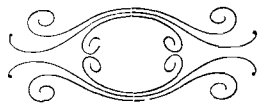


out his hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people. And as he spoke by the mouth of Jeremiah, so will he do by Israel, and by all people. The Lord Jesus said directly to the Jews: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. 21:43. The words of the forerunner of Christ to the Jews were: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. 3:9. It is not accident of birth which finds favor with God, it is not because of honoured ancestors that his blessing abides with us. He prizes above all things "the upright heart and pure," and his blessing abides with those whose characters are forming by faith in Jesus Christ according to his revealed will. And all will find their labour vain who try to make void the word of the Lord.



CHAPTER VII.

THE KINGDOM AND THE KING.

God made the earth to be inhabited by the children of men. Isa. 45:18; Ps. 115:16. When the intention was expressed to make man, it was said: "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Gen. 1:26. More may have been implied than is here expressed. There is order in Heaven; some are appointed to higher stations than others, but all is harmony, for all delight to do the will of their Creator. When the earth is freed from the curse, there will be different orders among the children of men. Rev. 21:24. How natural to suppose that, had Adam remained innocent, as the earth was filled with his posterity, great respect would always have been shown to him, the head of the race. But now that glory and honour will be borne by the second Adam.

In addition to the gift of the land, and the blessing of the nations, the Lord said to Abraham: "And kings shall come out of thee." Gen. 17:6. The same words were repeated to Jacob. Gen. 35:11. And the idea of royalty is incorporated into the covenant at Horeb. "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests." Ex. 19:6.

In the days of Samuel the prophet the people asked for a king. The motive that actuated them was not good; they wanted a king that they might be like all the nations. 1 Sam. 8:19, 20. The Lord had given directions for their conduct, with a view to keeping them separate from, and unlike, the nations. He was their ruler, their guide, and protector. Doubtless the heathen who knew not God, held them in derision

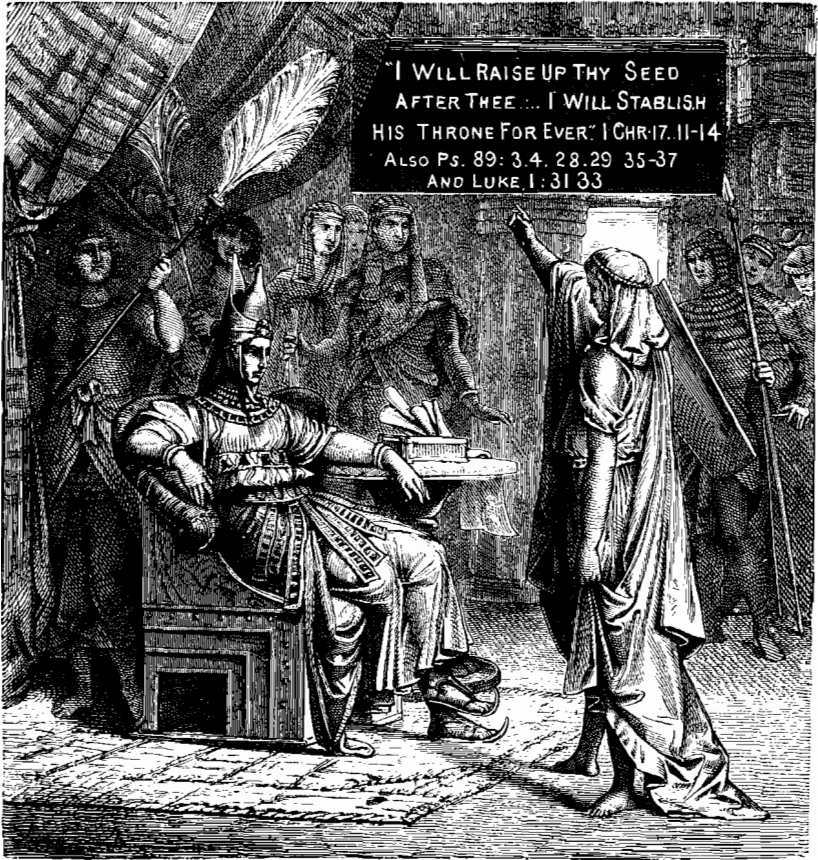
because they had no king, no visible ruler; and this may have had an ill effect upon them. But God, while he disapproved of their request, listened to them, only reserving to himself the right to choose their king for them. He did not resign the right to rule over them; he was still their actual sovereign, guiding and directing their kings in the government of the kingdom.

Samuel was directed to anoint Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. When Saul had reigned sixteen years, he disobeyed the word of the Lord, who had before appointed Amalek to utter destruction for their sins. Ex. 17:8-14; Deut. 25:17-19. Therefore the Lord rejected Saul, and took the kingdom from his house. Samuel was sent to Bethlehem, and there anointed David, the youngest son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah. This was about seven years before the end of Saul's reign. In the year 1055, B. C., David was made king over Judah, and reigned in Hebron seven years. At the end of that period all Israel sought after him, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years.

