

demands the worship of it on pain of the fiery furnace. The righteous refuse and suffer. In Belshazzar we get the easy, worldly, self-indulgent thing, with contempt of religion. The king makes a feast, worshipping all that which ministered to his pleasures. The righteous are utter strangers to it all. In Darius we get a persecuting power again, but it is in connection with self-exaltation. The king makes an interdict, that none are to be treated as God but himself for so many days on pain of the lion's den. The righteous again refuse and suffer. These are plain and sure distinctions in the progress of Gentile iniquity. And it may strike us, I judge, very clearly, that we are at present rather in the day of Belshazzar. Persecution and idol-service gave character to the preceding day, and persecution and deification of man to the day which followed: but all was easy indifference, with thorough satisfaction in the present things of the world, in the day of Belshazzar. Refusal and consequent suffering form the path or history of the righteous in the times of the idolatrous, persecuting Nebuchadnezzar, and of the self-exalting, persecuting Darius; but in the times of Belshazzar, perfect and thorough separation is the place of the saints of God.

There is a voice for us in all this. Daniel is not seen at the feast. And there is one, though not in his strength yet much in his spirit, who is absent also—the queen, the king's mother. The king is ignorant of the man of God who was then in his