

## August 2

*O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* Psalm 95:6

OUR judgment is that it is impossible for any Christian to maintain a proper, con-

R5835 "The children of God are not to say prayers, they are to pray. There is much formal prayer -- much saying of prayers-- which do not get higher than the head of the one who repeats the words."

R5480 "FERVENT IN PRAYER -- WATCHING THEREUNTO

*"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints."*--Ephesians 6:18.

PRAYER is a wonderful privilege. It is a very great favor to be permitted to approach the Supreme Ruler of the Universe with our petitions. We should come, therefore, in the spirit of deep appreciation, of earnestness and humility and reverence. The greater our earnestness, the more acceptable will be our prayers, and the more abundant blessings shall we receive.

There is a great deal of formal prayer. The Scriptures speak of this as drawing near unto God with the *lips*, while the *heart* is far from Him. (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:7-9.) It would be better not to approach the Lord at all than to do so in an improper manner. The man who merely utters words with His lips is not praying. A Christian should not say prayers, but should pray. We should not think of saying even one word that we do not mean and have not thought out. Many people have done themselves injury by praying in a formalistic manner.

When we come to the Father, let us draw nigh in spirit -- with the heart, the understanding, the mind -- whether the prayer be long or short. Let us come with true and earnest devotion, with supplication, that He may see our intense desire in the matter. As our Lord said, the Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth. Without the *spirit of prayer* our petitions amount to nothing.

No one may offer prayer to the Father except those who have accepted His terms, and have come into relationship with Him as sons, through the great Advocate. Others are aliens and strangers. There is a difference between worship, or thanksgiving, and prayer. Any one may offer worship--adoration, homage. Any one may bow the knee and *express thanks and appreciation*. But the privilege of *making requests* of God is directly limited to those who have been accepted in Christ.

There is a difference, too, between *prayer* and *supplication*. The term *prayer* applies to *any* petition, great or small; whereas the term *supplication* means a special, agonizing desire for a thing -- entreaty with *intense yearning*. But whether it is prayer in the ordinary sense, or intense prayer -- supplication -- we should always come in the spirit, with an appreciation of the fact that we are entering into the presence of the great Creator and that in thus doing we are enjoying a great privilege...

"WATCHING THEREUNTO"

St. Paul adds, "and watching thereunto." Watching seems to be an attitude of mental alertness. If we really *believe* that the Lord has indicated that we should *pray*

sistent walk in life, and to build up such a character and faith structure as are represented by the apostle as composed of "gold, silver and precious stones," without prayer; more than this, without regularity in prayer--we would almost be inclined to say, with-

for the things we need, and that He will give us these things, then we should be on the alert to recognize when we receive them. We should take heed as to the things for which we ask, and be *sure* that we ask for the things *promised*, the things for which we are *entitled to ask*.

We should also watch for the Lord's providential leadings. The person who, after having prayed, forgets what he prayed for, and who cannot tell whether or not he has received an answer to his petition, has certainly missed a great blessing which it is designed that he should have...

### LESSONS LEARNED BY THE LORD'S DELAY

Perhaps one reason why our Lord does not answer our petitions quickly is that He desires us to learn to watch for the answer and thereby get the lesson of appreciation and gratitude to Him, as we realize that He has given us our request. We should therefore pray with all perseverance, watching for the answer until it come -- not watching merely for a few minutes, or for a day or a week. The Lord might see best to further defer the answer to our petition, either to test our faith or to increase our earnestness and get us into a better condition to receive the blessing. It requires time to become emptied of self and prepared to receive the mind of Christ; and with some, more time is required than with others...

We must search the Scriptures to know what is the mind of the Lord, what He has *promised* and what He has *not* promised. The fully consecrated will not want anything which is not in fullest harmony with the will of Him we so love and adore, and who is so worthy of our love and loyalty. We must remember, too, that while we are praying with persistence and faith, the Lord is preparing for us, not only the blessing and opportunity of service which we desire, but He is also preparing the circumstances and conditions which will bring this blessing or opportunity in the best form. This will require our *waiting on the Lord*, which should be in perfect trust and patience for His good time to grant the desire of our hearts. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." -- James 5:16.--R.V...

