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PREFACE

1. With Enoch, the seventh from Adam, and for three hundred and eight years contemporary with Adam, the voice of prophecy began to be heard through human lips. For so the apostle Jude declares. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 14,15. This sublime and earliest prophecy reaches to the end of time. And through all the intervening ages, other prophecies have covered all the more important events in the great drama of history. {3.1}

2. The coming to pass of these great events has been but the response of history to what the prophecies had declared. And thus amid the ever-present evidences of the short-sightedness of men, and the ever-recurring failures of human schemes, a voice has continually gone up from earth to heaven, "The word of the Lord endureth forever." {3.2}

3. It is for the purpose of calling attention to some of these important prophetic-historical lessons, if we may be permitted to coin a word, that this volume is written. And the books of Daniel and the Revelation are chosen for this purpose, because in some respects their prophecies are more direct than are to be found elsewhere upon the prophetic page, and the fulfillments more striking. The object before us is three-fold: (1) To gain an understanding of the wonderful testimony of the books themselves; (2) To acquaint ourselves with some of the more interesting and important events in the history of civilized nations, and mark how accurately the prophecies, some of them depending upon the developments of the then far-distant future, and upon conditions the most minute and complicated, have been fulfilled in these events; and (3) To draw from these things important lessons relative to practical Christian duties, which were not given for past ages merely, but are for the learning and admonition of the world today. {3.3}

4. The books of Daniel and the Revelation are counterparts of each other. They naturally stand side by side, and should be studied together. {3.4}

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Foreword

This volume is devoted largely to tracing the story of God's marvelous dealing with nations and with notable individuals in fulfillment of the great prophecies of the Bible in the past, but more particularly to the unrolling of the prophetic scroll as seen in the stirring events of the throbbing present, and of those impending in the immediate and ominous future. Such events are of the greatest personal significance to every man and woman.

No one can afford to live in a time like ours without studying the vital issues it has pleased God to open to our understanding in this fast moving age. Such issues have eternal consequences for every soul.

The author of this book lived and wrote more than a century ago, and in the literary and polemic style of those times. His interpretation of prophecy, however, and the doctrines of truth he established through intensive study of the Scriptures, have borne the test of time and of diligent scrutiny by Bible students. Indeed, they have borne the test so well that they are the more worthy of being perpetuated in a revised edition, which it is our great pleasure to offer in this present attractive form.

No effort has been spared by the editors to simplify and clarify the presentation of truth in the fluent and appealing diction of the writer, to verify all historical and exegetical sources drawn upon by the author, and in notable instances to fortify the teaching by new evidence not available at the time of the original writing. They have sought also to bring to bear upon prophetic interpretation the additional weight of significance so obviously discernible in political, social, and religious developments pressing upon our attention in these culminating days of the gospel era.

Thoughtful and open-minded consideration of these vital themes by every candid reader is earnestly invited.

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5. We are aware that any attempt to explain these books and make an application of their prophecies, is generally looked upon as a futile and fanatical task, and is sometimes met even with open hostility. It is much to be regretted that any portions of that volume which all Christians believe to be the book wherein God has undertaken to reveal his will to mankind, should come to be regarded in such a light. But a great fact, to which the reader's attention is called in the following paragraph, is believed to contain for this state of things both an explanation and an antidote. {4.1}

6. There are two general systems of interpretation adopted by different expositors in their efforts to explain the sacred Scriptures. The first is the mystical or spiritualizing system invented by Origen, to the shame of sound criticism and the curse of Christendom; the second is the system of literal interpretation, used by such men as Tyndale, Luther, and all the Reformers, and furnishing the basis for every advance step which has thus far been made in the reformation from error to truth as taught in the Scriptures. According to the first system, every declaration is supposed to have a mystical or hidden sense, which it is the province of the interpreter to bring forth; by the second, every declaration is to be taken in its most obvious and literal sense, except where the context and the well-known laws of language show that the terms are figurative, and not literal; and whatever is figurative must be explained by other portions of the Bible which are literal. {4.2}

7. By the mystical method of Origen, it is vain to hope for any uniform understanding of either Daniel or the Revelation, or of any other book of the Bible; for that system (if it can be called a system) knows no law but the uncurbed imagination of its adherents; hence there are on its side as many different interpretations of Scripture as there are different fancies of different writers. By the literal method, everything is subject to well-established and clearly-defined law; and, viewed from this standpoint, the reader will be surprised to see how simple, easy, and clear many portions of the Scriptures at once become, which, according to any other system, are dark and unsolvable. It is admitted that many figures are used in the Bible, and that much of the books under consideration, especially that of the Revelation, is clothed

