

The Divine Programme of The World's History Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part I.



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AS the Congo River in its onward flow across the “Dark Continent” broadens and deepens when its great tributaries mingle their waters with its own, so the stream of prophetic revelation increases continually in volume as it rolls down through the ages. From the first, its theme was redemption—the saving blessing in store for the human race; but to Adam and to Abraham the great benefit—the salvation—only was predicted, while little was said of the great Benefactor, the Saviour Himself.

To Moses and David visions of the blessed Coming One were granted, till, by degrees, His mediatorial work, His double nature, His wonderful personal experiences, and many features of His glorious kingdom were revealed. In the times of the Jewish kingdom especially, and during the captivity which followed its dissolution, the river of prophecy thus widened exceedingly. Its revelations concerned three main subjects:—

- I. The fortunes of the JEWISH kingdom and people.
- II. The person and work of MESSIAH THE PRINCE.
- III. The GENTILE nations—pagan kingdoms and empires.

1. The JEWISH PROPHECIES included predictions of the dismemberment of the kingdom after Solomon's reign; the overthrow of the ten tribes and its date; the deliverance of Judah from the Assyrian invasion; its subsequent conquest by Babylon; the captivity and its duration; the restoration and the means of it; the duration of its restored existence; the Roman overthrow and subsequent desolation; together with minor points so numerous that it may be safely asserted that Israel's entire history was written in advance, and that nothing ever befell them that was not first foretold. Thus the providential government of God over His people was manifested, and the moral reasons for His dispensations expounded beforehand.

The Jewish prophets combined pastoral care and spiritual exhortation with prediction in their ministry. They were the ambassadors for God of their day, pleading with His people of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Like the apostles, they were witnesses for the truth, and often martyrs for its sake. Some of their predictions were accomplished speedily, attesting to the then living generation their Divine commission; others were recorded for ages to come, and demonstrate in our own day the Divine prescience which inspired them.

II. The MESSIANIC predictions increased in number and in variety during this period, and included revelations as to the nature of Christ's person and mission, His birth of a virgin and the place where it should occur, His works of mercy, His meek and compassionate character, His sinlessness, His atoning self-sacrifice, His humiliation and rejection, His sufferings, death, and resurrection; the atonement wrought by these, with its results in the gift of the Holy Ghost; the propagation of the gospel among the Gentiles, and many other particulars.

III. The predictions as to the GENTILE nations and their rulers include those relating to Assyria, Babylon, Moab, Egypt, Tyre, Philistia, Kedar, Elam—all of which had more or less direct and important connection with the Jewish people, together with others relating to individuals, such as Sennacherib, Cyrus, and Nebuchadnezzar, who influenced their fortunes seriously. Such prophecies taught the Jews that Jehovah was not their God only, but the Supreme Ruler over all the earth.

The polytheism of the day had divided the countries of the world among its false deities, and circumscribed the power of each to certain districts. The Assyrians when settled in Samaria complained that they "knew not the manner of the God of the land." The Israelites could never thus limit Jehovah in their thoughts, since the predictions of His prophets unveiled the future of the Gentiles around them as well as their own, and their fulfilment proved that Divine providence controlled the one as completely as the other. Moreover, such prophecies abated the doubts and conflicts which must have arisen in the hearts and minds of pious Jews under the dark providences of defeat and captivity. When the enemy was permitted to triumph, and to boast in his false gods as if of superior might to Jehovah, it was a consolation to know by prophetic revelation that the triumph would be of brief duration, that the spoiler would soon himself be spoiled and the captive delivered, to understand the moral reasons for the disciplinary portions of the providential government of God, and to be led to repentance for the sins that had incurred Divine judgments.

It lies, however, outside the province of this work to examine in detail these several classes of predictions, or to trace their fulfilment. On some of them it would not be easy to base arguments of evidential value; inasmuch as it might not at this distance of time be possible to prove that the date of the publication of the prediction was sufficiently remote from the event that fulfilled it, or that the event was so beyond the power of human sagacity to anticipate, as to demonstrate supernatural prescience (foresight). Moreover, none of these predictions properly fall under either of the great programmes which we are here examining. They stand apart from

the comprehensive foreviews given at the commencement of the great sections of human history, to the fathers, or founders, of the new order of things, and they need not therefore detain us.

