

They saw him kneel in his usual place of prayer; three times each day they heard his voice raised in earnest supplication. It was enough; the accusation was made against "that Daniel which is of the children of the captivity of Judah." For the first time the design of the counselors flashed across the mind of Darius. A decree signed with the king's seal was unalterable in the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, yet the king spent the entire day pleading with those in high authority, and searching for some way of escape; but with Satanic smiles those princes met every argument with the words, "Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed." (SDP 84.2).

When the hands of men are tied; when there is no power on earth to help; then is God's opportunity. And Daniel's prayer still ascended: "It is time for thee, Lord, to work. Keep me in perfect harmony with thee." And while his own heart was in sympathy with heaven, there was no power on earth which could deprive him of his life, if God desired him to live. Daniel and Darius met at the mouth of the lions' den, but there was not another man in the realm so fitted to go inside as this same Daniel. Pressing the hand of his esteemed minister, Darius said, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." Daniel passed into the midst of the wild beasts of the forest, and a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den. Probably some feared that friends and sympathizers of Daniel might come to the rescue, so the seal of the king was placed upon the stone, that the purpose might not be changed. (SDP 85.2).

Satan exulted as he did years later when he saw the Son of God in the sepulcher, with a stone before the door, and the stone sealed with the Roman seal. But there was no more power to hold Daniel in the den of lions than to keep Christ in the grave. The angel came, not to the stone, but into the den, and one of the most precious times for Daniel was when he sat in the center of the cave, and those lions couched at his feet or fondly licked his hands. There was a time when the lion and the lamb played together, and man was given dominion over the beasts of the earth. It was only after sin entered, and man took the life of the beasts, that they in turn sought to destroy man. Harmony with God will finally restore man to his God-given place as king of the beasts. Daniel's heart was beating with the heart of God, and when he entered the den, the beasts were at peace with him. The unity of feeling is shown in the fact that an angel was visible, and Daniel talked face to face with the heavenly visitor. (SDP 86.1).

The king's heart was sad, and he spent the night in fasting and prayer. Hastening to the den in the early hours of the morning, he called: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" And from the recesses of the den came the words of cheer, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths." (SDP 86.2).

"He is not here, but risen." "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" said the angel, as the women came to the sepulcher of Christ. So no manner of hurt was found upon Daniel, the representative of Christ, "because he believed in his God;" because innocency was found in him. (SDP 86.3).

When Daniel's accusers were cast into the lions' den, they were crushed and devoured at once. Again the nations of the world saw the power of Israel's God to preserve his faithful people. Darius had his belief in God confirmed; and Cyrus had received a lesson he could not soon forget. It was a fresh token to the Israelites that God was in their midst to bless them. To Daniel came the voice of God promising patience and strength to perform his duties as a servant of God. Greater light came to Daniel, for it was after this experience that a large portion of the prophecies were given to him. (SDP 86.4).

Darius published to "all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth," "that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel." Thus God not only honored Daniel by a most miraculous deliverance, but his integrity was the means of publishing the truth throughout the world. From this time Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus, who issued the wonderful decree for the deliverance of the Jews. If sick at heart because of the seeming prosperity of the wicked and the increase of wickedness among men in high places, learn their fate from the sixth chapter of Daniel. (SDP 87.2).

If oppressed because of adherence to the Word of God, remember that Daniel represents all such, and what was done for him will be done for all whom Heaven favors to-day. Though death claim the body, the promise of God is a speedy resurrection; and whether in death, in prison, or the den of lions, Satan has no power over Christ. "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." (SDP 87.3).

#### *References*

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# Daniel in the Lion's Den

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“All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.” (Dan. 6:7).

Here is recorded the case of a man who was a devout follower of God, one whose honesty, accuracy, and skill in every particular was a wonder to the world. It is a powerful witness to the duties and privileges of every Christian business man. He was a noble statesman, but not a politician, an example for all office-holders. He fulfilled his duties under the Medes just as faithfully as under the Babylonians. He served the God of heaven, and not a man-made party. A business man does not necessarily have to be a sharp, policy man, but may be instructed by God at every step. When prime minister of Babylon, Daniel, as prophet of God, was receiving the light of heavenly inspiration. The usual type of a statesman, worldly, ambitious, scheming, is compared in the Scriptures to the grass of the field, and to the fading flower. The Lord is pleased to have men of intelligence in his work if they remain true to him. Through the grace of Christ, man may preserve the integrity of his character when surrounded by adverse circumstances. Daniel made God his strength, and was not forsaken in his time of greatest need.

The very position which he occupied put Daniel to the severest test. As chairman or chief of the presidents over the princes, Daniel was obliged to deal with all the under-rulers of the empire. One by one they were obliged to render an account to him. This was that the king might receive no damage. The king, then, was in danger; not in danger of losing his life, but these officials were scheming politicians who were robbing the government in every possible way. If they had taxes to gather, they turned a large per cent to their own account. There was bribery, cheating, wire pulling, and buying of positions in the Babylonian government, as there is in the world to-day. Dishonesty was found everywhere. (SDP 79.1).