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in symbolic language; but it is also claimed that the Scriptures introduce no figure which they do not somewhere furnish literal language to explain. This volume is offered as a consistent exposition of the books of Daniel and the Revelation according to the literal system. {4.3}

8. The study of prophecy should by no means be neglected; for it is the prophetic portions of the word of God which especially constitute it a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. So both David and Peter unequivocally testify. Ps.119:105; 2 Peter 1:19. {4.4}

9. No sublimer study can occupy the mind than the study of those books in which He who sees the end from the beginning, looking forward through all the ages, gives, through his inspired prophets, a description of coming events for the benefit of those whose lot it would be to meet them. {4.5}

10. An increase of knowledge respecting the prophetic portions of the word of God was to be one of the characteristics of the last days. Said the angel to Daniel, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased;" or, as Michaelis's translation reads: "When many shall give their sedulous attention to the understanding of these things, and knowledge shall be increased." It is our lot to live this side the time to which the angel told Daniel to thus shut up the words and seal the book. That restriction has now expired by limitation. In the language of the figure, the seal has been removed, and many are running to and fro, and knowledge has marvelously increased in every department of science; yet it is evident that this prophecy specially contemplates an increase of knowledge concerning those prophecies that are designed to give us light in reference to the age in which we live, the close of this dispensation, and the soon-coming transfer of all earthly governments to the great King of Righteousness, who shall destroy his enemies, and crown with an infinite reward every one of his friends. The fulfilment of the prophecy in the increase of this knowledge, is one of the pleasing signs of the present time. For more than half a century, light upon the prophetic word has been increasing, and shining with ever-growing luster to our own day. {5.1}

11. In no portion of the word of God is this more apparent than in the books of Daniel and the Rev-

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elation; and we may well congratulate ourselves on this, for no other parts of that word deal so largely in prophecies that pertain to the closing scenes of this world's history. No other books contain so many chains of prophecy reaching down to the end. In no other books is the grand procession of events that leads us through to the termination of probationary time, and ushers us into the realities of the eternal state, so fully and minutely set forth. No other books embrace so completely, as it were in one grand sweep, all the truths that concern the last generation of the inhabitants of the earth, and set forth so comprehensively all the aspects of the times, physical, moral, and political, in which the triumphs of earthly woe and wickedness shall end, and the eternal reign of righteousness begin. We take pleasure in calling attention especially to these features of the books of Daniel and the Revelation, which seem heretofore to have been too generally overlooked or misinterpreted. {5.2}

12. There seems to be no prophecy which a person can have so little excuse for misunderstanding as the prophecy of Daniel, especially as relates to its main features. Dealing but sparingly in language that is highly figurative, explaining all the symbols it introduces, locating its events within the rigid confines of prophetic periods, it points out the first advent of the Messiah in so clear and unmistakable a manner as to call forth the execration of the Jews upon any attempt to explain it, and gives so accurately, and so many ages in advance, the outlines of the great events of our world's history, that infidelity stands confounded and dumb before its inspired record. {5.3}

13. And no effort to arrive at a correct understanding of the book of the Revelation needs any apology; for the Lord of prophecy has himself pronounced a blessing upon him that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein; for the time is at hand. Rev.1:1-3. And it is with an honest purpose of aiding somewhat in arriving at this understanding, which is set forth by the language above referred to as not only possible but praiseworthy, that an exposition of this book, according to the literal rule of interpretation, has been attempted. {5.4}

14. With thrilling interest we behold to-day the nations marshaling their forces, and pressing forward

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in the very movements described by the royal seer in the court of Babylon twenty-five hundred years ago, and by John on Patmos eighteen hundred years ago; and these movements - hear it, ye children of men - are the last political revolutions to be accomplished before this earth plunges into her final time of trouble, and Michael, the great Prince, stands up, and his people, all who are found written in the book, are crowned with full and final deliverance. Dan.12:1, 2- {6.1}

15. Are these things so? "Seek," says our Saviour, "and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." God has not so concealed his truth that it will elude the search of the humble seeker. {6.2}

With a prayer that the same Spirit by which those portions of Scripture which form the basis of this volume were at first inspired, and whose aid the writer has sought in his expository efforts, may rest abundantly upon the reader in his investigations, according to the promise of the Saviour in John 16:7, 13, 15, this work is commended to the candid and careful attention of all who are interested in prophetic themes.

