, as "four kings which should arise." Verse 17. They do not denote a line of successive kings, but kings or kingdoms which exist contemporaneously; for three of them were plucked up by the little horn. The ten horns, beyond controversy, represent the ten kingdoms into which Rome was divided.

2. We have seen that in Daniel's interpretation of the image he uses the words /king// and /kingdom// interchangeably, the former denoting the same as the latter. In verse 44 he says that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." This shows that at the time the kingdom of God is set up, there will be a plurality of kings existing contemporaneously. It cannot refer to the four preceding kingdoms; for it would be absurd to use such language in reference to a line of successive kings, since it would be in the days of the last king only, not in the days of any of the preceding, that the kingdom of God would be set up.

Here, then, is a division presented; and what have we in the symbol to indicate it? - Nothing but the toes of the image. Unless they do it, we are left utterly in the the dark as to the nature and extent of the division which the prophecy shows did exist. To suppose this would be to cast a serious imputation upon the prophecy itself. We are therefore held to the conclusion that the ten toes of the image denote the ten parts into which the Roman empire was divided.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This division was accomplished between the years A.D.351 and A.D.476. The era of this dissolution thus covered a hundred and twenty-five years, from about the middle of the fourth century to the last quarter of the fifth. No historians of whom we are aware, place the beginning of this work of the dismemberment of the Roman empire earlier than A.D.351, and there is general agreement in assigning its close in A.D.476. Concerning the intermediate dates, that is, the precise time from which each of the ten kingdoms that arose on the ruins of the Roman empire is to be dated, there is some difference of views among historians. Nor does this seem strange, when we consider that there was an era of great confusion, that the map of the Roman empire during that time underwent many sudden and violent changes, and that the paths of hostile nations charging upon its territory, crossed and recrossed each other in a labyrinth of confusion. But all historians agree in this, that out of the territory of Western Rome, ten separate kingdoms were ultimately established, and we may safely assign them to the time between the dates above named; namely, A.D.351 and 476.

The ten nations which were most instrumental in breaking up the Roman empire, and which at some time in their history held respectively portions of Roman territory as separate and independent kingdoms, may be enumerated (without respect to the time of their establishment) as follows: The Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruli, Anglo- Saxons, and Lombards. The connection between these and some of the modern nations of Europe, is still traceable in the names, as England, Burgundy, Lombardy, France, etc. Such authorities as Calmet, Faber, Lloyd, Hales, Scott, Barnes, etc., concur in the foregoing enumeration. (See Barnes's concluding notes on Daniel 7.)

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As an objection to the view that the ten toes of the image denote the ten kingdoms, we are sometimes reminded that Rome, before its division into ten kingdoms, was divided into two parts, the Western and Eastern empires, corresponding to the two legs of the image; and as the ten kingdoms all arose out of the western division, if they are denoted by the toes, we would have, it is claimed, ten toes on one foot of the image, and none on the other; which would be unnatural and inconsistent.

But this objection devours itself; for certainly if the two legs denote division, the toes must denote division also. It would be inconsistent to say that the legs symbolize division, but the toes do not. But if the toes do indicate division at all, it can be nothing but the division of Rome into ten parts.

The fallacy, however, which forms the basis of this objection, is the view that the two legs of the image do signify the separation of the Roman empire into its eastern and western divisions. To this view there are several objections.

1. The two legs of iron symbolize Rome, not merely during its closing years, but from the very beginning of its existence as a nation; and if these legs denote division, the kingdom should have been divided from the very commencement of its history. This claim is sustained by the other symbols. Thus the division (that is, the two elements) of the Persian kingdom, denoted by the two horns of the ram (Dan.8:20), also by the elevation of the bear upon one side (Dan.7:5), and perhaps by the two arms of the image of this chapter, existed from the first. The division of the Grecian kingdom, denoted by the four horns of the goat and the four heads of the leopard, dates back to within eight years of the time when it was introduced into prophecy. So Rome should have been divided from the first, if the legs denote division, instead of remaining a unit for nearly six hundred years, and separating into its eastern

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and western divisions only a few years prior to its final disruption into ten kingdoms.