### PRAYERFUL ATTITUDE ALONE NOT SUFFICIENT

We have been surprised occasionally to hear some professed follower of Christ urging the impropriety of a form of prayer in words, and of assuming any particular posture in prayer, or of praying at any stated time, asserting that kneeling in prayer is unnecessary -- that all of life should be a prayer. Such a proposition is astounding to us -- the logic of it is incomprehensible. True, we are to pray always, to be always in the spirit of prayer, to be so devoted to the Lord that we shall *ever* manifest in our lives the beauty of holiness, that we shall be shining lights in the world. But we hold that *no Christian* can maintain this heart attitude, or glorify God in his life, without going to the Lord in a particular and formal manner, and preferably upon his knees, and if possible in solitude at certain times. "Enter into thy

out *kneeling* in prayer: and we believe that the experiences and testimonies of the truest and best of the Lord's people who have ever lived will corroborate this. Z.'99-184 R2501:6

closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to Thy Father which is in secret."--Matthew 6:6.

Our dear Master's constant attitude of prayer did not hinder His more particular devotions when He turned aside from the busy affairs of His life to converse with the Father in secret -- sometimes briefly and sometimes spending the entire night in prayer in the mountain solitude. The very isolation of the Lord from all human help drew Him the nearer and the oftener to the Father in prayer and communion. So it is, or should be, with all the true followers of the Master. As we grow in His character-likeness we will, like Him, pray without ceasing, in everything giving thanks, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, recognizing Him as the center of all our hopes and our joys.

### OUR "SOLITARY WAY"

We all realize at times the inability of even our dearest ones to enter fully into and appreciate our sorrows and our needs. They are unable to sympathize with us fully in our struggles and our trials. This realization should send us, as it did our dear Lord, the more frequently to the Throne of Grace, where we are always sure of having the ear of One who understands us perfectly and can make all needful allowance for our frailty; who knows the limit of our ability to do and to be, in our imperfect flesh; and who can give us the perfect sympathy which none other can give. He never fails to hear and to heed the cry of His children, even though He may for a wise purpose in love defer for a time a visible answer to their pleas.

### JACOB AN EXAMPLE

The prayer of Jacob at the time he was anticipating a meeting with Esau on his return from Padan-Aram may be considered one of the most excellent examples of earnest, persevering prayer to be found in the Lord's Word. It is full of confidence and trust in God. It recounts God's Promise to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac and the renewal of this promise to himself. He mentions to the Lord His promise also to bring him again to his home land. His humility is shown in his words: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shown unto Thy servant; for with my staff [only] I passed over this Jordan [when fleeing from home], and now I have become two bands [great companies]."--Genesis 32:10.

He tells the Lord of his fear of Esau, yet shows that his fear is offset by his confidence in the Almighty. It was at this time, and doubtless in answer to this prayer, that the angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob, and so full of faith was he in the Power of God and in His Promise to protect him and make of him a great nation, that he laid *physical hold* upon the angel, declaring: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" The angel here appeared as a man; but Jacob had recognized him as the representative of the Lord, sent to meet him.

We cannot suppose that the angel was not sufficiently powerful to release himself

from the grasp of Jacob, but rather that God was pleased to bless him, and that these circumstances were designed for the very purpose of drawing out Jacob's longing desire for this blessing of the Lord, to demonstrate the depth and intensity of his desire. When this was proven, when he had manifested his deep appreciation of the blessing which God alone could give, and this great longing to be in harmony with Him, then the blessing came -- Jacob's victory. God was pleased to reward such faith and energy and zeal...

"Prayer is not *conquering* God's *reluctance*; it is *laying hold* upon God's *willingness*."... God wishes us to be persistent, and to have unwavering faith in His willingness to give us His best gifts.

R3662 "IMPORTUNITY IN PRAYER... The things which we have only a slight desire for we may mention once or twice at the throne of grace, but those things which lie very close to our hearts become our continual prayer, associating in our minds with all of life's duties and interests, the heart gravitating continually toward the thing we have desired of the Lord, and on suitable opportunities repeating to him the request--making sure that the thing we request is in accord with his promises."

