

by Daniel that Christ himself came in person to help Gabriel.

GOD'S WORKING UNKNOWN TO MEN

To Daniel doubtless it seemed that his prayer was unheard, but God was working out the answer in a way unknown to the prophet. Had he ceased to make intercession at the end of one week, or at the end of two weeks, the history of an entire people would have been changed. The promise is, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." (Isaiah 65:24). God is often testing the strength of our desires when he withholds an immediate answer to our prayer. (SDP 158.1).

"Knowest thou wherefore I am come unto thee?" asked Gabriel. "I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days." (Dan. 10:14). Daniel fell to the ground, and the breath went from his body. This was his condition when in vision. He was unable to speak until Christ touched his lips. Then he spoke to Gabriel, who stood by his side to strengthen him, and to explain to him the history of the latter days. (SDP 158.2).

God has had many prophets. The effect of the Spirit upon a human being when in vision is unexplainable. There is an overpowering presence which so overcomes the physical being that it has no strength to act of itself. The breath leaves the body, and the voice of God speaks through the human instrument. The eyes remain open, as Balaam described his condition, but the person sees things outside the world.

He is often taken far beyond the bounds of earth as was the case of Ezekiel, John, and Paul. Earth's attraction is broken, and with an angel guide the prophet visits other places, or beholds the future, reading there the history of men and nations. When the living coal from the altar is laid upon those lips, they speak words of heavenly wisdom. Isaiah had this experience. (SDP 159.1).

For the third time Gabriel expressed the love of God for Daniel, adding, "Peace be unto thee; be strong, yea, be strong." By word and by touch Gabriel strengthened the gray-haired prophet. He was ready for the revelation, and said, "Let my Lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me." (Dan. 10:19).

The things which are noted in the history of truth were related by this great revealer. Man sees not as God sees, and in his shortsightedness he often emphasizes the unim-

portant, and passes lightly over events of universal interest. But when history is given in God's Word it is a chronicler of those things which are "noted in the Scripture of truth."

This fact is noticeable in the history of the Persian kings, which is contained in the next few verses. In the most abbreviated manner, Gabriel touches the events of hundreds of years, but he brings into prominence things which are noted elsewhere in the Word of God, and which can be understood only by a careful study of other books of the Bible. (SDP 159.3).

For an understanding of the history of Persia, it is necessary to study carefully Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah. These books carry the history to the time of Persia's greatest strength, and through the time when that nation worked for God and his people. Then, and not till then, is the record silent. (SDP 160.1).

References

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Daniel's
encounter with
Christ
Daniel 10:1-21

The last three chapters of the book of Daniel are inseparable, for they relate the last recorded vision of the prophet. The tenth chapter is preliminary to a detailed history of the world, and is valuable because of the important spiritual lessons which it contains.

A REBUKE TO MEN IN HIGH POSITIONS

Daniel was an old man, and nearing the end of a long and eventful career, but his last days were full of anxiety for his race, and he still carried the burden of their captivity on his heart. Since the events recorded in the ninth chapter, he had been in the lions' den, thrust there because of the cruel hatred of men in high positions.

His godly life was a constant rebuke to the corruption of men in office, and they sought to destroy him, but God put these men to confusion, and witnessed to the purity of Daniel's life. The prophet had been held in high esteem by Darius the Mede, and on his death and the accession of Cyrus, Daniel had remained in the court, a counselor of the king. (SDP 154.1).

SIN DAZZLES THE EYES

Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, had issued an emancipation proclamation to the Jews. The Spirit of God had pleaded with the heart of the king, and he felt that he was brought into power for that purpose. When, after every provision had been made for the return, but a small fraction of the Jews took advantage of it, Cyrus began to doubt the wisdom of the decree. It was with the Jews as with sinners to-day. Pardon is granted and freedom offered, but they choose to remain in sin until they receive the penalty-death. The sins of Babylon dazzled the eyes of the Jews who beheld them, and the voice of their God was but faintly heard. (Comp. Eze. 33:30-32).

Daniel could not understand the situation. The spiritual condition of his own people weighed heavily upon him, and the changing attitude of the king worried him. He thought upon the previous vision, and wondered if it could be that his people-the Jews-would cling to the sins of Babylon until they were overtaken by the persecutions described as belonging to the latter days. He could not understand the times, although the words spoken by Gabriel seemed clear of comprehension. (SDP 155.1).

