

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

The Visions of the King

Daniel 1:19,20

And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stand they before the king.

And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm.

Nebo was the Babylonian name for Mercury, the Planetary Spirit, or God, (Archangel in Christian terminology) who was the tutelary deity of Chaldea inasmuch as the country as a whole was said to come under the sign Virgo. In Babylon appeared both the high and the low aspects of Virgo: on the one hand an exalted spiritual development among priestly Initiates; on the other the gross commercialism of merchants who gradually invaded the Temple precincts. While Virgo conters a sublime consciousness of the immaculacy of God upon true Initiates, it also gives a mercenary, commercial outlook to the unilluminated. This latter phase of the Babylonian civilization brought its downfall. The mundane pursuits of

the people gradually overwhelmed the spiritual until the things of God were for sale in the market place.

Because of the importance of the God (Archangel) Nebo in Chaldean life, the word was incorporated into the names of many Babylonian kings. Thus we have Nebuchadnezzar who, in the story of Daniel, shows a strangely sensitive mind. He repeatedly receives visions that his own Wise Men are unable to explain, but which Daniel interprets. It is Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream that wins him his first elevation to a position of power, thereby arousing the jealousy and hatred of the Chaldean "wise men" — who were not Initiates in any real sense of the word but who used their priestly prerogative as a means of worldly power.

The temptation to use institutions devoted to spiritual ideals for purposes of political intrigue and for the satisfaction of personal ambition is one that every aspirant must face sooner or later. The commercialization of religious institutions or their prostitution by politicians has been, and still may be, the bane of Christendom. Even modern occult schools are not immune to this crystallizing and destructive influence, as is revealed in the struggle for authority and wealth going on in many of them. The appearance of a true spiritual Teacher is not welcomed by psychic careerists, so Daniel was unwelcome to the false seers of Nebuchadnezzar's court. Throughout the Book of

Daniel we will see how his defeated rivals, most of whom were failures on the Path of Initiation, continue to harass him and repeatedly endeavor to undermine his prestige. They even succeed for a time.

The Bible narrative clearly points out that Daniel surpassed the Chaldean diviners in their own wisdom, achieving honor through merit. His loyalty to the king is shown throughout, whereas history points the finger of suspicion at Babylonian priests in connection with treachery that enabled Cyrus to conquer the city by night. In Daniel's words to the king, esotericists see the integrity of a supremely gifted minister of the State. He may be better understood if compared with the more recent Nostradamus, a Roman Catholic of Jewish descent who is celebrated as the greatest prophet of Christian Europe and whose prophetic verses stand as a genuine apocalyptic work. Daniel may also be compared with those medieval Jewish kabbalists who, through their studies, became convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah and therefore confessed Christianity. So often was this the case that the Jewish Orthodox Church finally eschewed the kabbalah as a pernicious influence. As a result it remained almost wholly in Gentile hands until recent years.

In the light of these two comparatively modern examples it is much easier to grasp the significance of Daniel's

character and achievement in Chaldea; and to understand why he was named one of the founders of the "Great Assembly" in the Holy City when the Exiles returned from Babylon, and why the Book of Daniel ranks high in apocalyptic and kabbalistic literature.

In a former chapter a parallel was drawn between the stories of Moses and Daniel. But the student must bear in mind that we here deal with a particular aspect of spiritual evolution which, while it certainly contains elements similar to those of the Mosaic era, also points a lesson of its own. The Book of Daniel may, therefore, be interpreted from either the standpoint of Daniel as an Initiate-Teacher or from that of Nebuchadnezzar, the royal neophyte who, while responding primarily to the material forces of Virgo (Nebo was the god of fortune), is being awakened by impacts from spiritual planes. The latter's experiences occur during the night, even as do the revelations of Daniel concerning them. The reference is to the activities of night life when the ego functions apart from its body during sleep.

An Initiate's night life on inner planes is as clear and complete to him as are his memories of daily experiences in his body. The occurrences of this night life sink into the subconsciousness of the materialistic person when his ego returns to its body in the morning; if he recalls them at all

they seem to be dreams. Both memory and sense-perception belong to the higher ethers; the degree of their usability depends upon the individual's measure of spiritual development. Nebuchadnezzar appears to be a man who stands at the threshold of spiritual awareness but is not yet fully awakened. He knows that something strange has occurred during his sleep but cannot completely recall it. Daniel, the Initiate whose consciousness is fully orbbed, has no such difficulty.

— ***Corinne Heline***