R4780 "If the Lord's consecrated people could be brought to the point where the chief aim in life, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of the truth, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a sound mind, what a blessing it would mean! If then they should wrestle with him until the breaking of day, their hold upon him would be sure to bring the desired blessing. The Lord reveals himself for the purpose of giving this blessing; but he withholds it until we learn to appreciate and desire it."

R3665 "The holy Spirit is the spirit of love -- to God and to man. It cannot be given to us under present conditions except gradually, as the old selfish, wrong spirit is deposed from our hearts. This, therefore, must be continually our prayer to the end of life's journey, that we might be filled with the Spirit of the Lord, and thus praying means that we will be thus laboring day by day, and that the Lord will continually bless us, giving us the fruits of his Spirit in our hearts and in our lives more and more, its joy and peace and blessing."

(Luke 11:9-13) "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. {10} For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. {11} If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? {12} Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? {13} If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

E223 "The Heavenly Father is pleased to have us desire and ask for more and more of the holy Spirit... The Father will be pleased to so order the affairs of such that hindrances to the

Spirit, whether in them or in their environment, shall be overcome, that his loving Spirit may abound in them... Now all there remains to do is to open the sluices in every direction, so as to let the holy Spirit of love and truth penetrate into and permeate every action, word and thought of our beings. We need divine aid, the operation of the Lord's wisdom and providence, to show us what clogs the sluices and to help us to remove the obstructions.

The Spirit of holiness in abundance can only be received by those who earnestly desire it and seek it by prayer and effort. The mind or spirit of the world must be driven out of our hearts, in proportion as we would have them filled with the holy Spirit, mind, influence. Self-will must also give place. And because it is in proportion as we are emptied of all things else that we are ready to receive of his fulness, therefore the Lord would have us come into this condition of earnest desire for filling with his Spirit of holiness, that we may be willing and anxious to displace and eradicate every other contrary influence and will."

R2006 "YE HAVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK NOT." -- James 4:2...

Every trial of faith and patience is an occasion for prayer for the promised succor. Every failure to gain victory is an occasion for a prayer for forgiveness, and as well for divine blessing, that the lesson of our own weakness may be deeply impressed, so that in the next similar trial we may promptly apply for and lay hold upon the "grace to help" promised. Every victory over self is an occasion for prayer that we be not high minded and puffed up, but kept humble and watchful for the next attack from the great Adversary. Every service for the truth becomes an occasion for a prayer of thanks for the privilege of serving the Great King and mayhap to have suffered something for his cause; and a cause for supplication for further opportunities of service and grace to use them wisely...

If you have trials and temptations which you are able to overcome, and which are working out in your character patience, experience, brotherly-kindness, sympathy and love, rejoice and offer the prayer of thanksgiving and acknowledgment of divine mercy and help. If your trials seem heavier than you can bear, and likely to crush you, take the matter to the great Burden-bearer, and ask his help in bearing whatever would do you good, and release from all that would not do you good, but which would injure you. If your heart is full of a desire to obey the Lord's injunction and "forget not the assembling," and you are unreasonably hindered in a way that you have tried to overcome but cannot, take the matter to the Lord in prayer, and watch and wait and strive according to your prayer, and you will soon see a manifestation of divine power on your behalf...

Have you a quarrelsome disposition, or other bad habits, which you realize are a burden to your home and family, and to your brethren in the Lord's household? Take it to the Lord in prayer, asking grace and help to overcome, and meantime using your best diligence and effort in harmony with your prayer...

Have you business complications brought about by your lack of judgment, or

the dishonesty of others, or your generosity to the poor, etc.? And do these perplex you and hinder your progress in spiritual matters, and thus threaten your welfare as a "new creature?" This surely is a proper matter to lay before the Lord at the throne of the heavenly grace. And although it would not be right for you to attempt to dictate how your relief shall come, and you should not expect the Lord to work a miracle to prosper your imprudent venture, yet you can ask his wisdom to guide and overrule in the results, better than your wisdom could do it."