BATTLE CREEK, MICH., U.S.
January, 1897. {6.3}

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The Light of God's Word

O'er all the moral world, where, otherwise,
No light would come, or through its midnight gloom
No cheering ray appear, to dissipate
The darkness, God has set a guiding star--
A luminary bright--whose rays divine
Should pierce the night--the deep'ning shades dispel,
Which o'er the earth in sullen silence brood.
Nay, more, a ray of God's own brightness, sent
Direct to man from off His radiant throne;
That those who gladly should the light receive,
And follow where it led, should here enjoy
A glorious foretaste of the bliss of Heaven.

It is God's Holy Word, immutable,
Through life's bewildering maze alone can guide
The wandering traveler to eternal rest.
Without it, man were lost--lost in the deep,
Dark labyrinth of dread uncertainty--
Where doubts distract, and fearful thoughts arise--
With nought his steps to lead, save the dim lamp
Of human reason, whose misguiding flame
Would serve to make the gloom still more profound,
The darkness deeper, and more keenly felt.
But 'twas not God's design to leave man thus,
In error's devious paths, to grope his way;
So, through His Sacred Word, His will revealed,
And pointed out the narrow path, that bright
And brighter shines, e'en to the perfect day.

(From the poem "The Warning Voice of Time and
Prophecy," by Uriah Smith.)

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INTRODUCTION

That the book of Daniel was written by the person whose name it bears, there is no reason to doubt. Ezekiel, who was contemporary with Daniel, bears testimony, through the spirit of prophecy, to his piety and uprightness, ranking him in this respect with Noah and Job: "Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast; though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Eze.14:19,20. His wisdom, also, even at that early day, had become proverbial, as appears from the same writer. To the prince of Tyrus he was directed by the Lord to say, "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee." Eze.28:3. But above all, our Lord recognized him as a prophet of God, and bade his disciples understand the predictions given through him for the benefit of his church: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Matt.24:15,16. {19.1}

Though we have a more minute account of his early life than is recorded of that of any other prophet, yet his birth and lineage are left in complete obscurity, except that he was of the royal line, probably of the house of David, which had at this time become very numerous. He first appears as one of the noble captives of Judah, in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, at the commencement of the seventy years' captivity, B.C.606. Jeremiah and Habakkuk were yet uttering their prophecies. Ezekiel commenced soon after, and a little later, Obadiah; but both these finished their work years before the close of the long and brilliant career of Daniel. Three prophets only succeeded him, Haggai and Zechariah, who ex-

ercised the prophetic office for a brief period contemporaneously, B.C.520 - 518, and Malachi, the last

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ercised the prophetic office for a brief period contemporaneously, 520-518 B.C., and Malachi, the last

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of the Old Testament prophets, who flourished a little season about B.C.397. {19.2}

During the seventy years' captivity of the Jews, B.C.606 - 536, predicted by Jeremiah (Jer.25:11), Daniel resided at the court of Babylon, most of the time prime minister of that brilliant monarchy. His life affords a most impressive lesson of the importance and advantage of maintaining from earliest youth strict integrity toward God, and furnishes a notable instance of a man's maintaining eminent piety, and faithfully discharging all the duties that pertain to the service of God, while at the same time engaging in the most stirring activities, and bearing the weightiest cares and responsibilities that can devolve upon men in this earthly life. {20.1}

What a rebuke is his course to many at the present day, who, having not a hundredth part of the cares to absorb their time and engross their attention that he had, yet plead as an excuse for their almost utter neglect of Christian duties, that they have no time for them. What will the God of Daniel say to such, when he comes to reward his servants impartially, according to their improvement or neglect of the opportunities offered them? {20.2}

But it is not alone nor chiefly his connection with the Chaldean monarchy, the glory of kingdoms, that perpetuates the memory of Daniel, and covers his name with honor. From the height of its glory he saw that kingdom decline, and pass into other hands. Its period of greatest prosperity was embraced within the limits of the lifetime of one man. So brief was its supremacy, so transient its glory. But Daniel was intrusted with more enduring honors. While beloved and honored by the princes and potentates of Babylon, he enjoyed an infinitely higher exaltation, in being beloved and honored by God and his holy angels, and admitted to a knowledge of the counsels of the Most High. {20.3}

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But it is not alone nor chiefly his connection with the Chaldean monarchy, the glory of kingdoms, that perpetuates the memory of Daniel, and covers his name with honor. From the height of its glory he saw that kingdom decline, and pass into other hands. Its period of greatest prosperity was embraced within the limits of the lifetime of one man. So brief was its supremacy, so transient its glory. But Daniel was intrusted with more enduring honors. While beloved and honored by the princes and potentates of Babylon, he enjoyed an infinitely higher exaltation in being beloved and honored by God and His holy angels, and admitted to a knowledge of the counsels of the Most High.

