DANIEL FACING THE LIONS' DEN

NO. 1154

A SERMON
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house;
and 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 6:10

DANIEL was of royal race, and what is far better, he was of royal character. He is depicted on the pages of Scriptural history as one of the greatest and most faultless of men. How grand and impressive his first appearance as a young man, when he was introduced to Nebuchadnezzar! The Chaldeans and magicians and astrologers had all failed to divine the secret which perplexed the king and troubled his spirit, till at length there stood up before him this young prince of the house of Judah to tell his dream and the interpretation thereof. No wonder that the excellent spirit which shone in him led to his being made a great man, procured for him rich gifts, and led to his promotion among the governor of Babylon.

In after days he showed his dauntless courage when he interpreted the memorable dream of Nebuchadnezzar, in which the king's pride was threatened with a terrible judgment. It needed that he should be a lion-like man to say to the king, "Thou, O king, shalt be driven from among men, and eat grass as oxen, and your body shall be wet with the dew of heaven, till thy hairs are grown like eagles' feathers, and thy nails like birds' claws."

Yet what he told him came true, for all this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel discharged his duty to his conscience, so there was nothing to disquiet him. Well might he have said—

"I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience."

In lurid light, in terrible grandeur, Daniel comes forth again, on the last night of Belshazzar's reign, when the power of Babylon was broken forever. The Persians had dried up the river, and were already at the palace doors. "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting," said the prophet, as he pointed to the mysterious handwriting on the wall.

After this he appears again, and this time in a personal dilemma of his own. Great as he was in the palace, and great in the midst of that night's carousel, he appears, if possible, greater, because the faith that animates him shines more radiantly when he is upon his knees.

The princes have conspired against him. They have, by fraud, perverted the king's mind, so that he has passed an edict. Though Daniel knows that it is contrary to the law of the realm for him to pray or ask a petition of any god or man save of king Darius, yet he does pray and give thanks before his God. In the higher sovereignty of the King of kings he believes, and to the edicts of His everlasting kingdom he yields fearless and unqualified obedience. The sequel shows that the Most High God delivers him. Of this Daniel we are about to speak to you.

I. Our first point will be that DANIEL'S PRAYERFULNESS WAS THE SECRET OF HIS POWER.

Daniel was always a man of prayer. If you saw him great before the people, the reason was because he was great before his God. He knew how to lay hold of divine strength, and he became strong. He knew how to study divine wisdom, and he became wise.

We are told that *he went to his house to pray*. He was a great man—the highest in the land—consequently he had great public duties. He would sit as a judge probably a large part of the day. He would be engaged in the various state offices distributing the favors of the king, but he did not pray in his office, save of course that his heart would go up in adoration of his God all day long.

He was in the habit of going to his house to pray. This showed that he made a business of prayer, and finding it neither convenient to his circumstances nor congenial to his mind to pray in the midst of idolaters, he had chosen to set apart a chamber in his own house for prayer.

I don't know how you find it, but there are some of us who never pray so well as by the old armchair, and in that very room where many a time we have told the Lord our grief, and have poured out before Him our transgressions. It is well to have, if we can have, a little room, no matter how humble, where we can shut to the door, and pray to our Father who is in heaven, who will hear and answer.

He was in the habit of praying three times a day. He had not only his appointed seasons of morning prayer and of evening prayer, as most believers have, but he had his noon-day retirement for prayer, as perhaps only a few have. He was an old man, over eighty years of age at this time, but he did not mind taking three journeys to his house to pray.

He was a very busy man. Probably no one here has half so much important business to transact daily as Daniel had, for he was set over all the empire, and yet he found time regularly to devote three stated intervals for prayer. Perhaps he thought that this was prudent economy, for, if he had so much to do, he must pray the more.

As Martin Luther said, "I have got so much to do today that I cannot possibly get through it with less than three hours of prayer." So, perhaps, Daniel felt that the extraordinary pressure of his engagements demanded a proportionate measure of prayer to enable him to accomplish the weighty matters he had on hand.

He saluted his God and sought counsel of Him when the curtains of the night were drawn, and when his eyelids opened at the day dawn, as well as when the full sunlight was poured out from the windows of heaven. Blessing the Lord of the darkness, who was also the Lord of the light, Daniel thrice a day worshipped his God.