## MORNING

R2240 "Let us begin each day with prayer for wisdom and grace that we may serve the Lord acceptably"

R2204 "Pray every morning, that the Lord will bless us in the cultivation of Love in thoughts and words and deeds throughout the day;"

R4780 "*Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*"--Joshua 24:15... Every day we should renew our covenant with the Lord -- renew it and make it fresh in our minds, thus showing that there has been no change on our part; that we are still in the same attitude. This is the same thought as was in the making of our consecration; we are dead with Christ--"Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price."

R2413 "Let our prayers every morning ascend to God,-- "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer." (Psa. 19:14.)"

## EVENING

CR390 "Never go to bed, never go to sleep, with a spot on your robe -- never. That is the only way I know of to keep the garment unspotted -- take it to the Lord in prayer... He wants you to learn every little thing in respect to your imperfections, that you may be all the more on guard; or, as the Apostle says, walk circumspectly, watching where you tread --"I wonder if that is a bad place to walk? I might get my garment soiled there."

Did you ever notice a lady with a white dress on passing through a muddy street, or near muddy wheels, etc.? How carefully she will draw her garments around her to seek to walk carefully at each step? She is trying to keep her garments unspotted. And if she got a spot on this garment, what would she do?... She would take out the spot with a great deal of care -- the very way the Lord tells us to do. We take it to Him and He sponges the spot and we stand before Him clean again, forgiven, and with the white pure robe."

R2240 "At the close of each day let us square our day's account with the Lord at his throne of grace: recounting so far as we are able its opportunities used and neglected, its victories won or its defeats, its self-sacrifices and its selfishnesses; -- thanking God for the grace that helped in time of need and apologizing for all errors and defeats, craving forgiveness in the name and merit of our Savior and promising greater faithfulness and zeal by the Lord's grace the next day."

## DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS

JULY 30.--DAN. 6:10-23.

*"The Lord is thy keeper."--Psa. 121:5.*

NOTHING gives us a higher opinion of the kings of ancient times, their willingness to recognize character and merit wherever it might be found, than does the record furnished in the Book of Daniel. If we were surprised at Nebuchadnezzar's impartial treatment of his captives, in the selection of Daniel and his companions, and their education and advancement in the kingdom; if we were surprised that the king so greatly honored Daniel for the interpretation of a dream; if we were surprised that, when convinced that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were servants of the true God, Nebuchadnezzar gave them still higher positions in the empire; and if we were surprised that Belshazzar took no offence at Daniel's interpretation of the writing on the wall, but highly honored and rewarded him for his faithful, plain, outspoken words, --we are still more surprised to find that King Darius of the Medes and Persians, so far from destroying all the rulers of Babylon, including Daniel, apparently spared all except the king alive, and gave Daniel a very high position in the empire. We may reasonably assume that, altho God's providence was in the matter of Daniel's preferment, nevertheless there was some creditable generosity in those heathen kings, as well as some natural ability and good quality manifested by the Prophet Daniel.

As one of the three presidents of the empire, and having charge over a hundred and twenty of its provinces, Daniel stood in the way of many who sought office, and, as a man of unimpeachable character, no doubt he stood in the way of many schemes for the plundering of the treasury; for such public plundering and dishonesty, said to be very general throughout Eastern countries to-day, was probably so then to a large extent. For these selfish reasons, Daniel was sure to have a host of secret enemies, who sought his downfall. From the narrative we might suppose that these enemies, many of whom would be prominent in official life, had watched in vain to find any real cause of complaint, and that they finally concluded that, if fault would be found at all, it must be on account of his religion.

How this reminds us of the Apostle's testimony, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," and again, our Lord's words, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you!" (2 Tim. 3:12; John 15:19.) Even where there are no selfish motives to impel the persecution, there is ever present the distinction between "light" and "darkness:" and the fact noticed by all is mentioned by our Lord,--that all who are themselves of the darkness hate the light and all who walk in the light. (John 3:19-21.) Some one has truly said, "Whosoever does well and is faithful and true, while others are dishonest and false, must expect to be opposed and hated. Every effort will be made to injure his character, to drag him into the mire, and to make it appear that he is no better than those who assail him. Envy is sharper than a serpent's tooth, and deadlier than the poison of asps."