In the thirteenth year of his reign, David expressed his intention to build a house for the ark of the Lord, which had always rested under curtains from the time the tabernacle was made by Moses in the desert of Arabia. But the Lord would not suffer him to build a temple to his name, because he had been engaged in many wars; but the promise was then made that his seed should build a house for the Lord, and should be established upon his throne forever. The language of the promise was very expressive:—

“I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son; and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee; but I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forevermore.” 1 Chron. 17:11-14.

Thus the Lord said to David, he shall be thy seed and my son. As in the promise in Gen. 3:15, and also in that to Abraham, we shall find in this to David, that this promise to his seed does not refer to his posterity in general, nor to his



"I WILL RAISE UP THY SEED
AFTER THEE ... I WILL STABLISH
HIS THRONE FOR EVER." I CHR. 17. 11-14
ALSO PS. 89: 3. 4. 28. 29 35-37
AND LUKE. 1: 31 33

DAVID ON HIS THRONE.

immediate son, but to one remote, namely, to Christ. He alone is at once the seed of David and the Son of God.

But even as the children of Israel possessed the land of Canaan, so Solomon built a temple for the sanctuary of God. This, of course, was a type of the real temple, "the true tabernacle" (Heb. 8:2), which the seed of promise was to build.

This promise, dwelt upon in Ps. 89, is as follows:—

"I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations." "His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of Heaven." "His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me." Ps. 89:3, 4, 29, 36.

Solomon enjoyed a peaceable reign of forty years, but when his son, Rehoboam, took the kingdom, there was a revolt, and the kingdom was divided into two branches of Judah and Israel. This was 975 years B. C. The kings of Israel, in order to separate themselves entirely from Judah, and thus maintain a separate supremacy, corrupted their worship, and during its entire existence there was not one truly pious king in Israel. Nearly two hundred and sixty years after this division took place, the king of Assyria utterly overthrew the kingdom of Israel, taking the people captive and scattering them in his own dominions, and peopling Samaria with strangers. 2 Kings 1:7. About forty years after this, 677 B. C., the king of Assyria took Manasseh, king of Judah, captive, and carried him to Babylon, for he had done very wickedly, and the Lord delivered him into the hand of his enemy. And thus in 677, B. C., the twelve tribes were without a king in either house.

To those who cannot look beyond this present state or dispensation for a fulfilment of the promises to David, this seems to be a sad commentary on those promises of everlasting glory to his throne and kingdom. There was temporarily a change in the condition of the kingdom of Judah. Manasseh humbled himself, and they restored him to his throne; and kings reigned in Jerusalem about the space of seventy-five years longer, when the king of Babylon took Jerusalem, and put kings over Judah according to his own mind. He exalted

Zedekiah to be king, but Zedekiah rebelled against him, and the king of Babylon took him captive and put out his eyes, and destroyed the temple and the chief houses in Jerusalem. This was 588 years before Christ. 2 Kings 25:4-10; 2 Chron. 36:14-20.

The temple built by Solomon stood 417 years, from 1005 to 588 B. C. But before the utter destruction of the city, in the days of Jehoiakim, B. C. 606, Nebuchadnezzar came and took the king captive, and carried away some of the vessels of the house of God, and some of the goodliest of the children of Judah he took to Babylon, to be instructed in the learning of the Chaldeans. Compare Dan. 1:3, 4; 2 Kings 20:16-18; Isa. 37:5-7. Among the captives were Daniel and his three brethren, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, of the children of Judah.

It was only about five years before the captivity of Zedekiah, and the destruction of the temple and the city, that the prophet Ezekiel spoke of the utter subversion of the kingdom, and also of its future restoration, as follows:—

“And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.” Eze. 21:25-27.

The kingdom, the crown, had passed under various changes. After many wars it was taken by the king of Babylon, who set rulers in Judah according to his will. But under Zedekiah, a most rebellious prince, the prophet said, “it shall be no more”—it shall be utterly cast down, “until he come whose right it is.” And whose is the right to the kingdom and throne of David? It is the right, by an unfailing promise, of that certain one of the seed of David, who, said the Lord, “shall be my son.” In his right it shall endure as the sun, even as the days of Heaven. And more than a hundred years before this time, another prophet spoke of this:—

“And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.” Micah 4:8.

The first dominion was that which was given to Adam—dominion over all the earth. The tower of the flock is no other than the seed of the woman—the seed of Abraham. He is heir of the world, and through him shall the kingdom come to the daughter of Jerusalem. This is a most interesting prophecy, connecting the first dominion—the original gift of the earth—with the kingdom which the seed of David shall inherit. All prophecy, all promise, all hope, centers in the stronghold, the tower of the flock. As the seed of the woman, he will bruise the head of the serpent, and recover the lost dominion. As the seed of Abraham he is the heir of the world, and a blessing to all nations. As the seed of David, he will possess the kingdom forever, and his throne shall endure as the sun, even as the days of Heaven. As the Son of God, he will save his people from their sins, and restore life to the race of Adam; to all who accept his salvation. All blessings come through him. Let all blessing and honour and glory be paid to him.