After the establishment of Jewish monarchy in the reign of David and Solomon, at which crisis the previous foreview was granted, no great turn or change in the history of the chosen people through whom the world's redemption was to be accomplished took place until the Babylonian captivity. The promise of the permanence of David's dynasty as long as the kingdom existed was conspicuously fulfilled, as may be clearly seen by a comparison between *his* dynasty which reigned at Jerusalem and that which occupied the throne of Israel or the ten tribes.

Frequent and violent interruptions, owing to revolt and assassination, marked the succession in Samaria. Jeroboam's line failed; Baasha's house did the same; the usurpers Zimri and Omri were cut off; so was the house of Ahab; Jehu's succession was expressly limited to four generations; and from that time to the fall of the ten tribes before Assyria, there was only a series of successive conspiracies which placed strangers on the throne.

In Judah, on the contrary, there was an unbroken descent in one line, so that the family of David occupied his throne for 450 years without interruption, until both king and people were carried to Babylon. The related kingdom of Israel, though it only lasted 250 years, saw three complete extirpations of the reigning family, the deposition of the house of Jehu, and perpetual confusion in the order of the kingdom.

The stability of David's throne was not owing to an absence of danger; insurrection and conspiracy arose, but they could not overthrow it. Athaliah's domestic treachery did not defeat the promise of God; the confederacy of Syria and Ephraim to set up the son of Tabeal on the throne of Judah in the days of Ahaz, was foiled; and even the great invasion of Sennacherib, though it threatened Hezekiah, was not allowed to overthrow the dynasty of David before the appointed time. It was upheld when ruin was all around it. A very special providence preserved the throne of Judah and the dynasty that occupied it, until by its own act it forfeited all its privileges.

But the temporal promises of the Davidic covenant had been made distinctly conditional, and held good only as long as David's seed remained faithful to Jehovah. "If he (i.e. the king) commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men," was one of the provisions of the original covenant; and to Solomon God had said, "If thou wilt walk before Me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness . . . then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever . . . but if ye go and serve other gods, and worship them, then will I cut off Israel out of the land that I have given them." (1 Kings ix. 4.) Hence, as long as the kings of Judah were even in the main faithful and obedient, they were upheld in spite of many and flagrant transgressions; but when Manasseh filled the land with idolatry and the blood of human sacrifices, when all the three sons of the good king Josiah "did evil in the sight of the Lord," then it was formally announced to the king by the prophet

that the covenanted blessings were forfeited, and the penalty predicted 450 years before about to descend.

There is something specially sad and pathetic in the whole strain of Jeremiah chapter 22, where God reluctantly yet solemnly revokes the promises of the covenant. "Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David;" and then comes the terrible message. Jehoahaz (or Shallum) was to die an outcast in Egypt; his brother Jehoiakim to perish unlamented, and "be buried with the burial of an ass"; Jehoiachin, the last independent king of David's line, to be given into the hands of those that sought his life, cast out to die in another land, "O earth, earth, earth," ends this touching passage, "hear the word of the Lord. Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."

The word "childless" means here, without a successor on the throne, an heirless king; officially childless. Personally Jehoiachin had a family, and his son Salathiel enters into the line of the ancestry of Christ; Matt. i. 12; 1 Chron. iii. 17. The word might be rendered "destitute" or "deprived," not of offspring, but of a successor.

Thus God revoked the title of David's seed to the throne, but not for ever, for the passage goes on to speak of "the Righteous Branch" that shall yet be raised to David, "the king" that shall "reign and prosper and execute judgment and justice in the earth." "The sure mercies of David" have not failed, his throne is only in abeyance, until He shall come whose right it is to reign.

A crisis of peculiar importance, a great turning-point in history, was reached at this juncture, which was an era of solemn and fundamental change to the chosen people. It was a fit crisis for a fresh outburst of prophetic light. The kingdom of Israel was over. The throne of Judah had fallen to rise no more until days yet to come. The times of the Gentiles were about to commence. The heritage of Jehovah lay waste, the temple of God was a heap of blackened ruins, the corporate nationality of the Jews was shattered, it was an hour of utmost gloom and deepest discouragement. The outward ordinances of religion were in abeyance, the typical ritual suspended, the Davidic covenant apparently broken—how intensely the light of further revelation was required!

