

find greater unanimity among adherents of the so-called "Higher Criticism" than in relation to the Book of Daniel. Virtually all of these agree that it does not come from a Jew who was prominent at the court of Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century B.C. but from an unknown writer of the Maccabean period, four centuries later. Consequently, when Babylonian discoveries appeared to contradict the chapter at two vital points, this seemed to provide convincing evidence of the truth of the critical viewpoint.

Let us briefly recall the principal events of the chapter. It tells of a king of Babylon named Belshazzar who gave a great feast. During the feast he saw fingers of a man's hand writing upon the wall. He became very much excited and anxious to know the meaning of the writing. Calling for all the wise men of Babylon, he made a wonderful offer: "Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed in scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom" (v.7.). All the wise men were brought in but none could read the writing. Eventually the queen-mother heard what was happening and told the king about a wise man named Daniel who had been prominent in Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, a previous king, and suggested that he might be able to interpret the writing. Daniel was called in, and the same offer made as had been given to the others. "If thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom" (v. 16). Daniel answered and explained the meaning of the writing, that God would punish Belshazzar's pride by taking away his kingdom and giving it to the Medes and Persians.

Verse 29 is most astonishing, because it shows what an honorable king Belshazzar must have been. Despite the very unpleasant nature of the interpretation which Daniel had given, he immediately proceeded to carry out his promise. We read in verse 29, "Then commanded Belshazzar, and they