About fifteen years before the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple, in the third year of the captivity of Daniel and his brethren, a prophecy of the restoration of the kingdom was given by means of a dream to Nebuchadnezzar, and its wonderful interpretation by Daniel. This is of greater interest than the prophecies that had preceded it, inasmuch as it gives a series of events easily understood by all, thereby beginning to open to us the time of the restoration of the kingdom and throne of David. This dream was given to Nebuchadnezzar by the Lord, for the express purpose of making known what shall be in the last days. Dan. 2:28. The king was reflecting upon the future, with a strong desire to look into its secrets; and the Lord caused him to understand according to his desire.

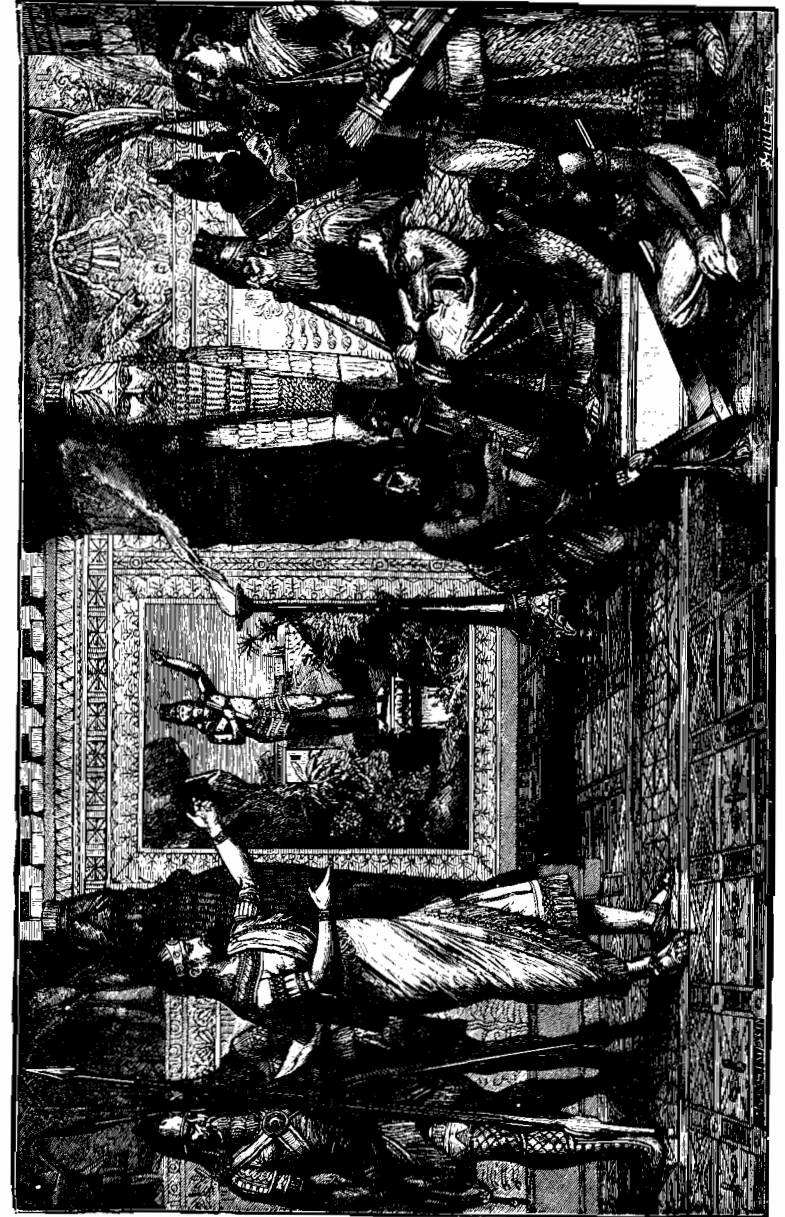
The interpretation of this dream was given under very peculiar circumstances. The dream troubled the king, though he could not remember it. This resembled a freak of the mind with which we are all acquainted. We are often troubled or perplexed over our inability to call to mind that which seems so near to our remembrance, but still eludes its grasp.