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the first prophecy giving a consecutive history of the world from that time to the end. It located the most of its predictions within well-defined prophetic periods, though reaching many centuries into the future. It gave the first definite chronological prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. It marked the time of this event so definitely that the Jews forbid any attempt to interpret its numbers, since that prophecy shows them to be without excuse in rejecting Christ; and so accurately had its minute and literal predictions been fulfilled down to the time of Porphyry, A.D.250, that he declared (the only loophole he could devise for his hard-pressed skepticism) that the predictions were not written in the age of Babylon, but after the events themselves had transpired. This shift, however, is not now available; for every succeeding century has borne additional evidence to the truthfulness of the prophecy, and we are just now, in our own day, approaching the climax of its fulfilment. {21.1}

The personal history of Daniel reaches to a date a few years subsequent to the subversion of the Babylonian kingdom by the Medes and Persians. He is supposed to have died at Shushan, or Susa, in Persia, about the year B.C.530, aged nearly ninety- four years; his age being the probable reason why he returned not to Judea with other Hebrew captives, under the proclamation of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1), B.C.536, which marked the close of the seventy years' captivity. {21.2}

Response of History to the Prophecy of Daniel

01 - DANIEL IN CAPTIVITY

Characteristics of the Sacred Writings - Five Historical Facts - Prophecy of Jerusalem's Captivity - The Holy City Three Times Overthrown - God's Testimony against Sin - Condition and Treatment of Daniel and His Companions - Character of King Nebuchadnezzar - Signification of Pagan Names - Daniel's Integrity - The Result of His Experiment - Daniel Lives till the Time of Cyrus

“VERSE 1. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part

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Chapter I

A Captive in Babylon's Royal Court

Verse 1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part

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of the vessels of the house of God; which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure-house of his god." {23.1}

With a directness characteristic of the sacred writers, Daniel enters at once upon his subject. He ~~commences~~ in the simple, historical style, ~~his book, with the exception of a portion of chapter 2, being of a historical nature till we reach the seventh chapter, when the prophetic portion, more properly so called, commences.~~ Like one conscious of uttering only well-known truth, he proceeds at once to state a variety of particulars by which his accuracy could at once be tested. Thus in the two verses quoted, he states five particulars purporting to be historical facts, such as no writer would be likely to introduce into a fictitious narrative: (1) That Jehoiakim was king of Judah; (2) That Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon; (3) That the latter came against the former; (4) That this was in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign; and (5) That Jehoiakim was given into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, who took a portion of the sacred vessels of the house of God, and carrying them to the land of Shinar, the country of Babylon (Gen.10:10) placed them in the treasure-house of his heathen divinity. Subsequent portions of the narrative abound as fully in historical facts of a like nature. {23.2}

This overthrow of Jerusalem was predicted by Jeremiah, and immediately accomplished, B.C.606. Jer.25:8-11. Jeremiah places this captivity in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, Daniel in the third. This seeming discrepancy is explained by the fact that Nebuchadnezzar set out on his expedition near the close of the third year of Jehoiakim, from which point Daniel reckons. But he did not accomplish the subjugation of Jerusalem till about the ninth month of the year following; and from this year Jeremiah reckons. (Prideaux, Vol.I, pp.99,100.) Jehoiakim, though bound for the purpose of being taken to Babylon, having humbled himself, was permitted to remain as ruler in Jerusalem, tributary to the king of Babylon. {24.1}

This was the first time Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Twice subsequently, the city, having

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With a directness characteristic of the sacred writers, Daniel enters at once upon his subject. He begins his book in a simple historical style. The first six chapters, with the exception of the prophecy of chapter 2, are narrative in content. With chapter 7 we reach the prophetic part of the book. Siege of Jerusalem.--Like one conscious of uttering only well-known truth, he proceeds at once to state a variety of particulars by which his accuracy could be tested.

