

# A Night among Lions — Devotion.

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*Daniel 6.*

## Night Scenes of Scripture

*Seventeen Bible Night Scenes, illustrating and elucidating various truths of the Gospel.*

by W. T. P. Wolston, M.D., 1896.

## Chapter 14.

### A Night among Lions — Devotion.

It would in no wise surprise me if some of you were to say, That is a curious scripture to select, in order to proclaim the gospel. Well, I will not quarrel with your criticism, but will read you one verse of Scripture from the New Testament, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15: 4), for I am certain that the sixth of Daniel is no exception to the application of that remarkable scripture.

The Bible is like no other book. It has unspeakable wealth, not only of information, but of light and blessing from God. Although this chapter does not contain much statement of the gospel, I do not know an Old Testament scripture that confirms more blessedly and really the faith and confidence of the heart that believes in God than does this sixth of Daniel, because it shows me what the effect is in the soul, of the word of God, and of having to do only with God. And what is that effect? This — It makes it absolutely fearless in the presence of men.

Daniel was a man of God without doubt. He was at this time, I take it, becoming an old man. But he was a man who clung to God, who loved Him, honoured Him, and obeyed Him; and who, in the face of that which was most terrible to the human mind to contemplate, felt that to cleave to, and implicitly obey the Lord, was his safe path in spite of all consequences. If you are a Christian, I think you will agree with me that Daniel's judgment was a right one; and if you are not a Christian, and have never known the blessedness of having to do with God, I trust that by His grace you will be led into contact' with the living God just now.

Daniel knew the living God. He was in touch with the living God. Are you? It was a fine testimony that Darius sent out to all his subjects: "He is the living God, and steadfast for ever" (Dan. 6: 26). Thank God He is. It is a good thing to know the living One in a world of death. "The living God." Charming expression! Lovely epithet applied to God. If you have never yet been brought into contact with the living God, may His Spirit bring you in contact with Himself

now; because, if not, you are still dead in your sins, a sinner on your road to eternal judgment. Oh, my friend, note this well, that the source of blessing for you and for me even as for Daniel, was and is "the living God." The scripture before us is very interesting, not only as a matter of history, but because I have no doubt God gives us this narrative for the special purpose of throwing light upon the day in which you and I live. I do not know whether you are accustomed to read Old Testament Scripture in that way. If not, I commend it to you. We should seek to learn what God means by recording certain things. They are not merely matters of history, but He records them as pictorial views of what His purposes and plans are, showing on the one hand the folly and sin of man, as in Daniel 5, and on the other, how God steps in to carry out His own purposes.

Now this sixth chapter of Daniel must be read with the fifth, and I may add that the third and fourth go with them also. In Daniel 3 you get the story of Nebuchadnezzar putting up his golden image, and compelling men to bow down to it; the civil power is there seen compelling men to forswear God. There were several faithful, godly men — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego — who would not bow down to the idol. What is the result? They are cast into the burning, fiery furnace. And what does the fire do for them? It burns off all their bonds, sets them free, and puts them into the company of the Son of God. There they are in liberty. God takes care of them.

In the next chapter, Daniel 4, a very striking scripture, Nebuchadnezzar's self-exaltation and pride are seen rising to a fearful height. What do I find then? God steps in, and Nebuchadnezzar is reduced to the level of the beast. He says as he walks in his palace, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Dan. 4: 30.) His thought is, I have done all this, and then there comes a voice from heaven saying, "The kingdom is departed from thee; and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field" (vers. 32, 33), i.e., he is reduced to the level of a beast.

You must bear in mind that the Book of Daniel unfolds "the times of the Gentiles," a period in which God allows the civil power to fall into the hands of the Gentiles; and I have no doubt, therefore, that in the two chapters I have already alluded to, and in the fifth and sixth also, God is giving us a sort of picture of what the pride and folly of the Gentiles will lead them to. In chap. 3 you have Nebuchadnezzar setting up the idol; in the fourth he exalts himself, but God abases him. The fifth chapter is the scene of Belshazzar's impiety and sacrilege in bringing in the vessels of the Lord, and drinking out of them — a most daring insult to Jehovah. What is the result? Belshazzar is judged. In the chapter before us this evening (the sixth), another man exalts himself, and takes the place of God. Now the picture is complete. The third chapter gives us idolatry; the fourth, self-exaltation; the fifth, impiety; and the sixth apostasy.