In this dilemma the king resorted to his wise men, many of whom professed knowledge which, if they had possessed it, should have served them in this emergency. He demanded that they should both tell him the dream, and give him the interpretation. Some have denounced this as a most unreasonable demand. But when we consider the pretensions of the astrologers and soothsayers, for such were some of them, we cannot call the demand unreasonable. They asked him to tell them the dream, promising then to give the interpretation. The king was apparently so disappointed in them, that he lost all confidence in their professions and promises. Perceiving the character of their pretensions to superior wisdom, he accused them of having "prepared lying and corrupt words;" for if he should tell them the dream, it would not require any great amount of ingenuity to invent some kind of interpretation. "Tell me the dream," said he, "and then I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof." Dan. 2:9. If they failed to do this, he decreed that they should all be put to death. The alternative was terrible, but they were compelled to confess that they could not do it; that it required a wisdom greater than was possessed by any that dwelt on the earth. There was no chance for them to practice their wonted deception; they well knew that they could not invent anything that the king would recognize as his dream.

Daniel and his brethren had not been directly appealed to by the king, but inasmuch as they were counted among the wise men of Babylon, the officer who was appointed to execute the king's decree sought them to put them to death. But Daniel desired time, which was granted, and the young captives betook themselves to prayer, and the Lord revealed to Daniel both the dream and its interpretation. This saved not only the lives of Daniel and his brethren, but of all the professedly wise men; for the matter being revealed, the king was content to let them all live.

The dream was related to the king in the following words:—

"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof



DANIEL INTERPRETING THE DREAM.

was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his sides of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 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. 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." Dan. 2: 31-35.

The test that the king put upon the wise men was a severe one, but here it was perfectly met. How must the great king have been struck, as the young Hebrew captive—a mere boy—stood before him and declared to him his secret thoughts, and every particular of his dream, which he had forgotten. Now it all flashed clearly upon his mind; he knew that that was what he saw in his dream, and he had all confidence that this young captive was capable of giving him the correct interpretation.

But Daniel disclaimed having any wisdom to reveal the king's secret. He said also that neither astrologer, magician, nor soothsayer, could make it known.

"But there is a God in Heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." "But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for the intent that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart." Dan. 2: 28, 30.

The margin of the English Version is here copied, it being the correct reading. Dr. Barnes says: "The margin is the better rendering, and should have been admitted into the text." The Revised Version has adopted it.

The common English rendering of verse 30 is not only incorrect, but it does great injury to the prophecy as being a revelation from God of what shall be in the last days. The common reading implies that the matter was made known for the sake of those who should interpret it, which is altogether a wrong idea. It would effectually make it of private interpretation. Prophecy is not given to answer any personal ends. The whole matter, both the dream and the interpretation, was for the purpose of making known what shall be in the last

days, and when the kingdom of Israel, that was being subverted, should be restored, and the throne and the crown given to him whose right it is.

And being such, it was not for Nebuchadnezzar alone, nor for those of that age. It is the beginning of one of the most important chains of prophecy in all the Bible. All the circumstances give the most undoubted assurance that the Lord has therein made known to all his people what shall be in the last days. In examining the interpretation each particular will be noticed as we pass.

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

In verse 30, Daniel frankly declared that he had no wisdom above others to tell the dream; he gave all the honor to the God of Heaven. Here he says: "We will tell the interpretation," including his brethren in making known the interpretation. It was in answer to their united prayer that it was made known to Daniel.

Verses 37, 38. "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of Heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the 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."

Several interesting points are here presented for consideration.

1. The God of Heaven had ordered the kingdom of Babylon for purposes of his own. He selected Babylon to chastise his people for their sins. He made it a surpassingly glorious kingdom, to represent the gradation of events and kingdoms in the world, even to the last days. It was the most glorious kingdom that has ever existed, being fairly represented by its capital city, the like of which never existed, either before or since.

2. Nebuchadnezzar was king over the kings of the earth. In describing his greatness and the extent of his rule, the words of Daniel, in a most striking manner, agree with the terms of the original gift of the dominion to Adam, namely, over the beasts

of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, wheresoever the children of men dwelt, that is, over all the earth. In this we get the first idea of the full intent of this revelation, as more clearly set forth in the interpretation in verses 44, 45, as will be noticed when we come to those texts.

3. By comparison of the Scriptures, we learn that in all cases the king represents the kingdom over which he rules; and Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, inasmuch as he stood at the head of an empire which was well symbolized by the most precious metal. The distinction of empire and kingdom is not known in the Scriptures.

Verse 39. "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee."

