

by His power and providence. But these suffering ones trusted in the living God, and shared His *special salvation*. We have read the story of three worthy servants of God being cast into a burning fiery furnace, because they would adhere to the one living God. Now, God was the Saviour, the Upholder and Benefactor of those cruel idolatrous officers who ordered the burning, and of their menial servants who threw the sufferers in. They derived all their strength to act, and to sin, from the upholding hand of His power. But that same God granted a special salvation to the men who chose to suffer for His name's sake, rather than bow down to a senseless metallic god. The appearance of one like unto the Son of man, walking with them, and their coming forth unscorched, was the proof that God does specially save them that believe. So too, when Daniel was cast into the lion's den. The men who determined to remove him out of their way could not have done it, only as they received power from on high. But if we could have gone with the king next morning, and have heard him ask, "O, Daniel, is thy God able to deliver thee?" that thrilling reply from behind the den's door, would have been just an illustration of the truth which the Apostle here asserts. Then, Christian brother, in the sorest trial which it may ever be your lot to suffer, let this "strong consolation" be yours. The living God is the Saviour, "especially of those who believe."

But there is a third passage to which we desire a brief reference. It is found at the twentieth verse of the third chapter to the Ephesians: "Now unto Him that is able," &c. All will say that it is a precious text, abounding with precious, appropriate adjectives, designed to magnify the grace,—“exceeding, abundant” grace of Him who is our Elder Brother and our Omnipotent Saviour. What a pity that so sweet a text should be spoiled, or even marred. But is n't it oftentimes so cited, and given even in the prayers of good and earnest Christian men, and even Christian ministers, as almost to spoil it? Do you ask how this is done? It is by the *addition* of a little word, good in itself, but redundant and uninspired here. The passage speaks of the gracious, glorious Master, as “able to do, above all that we ask or think.” The interpolated word is put into this sentence. It is the word *can*, and the text is made to say “above all that we *can* ask or think.” Well, here is the inability theory with a witness. But if man *could not* think how much they need the help and salvation of God,—if they were literally incapable of a realization of their need and their dependence—would there be as much of *sin* as of misfortune in this? And would God be hard upon them in the infliction of punishment when they had come so near being idiots that they *could not* think? Then again, “more than we *can* ask.” What bearing has this upon the teaching of the One Master Himself? We have found it among His counsels—commands if you please—“ask, seek, knock,” But if we are so helpless that we cannot ask help, such cripples that we cannot seek the proffered aid which would enable us to move, why if it be so—if there be that kind, and that degree of inability, which, with that non-helping verb interpolated here would give this text such a new version, then for one, I could not warn or reprove lazy Christians or graceless sinners with much hope of salutary effect. But the true, inspired text brings out a most precious assurance of the Saviour's readiness to hear and to answer prayer,—this exceeding, abundant readiness and ability to bless, far beyond what we have ever conceived or ventured to implore. The shame and sin then is ours that we have asked so little. The grace and the glory His.

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Astronomer Proctor is a Roman Catholic, but he is credited with saying: “Men of science tell us on every side that science teaches them nothing of God. That is the very thing we are told in the words of the Scripture. ‘Thou canst not by searching find out God.’ Mysteries are brought before us which no efforts on our part enable us to resolve. So far from inducing doubt, it should encourage our faith. As we are in the presence of infinite space and infinite time, so also are we in the presence of infinite wisdom and power.”