

## **THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE**

– *DANIEL 1:8-20. – SEPTEMBER 10. –*

**"It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." – Romans 14:21.**

WE HAVE NOTED the cruelty of the kings of olden times. It is appropriate, therefore, that we note also certain instances in which they manifested great breadth of generosity and wisdom. Today's study illustrates this. Amongst the earlier captives brought by Nebuchadnezzar from Jerusalem some twenty years before its destruction were four young men of evidently noble birth and religious training. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. These captives were not maltreated nor enslaved, in the ordinary sense of the term. Their intellectual qualities were discerned and they were put into a superior school that they with others might be fitted to constitute a board of wise men, counselors of the king. So different is all this from the nepotism, "graft" and "pool" of our day that it seems almost incomprehensible.

At the same time the instance was an overruling of Divine providence by which not merely rebels against God in Israel were suffered to be captured and deported, but some also who were most loyal of heart to the principles of the Divine Law. We may here learn a lesson of how God is able to make even the disasters of life work out blessings for those who are truly loyal to Him even as Daniel and his companions were blessed and prospered in the enemy's land, and advanced to positions far higher than they would ever have attained in their own land.

## **ADVANTAGES OF ABSTEMIOUSNESS**

The young Hebrews were attached to the king's household, and were provided with extraordinary delicacies, including spirituous liquors. The policy of the king in providing sumptuously for all the

students, who were from various lands, was that, being well nourished, they might be in their best physical and mental condition. This lesson shows that it is a mistake to suppose that high living is specially conducive to intellectuality – not to mention spirituality.

From the very beginning, under God's providence, the deportment of Daniel brought him into special favor with the prince of the eunuchs who had in charge the temporalities of these students. There is something in a meek and quiet spirit that is impressive; and as a rule such a spirit comes only from a proper, religious training. To this eunuch Daniel, and his associates through him, appealed, requesting that instead of the fine food and liquors provided they might have a plain, vegetable diet.

The eunuch replied that he would be very glad to comply with the request, only he feared that when examination time should come, these four Hebrews, fed upon the plainer fare, would appear to a disadvantage and cause a reflection upon himself and possibly cost the loss of his position, if not indeed the loss of his life. Daniel, however, appealed for a trial of the matter for ten days, agreeing to abide by the results. At the end of this short time, comparison showed that the four young men who practiced abstemiousness were fairer and fatter in flesh than were those who shared the king's bounty; so their request was granted.

Of them we read, "Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." At the end of the period of their preparation, the king communed with the students, "and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah...and in every matter of wisdom and understanding concerning which the king inquired of them he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in his realm."

What was the secret of this wisdom and understanding? Did not the secret lie in the blessing of God and in the fact that these young

men sought to devote their lives to the doing of the Divine will – to the doing of righteousness? Thus we see that our hearts and minds can be free from selfish motives, free from superstition, free from fears, free to do the will of God at any cost. Such minds anywhere, at any time, are scarce. Such minds always develop wisdom. On the other hand, sensuality, selfishness, the grinding of personal axes, always becloud the judgment. What we need today in every walk of life is consecrated men of the stamp of Daniel and his companions – whole hearted men – who will give their best for the service of their fellow men in whatever sphere their [R4873 : page 346] lives may be cast. The world has grown wiser (?) since those days. Today a Daniel would not get into such a position of influence; or if, perchance, he did get there, it would be a miracle if he were not removed – such a miracle as has kept Judge Lindsay of Colorado in office for several years in spite of every pressure of high handed politics which has sought to crush him because of his faithfulness to the principles of righteousness.

Although Babylon has passed away, although few of us can be Daniels or have his high position and wonderful opportunity, nevertheless the thing that is really needed is the Daniel spirit, and that is a possibility with every man and with every woman – young or old. "Dare to be a Daniel!" Alas! how few appreciate the privilege, how few are emulating the Daniel spirit.

Christians throughout this Age are in a condition very similar to that of Daniel. The great King of Glory has them in the school of Christ. He wishes to select a few to be joint heirs in the Messianic Kingdom when it shall be established. The test of examination will come in the end of this Age. Those who will then be found worthy will be such as have had the Daniel spirit of devotion to God and to the principles of righteousness – willing to lay down their lives in the service of the Truth – followers in the footsteps of Jesus. Of these the Lord speaks, saying, "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up My jewels." – Mal. 3:17.

## **"WHEREBY THY BROTHER STUMBLETH"**

Our text gives the thought that in addition to our consideration of what is best for ourselves in the way of food and drink, to enable us to best serve the Lord, we should also have a mind as to the effect of our influence on our neighbors. The more noble our characters the greater will be our influence upon those who are naturally weaker. And that influence should always be used for the good of others, for the lifting up of the highest possible standards of thought, word and deed. Whatever will assist us in this direction should be considered, and should be to us as a command from God, who has said, "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith."

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