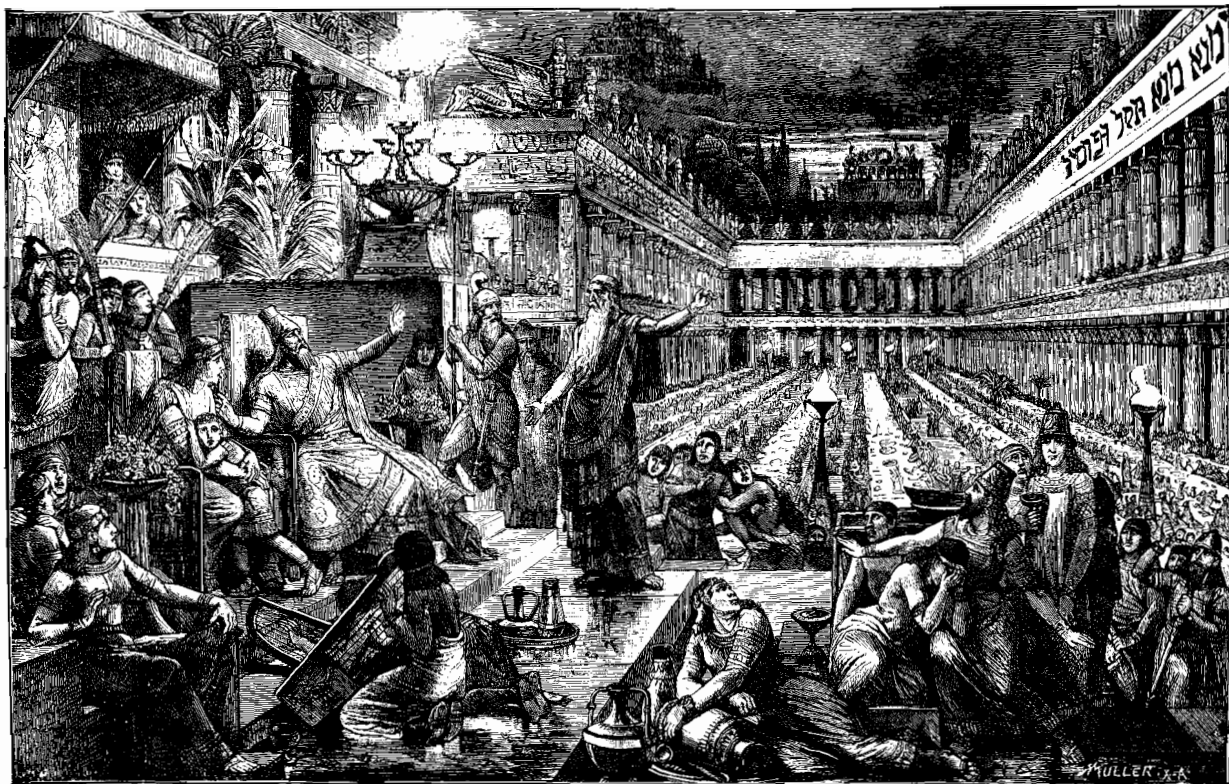
The succession was not merely of a king, but of a kingdom. This next kingdom is represented in the dream by the breast and arms of silver. What this kingdom was may be easily learned from this book of Daniel's prophecy. In chapter 5 we read that Belshazzar, king of Babylon, made a great feast to a thousand of his lords; and while drinking wine before them, he commanded to bring the vessels which his father (grandfather) Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, "that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein." While committing this act, they "praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." The circumstances of that night, not related in the Scriptures, but well known in history, must be briefly noticed.

The royal houses of the Medes and the Persians were united by marriage. There was war between the Medes and the Babylonians, and Darius, king of the Medes, was aided by the Persians under Cyrus, their prince, the nephew of Darius. Cyrus was an able general, and the whole empire had submitted to his arms, except Babylon, the imperial city. This he besieged. But the city was so well prepared for a siege, that it could have held out for an indefinite time if it had been faithfully guarded. History informs us that there were provisions within the city for a siege of twenty years, while the

squares were so spacious that very large gardens were found everywhere. There was much land within the walls available for raising provisions, and it was exceedingly productive. The walls were very high and strong, the entrances being guarded by heavy gates of brass. From their high walls the Babylonians laughed their besiegers to scorn, considering any means of defence useless, aside from the security offered by their walls, and believing that the besiegers would in time become convinced of the folly of their efforts.

But wickedness almost invariably attends upon the steps of worldly prosperity; and Babylon had filled up the cup of her iniquity, and the Lord had spoken by his prophets, saying that it should be not only overthrown, but utterly destroyed. To all human appearance, no power could overthrow it. Infidels might scoff at the prophecy, but no word of the prophets of God has ever failed, however improbable its fulfilment appeared at the time it was given. While Belshazzar and his proud princes were in the midst of their drunken revelry, praising the gods of their own making, and insulting the God of Israel, defying him by the sacrilegious use of the vessels consecrated to his service in Jerusalem, suddenly they were startled by the appearance of the fingers of a man's hand writing upon the wall of the royal banqueting house. Instantly their boasting was turned to consternation, and the king was so affrighted that "his knees smote one against another." The astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers were called, but they could not make known that which was written. It appears that, in the changes of rulers, Daniel was neglected if not forgotten; but when the queen called attention to his having made known the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, he was sent for, and read the writing to the king.

