

**THE PROPHET DANIEL
EXPLAINED. IN A
SERIES OF READINGS
FOR YOUNG PERSONS**

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The Prophet Daniel Explained. In a Series of Readings for Young Persons by François Samuel
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THE PROPHET DANIEL EXPLAINED

IN A SERIES OF READINGS FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

By the late Professor Gausson, of Geneva.

"Whoso readeth Daniel the Prophet, let him understand."—*Matt. xxiv, 16.*

TRANSLATED BY
MARGARET BLACKSTONE.



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PREFACE BY TRANSLATOR.

THOSE who are acquainted with PROFESSOR GAUSSEN'S Work in the Original, do not need any recommendation of it: but as the French edition is out of print, this Translation may be found useful; especially for those persons not familiar with the French language, and for the instruction of English youth. The lamented Author did not live to complete the Book of Daniel; but another volume might be translated, should the Public desire it. The Translator commends the present volume to the blessing of God upon her endeavors.

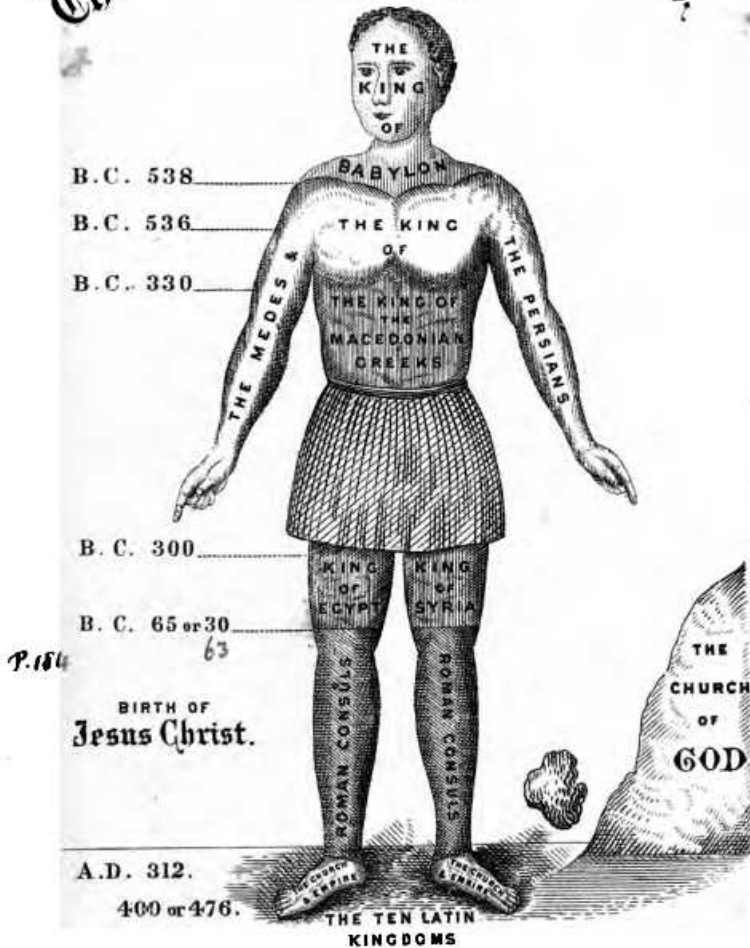
M. B.

Ovingdean,

March 6th, 1873.

The Vision of Nebuchadnezzar

B.C. 605.



THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

LESSON I.

DANIEL I. 1—9.

MAY this lesson begin in the NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost! Amen.

We begin to-day the holy Book of Daniel. Give me your full attention; let me see its expression in your faces; and look reverently on him who speaks to you of the word of the living God. Myself also, dear children, on opening this ancient and sacred book of prophecy, I lift up my heart to the God who inspired His servant Daniel to write it 2400 years ago; and I entreat Him to give to all of us the help of the same Spirit: to me, that I may discover its true meaning; and to you, that you may understand it, and may learn to pray, believe, and obey, as from his early years Daniel had done, who, in chapter x. 11, 19, is called "greatly beloved" by God. In fact, one of the reasons which made me fix on this Book of Daniel, was that his piety is shown from childhood. I thought that his words and his example would have an especial charm for you, on hearing that at the age of thirteen or fourteen, his young heart had already turned toward Heaven, and given itself to God's service.

It is thought that he was only in his fourteenth year when the King of Babylon besieged Jerusalem, slaughtered his relations, and took him prisoner. At such a tender age he was weighed in the balance and not found wanting. He had seen the terrible Chaldean cavalry appear before the city of his fathers; he had been a witness of all the horrors of a long siege; he had been led captive, far from the country of his childhood, into an idolatrous land, ignorant of its language, and into a house of bondage. Daniel's condition must besides have been much more painful to him than it would have been to you; for

he was one of the royal family. Imagine how unhappy you would be if foreign armies—breaking down our walls, slaughtering our fellow-citizens, and burning our city—were to seize some of you, and take you, loaded with chains, into the heart of Austria, or Poland, or Siberia, to serve foreign masters. But yet it was much worse for Daniel; he had hitherto lived in the midst of grandeur; he was the child of kings; and it is thought that the great Hezekiah was his grandfather. Could it have been believed a short time before the arrival of the Babylonian army, that this child, hitherto the object of so much love and care, would be so early made acquainted with the most frightful events and the bitterest sorrows of this life?