2. No such division into two great parts is denoted by the other symbols under which Rome is represented in the book of Daniel; namely, the great and terrible beast of Daniel 7, and the little horn of chapter 8. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that the two legs of the image were not designed to represent such a division.

But it may be asked, Why not suppose the two legs to denote division as well as the toes? Would it not be just as inconsistent to say that the toes denote division, and the legs do not, as to say that the legs denote division, and the toes do not? We answer that the prophecy itself must govern our conclusions in this matter; and whereas it says nothing of division in connection with the legs, it does introduce the subject of division as we come down to the feet and toes. It says, "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided." No division could take place, or at least none is said to have taken place, till the weakening element of the clay is introduced; and we do not find this till we come to the feet and toes. But we are not to understand that the clay denotes one division and the iron the other; for after the long-existing unity of the kingdom was broken, no one of the fragments was as strong as the original iron, but all were in a state of weakness denoted by the mixture of iron and clay. The conclusion is inevitable, therefore, that the prophet has here stated the cause for the effect. The introduction of the weakness of the clay element, as we come to the feet, resulted in the division of the kingdom into ten parts, as represented by the ten toes; and this result, or division, is more than intimated in the sudden mention of a plurality of contemporaneous kings. Therefore, while we find no evidence that the legs denote division, but serious objections against such a view, we do find, we think, good reason for supposing that the toes denote division, as here claimed.

3. Each of the four monarchies had its own particular territory, which was the kingdom proper, and where we are to

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look for the chief events in its history shadowed forth by the symbol. We are not, therefore, to look for the divisions of the Roman empire in the territory formerly occupied by Babylon, or Persia, or Grecia, but in the territory proper of the Roman kingdom, which was what was finally known as the Western empire. Rome conquered the world; but the kingdom of Rome proper lay west of Grecia. That is what was represented by the legs of iron. There, then, we look for the ten kingdoms; and there we find them. We are not obliged to mutilate or deform the symbol to make it a fit and accurate representation of historical events.

"VERSE 43. And whereas thou sawest 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."

With Rome fell the last of the universal empires belonging to the world in its present state. Heretofore the elements of society had been such that it was possible for one nation, rising superior to its neighbors in prowess, bravery, and the science of war, to attach them one after another to its chariot wheels till all were consolidated into one vast empire, and one man seated upon the dominant throne could send forth his will as law to all the nations of the earth. When Rome fell, such possibilities forever passed away. Crushed beneath the weight of its own vast proportions, it crumbled to pieces, never to be united again. The iron was mixed with the clay. Its elements lost the power of cohesion, and no man or combination of men can again consolidate them. This point is so well set forth by another that we take pleasure in quoting his words: -

"From this, its divided state, the first strength of the empire departed; but not as that of the others had done. No other kingdom was to succeed it, as it had the three which went before it. It was to continue in this tenfold division, until the kingdom of stone smote it upon its feet, broke them in pieces, and scattered them as the wind does the chaff of the summer threshing-floor! Yet, through all this time, a portion of its strength was to remain. And so the prophet says, 'And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.'

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"Verse 42. How in any other way could you so strikingly represent the facts? For more than fourteen hundred years, this tenfold division has existed. Time and again men have dreamed of rearing on these dominions one mighty kingdom. Charlemagne tried it. Charles V tried it. Louis XIV tried it. Napoleon tried it. But none succeeded. A single verse of prophecy was stronger than all their hosts. Their own power was wasted, frittered away, destroyed. But the ten kingdoms did not become one. 'Partly

strong, and partly broken,' was the prophetic description. And such, too, has been the historic fact concerning them. With the book of history open before you, I ask you, Is not this an exact representation of the remnants of this once mighty empire? It ruled with unlimited power. It was the throned mistress of the world. Its scepter was broken; its throne pulled down; its power taken away. Ten kingdoms were formed out of it; and 'broken' as then it was, it still continues; i.e., 'partly broken;' for its dimensions still continue as when the kingdom of iron stood upright upon its feet. And then it is 'partly strong;' i.e., it retains, even in its broken state, enough of its iron strength to resist all attempts to mold its parts together. 'This shall not be,' says the word of God. 'This has not been,' replies the book of history.