I quite admit that Darius, who comes before us in Daniel 6, did not take the initiative in his folly. His courtiers laid a trap for him, as they presented to him the very pleasing idea that he should be the one object of petition and worship. It was so pleasing to his vanity that he dropped into the trap. That is a picture of what will happen by-and-by, a foreshadowing of "the man of sin," spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation 12 and 13, who exalts himself, and takes the place of God. God has given us these pictures in the Old Testament just to interest us Christians in His Word.

I can only give you the bare outlines of the subject, but you can easily trace it out for yourselves in Scripture. There can be no doubt there is here a picture of what will come by-and-by. You will find Babylon is judged in Revelation 18, and the next thing is that "the beast" — the creature of Satan's choice and his helper — is judged too. By-and-by the judgment of God will come upon this scene of darkness and sin, when the Church has been taken away, and when the Holy Ghost is gone also. Then the world that bears the name of Christ — Christendom so-called — a scene of profession, but really without Christ, and without the Holy Ghost, will be judged of God. The first thing will be this — the beast who destroys the woman, the whore (Rev. 17: 16-18), is glad to get rid of everything that pertains to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ outwardly. The next thing is that this ravening beast is judged by the Lord Jesus Christ in the moment of His coming. Enough of that, however. I merely allude to it to help the Christian in the study of the Word of God.

Let us now look at the details of this interesting chapter, in connection with Daniel, and we shall find much to comfort and help our hearts, as believers in the Lord, and much to encourage those who may not yet be on the Lord's side to take their place there. Daniel had a position of authority in the kingdom of Darius. The king had recognised his worth, and had given him the highest position among the three presidents. "This Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him: and the king thought to set him over the whole realm" (ver. 3). Further, Daniel was a godly man, but the world, in its wickedness and corruption, does not love godly men. There is no doubt about that. If you want to get a proof of it, go and read the ninth Psalm. You will there see how the world uses the godly. The wicked hate the godly.

Enraged at Daniel's preferment, the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel, but could not do so, "forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" (ver. 4). Doubtless jealousy made the princes and authorities in the kingdom seek occasion against Daniel. It was the absence of pride in him that led to his exaltation, for we have seen that he was "preferred above the presidents and princes, because *an excellent spirit was in him*; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." Evidently he had gained greatly in the estimation of the king. His behaviour and walk were so beautiful — so spotless, in that sense — and the man had such a knowledge of the mind of God, that he was put a second time in Babylon in the remarkable position of being second only to the king himself First under Nebuchadnezzar, now under Darius. Two dynasties exalted him.

This roused the enmity of the presidents and princes, and they "sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." What a fine thing to have recorded about a servant of God! My dear friends, were the Lord to write our lives, could He say the same about us? Could God put down that there was no possibility of finding fault with us? Remarkable words: "They could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." He was blameless. I have no doubt his enemies looked at him from every point of view, in relation to the king, and to the government of the kingdom, and they did their best to find some fault with his services, or some blot in his character, and daily walk, but they could not.

He himself is able to say presently to the king that he had done him no damage. Lower down in the chapter, in view of God, he says, "Forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt" (ver. 22). It reminds one of the apostle Paul when he says to his accusers, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward men*" (Acts 24: 16). That is what all Christians should do. And how do you get and keep a conscience void of offence toward God? It is got first of all by being washed in the blood of the Lamb, and it is kept by walking in dependence on, and obedience to God. Young Christian, you get your conscience purged by the blood of Jesus. But you say, How can I keep a good conscience? By being exercised. You are exercised in your soul, and always have God in view, that is to say, you labour so to walk that God will not be able to say, "That was wrong"; and that no man shall be able to say, "That was wrong." This was Paul's manner of walk.

Daniel walked, evidently, on identically the same lines. What God thought of him is manifest. What the people of the world thought of him is beautiful. I feel rebuked in reading this scripture, and I do not believe there is a Christian here tonight, but is also rebuked as he reads the account of this man's life. He was a saint, and he was in a very difficult position. He had a high place in the world, and the higher the place you have in this world, the more are you in a certain sense under its power. The more I am receiving from the world — in the ordinary sense of the word, I may say — in the same proportion do I come under its power, unless my eye is kept fixed on the Lord distinctly and constantly. That Daniel's eye was on the Lord, is very certain, and therefore the Lord supported him, to the confusion of those who plotted for his downfall.