But first he uttered a most fitting rebuke to the proud and insolent Belshazzar. He reminded him of the benefits which God had conferred on his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, and of his having been driven from his kingdom because of his forgetfulness of God. "And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but



THE FEAST OF BELSHAZZAR.

hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of Heaven." He then read the writing upon the wall, as follows:—

"And this is the writing that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." Dan. 5:25.

Many conjectures, all quite useless, have been indulged in, as to the character in which these words were written. Implicit reliance upon the record must lead us to believe just what it says, "This is the writing that was written;" the words set down in the record must have been the identical words upon the wall. The words are Chaldaic, but this is so closely related to the Hebrew, that the words, very much alike, are found in both languages. If they were written in the same form in which they are transmitted to us, it would make the truthfulness of the interpretation more directly apparent to all who heard Daniel speak. As in the case of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, where the test put upon the wise men was such as to make sure to the king that the interpretation was correct, so here, if the words were those which were common to the Chaldeans, it would show to all present that the interpretation had a close relation to the words that were written. On the other hand, if they were written in some form not at all known to those present, the interpretation would lack the certainty, in their minds, which would attach to it if they had a knowledge of the words.

The wise men were unable to explain them, which is the sense in which their inability to read them should be taken. No one, except he were inspired of the God of Heaven, could possibly tell what was meant by the words themselves. Certainly, Daniel, by his own wisdom, could no more tell that MENE, which simply means "he hath numbered," meant that God had numbered and finished the kingdom, than he could tell what the divisions meant in the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. And the same may be said of TEKEL, which only means weighed, or, "he has weighed." Inspiration was necessary to determine that it meant, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." And no less difficulty attends the word UPHARSIN. The prefix U (sound of oo), is

the conjunction, and *Pah-ras* means, he divided; *parsin* is the same word, with the Chaldaic plural termination. The change in the form of the words which Daniel made in the interpretation would certainly lead to the conclusion that is here adopted, namely, that he was examining words in their own language, just as they are written. With a different pointing, and thereby with a different pronunciation, this last word means the Persian. But there was no reference, by any construction, to the Medes, though there was to the Persians. Yet the hearers could readily see the force of the interpretation when it was said the kingdom was numbered, and finished, and divided, for they all knew that the united forces of the Medes and Persians were at that moment surrounding the city. And thus, as has been remarked, the interpretation was much more forcible and convincing if the words were written with the characters known at least to the wise men who were present; and, of course, the more generally they were known, the more effect would the interpretation have on the minds of the vast assembly.

Now turn again to the facts of history. Cyrus caused a new channel to be made for the Euphrates, and made excavations on the plain, to receive the waters when he wished to divert them from the channel that ran under the walls and through the city. Yet all this labor would have been useless to him had the city been continually guarded with diligence and care; for, inside the city, walls were built on the banks of the river, so that if any passed the outer wall and followed the bed of the river inside the city, they would still be as effectually shut out from communication, with the city or from entering it, as if they were entirely outside, unless the gates were open which led to or across the river. But the prophet of God had spoken the word that Babylon should be destroyed, and Providence was on the side of the besieging army. An occasion was soon offered to Cyrus to take advantage of the preparation that he had made. Rollin, in his "Ancient History," thus speaks of it:—

"As soon as Cyrus saw that the ditch, which they had long worked upon, was finished, he began to think seriously upon the execution of his vast

design, which as yet he had communicated to nobody. Providence soon furnished him with as fit an opportunity for this purpose as he could desire. He was informed that in the city a great festival was to be celebrated; and that the Babylonians, on occasions of that solemnity, were accustomed to pass the whole night in drinking and debauchery." Vol. 1., p. 30, Harpers, 1865.

Knowing all this, Cyrus judged that diligence in guarding the city would be relaxed; and those within deemed it impossible for the enemy to pass the main or outer walls. Turning the waters into the new channels that he had cut, the river bed under the walls and through the city was soon dry enough for the soldiers to pass within. Xenophon, quoted by Dr. Barnes, Notes on Dan. 5:30, said that Cyrus and his generals had an idea that the gates inside the city would be left open, as all inside the city would naturally join in the revelry. He said:—

"And indeed those who were with Gobryas said that it would not be wonderful if the gates of the palace should be found open, as the whole city that night seemed to be given up to revelry.' He then says that as they passed on, after entering the city, 'of those whom they encountered, part, being smitten, died, part fled again back, and part raised a clamour. But those who were with Gobryas also raised a clamour as if they also joined in the revelry, and going as fast as they could, they came soon to the palace of the king. But those who were with Gobryas and Gadates being arrayed, found the gates of the palace closed, but those who were appointed to go against the guard of the palace fell upon them when drinking before a great light, and were quickly engaged with them in hostile combat. Then a cry arose, and they who were within having asked the cause of the tumult, the king commanded them to see what the affair was, and some of them rushing out opened the gates. As they who were with Gadates saw the gates open, they rushed in, and pursuing those who attempted to return, and smiting them, they came to the king, and they found him standing with a drawn sabre. And those who were with Gadates and Gobryas overpowered him; and those who were with him were slain—one opposing, and one fleeing, and one seeking his safety the best way he could. . . . When it was day, and they who had the watch over the towers learned that the city was taken, and that the king was dead, they also surrendered the towers.'"