Inspiration does not describe the iniquity in detail, but it does say, "The godly is perished out of the earth;. . . they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up." The princes and men in power not only work mischievously, but they work with both hands earnestly. If details are wanted, study the governments of to-day. They are the off-shoots from that same root of Babylon, and by studying the iniquity of to-day, we can know the sins against which Daniel had to stand. Even in the best of earthly governments, hundreds of thousands of dollars are used annually in an unlawful manner. When \$3,500 is paid for a single vote, and the individual returns the money because he has an offer of \$3,700 from the other party; when a mayor of a city can

afford to spend three or four times his salary to obtain an office, it must be known that money comes from some unlawful source. (SDP 80.1).

Roman history, with its stories of trusts, monopolies, and corporations, its bribery in the senate and outside the senate, is the history of Babylon, for Rome was one of the governments which were built upon Babylonian principles. French history of the period of the Revolution repeats the story. The history of England, the continental countries, and the United States today repeat the same story. So in the current history may be read in detail what had to be met by the prime minister in the city of Babylon. The sixth chapter of Daniel is left on record to show how a man of God, when elevated to such a position, can remain uncontaminated. It shows that attitude which any man of God must assume toward popular vice and corruption, and more than that, it shows what treatment a man who is true to principle must expect to receive from the hands of those who are corrupt. (SDP 81.1).

Because Daniel did guard the king's interests, Darius was about to set him over the whole realm. But the honesty of one man is like a thorn in the flesh of the unjust, and in their political meetings the princes and presidents sought to destroy the man who made accurate reports, and who was faultless in his dealings. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," is a principle of divine government, and from this principle Daniel could not be swerved. One can imagine the language of the princes as they discussed the matter. Every scheme they had tried had been checked, and yet it was generally acknowledged that it would be useless to bring a complaint concerning the work of Daniel. There was but one possible way to condemn him, and that must be concerning his religion. Even on that point they dared not make open accusation, but must accomplish their end without revealing their object. Their contemptible, under-handed method of procedure brought them in conflict with the God of Daniel, not with Daniel as an individual. (SDP 81.2).

With manifest respect for the king, and with words which flattered him, a committee of the princes waited upon Darius. The first words they spoke afterward revealed that there was a plot on foot, for they said, "All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors," and other officers had consulted together, when in truth they had held secret meetings, and the chief of the presidents was kept in ignorance of the matter. The king placed great confidence in his prime minister, and anything purporting to have his approval was accepted without further investigation. The form of a decree was presented to the king. It exalted Darius above all earthly monarchs, and attempted to place him above God. King Darius placed his seal upon the document, making it a law of the land. For thirty days no man should bow down or worship or ask any petitions, save of the king. (SDP 82.2).

The heart of God was drawn toward Babylon. Heaven was bound very close to earth, notwithstanding the iniquity, for God's chosen people were there, and the time of their deliverance drew near. While the Medes and Persians knew about God, they did not know him. An actual experience was needed, and God would manifest his power through that same faithful servant who had witnessed for him sixty-eight years. Daniel was true, noble, and generous. He was anxious to be at peace with all men, but would not permit any power to turn him aside from the path of duty. He was willing to obey those who had rule over him; but kings and decrees could not make him swerve from his allegiance to the King of kings. He realized that compliance with Bible requirements was a blessing to both soul and body. (SDP 83.1).

Daniel was aware of the purpose of his enemies to destroy his influence and his life; he knew of the decree, but it made no difference in his daily life. He did nothing unusual to provoke wrath, but in a straight-forward manner he performed his accustomed duties, and three times a day at his usual times for prayer, he went into his room, and with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he earnestly pleaded with the God of heaven to give him strength to be faithful. (SDP 83.2).

Daniel had a special meeting-place, and an appointed hour when he met the Lord, and these appointments were kept. There is a beauty in the thought of the soul connection between Daniel and heaven. His spiritual life was an actual thing, a life which he lived as real and as true as the physical life. The only life which his enemies knew or could comprehend was the physical life. To sever the intercourse with God would be as painful to Daniel as to deprive him of natural life; and as Christ withdrew to the mountains after days of soul-harrowing labor in order to be refilled with that life which he constantly imparted to the hungry multitudes, so Daniel sought God in prayer. It was only by these frequent times of spirit filling, as it were, that he had strength to meet the nervous strain of his official duties.

When the outward pressure was greatest, then he had the greatest need of being filled, that the equilibrium might be maintained. He who balances the clouds will so balance outward pressure with inward power if we but let him, that we never need be disturbed. If trials are great, open the soul to heaven, and equalize the pressure by being filled from above. (SDP 83.3). Daniel did not and could not deny his Saviour by concealing himself in some corner of his room to pray. He knelt by the open window, toward Jerusalem. He did not pray in his heart, silently. He prayed aloud, as had been his custom before the decree was issued. Noble and true is the one who has God ruling in his heart. Underhanded and mean are the actions of those who yield to the influence of Satan. All that is noble in man is lost forever when such a leader is chosen. Satan was in the councils of those officials as they plotted against Daniel, and after the decree was signed, they set spies to catch him.