A singularity in his manner is noticeable here. *He had been in the habit of praying with his windows open towards Jerusalem*. This had been his wont: by long use it had become natural to him, so he continues the practice as heretofore. Though it was not essential to prayer, he scorns to make any alteration, even in the least point.

Now that the decree had been signed that he must not pray, he would not only pray, but he would pray just as often as he had done, in the same place and the same attitude, and the same indifference to publicity, with the windows open. Thus openly did he ignore the decree! With such a royal courage did he lift his heart above the fear of man, and raise his conscience above the suspicion of compromise. He would not shut the window because he had been accustomed to pray with it open. He prayed with his window open towards Jerusalem, the reason being that the temple was being built, and if he could not go himself, at any rate he would look that way. This showed that he loved his native land.

Great man as he was, he did not scorn to be called a Jew, and everybody might know it. He was "*that* Daniel of the children of the captivity of Judah." He was not ashamed to be accounted one of the despised and captive race. He loved Jerusalem and his prayers were for it. Hence he looked that way in his prayer. And I think also he had an eye to the altar. It was the day of symbol.

That day is now past. We have no altar save Christ our Lord, but beloved, we turn our eyes to Him when we pray. Our window is open to Jerusalem that is above, and towards that altar whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle with outward religiousness. We worship with our eyes to Christ.

And during that age of symbol Daniel saw by faith the realities that were foreshadowed. His eyes were turned towards Jerusalem, which was the type and symbol of the one Lord Jesus Christ. So he prayed with his window open. I cannot help admiring the open window, because it would admit plenty of fresh air. There is much good in fresh air, the more the better. We do not want our bodies to be sleepy, or our senses sluggish, for if they are we cannot keep our souls awake and our spirits lively.

And it would appear that *whenever Daniel prayed he mingled his supplication with thanksgiving*. He "prayed and gave thanks." I wonder if he sang a psalm, perhaps he did. At any rate prayer and praise, orisons and pæans, sweetly blend in his worship. He could not ask for more grace without gratefully acknowledging what he had already received.

Oh, mix up thanks with your prayers, beloved! I am afraid we do not thank God enough. It ought to be as habitual to us to thank as to ask. Prayer and praise should always go up to heaven, arm in arm, like twin angels walking up Jacob's ladder, or like kindred aspirations soaring up to the Most High.

I will not say more of this feature of Daniel's character. Oh, that we might all emulate it more than we have ever done! How few of us fully appreciate and fondly cultivate that communion with God to which secret prayer, continuously, earnestly offered, is the key and the clue! Could we not all of us devote more time to seeking the Lord in the stillness of the closet greatly to our advantage? Have not all of us who have tried it found an ample recompense? Should we not be stronger and better men if we were more upon our knees?

As to those of you who never seek unto the King eternal, how can you expect to find Him? how can you look for a blessing which you never ask for? How can you hope that God will save you, when the blessings He does give you, you never thank Him for, but receive them with cold ingratitude, casting His Word behind your back? Oh, for Daniel's prayerful spirit!

II. We pass on to DANIEL'S DIFFICULTIES, OR THE PRIVILEGES OF PRAYER.

Daniel had always been a man of prayer, but now there is a law passed that he must not pray for thirty days, for a whole calendar month. I think I see Daniel as he reads the writing. Not proud and haughty in his demeanor, for, as a man used to govern, it was not likely that he would needlessly rebel. But as he read it, he must have felt a blush upon his cheek for the foolish king who had become the blind dupe of the wily courtiers who had framed a decree so monstrous. Only one course was open to him. He knew what he meant to do, he should do what he always had done.

Still, let us face the difficulty with a touch of sympathy. He must not pray. Suppose we were under a like restriction. I will put a supposition for a minute. Suppose the law of the land were proclaimed, "No man shall pray during the remainder of this month on pain of being cast into a den of lions"—how many of you would pray? I think there would be rather a scanty number at the prayer meeting. Not but what the attendance at prayer meetings is scanty enough now! but if there were the penalty of being cast into a den of lions, I am afraid the prayer meeting would be postponed for a month, owing to pressing business, and manifold engagements of one kind and another. That it would be so, not here only, but in many other places, I should be prone to anticipate.