The result is thus briefly stated in Dan. 5:30, 31: "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom."

Thus ended the kingdom of the Chaldeans, the empire represented by the head of gold in the great image of Nebuchad-

nezzar's dream. The overthrow took place B. C. 538—sixty-five years after the dream was given; sixty-eight years after the captivity when Daniel and others were brought to Babylon; sixty-one years after Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah king of Jerusalem; and fifty years after the temple and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed. Thus wondrously does God fulfill his word, and thus plainly do the Scriptures and history agree in giving the succession of empire, showing that the breast and arms of silver, in the image of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, represented the united houses of the Medes and the Persians.

We now return to the words of Daniel in the interpretation.

Dan. 2:39. "And another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth."

This third kingdom answered to the body of the image which was of brass, the third metal mentioned. And the identity of this kingdom is as easily determined as that of the Medes and Persians. In chapter 8 is the record of a vision that Daniel had in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar. He was in Elam, which had been an independent kingdom, and as a province of Babylon preserved its capital and palace. See Dan. 8:2. Daniel said that in this vision he saw a ram which had two horns, and one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. And the ram became great and did according to his will. And then he saw a he goat which came from the west, which ran unto the ram in the fury of his power and brake his two horns, and stamped upon him; and the goat became very great. Other points in the history of these beasts are passed by for the present, as it is only the purpose here to show what they represent. The angel Gabriel was commanded to explain the vision to Daniel, and of these beasts he said: "The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king [or kingdom] of Grecia."

Here it is seen that the Medes and Persians, represented by the breast and arms of silver in the image, were overthrown

by Grecia, which of course is represented by the next metal, the body of brass of the image. That the kingdom of the Medes and Persians was overthrown by the Grecians, is so well known that it is unnecessary to quote history to further show the fulfillment of the prophecy in this particular. Thus we have three parts of the image well and clearly explained, namely, the gold, the silver, and the brass—Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Grecia.

Dan. 2:40. "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, shall it break in pieces and bruise."

It will be noticed that the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and its interpretation, show that four great empires should rule over the earth. And it appears that the first, the gold, was to be the most glorious, while the fourth, the iron, was to be the strongest. The first three are named in the prophecy, as we have seen. The fourth is not; but it is brought to view in other scriptures, and abundantly identified in history. Thus we read in Luke 2:1, that their went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. Cæsar Augustus was emperor of Rome, and Rome was the only empire that has existed since the rise and fall of the kingdom of Alexander, the Grecian, that had power to tax the world. This expression proves universality of dominion, such as was held by Babylon, Persia, and Greece, the first three parts of the great image. No king can tax beyond his jurisdiction, and no part of the whole world could resist the power of Rome.

The description of the action of this empire, as given by Daniel, is very expressive. "As the iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." Its rise to universal supremacy was emphatically by a breaking and bruising process. Its rise was not by a sudden overthrow of a ruling empire, as was the case with the Persians and the Greeks. The empire of Alexander was already divided into four parts, as was prophesied in Daniel 7 and 8. Of course no one of four kingdoms could be as strong as one universal kingdom. These divisions caused the Romans to carry on their conquests

in almost every direction, and almost everywhere; and this again led to their having a closer supervision over all parts of the world than did their predecessors. On this text, Dr. Barnes says:—

“Nothing could better characterize the Roman power than this. Everything was crushed before it. The nations which they conquered ceased to be kingdoms, and were reduced to provinces, and as kingdoms they were blotted out from the list of nations.”

Concerning the strength and extent of the Roman empire, and the watchfulness which the emperors exercised over this vast domain, Gibbon thus testifies:—

“But 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. The slave of imperial despotism, whether he was compelled to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the Senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, accepted his fate in silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown languages, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive. Wherever you are, said Cicero, to the exiled Marcellus, remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror.” Decline and Fall, chap. 3, paragraph 37.

Dr. George Weber, professor at Heidelberg, in his “Universal History,” says:—

“It was under Augustus that the Roman empire possessed the greatest power abroad, and the highest cultivation at home. It extended from the Atlantic ocean to the Euphrates, and from the Danube and Rhine to the Atlas and falls of the Nile.” P. 102, Brewer & Tileston, Boston, 1853.

The Romans were well represented by the iron, not only in the strength of their empire, but in the cruelty of their dispositions. They were iron-hearted, delighting in shedding human blood. Titus was considered one of the mildest of Roman conquerors, the most benignant of Roman rulers, so that his subjects gave him the title of “the delight of the human race;” yet Josephus, speaking of his conquest of the Jews, said:—

“While Titus was at Casarea, he solemnized the birthday of his brother

after a splendid manner, and inflicted a great deal of the punishment intended for the Jews in honour of him; for the number of those who were slain in fighting with the beasts, and were burnt, and fought with one another, exceeded two thousand five hundred.” Wars, Book 7, chap. 3, sec. 1.