The national apostasy which had sunk the people of God as low as the surrounding heathen in polytheism and idolatry, had brought down on them an early installment of the curses of the Sinaitic covenant, as a discipline which should restore them to the faith of Abraham. A foretaste of their present longer and more terrible chastisement had been allowed to overtake them—the Babylonian captivity had been sent to wean them from their besetting sin of idolatry, and draw them back to their allegiance to God. *Temporal* supremacy was taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles at this time, just as later on *religious* supremacy, "the kingdom of God," was similarly taken from them and given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof. But mercy was mingled with judgment at this sorrowful crisis, and it was during

this captivity that the sixth section of the Divine programme of the world's history, with its all-glorious issue and triumphant termination, was imparted to Daniel.

Before considering this gracious revelation, and in order to its better appreciation, we must take a brief glance at the then existing state of the civilized Gentile world, with whose future, prophecy thenceforth concerns itself as well as with the future of the chosen people.

The interest of history at that period centered still around the original seats of population with which we have before had to do—the great valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, Palestine, Egypt, and Arabia, though the Medes and Persians and Elamites to the east were also coming more prominently into notice. The balance of power among these nations was, however, materially altered since the epoch we last considered.

The golden days of Egypt were over, though it was still a kingdom, and at times able to assume the aggressive. Days of decrepitude and disintegration had long since descended on the land of Ham. Twenty petty princes were sometimes ruling at the same time over feeble sections of the once mighty empire of the Pharaohs.

The powerful dominion of David and Solomon had proved as brief in its duration as it was rapid in its rise, and had been early broken into two kingdoms; the northern portion of the divided realm of Israel had fallen under the power of Assyria a hundred and thirty years previously to the Babylonian captivity. The strong, rapacious, and cruel monarchs, Tiglath Pileser, Shalmanezar, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon, had, as we know from their own still extant inscriptions, successively ravaged both the Jewish territories east of Jordan, and the fair valleys and plains of Ephraim. They had gradually subdued the ten tribes, and, according to the cruel custom of the East (which happily has never obtained in Western warfare), they had deported the superior classes of the people to Assyria and Media. Only a poor and mongrel population, though probably a large one, dwelt in Samaria, which had become a tributary province of Assyria.

Sennacherib had also overrun Judea with his vast hosts, and threatened Egypt. He had, however, been checked by Divine intervention, in response to Hezekiah's faith and prayer. His successor Esarhaddon had taken Judah's wicked king Manasseh captive for a time, but he was restored on his repentance, for the throne of David had still to last a little longer. Assyria's own predicted doom was also fast approaching, for Nineveh's temporary respite was over, and the mighty city on the Tigris, whose magnificence, idolatry, corruption, tyranny, vainglory, and horrible cruelties have been revealed to us by its modern resurrection from the dust of ages, was about to fall. The government of Assyria had fallen into the weak hands of Sardanapalus, the provinces had risen in rebellion, the capital had been beleaguered by its foes. Its own great rivers, swelled by heavy rains, had broken down its walls for a length of twenty stadii; and the consequent exposure of his city had driven the miserable Sardanapalus in despair to burn himself, his family, and his treasures in his splendid palace. The prophecies of Nahum and Zephaniah had been literally and

wonderfully fulfilled in the fall of the guilty capital and empire, and out of the ashes of Assyria on the Tigris in the north-east had arisen the great empire of Babylon on the Euphrates in the southwest.

It was during the siege of Nineveh that Nabopolassar, then the Assyrian viceroy in Babylonia, had asserted his independence, and established unopposed a new monarchy, which, under the circumstances of the times, grew with amazing rapidity. The fall of Nineveh and of the Assyrian empire had left its many provinces without a ruler and without defence. Babylon and Egypt both strove for the supremacy, and the latter at first secured some successes in Asia. The good Jewish king Josiah tried to oppose the armies of Pharaoh Necho in their career of Asiatic conquest, but he was defeated and slain at Megiddo in B.C. 609—a defeat which his people bitterly mourned, and from which Judah never recovered. Necho's triumph, however, was brief; for three years later he and his army were routed in the great battle of Carchemish on the Euphrates, where the young and talented prince Nebuchadnezzar—then acting for his father, Nabopolassar—utterly defeated the Egyptian forces, and thus settled the question as to the future mastery of Asia (B.C. 603). This battle is prophetically and graphically described Jer. 46:3-12.