And how about private prayer? If there were informers about, and a heavy reward was offered to tell of anybody who bowed the knee night or morning, or at any time during the day, for the next thirty days, what would you do? Why, some persons will say, "I will give it up." Ah, and there are some who would boastfully say, "I will not give it up," whose bold resolve would soon falter, for a lion's den is not a comfortable place.

Many thought they could burn in Queen Mary's days that did not dare to confront the fire, though I think it almost always happened that whenever any man through fear turned back, he met with a desperate death at last. There was one who could not burn for Christ, but about a month afterwards he was burnt to death in bed in his own house.

Who has forgotten Francis Spira, that dreadful apostate, whose dying bed was a foretaste of hell? It is left on record, as a well authenticated narrative of the miseries of despair, though it is scarcely ever read nowadays, for it is far too dreadful for one to think upon. If we quail at suffering for Christ and

evade His cross, we may have to encounter a fiercer doom than the terror from which, in our craven panic, we shrunk. Men have declined to carry a light burden and been constrained to bear a far heavier one. They have fled from the bear, and the lion has met them. They have sought to escape from the serpent, but the dragon has devoured them.

To shrink from duty is always perilous. To demoralize yourselves in demoralized times is a desperate alternative. Better go forward, better go forward. Better, I say, even though you may have no armor. The safest thing is to go on. Even if there are lions in front, it is better to go ahead, for if you turn your back the stars in their courses will fight against you. "Remember Lot's wife!" She looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

The apostate is of all creatures the most terrible delinquent, his crime is akin to that of Satan, and the apostate's doom is the most dreadful that can be conceived. Master Bunyan pictures—(what was the man's name? I forget for the moment)—one Turnaway (was it not?) who was bound by seven devils, and he saw him taken by the back way to hell, for he had been a damnable apostate from the faith as it is in Jesus. It may be hard going forward, but it is worse going back.

Now it is a great privilege that we enjoy civil and religions liberty in our favored land, that we are not under such cruel laws, as in other times or in other countries laid restrictions upon conscience. And that we may to pray, according to the conviction of our judgment and the desire of our heart. But as I want you to value the privilege very much, I will put a supposition to you.

Suppose there was only one place in the world where a man might pray and offer his supplications unto God. Well, I think there is not a man among us that would not like to get there at some time or other, or at least to die there. Oh, what pains we should take to reach the locality, and what pressure we would endure to enter the edifice!

If there were only one house of prayer in all the world, and prayer could be heard nowhere else, oh, what tugging and squeezing and toiling, there would be to get into that one place! But now that people may pray anywhere, how they slight the exercise and neglect the privilege!

"Where'er we seek Him He is found,
And every place is hallowed ground."

Yet it would argue sad ingratitude, if seeking were therefore less earnest or prayer less frequent. And suppose there was only one man in the world who might pray, and that one man was the only person who might be heard, oh, if there was to be an election for that man, surely the stir to get votes for that man would be far more exciting than for your School Boards or your representatives in Parliament. Oh, to get to that man and ask him to pray for us, what overwhelming anxiety it would cause!

When the promoters and directors of railways had shares to dispose of during the old mania, how they were stopped in the streets by others who wished to get them and secure the premiums they carried in the market! But the man who was entrusted with the sole power of prayer in the world would surely have no rest day or night: we should besiege his house with petitions, and ask him to pray for us. But now that we may each pray for ourselves, and the Lord Jesus waits to hear those who seek Him, how little is prayer regarded!

And suppose nobody could pray unless he paid for the privilege, then what grumblings there would be from the poor, what meetings of the working men, because they could not pray without so many pounds of money. And what a spending of money there would be! What laying out of gold and silver to have the privilege of speaking to God in prayer! But now that prayer is free, without money and without price, and the poorest need not bring a farthing when he comes to have audience with God, oh, how prayer is neglected!

Perhaps it would not be a bad thing, on some accounts if there could be a law to prevent men from praying, because some would say, "We *will* pray." They *would* pray. They would get over the traces and stoutly protest, "We are not to be kept down, we *must* pray." Suppose I were bound to tell you now that

God would not hear your prayers all next week, you would be afraid to abide in your houses, and you would be equally afraid to leave them. You would be scared with terrors in your bed, and you would be afraid to get up and face the perils of moving about. You would say, "Whatever happens, I cannot ask God for His blessing. Whatever I do, I cannot expect His blessing on it, for I must not pray." Then, perhaps, you would begin to wish that you could pray.