The overthrow of Jerusalem recorded here was predicted by Jeremiah, and was accomplished in 606 B.C.[*] (Jeremiah 25: 8-11.) Jeremiah places this captivity in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, Daniel in the third. This seemingly discrepancy is explained by the fact that Nebuchadnezzar set out on his expedition near the close of the third year of Jehoiakim, from which point Daniel reckons. But the king did not accomplish the subjugation of Jerusalem until about the ninth month of the year following, from which year Jeremiah reckons. Jehoiakim, though bound for the purpose of being taken to Babylon, humbled himself and was permitted to remain as ruler in Jerusalem, tributary to the king of Babylon.

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This was the first time Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Twice subsequently the city

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revolted, was captured by the same king, ~~being~~ more severely dealt with each succeeding time. ~~Of these subsequent overthrows,~~ the first was under Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, ~~B.C.599,~~ when all the sacred vessels were either taken or destroyed, and the best of the inhabitants, with the king, were led into captivity. The ~~second~~ was under Zedekiah, when the city endured the most formidable siege ~~it ever sustained,~~ ~~except that by Titus, in A.D.70.~~ During the two years' continuance of this siege, the inhabitants of the city suffered all the horrors of extreme famine. At length the garrison and king, attempting to escape from the city, were captured by the Chaldeans. The sons of the king were slain before his face. His eyes were put out, and he was taken to Babylon; and thus was fulfilled the prediction of Ezekiel, who declared that he should be carried to Babylon, and die there, but yet should not see the place. Eze. 12:13. The city and temple were at this time utterly destroyed, and the entire population of the city and country, with the exception of a few husbandmen, were carried captive to Babylon, B.C.588. {24.2}

Such was God's passing testimony against sin. Not that the Chaldeans were the favorites of Heaven but God made use of them to punish the iniquities of his people. Had the Israelites been faithful to God, and kept his Sabbath, Jerusalem would have stood forever. Jer.17:24-27. But they departed from him, and he abandoned them. They ~~first~~ profaned the sacred vessels by sin, in ~~introducing heathen idols among them,~~ and he then profaned them by judgments, ~~in~~ letting them go as trophies into heathen temples abroad. {26.1}

During these days of trouble and distress upon Jerusalem, Daniel and his companions were nourished and instructed in the palace of the king of Babylon; and though captives in a strange land, they were doubtless in some respects much more favorably situated than they could have been in their native country. {26.2}

“VERSE 3. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed,

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revolted, but was recaptured by the same king, and more severely dealt with each succeeding time. The second overthrow was during the time of Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, when all the sacred vessels were either taken or destroyed, and the best of the inhabitants of were led with the king into captivity.

The third was under Zedekiah, when the city endured a formidable siege. During its continuance for a year and a half, the inhabitants of the city suffered all the horrors of extreme famine.

At length the garrison and the king attempted to escape from the city, but they were captured by the Chaldeans. The sons of the king were slain before his face. His eyes were put out, and he was taken to Babylon. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of Ezekiel that he should be carried to Babylon, and die there, yet he should not see the place. (Ezekiel 12: 13.) The city and temple were at this time utterly destroyed, and the entire population of the country, with the exception of a few husbandmen, were carried captive to Babylon, in 586 B.C.

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Hebrew Captives in Babylon.--During these days of trouble and distress upon Jerusalem, Daniel and his companions were nourished and instructed in the palace of the king of Babylon. Though captives in a strange land, they were doubtless in some respects much more favorably situated than they could have been in their native country.

Verse 3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed,

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and of the princes; 4. Children in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. 5. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank; so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king." {26.3}

~~We have in these verses the record of the probable fulfilment of the announcement of coming judgments made to King Hezekiah by the prophet Isaiah, more than a hundred years before. When this king had vaingloriously shown to the messengers of the king of Babylon all the treasures and holy things of his palace and kingdom, he was told that all these good things should be carried as trophies to the city of Babylon, and nothing should be left; and that even his own children, his descendants, should be taken away, and be eunuchs in the palace of the king there. 2Kings 20:14-18. It is probable that Daniel and his companions were treated as indicated in the prophecy; at least we hear nothing of their posterity, which can be more easily accounted for on this hypothesis than on any other, though some think that the term eunuch had come to signify office rather than condition. {26.4}~~