Necho retreated with the shattered remnant of his forces into Africa, resigned all pretension to the Asiatic conquests he had made, including Judea; and, as we read in the Book of Kings, he “came no more out of his land.” Judea became shortly afterwards a mere Babylonian province; Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and its people taken captive (B.C. 606-598).

After four hundred and fifty years of independence the kingdom of David had thus fallen. Israel, as predicted, had “come down very low,” and her enemies had risen very high. The curse causeless had not come; Israel, having broken her covenant, had justly incurred its penalties, but very terrible they were. Profoundly dark to every Jewish heart must have been the abyss of the Babylonish captivity. It had swallowed up their national existence for the present, but that was the smallest part of it. Had it also robbed them of their future? Had the promises of God failed? Was the covenant forsworn for ever? What, then, of the oath to Abraham? What of the promised seed and the blessing of the world through him? Had the throne of Judah fallen to rise no more? But what, then, of the sure mercies of David, and what of Messiah the Prince and His eternal rule over all nations?

Jeremiah had indeed limited the captivity in Babylon to seventy years, but what was to follow? Were pagan Babylonian tyrants to lord it for ever over the earth? Was the worship of the only living and true God to be extinguished? Were polytheism and idolatry still to swamp mankind with their degrading floods of superstition? Power and permanence, wealth and wisdom, art and science—all seemed to be on their side. But was this state of things to continue? What were the counsels of God, and the plans of providence? Thoughtful and godly souls must have longed and prayed for light and for the consolations of hope.

Most dazzling was the vision of Gentile grandeur on which the gaze of the Jewish exiles on the banks of the Euphrates rested in the meantime.

Nebuchadnezzar their captor was not only a most energetic and successful military hero and mighty conqueror, but he was besides a builder as magnificent as Rameses II. or Menephtah of Egypt themselves! Scripture gives us on this point only his one fatal soliloquy: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" but the speech was eminently characteristic of the man, and the boast was in harmony with the facts of the case, while the inscriptions he has left behind him abundantly explain and amplify the statement.

Babylon had, of course, been built ages before his day, for it was the city of the architects of the tower of Babel; and though the confusion of tongues stopped their erection of the latter, the former continued to exist. It had indeed been a seat of government from the earliest days, and had experienced a variety of fortunes. Recently in the time of the Assyrian empire it had been the provincial capital of Babylonia. But just as Augustus built Rome—in the sense that he found it brick and left it marble—so Nebuchadnezzar built Babylon; he enlarged, adorned, enriched, and strengthened it to such an extent, that he might well speak of the magnificent city as his own creation.

In a long and detailed account called the "standard inscription of Nebuchadnezzar," he rehearses his various and splendid architectural undertakings. His father, after assuming the regal position and title, had laid the foundations of an imperial city as he fully admits, but *he* erected the splendid superstructures, as Solomon built the temple for which David had prepared. He calls the city "the delight of his eyes," and exults in having made it "glorious," and especially in the impregnable defences with which he had surrounded it. According to Herodotus, the walls formed a circuit of fifty-five miles, enclosing a square measuring fourteen miles each way. Other writers give different dimensions, but the lowest computation represents it as ten miles square, and with an area consequently of a hundred square miles—four times as large as Paris, and twice as big as London.

The whole of this immense space was not of course covered with buildings; gardens, orchards, and palm groves were interspersed among them, and the royal quarter alone extended over some miles. Outside it were streets cutting each other at right angles, like those of American cities; most of the houses were many storeys high; and the city of the poor, where dwelt the countless labourers of the great king, was at some little distance. The height of the walls is variously stated by ancient historians as from three hundred feet down to seventy-five feet; but even this lowest estimate is enormous when the width of the wall, which was fifty cubits, is remembered. More than five hundred millions of square feet of solid masonry were contained in these bulwarks at the lowest computation. The buildings they enclosed—the temples, palaces, "hanging gardens," and towers—were gigantic and magnificent; artificial water in abundance was stored within the city, one reservoir alone being a mile long. Nebuchadnezzar's engineering operations were astonishing, and show how great the amount of knowledge and skill in those days, and how vast his resources in the "naked human strength" of forced labourers, who were, of course, mostly captives taken in war.