Oh, dear soul, do not live this night through without prayer! Get you to the mercy seat! Let sin be confessed to God. Let pardon be sought, and all the blessings of grace. Do not despise or turn away from that blessed mercy seat which stands open to every soul that desires to draw near unto God.

III. Having thus dwelt upon Daniel's difficulty, I now want to draw your attention to DANIEL'S DECISION.

The king says he must not pray. Daniel did not deliberate for a single minute. When we know our duty, first thoughts are the best. If the thing is obviously right, never think about it a second time, but straightway go and do it. Daniel did not deliberate. He went to his house and prayed in the morning, he went to his house and prayed at noon, and he retired to his house and prayed at eventide. "He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

I greatly admire one feature in Daniel's decision. He did not alter his accustomed habit in any single particular. Without disguise and without parade, he pursued the even tenor of his way. As we have already said, the time was the same, the attitude was the same, the open window was the same. There was no precaution whatever to conceal the fact that he was going to pray, or to equivocate in the act when he was praying.

He does not appear to have taken counsel of his friends, or to have summoned his servants and charged them not to let any intruder come in. Neither did he adopt any measure to escape his enemies. Not one jot of anxiety did he betray. His faith was steadfast, his composure unruffled, his conduct simple and artless.

Doubtless Daniel felt that as he was the greatest man in Persia, if he, a worshipper of JEHOVAH, the God of the Hebrews, failed in any degree, he would set a bad example to others, and greatly discourage any poor Jew who might have grace enough to stand out, provided his example led the way. Persons who occupy high positions should know that God expects more of them than of other people. England expects every man to do his duty, but especially the men that are put to the front. If the standard-bearer fall, how is the battle to hold?

Now, Daniel, you are much looked at and watched. God has put you in an eminent place, therefore take care that you do not flinch one solitary jot, go and do as you have been wont, though the sky look overcast with clouds of evil omen.

It would have been foolish daring rather than self-possessed courage in Daniel, had he been accustomed ordinarily to shut his window, should he have selected this crisis to open it, and if he had been accustomed to pray twice a day, I do not see why he should go now and pray three times, but he did as aforetime, it was his habit, and he would not be put out of it.

He would show that his conscience was obedient to God, and owed no allegiance to man. He could not and would not yield anything through menace. What a despot might lay down as law, a degraded sycophant might accept as equity, but a just man is proof against the corruption of an unjust judge.

It might be asked, perhaps, "Should not Daniel obey the king?" Certainly kings' laws are to be respected, but any law of man that infringes the law of God is, *ipso facto*, null and void at once. It is the duty of every citizen to disregard every law of earth which is contrary to the law of heaven. So Daniel felt that whatever he owed to his temporal sovereign, he owed to his God a vast deal more.

"But should not a man take care of his life? Life is valuable. Should he run such a risk?" Remember that if a man were to lose his soul, in order to save his life, he would make a wretched bargain. If a man lost his life to save his coat he would be a fool, and a man who loses his soul to save his life is equally a fool, and more so still. So Daniel felt that the risk of being put into a den with lions was nothing to the risk of being put into hell, and so he chose the smaller risk, and in the name of God he went straight on.

And I will tell you what Daniel would have said if he lived in these days, and *had he been like some of my brethren*—I mean like some of my brethren in the ministry—clergymen of a political church, by law established. He would have said, "This is not quite right! The decree of his Majesty's Privy Council is utterly at variance with my creed, but you see I occupy a position of great usefulness, and would you have me give up that position of usefulness that I hold, to let these governors and counselors, that are all such bad fellows, have the entire management of the realm?

"Everything will go wrong if I do not compromise my profession. Although it perhaps may not be quite consistent with conscience, it is pardonable in the light of policy, and thirty days will soon pass away, so for the sake of your usefulness," he would have said to himself, "for the sake of your *usefulness*, you had better stop where you are."

Oh, I have heard men who teach little children to repeat the words, "In my baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," and who know that it is a lie, and yet they stick in their un-protestant church and say, "I remain here because of my usefulness"—my *precious* usefulness!—"for if I were to go out of the church I should be leaving it to those bad persons who are in it."