Shakespeare has truly said:--

"Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,

Thou shalt not escape calumny."

"That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect;

For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;

So thou be good, slander doth yet approve

Thy worth the greater."

Sometimes we speak of the snares that are laid for the feet of God's servants as fixed by Satan, their great Adversary, and this may be so, at least by supervision, and yet apparently there are some so fully imbued with the spirit of their "father, the devil," that his nefarious schemes and plots seem to come quite naturally to them. And thus it was with Daniel's enemies, who sought his ruin. Very skilfully they counseled with the king respecting the necessity that the people should recognize him as a god, and urged this as essential to the enforcement of obedience to the king's commands amongst his new subjects. The theory of the empire was that the king's person was specially possessed by Ormuzd, the deity of the empire, that his word was therefore representatively the word of that god, and that therefore all of his decrees were infallible and inviolable, even by himself. Taking advantage of this law of the Medes and Persians, that no decree could be altered or abrogated, these plotters succeeded in having the king set apart thirty days in which it should be a crime to offer a petition or worship to any other person or god save to Darius himself.

We are not to suppose that the king had so false an idea of his own personal consequence, nor that these his officers entertained the view that he was an infallible god: rather, it was a matter which they suggested as a piece of statecraft, a fraud upon the people, justified, in their perverted judgments, by the greater peace and security from the prevalence of such a superstitious reverence for the king and his laws. The false reasoning was of the Jesuitical sort, which says, An evil or a falsehood is justified if beneficial results are hoped for;--the same false principle which operates in the minds of many intelligent preachers who, while thoroughly disbelieving in the doctrine of eternal torment themselves, countenance and encourage, or at least do not discourage, a belief in the falsehood on the part of their hearers; hoping that the prevalent superstition on the subject may prove a restraint upon the masses.

Having obtained the king's signature to the new law, the conspirators exulted in the thought that Daniel at last was in their grasp, and already practically destroyed. They seem to have known the man's character so well as not to doubt that he would be faithful to his religious convictions, and thus furnish them all the opportunity desired for his apprehension. And it was so. After the matter was proclaimed as law, as having had the king's signet, Daniel worshiped as before, kneeling three times a day before the Lord in prayer, thanksgiving and supplication--with his windows open toward Jerusalem, his expectations bright with hope in the Lord's promises, and especially with the thought that now the seventy years of Jerusalem's desolation were about fulfilled, and that very soon Cyrus, according to the prophecy, would become king, and send back the covenanted people to the land of promise.

We are not informed why Daniel had adopted a habit of private worship in so public a manner as to be generally known to the people--a manner so different from that which the Lord commended to the household of faith of this Gospel age, saying, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet [secret apartment], and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret." (Matt. 6:6.) Quite probably the custom of Babylon was such as to make Daniel's more open course the reasonable and proper one. Possibly all worship was more or less public or visible, and for Daniel to have worshiped in secret might have been misunderstood to mean that he did not worship at all; while to worship as he did, not before an idol, but with his face toward Jerusalem, the typical city of God, the great King, and his Temple, the typical habitation of God, the great King, would be his standing confession of God before the various nationalities of Babylon, including his own people, the Jews, who would need just such an illustration of faithfulness to the true God and separation from idolatry.

Daniel was not satisfied to merely close his eyes in prayer after he had retired to rest, as do many people living under the greater light of this Gospel age, and under greater privileges and opportunities and grander promises. He had a great God who was worthy of reverence and worship, and he was great enough as a man to appreciate that it was a privilege to have intercourse and fellowship with his Creator. He was not only not ashamed to bow the knee to the Almighty, but was unwilling to assume a less humble position before God than he and others assumed toward earthly kings. <sup>(1)</sup>Our judgment is that it is impossible for any Christian to maintain a proper consistent walk in life, and to build up such a character and faith structure as are represented by the Apostle as composed of "gold, silver and precious stones," without prayer;--more than this, without regularity in prayer;--we would almost be inclined to say, without kneeling in prayer: and we believe that the experiences and testimonies of the truest and best of the Lord's people who have ever lived will corroborate this.