"But then,' men may say, 'another plan remains. If force cannot avail, diplomacy and reasons of state may; we will try them.' And so the prophecy foreshadows this when it says, 'They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men;' i.e., marriages shall be formed, in hope thus to consolidate their power, and, in the end, to unite these divided kingdoms into one.

"And shall this device succeed? - No. The prophet answers: 'They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.' And the history of Europe is but a running commentary on the exact fulfilment of these words. From the time of Canute to the present age, it has been the policy of reigning monarchs, the beaten path which they have trodden in order to reach a mightier scepter and a wider sway. And the most signal instance of it which history has recorded

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in our own day, is in the case of Napoleon. He ruled in one of the kingdoms.... He sought to gain by alliance what he could not gain by force; i.e., to build up one mighty, consolidated empire. And did he succeed? - Nay. The very power with which he was allied, proved his destruction, in the troops of Blucher, on the field of Waterloo! The iron would not mingle with clay. The ten kingdoms continue still.

"And yet, if as the result of these alliances or of other causes, that number is sometimes disturbed, it need not surprise us. It is, indeed, just what the prophecy seems to call for. The iron was 'mixed with the clay.' For a season, in the image, you might not distinguish between them. But they would not remain so. 'They shall not cleave one to another.' The nature of the substances forbids them to do so in the one case; the word of prophecy in the other. Yet there was to be an attempt to mingle - nay, more, there was an approach to mingling in both cases. But it was to be abortive. And how marked the emphasis with which history affirms this declaration of the word of God!" - Wm. Newton, Lectures on the First Two Visions of the Book of Daniel, pp.34-36.

Yet with all these facts before them, asserting the irresistible power of God's providence through the overturnings and changes of centuries, the efforts of warriors, and the diplomacy and intrigues of courts and kings, some modern expositors have manifested such a marvelous misapprehension of this prophecy as to predict a future universal kingdom, and point to a European ruler, even now of waning years and declining prestige, as the "destined monarch of the world." Vain is the breath they spend in promulgating such a theory, and delusive the hopes or fears they may succeed in raising over such an expectation.<sup>1</sup>

"VERSE 44. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without

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<sup>1</sup> Shortly after this language was penned, Napoleon III, this "destined monarch of the world" was dethroned, and died in ignominious retirement, and his son and heir has since fallen by the hands of savages in Africa.

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hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

We here reach the climax of this stupendous prophecy; and when Time in his onward flight shall bring us to the sublime scene here predicted, we shall have reached the end of human history.

The kingdom of God! Grand provision for a new and glorious dispensation, in which his people shall find a happy terminus of this world's sad, degenerate, and changing career. Transporting change for all the righteous, from gloom to glory, from strife to peace, from a sinful to a holy world, from death to life, from tyranny and oppression to the happy freedom and blessed privileges of a heavenly kingdom! Glorious transition, from weakness to strength, from the changing and decaying to the immutable and eternal!

But when is this kingdom to be established? May we hope for an answer to an inquiry of such momentous concern to our race? These are the very questions on which the word of God does not leave us in ignorance; and herein is seen the surpassing value of this heavenly boon. We do not say that the exact time is revealed (we emphasize the fact that it is not) either in this or in any other prophecy; but so near an approximation is given that the generation which is to see the establishment of this kingdom may mark its approach unerringly, and make that preparation which will entitle them to share in all its glories.