CONTROL OF THE APPETITE

Two years after the decree of Cyrus, Daniel determined to

humble his heart before God by prayer and fasting until he should understand the matter. He did not practice total abstinence from food, for this fast was not the fast of a day. But he withdrew from the king's table and partook of the plainest kinds of food, spending much time in prayer and study.

It was his purpose to have his appetite so in subjection that physical wants would not crowd out his desire for spiritual insight. The spiritual life of man too often partakes of the earthly mold of his body by overindulgence of appetite. The soul should control the body, and not be burdened by the body. This condition Daniel sought to attain.

He sought also to strengthen the mind by retiring to a quiet spot on the banks of the river Tigris. He took with him a few men as companions. Doubtless these were Jews who also felt a burden for Israel. The solitude of the spot, the swiftly flowing waters of the river, the lofty trees, and the clear sky above, led the prophet's mind out after his God. (SDP 155.2).

DANIEL'S ENCOUNTER WITH GABRIEL

For three weeks he thus sought for light and truth. Then it was that he looked up and beheld the Son of God by his side, the same who appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos. The brightness which shone round about Michael was too great for the eyes of the companions of Daniel, and they hastened to hide themselves.

The countenance of Christ was like lightning, and as he gazed upon the prostrate form of Daniel, the other men fled for their lives. But what would have been death to those who harbored sin, was life to the one whose character was pure. The dross had been consumed before, and the light shone upon the prophet as sunlight on a mirror. (SDP 156.1).

So full of life is the Son of God that his eyes appeared as lamps of fire, flashing light. He it is who says, "I will guide thee with mine eye." Daniel could bear the gaze, but his companions felt that those eyes burned into their very souls, and they hid from his gaze. To the ears of Daniel, accustomed by long experience to heavenly sounds, the voice of the "One Man" was as the voice of the multitude, or as the sound of many waters, clear and beautiful. To human ears, dull of hearing, it is like thunder.

The Jews at the time that the Greeks came to Christ had a similar experience to that of the companions of Daniel. Sitting in the temple court, the lightning played about the head

of Christ, and a voice which to him was the voice of God, to them sounded like the crash of a thunder bolt. Daniel was left alone in the presence of the Son of God, and as he compared his own condition to that of Christ, he seemed but a lump of clay, a broken vessel, uncomely and useless.

"My vigor was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." (Dan. 10:16). He clung close to the cold earth, his face to the ground in a deep sleep, helpless in the hands of his God. "What is man that thou are mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" (Psa. 8:4).

Then Gabriel, the angel who had so often talked with Daniel, touched him with his hand, and lifted his prostrate form. He said, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent." There was power in the touch of the angel's hand. There was power in the touch of the Saviour's hand. When on earth virtue, life, the healing power of God, constantly radiated from him. He could touch the leper, and a life-current flowed from him to the diseased one.

So it was with Gabriel's touch. He who stood in the presence of God was so filled with life that as he laid his hand on man, a thrill of life was felt in every nerve. It may be so with beings today. The follower of Christ should have the life-current so strong within him that sin is rebuked, and disease driven from him. "A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee," (Psalms 91:7) is the promise. Christ came that we might have an abundance of life; the cup full to overflowing.

We do not half realize our privilege. It was three full weeks since Daniel had begun to pray, and Gabriel explained the cause of the delay. From the first day of the fast his words had been heard, but their answer required the co-operation of Cyrus, the Persian king. So while Daniel waited, ignorant of the work of heaven in his behalf, and little dreaming of the strivings in the heart of the king, Gabriel had been at the Persian court pleading with Cyrus. (SDP 157.3).

One may wonder how Gabriel worked. Details are not given, but one thing is sure: until the moment of a nation's rejection, angels are always in the midst of their councils. Men will be led to take positions for the truth, not knowing the real reason for their own decisions.

The Holy Watcher is a constant witness in legislative halls to-day, and every just decree is the result of an impulse from the throne of God. This influence was at work in the heart of Cyrus, and so pressing were the petitions offered