

# The Watcher and the Holy One

Daniel 4.

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The present is a moment of great significance in the world's history. We often speak of other days as having been strongly characterised, and as of high importance in the progress of the way of man, and in the unfolding of the purposes of God. Were we but in the due position, so as to look at them aright, the present would be seen by us as equal to any of them in importance and in meaning.

Man is preparing that great exhibition of himself, whereby the whole world is to be ensnared and deceived to its final utter ruin. Such a condition of things has already had many a miniature resemblance; and nothing has escaped the snare but "the mind of Christ," i.e., the man of God led by the Spirit through the spacious and commanding delusion.

There was, in other days, a tree whose leaves were fair and whose fruit was much, the height of which reached unto heaven, and the sight of it to the end of all the earth, the beasts of the field had shadow under it, the birds of the air dwelt in the boughs of it, and all flesh fed on it. It was, after this manner, the admiration and the boast of all: their desire was towards it; and the heart of the man who planted it affected it as his glory and joy. "In not this great Babylon that I have builded," said the king Nebuchadnezzar.

Thus was it, this fair luxuriant tree. All flesh was content, and man's heart feasted on it; the ends of the earth gazed at it; and thus it got its sanction from all that was in man or of man.

In a little space, however, heaven visited it: and it was altogether another thing in the judgment of heaven. The Watcher and the Holy One came down, as the Lord Himself had done in the still earlier days of Babel and of Sodom, and this visitor from heaven inspected this tree of beautiful wondrous growth. But with Him it was no object of admiration or worship. He was not moved to desire its beauty. In His thoughts it was not a tree good for food, or pleasant to the eye, or desirable for any end, as it was in the thoughts of all flesh. He looked on it as on a thing ripe for righteous judgment, and He said of it, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit."

This was solemn, in a moment of common universal exaltation, when the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and all flesh, were glorying in the thing which heaven was thus dooming to destruction. But Daniel among men in that day was one who had the mind of heaven, the mind of the Watcher and the Holy One respecting this tree — but such as he only. For the saint on the earth has the mind of heaven in him. This is our place. All flesh may feed on that, of which faith, or the mind of Christ in us, sees the end under the sure judgment of God.

This is so; and may we experience it! But moral danger and temptation beset our hearts. "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." And the saint, in these days, is in great danger of having more of the mind of man in him than that of God. Look at even such an one as Samuel. When Eliab stood before him, he said, "the Lord's anointed is before me." But he looked where the Lord did not look. He eyed the countenance of the man, and the height of his stature, while the Lord eyed the heart. And we are in danger (in these days of both religious and secular attractions) of mistaking Eliab again for the Lord's anointed. Paul was held in some contempt at Corinth because of

his "bodily presence," which was "weak." He was no Eliab. He was wanting in "outward appearance" (see 1 Sam. 16: 7; 2 Cor. 10: 7), and even the disciples at Corinth were beguiled away from him.

All this is warning to us in this solemn and significant day, when man's exaltation of himself is growing apace, and things are judged of by the mind of man, and in their bearing on the advancement of the world.

But, again, when the disciples were held in admiration, religious admiration, of the buildings of the temple, we have a like occasion of the rebuke which the mind of man met from the mind of God. "As He went, out of the temple, one of His disciples said unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here; and Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." (Mark 13)

This has the same moral character in it. It is the erring judgment of man, spending its delight and wonder on what the righteous judgment of God has already and solemnly renounced. The Lord (may I say?) was as the Watcher and the Holy One of the prophet, delivering the sentence of heaven upon the boast and pride of the heart of man, found too in the place of religion. And again, I ask, has not this a voice in the of this present generation?

The case, however, which above all has fixed my mind at this time, is that in Luke 19, where the multitude are following the Lord on His way from Jericho to Jerusalem. We are there told of them, that "they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

This tells us again of the expectation of man's heart. The people judged that the present scene, the world as in man's hand, could get its sanction from God. The kingdom, they thought, would be set up at once. But this can never be. Christ cannot adopt man's world. Through repentance and faith man must take up with Christ's world, and not think that Christ can take up with his. The kingdom cannot come fill judgment shall have cleared the scene of man's iniquities and pollutions. But this is not what man calculates on at all. He judges that the kingdom may immediately appear — appear, or be set up, without any purifying, any change: all that is wanting is advancement a few steps farther, as from Jericho to Jerusalem, a little more progress in the growing scene, and all will be the kingdom fit for God's adoption.

This is the mind of this present generation — like those who, in this chapter in Luke, "thought that the kingdom of heaven should immediately appear." Things are so advanced, so refined, so cultivated by a multitude of fresh energies, moral, religious, and scientific, that under the success and progress of such energies, the world will do for Christ in a very little while. But no, it is man's, world still, and this will never do for Christ. You may sweep and garnish the house, but it is the house of the old owner still, and, for all the pains spent upon it, only the more fit for the old owner's designs, and in no wise one single bit more suited to God's great and glorious purposes.

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem. But He finds there a field of thorns and briars; there were money-changers, and sellers of doves in the temple of God. The house of prayer was a den of thieves. The rulers, chief priests, and scribes, were seeking to destroy the Just One. The religion of the place was chief in the offence. Jesus wept over it; instead of all being ready for the kingdom appearing immediately, all was but ready for judgment, for the stones crying out immediately. And thus, the city, as Jesus said of it, was soon to be entrenched and encompassed, and laid even with the ground, instead of being the habitation of glory, and the witness of the kingdom of God.

I ask myself, has not all this a voice for our ears in this generation? "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Jesus, as a Holy One and a Watcher again on

this occasion, as in Matthew 24: 1, 2, inspected the fair tree of man's worship and joy, and in spirit said "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves and scatter his fruit." And so is my soul deeply assured He is doing at this moment, touching all the progress and advancement and boasted toils and successes of this present hour. He that sits in the heavens has another thought of it all than men vainly imagine. He is not about to sanction, but to judge the world in this its day (a day near at hand) of loftiest advancement and exaltation.