

THE DEN OF LIONS.

Dr. Talmage Discourses to the People of Texas.

Lessons Learned From the Story of Daniel.

—Lions in the Path of Every Young Man.

—The Benefits of Religion in Our Daily Business.

Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage recently preached to the people at Waco, Tex., from the text: "Then the King commanded, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions." Daniel, vi. 16.

Dr. Talmage said: Darius was King of Babylon, and the young man Daniel was his favorite.

There were demagogues in Babylon who were so appreciative of the young man that they were affronted at the elevation of this young man.

Old Babylon was afraid of young Babylon. The taller the cedar, the more apt it is to be riven of the lightning.

These demagogues asked the King to make a decree that anybody that made a petition to any one except the King within thirty days should be put to death.

King Darius, not suspecting foul play, makes that decree. The demagogues have accomplished all they want, because they know that no one can keep Daniel from making petitions before God for thirty days.

So far from being afraid, Daniel goes on with his supplications three times a day, and is found on his house-top making prayer.

He is caught in the act. He is confined to the lions. Rough executioners of the law seize him and hasten him to the cavern. I hear the growl of the wild beasts and I see them pawing the dust, and as they put their mouths to the ground the solid earth quakes and his flesh creeps. I see their eyes roll and I almost hear the fiery eyeballs snap in the darkness.

These monsters approach Daniel. They have an appetite kept with hunger. With one stroke of their paw or one snarl of their teeth they may leave his head at the bottom of the den.

But what a strange welcome Daniel receives from these hungry monsters. They fawn around him, lick his hand, they bury his feet in their long mane.

That night he has calm sleep with his head pillowed on the warm necks of the tamed lions.

But not so well does Darius, the King, sleep. He loves Daniel, and hates this stratagem by which he has been condemned.

All night long the King walks the floor. He can not sleep. At the least sound he starts and his flesh creeps with horror. He is impatient for the dawning of the morning.

At the first streak of the daylight Darius hastens forth to see the fate of Daniel. The heavy palace doors open and clang shut not behind the people of the den.

Darius goes to the den of lions, he looks in. All is silent. His heart seizes. He feels that the very worst has happened; but gathering all his strength he shouts through the rifts of the rock: "O Daniel, are you here? Do you still live?"

Continually able to deliver a sermon, some rolling up from the deep darkness a voice which says: "O King! Live forever. My God has sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me."

But when he is brought out from the den, the demagogues are hurried into it, and no sooner have they struck the bottom of the den than their flesh was rent and their bones cracked, and their blood spurted through the rifts of the rock above their heads, making the rocks tremble with their roar, they announce to all ages that while God will defend His people the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Learn first from this subject that the greatest crime that you can commit in the eyes of many is the crime of being a demagogue.

What had Daniel done that he should be flung to the lions? He got to be Prime Minister. They could not forgive him for that, and behold in that a touch of ungodliness human nature as seen in all ages.

Now you are being in some degree successful, your success chills some one. Those men who used to sympathize with you stand along the street, and their eyes are fixed on you from under the rim of their hats.

You catch a word or two as you pass by them. "Stuck up," says one. "Got it dishonestly," says another. "Will burst soon," says a third. Every stone in your path is laid on your heart. Your horses' hoofs went over their nerves.

Every item of your success has been to them an item of discomfiture and despair. Just as soon as in any respect you rise above your fellows, they will be more virtuous, if you are more virtuous, if you are more influential, you cast a shadow on the prospect of others. The road to honor and success is within reach of the enemy's guns. Jealousy says: "Stay down or I'll knock you down." "I do not like you," said the snowflake to the snowflake. "Why don't you like me?" said the snowflake. "O," said the snowflake, "you are going up and I am coming down."

Young merchants, young lawyers, young doctors, young mechanics, young artists, young farmers, at certain times there were those to sympathize with you, but now that you are becoming master of your particular occupation or profession, how is it now your lawyers, young doctors, young artists, young farmers—how is it now? The greatest crime that you can commit is the crime of success.

Again, my subject impresses me with the value of decision of character in any department. Daniel knew that if he continued his adherence to the religion of the Lord he would be hurled to the lions, but having set his compass well he sailed right on.

For the lack of that element of decision of character so eminent in Daniel many men are ruined for this world and ruined for the world to come. A great many at forty years of age are not settled in any respect, because they have not been able to make up their mind. Perhaps they will go West. Perhaps they will go East. Perhaps they will go South. Perhaps they will go North. Perhaps they will not. Perhaps they may make that investment in real estate or in railroads. Perhaps they will cut. They are like a steamer that should go out of New York harbor, starting for Glasgow, and the next day should change for Havre de Grace, and the next for Charleston, and the next for Boston, and the next for Liverpool. These men on the sea of life are everlastingly tacking ship and making no headway. Or they are like a man who starts to build a house in the Corinthian style and changes it to Doric, and then completes it in the Ionic, and is cursed by all styles of architecture.

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