At Berytus, a city of Phœnicia, he celebrated the birthday of his father in a similar manner, where a great multitude perished by the same means. The reader cannot fail to be interested in the following remarks of Professor Gausseu, of Geneva, in his “Discourses on Daniel,” on this subject:—

“The fourth empire was iron. Iron—no better definition than this can be given of the character of the Romans. Everything in them was iron. Their government was iron—merciless, hard-hearted, inhuman, inexorable. Their courage was iron—cruel, bloody, indomitable. Their soldiers were iron—never was there a nation more fearfully armed for battle; their breast-plates, their helmets, their long shields, their darts, their javelins, their short and heavy two-edged swords, all their weapons were ingeniously terrible. . . . Their yoke upon the vanquished was iron,—heavy, intolerable, and yet unavoidable. In their conquests they crushed everything; they made Roman provinces of all the subjected countries; they left them nothing of their own nationality, and in a short time had even deprived them of their language. It was soon commanded to speak Latin not only in all Italy, but in Germany, south of the Danube, in all France, in all Belgium, in Switzerland, in Geneva, in Spain, in Portugal, and even in Africa. . . . When Julius Caesar, who took all France, and made it a Roman province, finished the assault of the last city, he ordered that both hands be cut off from all the men that were found in it, which cruelty he proudly mentions in his Commentaries. They wanted human blood in all their joys.” Vol. I, pp. 146-8, Toulouse, 1850.

Luther, in his “Introduction to Comments on Daniel,” said:—

“The first kingdom is the Assyrian, or Babylonian; the second, the Medes and Persians; the third, that of Alexander the Great, and the Greeks; the fourth, the Roman. In this explanation and opinion all the world are agreed.”

We now return to the words of the young prophet in the explanation of the dream.

Verse 41. “And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided.”

The iron kingdom was to be divided into different kingdoms, according to the number of toes on the image of a man. Daniel had a vision, recorded in chapter seven, in which he

saw four great beasts, which also represent four great kingdoms the same as the four metals of the great image, and the fourth beast had ten horns, which are said to be ten kingdoms. Verse 24. The ten toes of the image represent the same ten kingdoms.

"But there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay."

The fourth kingdom was not overthrown in the manner in which the preceding ones were, so as to let the power or dominion pass to another territory. It was to be divided, and the iron was to remain in the divisions; the power of the same dominion was to be exercised by ten kingdoms instead of by one universal empire.

Verses 42, 43. "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. 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."

It would not be possible to find figures more appropriate than these to indicate that these kingdoms should never again be united. Go to the founders where the molten iron is poured into the clay. Sometimes the moulds are imperfect, become broken, and the iron finds its way in every direction—literally mingles with the clay; but they will never cleave to one another. When the mass cools, every particle of the iron can be picked out and separated from every particle of the clay. Partly strong and partly broken or brittle, well represents the condition of the several kingdoms which sprung up on the territory of the Roman empire. Bishop Lowth, in his "Commentary on Daniel," says:—

"The toes of the image signify the ten kingdoms who were in after times to divide the kingdom among themselves. . . . This partition of the Roman empire will divide its strength, and by consequence be a diminution of its power."

This dividing is another fact in the identification of the fourth kingdom as the Roman empire. It was not true of either of the other great kingdoms that it was broken into ten kingdoms

and thus stood for a long time. The Grecian empire was divided into four parts, as will be seen in Daniel seven and eight and as noticed in all history. But the Roman empire was divided into half a score of kingdoms, most of which remain unto this day. And there would be scarcely any earthly limit to their power were it not for one thing: the word of prophecy long ago declared, "They shall not cleave one to another." They may enter into confederacies and form alliances, but they shall not stand. Ambitious men, as Charlemagne, Napoleon, etc., may think to hold the kingdoms in their own power,—to unite the nations in their own interests, to serve their own purposes; but look again, and where are they? Now proudly riding on the waves of victory, they think that they can make a map of the world which shall remain as a monument of the success of their schemes. But suddenly their schemes have perished with them.

"Iron and clay" still expresses the condition of those who occupy the old Roman dominion. But the climax, the great object of this prophecy, remains to be noticed. Thus the young captive in Babylon said:—

"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."

And thus, besides the four great empires represented by the gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron, another universal kingdom is to succeed them, represented by the stone, which shall be set up by the God of Heaven. In the dream it was shown that the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. It is no other than the kingdom and throne of David restored in the hands of his seed, the first dominion recovered from the power of the enemy, and from the curse which has so long rested upon it. The prophecy concerning this kingdom, revealing its features, must yet be examined.