As already explained, we are brought down by verses 41-43 this side of the division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms; which division was accomplished, as already noticed, between 351 and 476. The kings, or kingdoms, in the days of which the God of heaven is to set up his kingdom, are evidently those kingdoms which arose out of the Roman empire. Then the kingdom of God here brought to view could not have been set up, as some claim it was, in connection with the first advent of Christ, four hundred and fifty years before. But whether we apply this division to the ten kingdoms or not, it is certain that some kind of division was to take place in

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the Roman empire before the kingdom of God should be set up; for the prophecy expressly declares, "The kingdom shall be divided." And this is equally fatal to the popular view; for after the unification of the first elements of the Roman power down to the days of Christ, there was no division of the kingdom; nor during his days, nor for many years after, did any such thing take place. The civil wars were not divisions of the empire; they were only the efforts of individuals worshipping at the shrine of ambition, to obtain supreme control of the empire. The occasional petty revolts of distant provinces, suppressed as with the power, and almost with the speed, of a thunderbolt, did not constitute a division of the kingdom. And these are all that can be pointed to as interfering with the unity of the kingdom, for more than three hundred years this side of the days of Christ. This one consideration is sufficient to disprove forever the view that the kingdom of God, which constitutes the fifth kingdom of this series as brought to view in Daniel 2, was set up at the commencement of the Christian era. But a thought more may be in place.

1. This fifth kingdom, then, could not have been set up at Christ's first advent, because it is not to exist contemporaneously with earthly governments, but to succeed them. As the second kingdom succeeded the first, the third the second, and the fourth the third, by violence and overthrow, so the fifth succeeds the fourth. It does not exist at the same time with it. The fourth kingdom is first destroyed, the fragments are removed, the territory is cleared, and then the fifth is established as a succeeding kingdom in the order of time. But the church has existed contemporaneously with earthly governments ever since earthly governments were formed. There was a church in Abel's day, in Enoch's, in Noah's, in Abraham's, and so on to the present. No; the church is not the stone that smote the image upon its feet. It existed too early in point of time, and the work in which it is engaged is not that of smiting and overthrowing earthly governments.

2. The fifth kingdom is introduced by the stone smiting the image. What part of the image does the stone smite? - The feet and toes. But these were not developed until

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four centuries and a half after the crucifixion of Christ. The image was, at the time of the crucifixion, only developed to the thighs, so to speak; and if the kingdom of God was there set up, if there the stone smote the image, it smote it upon the thighs, not upon the feet, where the prophecy places the smiting.

3. The stone that smites the image is cut out of the mountain without hands. The margin reads, "Which was not in hand." This shows that the smiting is not done by an agent acting for another, not by the church, for instance, in the hands of Christ; but it is a work which the Lord does by his own divine power, without any human agency.

4. Again, the kingdom of God is placed before the church as a matter of hope. The Lord did not teach his disciples a prayer which in two or three years was to become obsolete. The petition may as appropriately ascend from the lips of the patient, waiting flock in these last days, as from the lips of his first disciples, "Thy kingdom come."

5. We have plain Scripture declarations to establish the following propositions: (1) The kingdom was still future at the time of our Lord's last Passover. Matt.26:29. (2) Christ did not set it up before his ascension. Acts 1:6. (3) Flesh and blood cannot inherit it. 1Cor.15:50. (4) It is a matter of promise to the apostles, and to all those that love God. James 2:5. (5) It is promised in the future to the little flock. Luke 12:32. (6) Through much tribulation the saints are to enter therein. Acts 14:22. (7) It is to be set up when Christ shall judge the living and the dead. 2Tim.4:1. (8) This is to be when he shall come in his glory with all his holy angels. Matt.25:31-34.

As militating against the foregoing view, it may be asked if the expression, "Kingdom of heaven," is not, in the New Testament, applied to the church. In some instances it may be; but in others as evidently it cannot be. In the decisive texts referred to above, which show that it was still a matter of promise even after the church was fully established, that mortality cannot inherit it, and that it is to be set up only in connection with the coming of our Lord to judgment, the reference

cannot be to any state or organization here upon earth. The object we have before us is to ascertain what constitutes the kingdom of Dan.2:44; and we have seen that the prophecy utterly forbids our applying it there to the church, inasmuch as by the terms of the prophecy itself we are prohibited from looking for that kingdom till over four hundred years after the crucifixion of Christ and the establishment of the gospel church. Therefore if in some expressions in the New Testament the word "kingdom" can be found applying to the work of God's grace, or the spread of the gospel, it cannot in such instances be the kingdom mentioned in Daniel. That can only be the future literal kingdom of Christ's glory, so often brought to view in both the Old Testament and the New.