A tunnel was, it is said, carried under the bed of the Euphrates, fifteen

feet wide and twelve feet to the spring of the arch, and more than half a mile in length; and a magnificent drawbridge spanned the great stream, fully a mile wide at that point. Nor did Nebuchadnezzar confine his operations to the city itself. He connected the Tigris and Euphrates by a broad and deep channel called the NAHR MALCHA, or "Royal River," and dug an artificial lake near Sippara, which was a hundred and forty miles in circumference, and nearly two hundred feet deep. He built quays and breakwaters along the shores of the Persian Gulf, and founded a city in the neighbourhood; he restored the temple of Belus, or "tower of tongues," at Borsippa, eleven or twelve miles from Babylon; and its remains, the great Birs-i-Nimrud, are now the mightiest of all the ruins of Mesopotamia, and identified by many with the Tower of Babel, for it was already a vast and very ancient ruin when Nebuchadnezzar undertook its restoration.

His works are spread over the entire country, and Sir Henry Rawlinson calculates that nine-tenths of the bricks brought from Mesopotamia are inscribed with his name. "At least a hundred sites in the tract immediately about Babylon give evidence by bricks bearing his legend of the marvellous activity and energy of this king."

"Altogether there is reason to believe that he was one of the most indefatigable of all the builders that have left their mark upon the world in which we live. He covered Babylonia with great works, he was the Augustus of Babylon. He found it a perishing city of unbaked clay, he left it one of durable burnt brick." (Canon Rawlinson: "Egypt and Babylon," chap. vi.)

"We trace the acropolis of the royal city, where stood the palaces from whose terraces Nebuchadnezzar surveyed the placid flood of the Euphrates twenty miles away north and as many south, with the city at his feet, the vast plain and palm groves along the river banks, the hanging gardens near, and temples and villages intermingled in the prospect. Closely adjacent were the mansions of Daniel and his friends, busy in the cares of state administration; and here, too, the Chaldee magicians and the Babylonian princes with their craft and superstitions. Here the banquet hall of Belshazza, and not far off the dens and the furnaces where suffered the victims of tyranny and the witnesses to truth.

Now, as the stranger treads the ground once trodden by king and prophet, he needs but little meditation to call up to view their familiar haunts; to see where once the wharves bordered the river, and where were the gates that opened to the soldiers of Cyrus, or erewhile to the captives from Jerusalem. Now a deadly silence broods over the scene. . . . All is one undistinguishable heap, and you can only be assured that on this spot Babel was first built, and the speech of man was first confounded; that the great captive of Judah found honour and consolation here, and that heathen scribes penned, even where you stand, proclamations of honour and worship to the God of Israel, and of deliverance to His captives.

"This was the proud and luxurious court of Babylon, the seat of dominion over the mightiest nation that was under heaven, at the time when its sovereign pronounced the brief soliloquy which brought down upon him the judicial insanity described by Daniel; and yonder, five or six miles south, Hillah,

once populous city, yet holds its place, and marks the memorable site where the plebeians of that age dwelt apart, with a broad intervening space to separate them from the courtiers and their lord." (Rule: " Oriental Records," p. 220.)

The captive Jews were for the most part, like all his other prisoners of war, forced to work for the Royal Builder in erecting these splendid structures, and carrying out these vast enterprises. Crowds of expatriated Egyptians, Phoenicians, Syrians, Jews, Ammonites, and Moabites were forcibly settled all over Babylonia, and especially near the capital, from whom forced labour was required, and whose condition was consequently one of slavery, not unlike that of Israel in Egypt 1,000 years previously.