Before going farther, I want to tell you something about these dealings of God. He often sees fit that here below, children should bear the consequences of their fathers' sins. Daniel's being carried captive into the land of Shinar, was a fulfilment of the judgement pronounced long before by God against his grandfather, Hezekiah. He, in the days of Isaiah, being sick unto death, but wishing to get well, turned his face towards the wall, and poured out his heart in fervent prayer. Then God, moved with pity, told him, through Isaiah, that He would add unto his days fifteen years. Yet very soon afterwards Hezekiah fell into sin. The king of Babylon, who lived many hundred miles from Jerusalem, having sent ambassadors to congratulate him on his recovery, he showed them all his treasures. I think that if you had been in the palace, you would have walked through its rooms, and admired the riches that were in them, like the ambassadors, without perceiving that something very evil was in the heart of Hezekiah. But sin is often invisible, because it is in the thoughts, which God alone can see. And Scripture tells us that He saw in the heart of this king feelings of pride and ingratitude, which highly displeased Him; for He looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart; and when He thus judges our inward motives, He never does so without at the same time taking account of the instructions and favours which we have received. Consequently, the Almighty had declared that Hezekiah's sin should not go without punishment; that a great lesson should be given to his country, to his family, and to all future ages; that his treasures, of which he was too proud, should be carried away by the king of Babylon; and that even his sons should become slaves to the idolatrous monarchs, whose admiration he had so foolishly sought to obtain. Read Isaiah xxxix, and 2 Chronicles xxxii, 25-31.

Thus it was that young Daniel had to bear the iniquity of his fathers. But do you think this unjust? Oh, no. Do you remember what children should say who are unhappy, like Daniel, through circumstances, in which the faults of a father or grandfather may have placed them? (I told you a few days ago, when speaking of Achan's sin.) They ought to say three things. The first?—O my God! I am very unhappy; but I have deserved by my sins to be a thousand times more so.—Doubtless! In this way, Daniel might say, "I have no right to complain, for I am a sinner, O my God! Thou hast sent me into Chaldea; but I deserved for my faults to go rather into hell; and Thou hast delivered me from it by Thy mercy." Such will always, dear children, be the first thought of Christians suffering through the faults of others; they will begin by humbling themselves, and recalling their own ingratitude; they will be ready to receive everything from *that* Hand, which is full of justice as well as of mercy.

But further, what should be their second reflection?—O my God! I am very unhappy; but Thou wilt certainly turn this great affliction to the good of my soul. Yes, dear children, it often happens that in the time of our sharpest sorrow, we are most blest by God; for then He gives us holy thoughts; we take up our Bible; we find our treasure and our refuge therein; we learn humility, we hold by the Cross; we come back to prayer; and we say, with David, "Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, and to whom the Lord imputeth not sin."

Did not God thus favour Daniel in a land of strangers? Yes; never was any young man more helped, nor more blessed by Him, than Daniel. Truly he became in his captivity the holiest of God's servants, as we shall presently see. While submissively enduring it, he asked his Heavenly Father to sanctify this affliction; and certainly, in the last day, he will have greater cause of thankfulness for those years of sorrow, than for all those of his prosperity.

But now tell me the last of the three thoughts which should be in your mind if God were to see fit to send you, like Daniel, trials in consequence of others' sins.—O my God! I am very unhappy; but Thou wilt comfort me Thyself before long. Yes, but "a little while," and Jesus Christ will come and wipe away all the tears of His faithful servants. His reward is with Him; and the sufferings of the present time are not to be weighed against the glory which shall be revealed

in the children of God. We are only in this world for a very short time; and you know where we shall go if we have served God?—To Heaven surely.

If then we are going to Heaven, may we not greatly rejoice even in the midst of the severest trials? If a young Englishman were in America, in the far west, away from all belonging to him, and heard suddenly that he was recalled to his country and his family, and that all the joy which a loving heart can expect on earth, was preparing for him, would he not rejoice, even though to get back from the shores of America he had to make the voyage in a bad ship, and to pass many uncomfortable days and nights, with bad food, bad clothing, and bad companions? do you think he would be unhappy, and complain of his lot? would he wish to be anywhere else? No, no! He would say, I am the most fortunate of men. I am going home: my country, my family, all will be restored to me! No more crying nor sorrow, for those whom I love will soon wipe away all tears from my eyes!

Remember then, my children, these three thoughts, and these three consolations. Before entering on the explanation of this wonderful book, I think it well to make you observe what Holy Scripture tells us of Daniel's character; because you will then surely read more attentively the prophecies of this servant of God. I do not think that in the whole Bible there is anyone of whom the Holy Spirit has spoken more honourably; for he seems to place him higher than all the men of old. I will quote some proofs of this. Turn first to the tenth chapter, and read what the Angel Gabriel calls him in the 11th and 19th verses. Then open the Book of Ezekiel. It will show you what exceeding respect this man of God (who though living at the same time with Daniel was yet many years older) had for our prophet. Let us rather say, it will show us how highly God Himself esteemed His servant. Read aloud chapter xxviii. 2, 3, where Ezekiel reproves the pride of the King of Tyre, speaking to him from the Lord.

Thus you see, that "to be wiser than Daniel," was in the opinion of Ezekiel, and the men of his time, to have reached the summit of wisdom and knowledge—to be at least the first of men; and take notice, that it was in the thirty-third year of Daniel, that Ezekiel pronounced these words on the banks of Chebar. But here are others still more striking, if possible: *Ezekiel* xiv. 13 - 20. Pray observe with what a rare measure of grace the Lord must have filled the heart