The word children, as applied to these captives, is not to be confined to the sense to which it is limited at the present time. It included youth also. ~~And~~ we learn from the record that these children were already skilful in all wisdom, cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and had ability in them to stand in the king's palace. In other words they had already acquired a good degree of education, and their physical and mental powers were so far developed that a skilful reader of human nature could form quite an accurate estimate of their capabilities. They are supposed to have been about eighteen or twenty years of age. {27.1}

In the treatment which these Hebrew captives received, we see an instance of the wise policy and the

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and of the princes; 4 children in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. 5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

Here is recorded the probable fulfillment of the judgments predicted by the prophet Isaiah to King Hezekiah more than a hundred years before. When this king had vaingloriously shown to the messengers of the king of Babylon all the treasures and holy things of his palace and kingdom, ~~Hezekiah~~ was told that all these good things would be carried as trophies to the city of Babylon, and that even his own children, his descendants would be taken away and be eunuchs in the palace of the king there. (2 Kings 20: 14-18.)

The word "children" as applied to these captives is not to be confined to the sense to which it is limited at the present time. It included youth also. We learn from the record that these children were already "skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and . . . had ability in them to stand in the king's palace." In other words, they had acquired a good degree of education, and their physical and mental powers were so far developed that a skillful reader of human nature could form an accurate estimate of their capabilities. They are supposed to have been about eighteen or twenty years of age.

In the treatment which these Hebrew captives received, we see an instance of the wise policy and the

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liberality of the rising king, Nebuchadnezzar. {27.2}
1. Instead of choosing, like too many kings of later times, means for the gratification of low and base desires, he chose young men who should be educated in all matters pertaining to the kingdom, that he might have efficient help in administering its affairs. {27.3}
2. He appointed them daily provision of his own ~~meat and wine~~. Instead of the coarse fare which some would have thought good enough for captives, he offered them his own royal viands. {27.4}
For the space of three years,

they had all the advantages the kingdom could afford. Though captives, they were royal children, and they were treated as such by the humane king of the Chaldeans. {27.5}

~~The question may be raised, why these persons were selected to take part, after suitable preparation, in the affairs of the kingdom. Were there not enough native Babylonians to fill these positions of trust and honor? It could have been for no other reason than that the Chaldean youth could not compete with those of Israel in the qualifications, both mental and physical, necessary to such a position. {27.6}~~

“VERSE 6. Now among these were the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 7. Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names; for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.” {28.1}

This change of names was probably made on account of the signification of the words. Thus, Daniel signified, in the Hebrew, God is my judge; Hananiah, gift of the Lord; Mishael, ~~he that is a strong God~~; and Azariah, ~~help of the Lord~~. These names, each having some reference to the true God, and signifying some connection with his worship, were changed to names the definition of which bore a like relation to the heathen divinities and worship of the Chaldeans. Thus Belteshazzar, the name given to Daniel, signified keeper of the hid treasures of Bel; Shadrach, inspiration of the sun (which the Chaldeans worshiped);

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liberality of the rising king, Nebuchadnezzar. Instead of choosing means for the gratification of low and base desires, as too many kings of later times have done, he chose young men to be educated in all matters pertaining to the kingdom, that he might have efficient help in administering its affairs.

He appointed them daily provision of his own ~~food and drink~~. Instead of the coarse fare which some would have thought good enough for captives, he offered them his own royal viands. For the space of three years,

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Verse 6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

Daniel and His Companions Renamed.--This change of names was probably made on account of the signification of the words. In the Hebrew, Daniel signified, “judge for God;” Hananiah, “gift of the Lord;” Mishael, “who is what God is;” and Azariah, “whom Jehovah helps.” Since these names had some reference to the true God and signified some connection with His worship, they were changed to names which had definitions linking them to the heathen divinities and worship of the Chaldeans. Thus Belteshazzar, the name given to Daniel, signified “prince of Bel;” Shadrach, “servant of Sin” (the moon god); Meshach,

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Meshach, ~~of the goddess Shaca (under which name Venus was worshiped); and Abednego, servant of the shining fire (which they also worshiped).~~ {28.2}

“VERSE 8. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 10. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who had appointed your meat and your drink; for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. 11. Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12. Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king’s meat; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. 14. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat of the portion of the king’s meat. 16. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.” {28.3}

Nebuchadnezzar appears upon this record wonderfully free from bigotry. It seems that he took no means to compel his royal captives to change their religion. Provided they had some religion, he seemed to be satisfied, whether it was the religion he professed or not. And although their names had been changed to signify some connection with heathen worship, this may have been more to avoid the use of Jewish names by the Chaldeans than to indicate any change of sentiment or practice on the part of those to whom these names were given. {29.1}

Daniel purposed not to defile himself with the king’s ~~meat nor~~ with his wine. Daniel had

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“who is what Aku is” (Aku being the Sumerian equivalent of Sin, the name of the moon god); and Abednego, “servant of Nebo.”