To know that as long as I am there, I am in complicity with men who are dragging back the church to Romanism, as fast as ever they can, and yet to say, "I am so useful, and I should injure my usefulness"! In the name of Almighty God, are we to do evil that good may come?

If I thought I could save every soul in this place, or do any other stupendous thing by making the slightest compromise with my conscience, I dare not in the sight of the living God do it, for so I have not been taught by the Spirit of God. Consequences and usefulness are nothing to us: duty and right—these are to be our guides. These were Daniel's guides. The empire of Persia might go wrong, Daniel could not help that, he would not go wrong himself. It might be that these villainous courtiers and lords of the council might have the sway. Be it so. Leave God to manage them. It was not for Daniel even for thirty days, to give up prayer.

"Ah, but," they would say, "you can pray in your heart. You need not bow the knee, you can pray in your soul." But it will not do to sell principle, or to trifle with strict integrity and sterling truth in the smallest degree. Every jot and tittle has its intrinsic value. Our bold Protestant forefathers were of a different breed from the present race of temporizing professors.

Talk ye of apostolic succession! By what strange process you suppose that Fuller, Ridley, Latimer, Donue, and the like worthies, did transmit their miters and their benefices to the cowardly seed who now hold their titles and enjoy their livings, we are at a loss to understand. The identification baffles us. Do they inherit the same spirit, defend the same doctrines, or observe uncompromising allegiance to the same Gospel? We trow not. It seems to us that progenitors and progeny are wide apart as the poles.

If Jesus Christ were here today, there are plenty of people who would sell Him for two groats, they would not want thirty pieces of silver, but would sell Him for a smile of patronage or a nod of approbation. Oh that we had back the old covenanters who would not swerve an inch!

Look at John Bunyan when they bring him up before the magistrates and tell him he must not preach! "But I will preach," said he, "I will preach tomorrow by the help of God." "But you will be put in prison again." "Never mind, I will preach as soon as I get out." "But you will be hanged, or kept in prison all your life." "If I lie in prison," said he, "till the moss grows upon my eyelids, I can say nothing more than this, that with God's help, I will preach whenever I get a chance."

Do not tell me that these are non-essentials. To men that will follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, even the opening or the shutting of a window, if need be, is essential. Be jealous over what are called "trifles." They may be mere straws, but they show which way the wind blows. We want the race of grand old bigots back again. We have been howling at bigots these many years and praising up universal "charity," which means nothing else than denying that there is any truth in the world to defend, or any army of saints in which to enlist.

A Protestant on one occasion was bidden to bow down before the cross when he was about to be knighted, and many others did so. "It is only a form, you know," they said. "But," said he, "by God, I won't." And they called him "By God," and afterwards others who stood out boldly in the same way were called "By Gods," or "Bigots." So that tone of refusal has become a term of reproach.

Here is a grandest bigot of all! Daniel is his name. He *will* pray. They will throw him into a lions' den. "The bigoted fool!" Ah, yes, but God did not discountenance his unswerving uprightness. He had said before his God that he would do the right, and the right thing he did, whatever might happen.

Young men and young women, I would like you to go to school before Daniel and learn to say, "Whatever happens, we cannot lie, cannot do the wrong thing. We cannot believe what men teach us, when contrary to God's teaching. We cannot give up prayer and personal holiness, whether there be a lions' den or no lions' den. We will stand fast by that for God's own sake."

May that same spirit come back to Englishmen, and if it ever does, then I warrant you the shavelings of Rome will need to pack up and get straight away, for it is the bending men, the willow men, that will sell truth at any price. Oh that we may learn to sell it at no price, but to stand fast like pillars of iron for God, for Christ, for truth, for every holy thing!

Now I fear I ought to say, before I leave this series of reflections, that there are some who have no decision of character at all because they are not Christians. Some men are Christians, perhaps, though they have not decision enough to avow it—sneaking Christians! They have, they say, with their heart, but never with their mouth, confessed Christ. They have never been baptized as He bids them, and as they ought to be, according to His Word.

And there are some that have made a profession, but it is a smuggled profession. Their friends at home hardly know it, and they do not want them to know it. Oh, if I enlisted in Her Majesty's service, and had my regimentals given me to wear, I would wear them. I should not like to have them packed away and go about in other clothes, for I should be afraid of being taken up as a deserter.