The slavery of the Jews had been predicted: "Ye shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Even after the restoration, the Jews in Jerusalem still speak of themselves as slaves. "Behold, we are bondsmen this day," —slaves in the land Thou gavest to our fathers; "it yieldeth much increase to the kings whom Thou hast set over us: . . . they have dominion over *our bodies*, and over our *cattle*, at *their pleasure*, and we are in great distress." (Neh. ix. 36, 37)

Nebuchadnezzar was a cruel and tyrannical monarch, as his treatment of enemies, and his conduct to Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah proves. But we must imagine him, nevertheless, as a highly civilized and intelligent ruler. He is represented both in Daniel and on the monuments as "at the head of a magnificent court, surrounded by 'princes, governors, and captains, judges, treasurers, councillors, and sheriffs,' waited on by eunuchs selected with the greatest care, well favoured and carefully educated; attended, whenever he requires it, by a multitude of astrologers and other 'wise men,' who seek to interpret to him the will of Heaven. He is an absolute monarch, disposing with a word of the lives and properties of his subjects, even the highest. All offices are in his gift. He can raise a foreigner to the second place in the kingdom, and even set him over the priestly order. His wealth is enormous, for he makes of pure gold an image, or obelisk, ninety feet high and nine feet broad. He is religious after a sort, but wavers in his faith, sometimes acknowledging the God of the Jews as the only real deity, sometimes relapsing into an idolatrous worship, and forcing all his subjects to follow his example. Even then, however, his polytheism is of a kind which admits of a special devotion to a particular deity, who is called emphatically 'his god.' In temper he is hasty and violent, but not obstinate; his fierce resolves are taken suddenly, and as suddenly repented of; he is, moreover, capable of bursts of gratitude and devotion, no less than of accesses of fury; like most Orientals, he is vainglorious; but he can humble himself before the chastening hand of the Almighty; in his better moods he shows a spirit astonishing in one of his country and time—a spirit of real piety, self-condemnation, and self-abasement, which renders him one of the most remarkable characters in Scripture." (Rawlinson's "Ancient Monarchies," vol. iii. pp. 58, 59.)

It was towards the close of his long reign of forty-three years that the remarkable episode of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity occurred. It seems to have been an attack of what is termed lycanthropy, a disease not unknown to

physicians. It was not to be expected that so proud a monarch would leave on record any account of his own lunacy; but strange to say, there is one passage in his inscription which seems to allude to the interruption which it occasioned in all his usual avocations. The monument is broken and defective, but the extant portion runs thus:—

“‘In all my dominions I did not build a high place of power. The precious treasures of my kingdom I did not lay up. In Babylon, buildings for myself and the honour of my kingdom I did not lay out. In the worship of Merodach my lord, the joy of my heart, in Babylon, the city of his sovereignty and the seat of my empire, I did not sing his praises, and I did not furnish his altars (with victims), nor did I clear the canals.’

And there are other negative clauses, not yet translated. But these few lines suffice to tell of an utter abandonment of all royal care. No joy in his palace. No erection of a place of strength. No treasure laid up. An utter cessation of public works in unfinished Babylon. No observance of religion. Even the canals uncleansed are choked with mud and waterweed. Only suspension of reason, or a paralysis of all energy, could account for this.”(Rule: “Oriental Records,” p. 224.)

The king then goes on to describe how he *subsequently resumed* his great building works on his recovery, including the erection of the “Ingur-bel.”

“In a happy month and on an auspicious day its foundations I laid in the earth,” he says. “I completely finished its top . . . and made it the high place of my kingdom. A strong fort of brick and mortar in strength I constructed. Inside the brick fortification another great fortification of long stones, of the size of great mountains, I made. Like Shedim I raised up its head. And this building I raised for a wonder; for the defence of the people I constructed it.” (Rule: “Oriental Records,” p. 225.)

This, then, was the proud, pagan, cruel, conquering, busy, building, wealthy, and worldly monarch, into whose court the providence of God introduced at the crisis of the fall of Judah four young scions of the Jewish royal family, taken captive among others in the destruction of Jerusalem. This Babylon was the magnificent city in the midst of whose glory, iniquity, and idolatry, Daniel and his fellows grew up wiser than their teachers, prayerful and pious, pure and holy, steadfast to the God of their fathers, faithful unto death. Blessed illustration of the truth, that without taking His people out of the world, God can keep them from the evil!

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