Satan always defeats himself in the end, and so do Daniel's foes, as they commence to dig a pit for him, into which, however, they fall, and not he. "Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him, concerning the law of his God." We cannot find fault with his practical life, but we will trip him up on the ground of his religion. Once determined to get hold of him in that way, they band all together, and go to King Darius and request him "to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions" (ver. 7). They come to the king with this remarkable petition. No doubt it played upon the king's vanity, and he gives his consent. He dropped into the trap that Satan laid for him too, namely, the usurpation of the place of God. It was apostasy in its very worst form; because, you see, he was dethroning God. The request granted, the courtiers further say: "Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes. and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree."

It was well known that a decree so brought out would be enforced, and the people knew full well that any one who addressed a prayer to any person but the king for thirty days would be cast headlong into the den of lions. Now look at the man of faith. "When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and *his windows being open* in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, *as he did aforetime*" (ver. 10). That is very charming. The Holy Ghost distinctly states that Daniel did not act ignorantly. At the time he bowed in prayer before God he knew about the decree. He knew the alternatives. He knew he would have to obey the decree, or be cast into the

den of lions, and I have no doubt he looked well at the consequences of his actions. Ah, how many a man has been turned back from following the truth because of his fear of the consequences.

There is many a young man in this hall tonight who has never yet come out boldly on the Lord's side. Do you know why? He was afraid of the consequences. He knew he would be laughed at, and jeered at, by his godless companions. He was afraid of the consequences. Ah! there has many a soul gone into eternal fire, I am certain, just because he feared the consequences of confessing Christ. Is there such a timid soul before me now? Look at this man. His action is most cheering, and most encouraging. "When Daniel *knew* that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and *his windows being open* . . . he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and *prayed, and gave thanks.*" Well done, Daniel! What would nineteenth-century timidity have done? It would have drawn down the blinds, and said, Do not pray there, Daniel, where everybody will have the chance of looking at you. You might certainly shut the shutters, or draw the blinds. No. Daniel would not have that. Listen! It is pointedly remarked that he prayed, "*his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem.*"

You know, I suppose, why he prayed that way? Daniel was a firm believer in the Word of God. Now the man that is a firm believer in the Word of God gets his soul saved to begin with, and then gets guided by the Word of God all along his path afterwards; for remember, the Word of God is not only for your blessing, and to tell you of your salvation at the start, but it is for your direction and comfort ever after. What was it then that led Daniel to fling his windows open, and pray in the direction of Jerusalem? If you will turn to 2nd Chronicles, and the sixth chapter, you will see that he was acting on Scripture. When Solomon dedicates the temple to God, he turns in prayer to the Lord, and says with regard to God's people, "If they sin against thee (for *there is no man which sinneth not*)" — you mark that, friend, "there is no man that sinneth not," and sin bears terrible consequences, for the wages of sin is death, and after death the judgment — "and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before *their* enemies, and they carry them away captives into a land far off or near; yet if they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly; if they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and *pray toward their land*, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and *toward the city which thou hast chosen*, and *toward the house which I have built for thy name*: then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling-place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee" (2 Chr. 6: 36-39). Daniel knew that prayer by heart. A captive in the land of captivity, he recollected it. You will find in the ninth chapter of his book that he confessed his sin, and the sin of Israel, but that is not mentioned here. All that is recorded here is that he went into his house, and "his windows being open," he prayed "towards Jerusalem."

What would the half-heartedness of the present day have suggested? It will do just as well, Daniel, to go into a back room where no one will see you. God will hear you just as well in a back room as in the front. Ah, no, Daniel says, I must look towards the land, towards the city, and towards the house of God, no matter who sees me. Where was he? In Babylon. He could not see Jerusalem, but he looked towards it. He had God's authority to look towards His house, and

that he must do, no matter what the consequences might be. Well done, Daniel! What a lesson for us! I have no doubt he knew that he would be seen, but he said: I cannot help that. I cannot pray in any other direction than towards the city, if I am to expect an answer to my prayers, and I am not going to swerve, or budge one single inch from the word of God, for all the decrees of man, let the consequences be what they may.