It may be objected again, that when the stone smites the image, the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold are broken to pieces together; hence the stone must have smitten the image when all these parts were in existence. In reply we ask, What is meant by their being broken to pieces together? Does the expression mean that the same persons who constituted the kingdom of gold would be alive when the image was dashed to pieces? - No; else the image covers but the duration of a single generation. Does it mean that that would be a ruling kingdom? - No; for there is a succession of kingdoms down to the fourth. On the supposition, then, that the fifth kingdom was set up at the first advent, in what sense were the brass, silver, and gold in existence then any more than at the present day? Does it refer to the time of the second resurrection, when all these wicked nations will be raised to life? - No; for the destruction of earthly governments in this present state, which is here symbolized by the smiting of the image, certainly takes place at the end of this dispensation; and in the second resurrection national distinctions will be no more known.

No objection really exists in the point under consideration; for all the kingdoms symbolized by the image are, in a certain sense, still in existence. Chaldea and Assyria are still the first divisions of

the image; Media and Persia, the second; Macedonia, Greece, Thrace, Asia Minor, and Egypt, the third. Political

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life and dominion, it is true, have passed from one to the other, till, so far as the image is concerned, it is all now concentrated in the divisions of the fourth kingdom; but the other, in location and substance, though without dominion, are still there; and together all will be dashed to pieces when the fifth kingdom is introduced.

It may still further be asked, by way of objection, Have not the ten kingdoms, in the days of which the kingdom of God was to be set up, all passed away? and as the kingdom of God is not yet set up, has not the prophecy, according to the view here advocated, proved a failure? We answer: Those kingdoms have not yet passed away. We are yet in the days of those kings. The following illustration from Dr. Nelson's "Cause and Cure of Infidelity," pp.374,375, will set this matter in a clear light: -

"Suppose some feeble people should be suffering from the almost constant invasions of numerous and ferocious enemies. Suppose some powerful and benevolent prince sends them word that he will, for a number of years, say thirty, maintain, for their safety along the frontier, ten garrisons, each to contain one hundred well-armed men. Suppose the forts are built and remain a few years, when two of them are burned to the ground and rebuilt without delay; has there been any violation of the sovereign's word? - No; there was no material interruption in the continuance of the walls of strength; and, furthermore, the most important part of the safeguard was still there. Again, suppose the monarch sends and has two posts of strength demolished, but, adjoining the spot where these stood, and immediately, he has other two buildings erected, more capacious and more desirable; does the promise still stand good? We answer in the affirmative, and we believe no one would differ with us. Finally, suppose, in addition to the ten garrisons, it could be shown that for several months during the thirty years, one more had been maintained there; that for one or two years out of the thirty, there had been there eleven instead of ten fortifications; shall we call it a defeat or a failure of the original undertaking? Or shall any seeming interruptions, such as have been stated, destroy the propriety of

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our calling these the ten garrisons of the frontier? The answer is, No, without dispute.

"So it is, and has been, respecting the ten kingdoms of Europe once under Roman scepter. They have been there for twelve hundred and sixty years. If several have had their names changed according to the caprice of him who conquered, this change of name did not destroy existence. If others have had their territorial limits changed, the nation was still there. If others have fallen while successors were forming in their room, the ten horns were still there. If, during a few years out of a thousand, there were more than ten, if some temporary power reared its head, seeming to claim a place with the rest and soon disappeared, it has not caused the beast to have less than ten horns."

Scott remarks: -

"It is certain that the Roman empire was divided into ten kingdoms; and though they might be sometimes more sometimes fewer, yet they were still known by the name of the ten kingdoms of the Western empire."

