Present Truth, Feb 22 1900

A KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOSPEL SECRET MEANS LIFE.

(Daniel ii 19-36)

DANIEL and his companions desired mercies of the God of heaven, and their prayers were not in vain. Communion with the God of heaven was not a new thing to them, and they were not driven to it as a last resort, through fear of death. As citizens of the heavenly kingdom, loyal to its principles, they had learned to come boldly to a throne of grace, and to ask with confidence. Of some it is said, " Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Not so with these petitioners. The way they lived was the index of the way they pray. Bight living was the true basis of right praying.

"Then wa3 the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision, Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are His: He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings, and sets up kings : He gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He reveals the deep and secret things: He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him. I thank Thee and praise Thee, O Thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee: for Thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter."

That which Daniel saw in the night vision was what he had already experienced in his own life, the superiority of the principles of the kingdom of heaven. The Lord now showed him the working out of these principles among the nations of the earth, and their final triumph over all other kingdoms, regardless of their outward glory and power. He saw the long procession of kings who are removed one after the other, and of the kingdoms which succeed each other until " the Gospel of the kingdom of God " has accomplished its work, and "until He come whose right it is."

But " the secret " of all this goes deeper than the mere fact of the succession of kingdoms. It makes clear the *means* by which the King of heaven will establish an *everlasting* kingdom, although He has no other source from which to gather His subjects than the very peoples that constitute the earthly kingdoms which pass away. These are "the deep and secret things" which are beyond the range of human wisdom, and which must be "revealed" if they are ever known by man. The stability of any kingdom depends upon the loyalty of the subjects to the law of the realm, and so it is in the kingdom of heaven. And it is the triumph of the Gospel, that rebellious, fallen men can be transformed into loyal, obedient subjects of God's kingdom ; but this is only accomplished by that mysterious union of the Divine with the human, through the gift of the Son of God to the human family.

" Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14, 15.

" For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus bath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 2-4.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. 3:16. Daniel's prayer of thanksgiving shows that he had been prepared through his personal experience as a child of the heavenly King, to appreciate the nature of the revelation which was made to him, and to recognize in it the wider application of principles already familiar to him.

THE KEY THAT UNLOCKS HISTORY.

"Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon ; he went and said thus unto him ; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation."

The dream of Nebuchadnezzar, as will appear from the record, dealt with the history of the world, the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms. The true interpretation of the dream will therefore furnish the key to the correct understanding of the whole problem of human history, as viewed from the standpoint of the kingdom of God. But the philosophy of human history can be understood only as we study the life and teachings of the Son of God, the Son of Man, " the Man Christ Jesus." In His own person is found the interpretation of all history, and He was of the tribe of Judah. So the captain of the king's guard spoke better than he knew when he said, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation." Everyone who finds " Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth," will know the interpretation of history which would otherwise be to him but a confused struggle for the supremacy among the nations.

THE REVEALER OF SECRETS.

"The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof ? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king has demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers show unto the king ; but there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed are these : as for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and He that reveals secrets makes known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that you might know the thoughts of your heart."

The wisdom of this world cannot make clear the mystery of the kingdom of God. All the education of the schools will not make one a successful exponent of that mystery. "Can you by searching find out God?" The ability to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom grows out of a personal revelation, not simply *to* one but *in* one. So it was with the great apostle to the Gentiles : "It pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen." Thus had Daniel been prepared for the same work.

The secret of God's power among the nations, and the working of that power to set up His everlasting kingdom in the earth, are revealed in the experience of every man who will yield to it as it works in him, " casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." This experience, and the knowledge which comes from this experience, are open to all. "God is no respecter of persons," "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him : and His covenant to make them know it." This is the knowledge in which a man may justly glory (Jer. 9 : 24), and as in the case of Daniel, the glory is all given to God, who "reveals the deep and secret things."

STUDY FOR "THE LATTER DAYS."

Nebuchadnezzar was thinking of "what should come to pass hereafter." It is evident from what did come to pass later in his own experience, that he was thinking of his own kingdom as one likely to endure for an indefinite time, having already a universal dominion, and almost limitless resources for preserving and transmitting its glory unimpaired. Who can overthrow his kingdom, or prevent it from standing forever? Then God gave him a true view of the future history, that he might know " what shall be in the latter days," and then God caused it all to be written in this book with the interpretation, in order that all the world might know the same thing. It is certainly worthy of study by those who live "in the latter days."

The whole course of history is but the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom of God, the revealing of the failure of anything to endure, which is not in harmony with the principles of that kingdom. When future events are made known before they actually happen, it is simply preaching the Gospel in advance. And so we read : " And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, *preached before* the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Gal. 3:8, This is the Gospel which was proclaimed in the courts of Babylon by Daniel the Hebrew, the descendant of Abraham. The true God was to be made known to the heathen world, and in such a way as to command their attention.

Because the people had departed from God and His truth, Jerusalem had been overcome by Babylon, and the professed people of God were in captivity. Not recognizing that the God of heaven had given Jerusalem into his hand, and that for a definite purpose, the king of Babylon was lifted up in pride, and he thought of his kingdom as established for ever. But behind the king of Babylon was "the god of this world," seeking to establish a permanent kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of God, with Babylon as its capital. Had he really triumphed, and was Babylon to endure longer than Jerusalem? "The stupid man never regards, nor does the foolish man understand this,—that when the wicked spring up as the herbage, and all the workers of iniquity do flourish ; it is that they may be cut down forever ! And Thou, Jehovah, art forever exalted !" "Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O Lord : that the nations may know themselves to be but men."

These are the lessons to be taught, not simply to the heathen of Nebuchadnezzar's time, but to the heathen of all time, including the present; and for this purpose the record has been preserved for us. With its help we can look back over the centuries, and read aright their testimony, and are thus prepared to understand the interpretation of the present history. This is the only way by which we may know " what shall be in the latter days."