So Daniel went and "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, *as he did aforetime*." Mark that little word "as he did aforetime." It is very beautiful. He was not driven to his knees by the emergency, nor was he driven from being a prayerful man, just because it was a moment of intense difficulty, and a great crisis in his history. That resolute man was absolutely immovable. He was "like a marble statue," so to speak, "in the pathway of obedience" and fealty to God. He would not move an inch. Prayer to God was an integral part of Daniel's life; to forego it would have been wrong, and to pray to Darius would have been worse still, as it would have been to render to the creature what the Creator alone can claim. On the other hand, to disobey the king meant being cast into the den of lions. Make your choice, they said to Daniel; bow to Darius, or go to the den of lions.

Today also men must make their choice. You must either bow to the Lord Jesus Christ and receive eternal salvation, or face the judgment of God. I cannot press too strongly upon you the fact of the coming judgment of God. If you are wise you will escape from it. Forget not that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9: 17). God says it. Again, it is written, "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9: 43, 44). It was the Lord Jesus Christ who said this. Of unbelievers it is also written, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25: 46). It was the Saviour, who died on the tree for sinners, who spoke these words. God knows what is coming, and He has told us, my friends, exactly what it is, that we may be warned, and escape it. But more, He has told us of something that has come, and what is that? Salvation! A Saviour! A day of judgment and a day of wrath is coming, but a Saviour has come, and you may have that Saviour.

In Daniel's day the alternative was this, Bow to Darius, or be thrown into the den of lions. Well, says Daniel, I can only bow to God, and if I must go to the den of lions, He can deliver me out of it if He will. And so he prayed, while his enemies "assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication to his God" (ver. 4). Of course they knew his habits and ways, and we can well imagine the glee that filled this crew of would-be murderers, as they gathered round the house of the godly man. Ah! there he is, on his knees, morning, noon, and evening, turning to God. I do not say to you that you should pray three times a day. The Holy Ghost has said to us, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5: 17). And what does that mean? "Pray without ceasing" just means what it says. There was a great conclave of ministers who met once, and began to discuss that scripture. One thought that three times a day like Daniel was sufficient, and others thought something else. One of the company was leaving, and meeting old Betty, who kept the meeting-house, said to her, "We have been discussing that scripture, 'Pray without ceasing.'" "And what do you make of it?" said the old woman. "It is a little uncertain," replied the preacher. "it seems very easy to explain," says Betty. "How?" "Well, it just means what it says. When I get up in the morning, the first thing I do is to wash my face, and I pray God that many sinners may be

washed in the blood of Christ during the day. Then I put on my clothes, and I pray God to clothe me with Christ and with humility. Then when I take up my broom, and begin to brush out the room, I think of the woman who swept the house for the lost piece of silver, and I pray to God to sweep the world, and to save lost sinners. Then when I come to brush the grate, and it begins to brighten up, I pray to the Lord to brighten up my soul, and to brighten up my faith during the day." And so Betty went on mentioning certain things during the day as providing an opportunity of approaching God in prayer. Well done, Betty! She had the sense of what it was to get to God in prayer about everything, and I believe that is exactly what you find in the history of the soul of every one who becomes a true Christian. He is constantly turning every occasion into an opportunity of approaching God in prayer.

Daniel is seen praying, and I can understand how delighted his enemies are to see him. His condemnation is now certain. They go to the king, and put him in memory of the edict, and then they gleefully add, "That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day" (ver. 13). The world was witness to his resolute godliness. And it is a happy thing if the world has the same thing to say about your habits and mine. "Then the king, when he heard *these* words, was sore displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him" (ver. 14). But no, he could not do it. The laws of the Medes and Persians were unalterable. The consequence was they had to be carried out. To ensure this the men came to the king again in the evening saying, "Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed" (ver. 15), They were determined that Daniel should spend that night in the lions' den; but I am bound to say, he never had a happier night in his life. Why? Because he was in the path of duty and of obedience; and the Lord stood by him in a marvellous manner.

"Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast *him* into the den of lions" (ver. 16). I think I see that scene as the praying man of God is laid hold of, the gates are opened, and he is cast into the lions' den. Well might his heart naturally have been afraid. But no. The fear of God was in it instead. He had walked with the living God for many a long year, and of one thing I am certain, that the living God walked with him to the mouth of the den that day. He went in, and then the king said to Daniel, "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, *he will deliver thee*" (ver. 16). That was a splendid word for him to hear as the stone was being rolled to the mouth of the den. "Thy God, whom *thou servest continually*, he will deliver thee." What a fine character was Daniel's, and what a fine testimony this to his service for the Lord, "whom thou servest continually." And what a cheering word to his heart, "He will deliver thee." I think, whatever fears might have passed through Daniel's mind before, they would disappear after these words, although we immediately read that "a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king scaled it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel" (ver. 17).

The decree executed, darkness reigned, but the king passed a very sad night. I am pretty certain that of the two men, that night, Daniel was far better off than Darius. The king fasted all night. He went supperless to bed, and slept not. His instruments of music were not brought. He could not sleep, so he "arose very early in the morning, and went in haste to the den of lions." Now, my friends, let us picture this real bit of history for a moment. Let us put ourselves in

Daniel's place, so to speak, as he is thrown into the den of lions. There he is, a feeble and aged man; and he is surrounded by lions, mighty and hungry, greedy of prey, the kings of beasts, the most powerful of them. What chance has he against them? He is their appointed prey just because he is full of devotion to God. Escape seems impossible. But Daniel is a man of faith as well as of prayer, and God always rewards and answers faith. He is pleased by it, as well as by obedience. Daniel has gone in alone with God. Lions may be there, but he thinks not of them, nor fears, nor regards them. He spends that night not in the company of lions, but really alone with God, and I repeat, he is happier far than Darius. Darius has had a wretched night, Daniel a happy one. Hence we can well understand that the king in the morning cries with a lamentable voice unto Daniel. He has lost his faith in God during the night, because he says, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, *is thy God*, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" The night before he said, "Thy God will deliver thee." In the morning he is not quite sure. It is a bad thing not to have certain confidence in the living God. "Is thy God able to deliver thee from the lions?"

Now, mark Daniel's answer. "Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." Beloved friend, can you say, like Daniel, "My God"? If you do not learn to say "My God" on earth, you will never learn to say it in eternity. Then out of the depths of eternal sorrow and misery there may come from your lips a most bitter cry, but it will have this prefix, "O God!" You will never say "My God" in hell. Never! Why not learn to say "My God" now? Who says that tonight? Who turns tonight to speak to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and can truthfully use that expression? When I say "my," it means something I possess — some one I know. I possess Him — my God. And how can I be sure that God is my God? The Lord Jesus Christ, who had no sin, when on the cross bearing our sins and the judgment of God, at length cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That language of Jesus was the expression of the sense He had of the utter and profound abandonment of God as He was drinking the cup of judgment due to sinners, that you and I might have life eternal. He was forsaken that you and I might be accepted. Standing on the ground of the redemption which He accomplished, may you be able henceforth to say, "My God!"

You have been on the world's side hitherto. Be on the Lord's side from now. You have been on the devil's side till now; you have served Satan, sin, and lust till this hour. Oh, turn to God now. What a wonderful thing it is that the man who turns to Him can truly say, "My God." Paul could say, "My God" (Phil. 4: 19). The possession of God is a wonderful thing. The mere profession of Christianity is a poor thing, but the possession of the knowledge of God as your Father is a wonderful thing. God loves to hear the man who has come back confessing his sin, saying, not only "My God," but He loves to hear him say, like the prodigal, "My Father." He loves to hear the voice of the returning prodigals, and He ever runs to meet and bless them.

It was with gladsome voice that Daniel replies to the king, saying, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." What transpired throughout that night Scripture has flung a veil over. We are only told that God's angel was there — no doubt a visible manifestation from God — and that the lions' mouths were shut. Daniel's mouth is opened in praise and thankfulness as he now confesses what God has done. The reason of God's intervention Daniel now adds: "Forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and

also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt" (ver. 22). He simply states what his walk before God had been, and what his conduct had been in relation to the king. "Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him." Why? "*Because he believed in his God*" (ver. 23). Do you believe in God? If you are a believer in God, you are sure to be blessed.