Thus the subject is cleared of all difficulty. Time has fully developed this great image in all its parts. Most strictly does it represent the important political events it was designed to symbolize. It stands complete upon its feet. Thus it has been standing for over fourteen hundred years. It waits to be smitten upon the feet by the stone cut out of the mountain without hand, that is, the kingdom of Christ. This is to be accomplished when the Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (See Ps.2:8,9.) In the days



of these kings the God of heaven is to set up a kingdom. We have been in the days of these kings for over fourteen centuries, and we are still in their days. So far as this prophecy is concerned, the very next event is the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom. Other prophecies and innumerable signs show unmistakably its immediate proximity.

The coming kingdom! This ought to be the all-absorbing topic with the present generation. Reader, are you ready for the issue? He who enters this kingdom enters it not merely

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for such a lifetime as men live in this present state, not to see it degenerate, not to see it overthrown by a succeeding and more powerful kingdom; but he enters it to participate in all its privileges and blessings, and to share its glories forever; for this kingdom is not to "be left to other people." Again we ask you, Are you ready? The terms of heirship are most liberal: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Are you on terms of friendship with Christ, the coming King? Do you love his character? Are you trying to walk humbly in his footsteps, and obey his teachings? If not, read your fate in the cases of those in the parable, of whom it was said, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." There is to be no rival kingdom where you can find an asylum if you remain an enemy to this; for this is to occupy all the territory ever possessed by any and all of the kingdoms of this world, past or present. It is to fill the whole earth. Happy they to whom the rightful Sovereign, the all-conquering King, at last can say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"VERSE 46. Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshiped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him. 47. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. 48. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. 49. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the the king."

We have dwelt quite at length on the interpretation of the dream, which Daniel made known to the Chaldean monarch. From this we must now return to the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, and to Daniel, as he stands in the presence of the king, having made known to him the dream and the interpretation thereof, while the courtiers and the baffled soothsayers and astrologers wait around in silent awe and wonder.

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It might be expected that an ambitious monarch, raised to the highest earthly throne, and in the full flush of uninterrupted success, would scarcely brook to be told that his kingdom, which he no doubt fondly hoped would endure through all time, was to be overthrown by another people. Yet Daniel plainly and boldly made known this fact to the king, and the king, so far from being offended, fell upon his face before the prophet of God, and offered him worship. Daniel doubtless immediately countermanded the orders the king issued to pay him divine honors. That Daniel had some communication with the king which is not here recorded, is evident from verse 47: "The king answered unto Daniel," etc. And it may be still further inferred that Daniel labored to turn the king's feelings of reverence from himself to the God of heaven, inasmuch as the king replies, "Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings."

Then the king made Daniel a great man. There are two things which in this life are specially supposed to make a man great, and both these Daniel received from the king: (1) Riches. A man is considered great if he is a man of wealth; and we read that the king gave him many and great gifts. (2) Power. If in conjunction with riches a man has power, certainly in popular estimation he is considered a great man; and power was bestowed upon Daniel in abundant measure. He was made ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

Thus speedily and abundantly did Daniel begin to be rewarded for his fidelity to his own conscience and the requirements of God. So great was Balaam's desire for the presents of a certain heathen king, that he endeavored to obtain them in spite of the Lord's expressed will to the contrary, and thus signally failed. Daniel did not act with a view to obtaining these presents; yet by maintaining his integrity with the Lord they were given abundantly into his hands. His advancement, both with respect to wealth and power, was a matter of no small moment with him, as it enabled him to be of service to his fellow-countrymen less favored than himself in their long captivity.

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Daniel did not become bewildered nor intoxicated by his signal victory and his wonderful advancement. He first remembers the three who were companions with him in anxiety respecting the king's matter; and as they had helped him with their prayers, he determined that they should share with him in his honors. At his request they were placed over the affairs of Babylon, while Daniel himself sat in the gate of the king. The gate was the place where councils were held, and matters of chief moment were deliberated upon. The record is a simple declaration that Daniel became chief counselor to the king.