**Daniel**

By Frederick Dixon

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The great characteristic of Daniel was his ability to stand alone, which really is the measure of his moral courage. "Moral courage," Mrs. Eddy writes, on [page 514](http://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=is+%27the+lion+of+the+tribe+of+Juda%2C%27+the+king+of+the+mental+realm.&book=tfccs.main.sh) of Science and Health, "is 'the lion of the tribe of Juda,' the king of the mental realm." What exactly this means Daniel must have discovered long before he entered the den of Darius' lions, or, indeed, he never would have reached its threshold. The antithesis of the mentality of Daniel is the mentality of the mob. The mob finds its courage in the mesmerism of numbers: break the mesmerism, and it fades away, under your very eyes, like the smile of the Cheshire cat. To the man in the street the phenomenon is a more or less perplexing one: to the metaphysician it is as simple as the reasoning of Euclid. The mob, in a sentence, is of the earth earthy; it has set its heart upon carnal things; and its mentality is that of the materialist, instinct with fear, which is the belief that there is life, substance, and intelligence in matter.

The metaphysician, on the other hand, has made the momentous discovery of the absolute unreality of matter. From that moment it has become the business of his life to demonstrate this; and, in proportion as he makes good his demonstration, he necessarily ceases to believe in matter, and so parts company with fear. That is the lesson the wise men of the East strove to convey through the story of Daniel and that of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, as a matter of fact from the beginning of the Bible to the end. It is the lesson of the evolution of the knowledge of God, the understanding of Principle, in the human consciousness. As the understanding of Principle becomes clearer and clearer to a man, the unreality of matter necessarily becomes more and more obvious. With the broadening of this understanding, fear vanishes. If, that is to say, a man, by obedience to Principle, can make bread out of stones, can multiply one loaf into thousands, what becomes of the fear of starvation? If he can find the tribute money in a fish's mouth, where is the dread of poverty? If sickness can be healed and the dead raised, then the victory of the grave is abolished. The student, in short, as all this is revealed to him, finds a new and a wonderful meaning in those words of Paul, written to the church in Rome, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Life is, indeed, something very far removed from any belief of the flesh. Mrs. Eddy puts this with extraordinary vividness on [page 75](http://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=Jesus+restored+Lazarus+by+the+understanding+that+Lazarus+had+never+died%2C+not+by+an+admission+that+his+body+had+died+and+then+lived+again.+Had+Jesus+believed+that+Lazarus+had+lived+or+died+in+his+body%2C+the+Master+would+have+stood+on+the+same+plane+of+belief+as+those+who+buried+the+body%2C+and+he+could+not+have+resuscitated+it.&book=tfccs.main.sh) of Science and Health, where she writes, "Jesus restored Lazarus by the understanding that Lazarus had never died, not by an admission that his body had died and then lived again. Had Jesus believed that Lazarus had lived or died in his body, the Master would have stood on the same plane of belief as those who buried the body, and he could not have resuscitated it." Neither life, then, nor death can separate man from Principle, for man is the spiritual reflection of Principle, the image and likeness of God. The physical life of a man, on the other hand, with its sensuous passions and pleasures, the physical death of a man with its intense surrender to the belief of reality of matter, are simply phases of the belief of life in matter, that that life can be lost, and as such are mere counterfeits of Principle.

Something of what all this means must have been manifest enough to Daniel when, in defiance of the decree of Darius, "his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Daniel knew well enough that the time-servers and the sensualists, with their passions bred of the belief of the reality of matter, would all be professing an admiration of the wisdom of the statute which the king had signed. It never occurred to him, however, to trouble himself as to the hopes and fears of others. He knew perfectly well the demands made upon him by Principle, and he also knew perfectly well that the only danger that could really come to him would arise from any disobedience he might show to Principle. On the time-servers and the purveyors of malice he most probably never wasted a thought. To have done so, he must have been well aware, would have been to give their malice the only influence it could exert over him, namely, his own belief in it. To believe in evil is in short to give evil the only semblance of power it can ever attain, a fact the sycophants of the court gained some inkling of when they found the fate they had planned for Daniel overwhelming themselves.

Herein, then, is seen at once the protection of Principle, and the vengeance of the Lord. God, Principle, knowing nothing of evil, does not go out like Zeus to revenge Himself on the evildoer. But the evildoer, strong in his belief in the reality of matter and the power of evil, opens the sluice gates of suffering to himself through this very belief. His salvation lies in discovering and demonstrating the unreality of all that once seemed real to him, thus finding in this unreality the spiritual fact of the infinity of divine harmony. This was the secret of Daniel, and this is the secret of every man who, like Daniel, has sufficient understanding of Principle to stand alone. Standing alone simply means an ability to grasp the fact that to the individual nothing matters in comparison to doing right.

The mental pressure to join the mob is, of course, sometimes terrific, and if the nature of it is not understood it may quite easily become overwhelming. The mob is invariably guided by the senses, and it is against such a fate that majorities have to be so perpetually on guard. History has exposed the persecuting tendency of a majority, but it has left it to the metaphysician to show how this tendency comes about. It is founded on a sensuous dislike of any change or disturbance, which is characteristic of the inherent laziness of the human mind, and which develops first into anger with, and ultimately reaches a hatred of, any one who attempts to bring such change about. When the motive of the change is itself sensuous, the storm, as a rule, evaporates in a teacup. But when it is impelled by Truth, and is resisted by error, then the culmination of the struggle is likely to be terrific, as when the greatest struggle known to man was fought out on the hill of Golgotha. "Marvels, calamities, and sin will much more abound," Mrs. Eddy writes on [page 223](http://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=as+truth+urges+upon+mortals+its+resisted+claims%3B+but+the+awful+daring+of+sin+destroys+sin%2C+and+foreshadows+the+triumph+of+truth.&book=tfccs.main.sh) of Science and Health, "as truth urges upon mortals its resisted claims; but the awful daring of sin destroys sin, and foreshadows the triumph of truth."

It is here that the grandeur of the character of Daniel stands so clearly out. The cowardice, the self-seeking, the malice, the sensuality of the time-servers being absent from his consciousness, he could not, and did not, fall under the mesmerism of the occasion. Where the time-servers saw an opportunity for personal advancement, he saw only Principle, and understanding Principle understood also its power of protection. With the time-servers it was different. Believing in malice, in revenge, in death, they paved the way to their own destruction. To them the lions were very real lions. So it came about that it was they, and not Daniel, whom the lions destroyed.

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