Verse 8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? Then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. 11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king’s meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. 14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat. 16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

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Daniel’s Diet.--Daniel purposed not to defile himself with the king’s food or with his wine. Daniel had

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other reasons for this course than simply the effect of such a diet upon his physical system, though he would derive great advantage in this respect from the fare he proposed to adopt. But it was frequently the case that the meat used by the kings and princes of heathen nations, who were often the high priests of their religion, was first offered in sacrifice to idols, and the wine they used, poured out as a libation before them; and again, some of the meat of which they made use, was pronounced unclean by the Jewish law; and on either of these grounds Daniel could not, consistently with his religion, partake of these articles; hence he requested, not from any morose or sullen temper, but from conscientious scruples, that he might not be obliged to defile himself; and he respectfully made his request known to the proper officer. {29.2}

The prince of the eunuchs feared to grant Daniel's request, since the king himself had appointed their meat. This shows the great personal interest the king took in these persons. He did not commit them to the hands of his servants, telling them to care for them in the best manner, without himself entering into details; but he himself appointed their meat and drink. And this was of a kind which it was honestly supposed would be best for them, inasmuch as the prince of the eunuchs thought that a departure from it would render them poorer in flesh and less ruddy of countenance than those who continued it; and thus he would be brought to account for neglect or ill-treatment of them, and so lose his head. Yet it was equally well understood that if they maintained good physical conditions, the king would take no exception to the means used, though it might be contrary to his own express direction. It appears that the king's sincere object was to secure in them, by whatever means it could be done, the very best mental and physical development that could be attained. How different this from the bigotry and tyranny which usually hold supreme control over the hearts of those who are clothed with absolute power. In the character of Nebuchadnezzar we shall find many things worthy of our highest admiration. {29.3}

Daniel requested pulse and water for himself and his three companions. Pulse is a vegetable food of the leguminous kind, like peas, beans, etc. Bagster says, "Zeroim denotes all leguminous plants, which are

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other reasons for this course than simply the effect of such a diet upon his physical system, though he would derive great advantage in this respect from the fare he proposed to adopt. It was frequently the case that food used by the kings and princes of heathen nations, who were often the high priests of their religion, was first offered in sacrifice to idols, and the wine they used, poured out as a libation before their gods. Again, some of the flesh food used by the Chaldeans was pronounced unclean by the Jewish law. On either of these grounds Daniel could not, consistently with his religion, partake of these articles. Hence he respectfully requested the proper officer that from conscientious scruples he might not be obliged to defile himself.

The prince of the eunuchs feared to grant Daniel's request, since the king himself had appointed the food for Daniel and his companions. This shows the great personal interest the king took in these captives.

It appears that his sincere object was to secure in them the best mental and physical development that could be attained. How different is this from the bigotry and tyranny which usually hold supreme control over the hearts of those who are clothed with absolute power. In the character of Nebuchadnezzar we shall find many things worthy of our highest admiration.

It is interesting to note what was included in Daniel's request for his diet. The Hebrew word {HEBREW CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT} zeroim, here

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~~not reaped, but pulled or plucked, which, however wholesome, were not naturally calculated to render them fatter in flesh than the others.” {30.1}~~

A ten days' trial of this diet resulting favorably, they were permitted to continue it during the whole course of their training for the duties of the palace. ~~Their increase in flesh and improvement in countenance which took place during these ten days can hardly be attributed to the natural result of the diet; for it would hardly produce such marked effects in so short a time. Is it not much more natural to conclude that this result was produced by a special interposition of the Lord, as a token of his approbation of the course on which they had entered, which course, if persevered in, would in process of time lead to the same result through the natural operation of the laws of their being?~~ {30.2}

“VERSE 17. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18. Now at the end of the days that the king had said that he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

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translated “pulse,” is built on the same root as the word “seed” in the record of creation, where it mentions “every herb seeding seed,” and again, the “fruit of a tree seeding seed.” Genesis 1: 29. This makes it clear enough that Daniel’s request included grains legumes, and fruits. Then, too, if we understand Genesis 9: 3 correctly, the “green herb” itself must have been included in the diet requests. In other words, the menu for which Daniel asked and which he received was made up of cereals, legumes, fruits, nuts, and vegetables--a vegetarian diet of good variety, together with the universal drink for man and beast, clear water.