It is important to bear in mind that God does not always relieve His children from the consequences of the confession of the name of His Son. It is not always God's way so to do. But it is very encouraging to see how He sustains and miraculously delivers His beloved servant at this point, "because he believed in his God." Can it be said of you that you believe in God? "Abraham believed God." Do you? Paul says, "I believe God." Friend, do you? If you believe God, you pass from death to life. Have you learned to lay hold of the living God, who raised up His Son from the dead when He had died for sinners? If so, life is yours, and peace and joy are yours. Nay, more, righteousness is yours, on the same ground as Abraham got it. He believed God, "and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Faith in God secures untold blessing to the believing soul.

Daniel's faith brings God's deliverance, and he is taken up out of the lions' den unhurt. Then we find that judgment falls upon his foes (ver. 24), and the final result of Daniel's devotion to God is beautiful. Darius sends out a remarkable edict. It is a proclamation of wonderful import. Darius had gained a certain definite knowledge of God from Daniel's faithfulness. — Up to this time he had no real knowledge of Him. It is amazing what the effect of faithfulness is. There is always a charming effect where the soul witnesses for the Lord — where it stands boldly, and openly confesses the Lord. Confession is an immense thing, and I am certain that there are many souls today, some perhaps in this hall tonight, who, while converted to the truth of the gospel, have never taken their stand for the Lord. They have not openly and markedly taken up their position on the Lord's side. They are afraid — afraid of the consequences. But look at the consequences of this man's boldness, simple faith, and fidelity to God. Not only did God deliver him, but Darius through him learned the knowledge of God, and sent out an edict which I wish you would read: "Unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel." Have you obeyed that decree? Ah! you say, I am not living in Darius' day. I know it. Darius has long since gone to his account, but I will tell you this, if you have never trembled and feared before the God of Daniel, you will be in that condition one day, and it will be too late then to learn what Darius adds: "He is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion *shall be even* unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (vers. 25-27). Ah! there is God's title, He saves and rescues. What kind of God is my God? A saviour God. What kind of God was Daniel's God. A saviour God.

That is the title God takes now in the gospel. I quite admit that Darius meant the rescuing and delivering of the body, but it is equally, yea, more true, in regard to the soul. God is the saviour of His people. He is the living God. Have you turned to Him? Paul writes to the Thessalonians reminding them thus, "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1: 9). "The living and true God" is a charming expression. That is His title, and His character. What an immense thing it is in a world of sin, sorrow, death, and unreality, to know the living and true God. Well might Darius say, I will make this decree, "That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever." He never changes. He saves sinners. He upholds His saints. He comforts, strengthens, and blesses them, and the result of their testimony is this that His glory is spread abroad. "He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." Overnight Darius said, God will deliver. In the morning he asks, Did He do it? God did it. And then Darius sends out a decree, I want everybody to know Daniel's God, who has done it.

And now, my friend, I want you to know "My God," Daniel's God. I can assure you of blessing if you have made up your mind to belong to Jesus. Never mind the consequences. Perhaps you say, If I were to yield my heart to Him there may be serious consequences. I will tell you the consequences. You will be saved. You will get your sins forgiven. You will be justified by faith in Christ. You will have your sins washed away in the precious blood of Christ. Blessed consequences! Happy consequences! Then, on believing, the Holy Ghost will fill your heart with peace and joy, which will become deeper and deeper as you go outside and confess Christ. Confession is laid upon you as a privilege and a duty. It is coupled with salvation. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10: 9, 10).

You take your stand in the world for the living God, who has saved you, and forgiven you your sins. Confess Him, and He will maintain you: be sure of this. What would be the result of your confession? Somebody else would get converted through you. I doubt not the effect of the edict was great on those who heard it, because the truth of God always works, and God always blesses faithfulness. God give you and me grace to be faithful, and to be witnesses for the light, and to stand up for the Lord in the little circle where God has put us. God give you grace to be decidedly and distinctly for Christ; and you will exclaim, like Paul, "We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13: 6). Faithfulness is always rewarded; obedience and dependence delight God, and the path of true blessing for the Christian is always that of DEVOTION.

O Jesus, I have purposed

To serve Thee to the end;

Be Thou for ever near me,

My Master and my Friend;

I shall not fear the battle  
If Thou art by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway  
If Thou wilt be my Guide.  
O Jesus, Thou hast promised  
To all who follow Thee,  
That where Thou art in glory  
There shall Thy servant be  
And, Jesus, I have purposed  
To serve Thee to the end;  
O give me grace to follow  
My Master and my Friend.