One of the points of the Adversary's attack, surest to have a baneful influence, is along this line. When the Lord's people become overcharged with the cares of this life, instead of realizing their danger and seeking the help of the Lord to order the affairs of life differently, the suggestion comes that they are too weary to pray, or that another time will be more favorable: or perhaps they are so fully engrossed that reverence and acknowledgment to the Lord, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, is entirely forgotten: or perhaps sin lieth at the door, and they seek not to think of the Lord, and therefore avoid the throne of grace: or perhaps coldness has

<sup>(1)</sup> Aug. 2 Manna, Psa. 95:6

come in from some other cause, and the Lord seems afar off, and prayer becomes a mere formality and is by and by abandoned. The child of God who is in a proper condition of heart-harmony will desire to commune with his Creator,—not only to hear his Word, but also to offer thanksgiving and worship; as surely as he will desire natural food and drink for the sustenance of his natural body. Whoever has not this experience should seek it; and, according to our Lord's promise, he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

According to a preconcerted arrangement, the conspirators assembled themselves at the proper time to be witnesses of Daniel's devotion to the true God, and then proceeded to the king to announce that the first one to disobey his decree, and therefore to come under its punishment, was the aged, honored and trusted President of a hundred and twenty provinces of the empire, Daniel. The king was sorely displeased with himself: evidently he had not thought of Daniel, and of the possibility of such results following his decree. He had been advised to make it, it had seemed to flatter him, he had yielded to the urgent representations of the supposedly well-intentioned and wise men; and now he discerned that he had been deliberately led into a trap for the very purpose of destroying his most valued counselor, of whom, evidently, he had not thought to ask advice before signing the decree.

The king sought every possible way to make void the decree or to excuse Daniel from its penalty; but the conspirators were close at hand with arguments to prove that such a course would be contrary to the usages of the nation, would mean the undermining of the authority of the king and the loss of confidence in his decrees by the people; and he found no escape from his dilemma: his counselors even seemed to threaten the stability of his throne themselves, assuring him that "no decree *may* be changed." Finally the king commanded that Daniel be brought and cast into the den of lions; expressing to Daniel, however, the hope, "May thy God, whom thou servest continually, deliver thee." The exemplary conduct of Daniel, previously and at this time, had its effect upon the king, as expressed by the word, "*continually*." He had confidence that God was with Daniel, and that the God whom Daniel so sincerely worshiped and so intelligently trusted, must be more powerful than all other gods. Such should be the lesson of every Christian life, one which would testify not only to his own character and faithfulness to God, but one also which would testify to the good character and faithfulness of the God whom he worships.

The conspirators were bent on having matters thoroughly accomplished, and hence the stone (which covered the den and was probably fastened to its place with an iron bar) was doubly sealed with wax, to prove that it was not tampered with—one seal was the king's the other that of the lords of the empire, who were amongst the conspirators, so that there might be no subsequent alteration of the conditions or delivery of Daniel during the night. If the lions were not very hungry at the moment Daniel was first cast in, it was reckoned that they would certainly become so before morning. How the hearts of these evil men longed for the death of a good man, who had done them no injury—except as his life may have been a living epistle, contradictory to theirs, or as he may have thwarted some of their efforts to do evil!

It is very much to the king's honor that we read that he was so troubled in mind that he could not sleep, but spent the night fasting, and very early in the morning made haste to the den to see whether or not Daniel's God had delivered him. So amongst the friends and neighbors of a true Christian are some who know and appreciate God only as they know and appreciate the Christian character.

The king's words, as he approached the den, were a wonderful tribute to Daniel's faithfulness as a servant of God. "Is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the lions?" The king here associated, and that properly, Daniel's faithful service to God with his hope respecting God's faithfulness to Daniel. And this reminds us of the words of the Apostle (1 John 3:22), "And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."—Compare John 8:29.