The Cambridge Bible, has this note on zeroim: “vegetable food in general; there is no reason for restricting the Hebrew word used to leguminous fruits, such as beans and peas, which is what the term ‘pulse’ properly denotes.”

Gesenius gives this definition: “Seed-herbs, greens, vegetables, i.e., vegetable food, such as was eaten in a half fast, opposed to meats and the more delicate kinds of food.”

A ten days' trial of this diet resulting favorably, Daniel and his companions were permitted to continue it during the whole course of their training for the duties of the palace.

Verse 17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

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19. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore stood they before the king. 20. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. 21. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.” {30.3}

To Daniel alone seems to have been committed an understanding in visions and dreams. But the Lord’s dealing with Daniel in this respect does not prove ~~the others~~ any the less accepted in his sight. Preservation in the midst of the fiery furnace was as good evidence of the divine favor as they could have had. Daniel probably had some

natural qualifications that peculiarly fitted him for this special work. {30.4}

The same personal interest in these individuals heretofore manifested by the king, he still continued to maintain. At the end of the three years, he called them to a personal interview. He must know for himself how they had fared, and what proficiency they had ~~made~~. This interview also shows the king to have been a man well versed in all the arts and sciences of the Chaldeans, else he would not have been qualified to examine others therein. As the result, recognizing merit wherever he saw it, without respect to religion or nationality, he acknowledged them to be ten times superior to any in his own land. {31.1}

~~And it is added that Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus. This is an instance of the somewhat singular use of the word unto, or until, which occasionally occurs in the sacred writings. It does not mean that he continued no longer than to the first year of Cyrus, for he lived some years after the commencement of his reign; but this is the time to which the writer wished to direct special attention, as it brought deliverance to the captive Jews. A similar use of the word is found in Ps.112:8 and Matt.5:18. {31.2}~~

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19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. 21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

After Three Years’ Study.--To Daniel alone seems to have been committed an understanding in visions and dreams. But the Lord’s dealing with Daniel in this respect does not prove his companions any less accepted in His sight. By their preservation in the midst of the fiery furnace they had equally good evidence of the divine favor. Daniel probably had some

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natural qualifications that peculiarly fitted him for this special work.

The same personal interest in these individuals heretofore manifested by the king, he still continued to maintain. At the end of the three years, he called them to a personal interview. He must know for himself how they had fared, and to what proficiency they had attained. This interview also shows the king to have been a man well versed in all the arts and sciences of the Chaldeans, else he would not have been qualified to examine others in them. Recognizing merit where he saw it without respect to religion or nationality, he acknowledged them to ten times superior to any in his own land.

It is added that Daniel “continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus.”

[*] The date 606 B.C. is widely supported by Ussher, Hales, and other chronologists, but more recent research by archaeologists favors the date 605. This apparently more accurate date, however, in no way affects the calculation of prophetic periods presented by the author, for it should be remembered that the Jews and other ancients counted both the first and last years of a period.--Editors.

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02 - THE GREAT IMAGE

A Difficulty Explained - Daniel Enters upon His Work - Who Were the Magicians? - Trouble between the King and the Wise Men - The Ingenuity of the Magicians - The King's Sentence against Them - Remarkable Providence of God - The Help Sought by Daniel - A Good Example - Daniel's Magnanimity - A Natural Character - The Magicians Exposed - What the World Owes to the People of God - Appropriateness of the Symbol - A Sublime Chapter of Human History - Beginning of the Babylonian Kingdom - What is Meant by a Universal Kingdom - Description of Babylon - The Heavenly City - Babylon's Fall - Stratagem of Cyrus - Belshazzar's Impious Feast - Prophecy Fulfilled - Babylon Reduced to Heaps - The Second Kingdom, Medo-Persia - Persian Kings, and Time of Their Reign - Persia's Last King - Alexander the Great - His Contemptible Character - The Fourth Kingdom - The Testimony of Gibbon - Influences which Undermined Rome - A False Theory Examined - What the Toes Signify - Rome Divided - Names of the Ten Divisions - Subsequent History - God's Kingdom Still Future - Its Nature, Location, and Extent

“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.” {32.1}

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 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

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Chapter II

The King Dreams of World Empires

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.

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