The heart of Darius was glad as he heard Daniel's voice saluting him, assuring him of his safety; and he at once caused him to be delivered from the den. Daniel expressed one reason for the Lord's deliverance, in the words, "Before him innocence was found in me—as also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." We note the fact that haughtiness and bravado are wholly lacking in the prophet's announcement of the great favor of God manifested on his behalf. There is a lesson here which many of the Lord's people need to learn; namely, that, having done their part, they are not to boast of it, nor to parade their sanctity, nor to speak exultingly of the results, as

tho they were of their own achievement, but are simply, like Daniel, to give the glory to God.

The expression, "God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths," need not be understood literally to signify that an angel was personally present and literally prevented the lions from opening their mouths; for tho such a course would be entirely possible, we are to understand the term, angel, in a general way to signify any power or agency which God might employ, and the expression, "shutting of the lions' mouths," would simply signify that they had been restrained from doing violence to Daniel. Nor would we question that an angel of the Lord could have been with Daniel, and kept him company in the den, if such were the will of God; but the presence or absence of an angel was not essential to the divine protection granted.

Many of the Lord's people are cast into dens of literal lions, and yet at times quite a good many of them have had experiences which strongly resemble this—as for instance, the Apostle Paul, in recounting his experiences, mentions perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils by his own countrymen, perils by the heathen, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, and caps the climax in the specification of "perils amongst *false brethren*." (2 Cor. 11:26.) It is possible for human mouths to do us more harm than the mouths of brute beasts; the Apostle James points this out when he says: "Behold, how small a fire enkindles a great forest! And the tongue is a fire in the world of unrighteousness. The tongue is established among our members as the one which defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of life, and it is enkindled of Gehenna; for every species, both of wild beasts and of birds and of reptiles and of sea-creatures, is tamable and has been tamed by the human race; but the tongue of men no man is able to subdue. It is an irrestrainable evil, full of death-producing poison."—James 3:6-8.

As God's providence was over Daniel, permitting him to come under the power of natural wild beasts, and making this a test of his fidelity to God and to principles of righteousness, so the Lord's providence sometimes permits his faithful ones to be exposed to the venom and malice and hate and misrepresentation and slander of human tongues, far more vicious and far more terrible every way than the wild beasts of the jungle, which can harm but for a moment. Nevertheless, as the Lord was able to deliver Daniel, he is not less able to send his angel (his providences) to shut the mouths of those who would do injury to his people. They may gnash upon them with their teeth, as the lions may have been permitted to do to Daniel, to test his faith in the Lord; yet we are to remember that all things are subject to him with whom we have to do, and whose service we have entered through vows of consecration.

In some instances it may please the Lord to grant a wonderful deliverance, as in the case of Daniel, while in other instances the providential dealings may result otherwise, as for instance in Stephen's case: his plain but kind statement of the truth to his Jewish brethren "cut them to the heart," and "they *gnashed on him with their teeth*, and cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord and cast him out of the city, and stoned him....And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." But even in such a case the victory was with the Lord's servant, of whom we read, "But he, being full of the holy spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God." And the record further is that Stephen, in the midst of such persecution, had the peace of God which passeth all understanding, to such an extent that his face was "as the face of an angel"—serene, calm, unperturbed. —Acts 6:15; 7:54-60.

The Scriptural record is that after Daniel's deliverance King Darius caused all the conspirators to be cast into the den of lions, and that thus they were all destroyed. Josephus adds something from tradition, to the effect that, when Daniel was delivered the conspirators claimed that his preservation was due to the fact that some one had fed the lions before he was cast into the den, and that the king undertook to demonstrate the matter by having the lions liberally fed, and then casting into the den those who had conspired against Daniel, who were speedily devoured.

This reminds us of how Haman was hanged upon the very gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. The Psalmist seems to speak of it as a principle associated with the divine government, that those who dig pits for others are likely to fall therein themselves. (Psa. 7:15,16; 9:15,16.) And who has not observed that those who gnash upon others with the tongue of scandal and falsehood, envy and malice, are likely in the end to be injured by the very falsehood and bitter words wherewith they seek to injure others? There is a law of retribution at work, in accordance with which a recompense of evil is dealt out to all evil-doers, either in the present life or in the life to come.