There are others who dishonor their profession, and do not live as they should. And there are those who, if they were persecuted, would speedily throw off their profession. They can go with Christ with silken slippers over smooth-shaven lawns, but as to walking through mire and mud with Him, that they cannot do. Oh for the heart of a Daniel, every one of us, to follow Christ at all hazards.

IV. Our last point is DANIEL'S DELIVERANCE.

With that we will conclude. The evil that threatened Daniel did come. He was to be put into a lions' den and into a lions' den he was put. So, young man, you say, "I will not do wrong." You hope to escape unscathed. Yet it may be that you will be discarded by your friends, and discountenanced by your associates. Expect it and go through it. If you are a tradesman and by saying you will not submit to an evil custom of the trade you will become a loser, be willing to be a loser, expect that the lions' den will be there, and that you will be put into it.

Daniel came there, but there was not a scratch upon him when he came out of it. What a splendid night he must have spent with those lions! I do not wonder that in after days he saw visions of lions and wild beasts. It seems most natural that he should, and he must have been fitted by that night passed among these grim monsters to see grand sights.

In any case he must have had a glorious night. What with the lions, and with angels all night to keep him company, he was spending the night-watches in grander style than Darius. And when he came out the next morning, so far from being a loser, he was a gainer. The king approved him, admired him, loved him. Everybody in the city had heard that Daniel had been put into the lions' den. He was a great man, and it was like putting the Prime Minister into the lions' den. And when he came out, with what awe they looked upon him! The king was not regarded half as much a god as Daniel.

Daniel had a smooth time of it afterwards. The counselors never troubled him again, the lions had taken care of them. There would be no more plotting against him. Now he would mount to the highest place in the empire, and no man would dare to oppose him, for very dread of the same fate that had

fallen upon his enemies and accusers. So Daniel had to the end of his days smooth sailing to the port of peace.

Now, believe me, to be decided for the right is not only the right thing but the easiest thing. It is wise policy as well as true probity. If you will not yield an inch, then somebody else must move out of the way. If you cannot comply with their proposals, then other people will have to rescind their resolutions. So you will find that, if you suffer, and perhaps suffer severely at first, for decision of character, you will get speedy recompense for all you endure, and a grand immunity in the future.

There will be an end to the indignities that are offered you. If it be not obstinacy, but real conscience that prompts you, you will rise to a position which otherwise you could not have attained. The opposition, so strong against you at first, will very likely lead to your enemies endorsing your views, and the dishonor you have meekly to bear will be followed by a deference flattering to your vanity, if not perilous to your future consistency.

Only put your foot down *now*. Be firm and unfaltering *now*. If you yield today, you will have to yield more tomorrow. Give the world an inch, and it will take many an ell. Be resolved, therefore, that no inch you will give, that to the lions' den you would sooner go than there should be equivocation, prevarication, or anything approaching falsehood.

However great the difficulty may be at the outset, yet do it, and you will be unhurt. You will be an immediate gainer by it, and to the rest of your days, God will give you a better and happier life than ever you have had before. "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

You Christian soldiers in the barracks, be decided, stand up for Jesus. You will be ridiculed at first, but you will live that down before long. But if you are cowardly, the ridicule will last many and many a day, and your fellow soldiers will take delight in laughing at you. If any of you are in a workshop, take courage, do not yield. Why should not we have our way, as they have theirs?

Young men in business, take care you begin your business in an honest, straightforward manner, for, if you begin it with artifice and crooked stratagem, it will go on crooked, and then, if you try to get straight, you will find it very difficult. But begin as straight as a line, never swerve from it. Act on the outset as a Christian should. What if employers should frown, or customers be vexed, or friends fail? Bear it! It will be the best policy in the long run. That is not, however, for you to consider. Do the right thing, whatever happens.

Let us be as Daniel. Oh that the young among you would emulate the purpose of heart with which Daniel began life! Oh that the active and vigorous among you would seek, with Daniel's constant prayerfulness, for that high gift of wisdom equal to all emergencies with which God so richly endowed him!

And oh, that the harassed, tempted, and persecuted among you would learn to keep a clean conscience in the midst of impurities, as Daniel did, to preserve, like him, faith and fellowship with the faithful and true God, though you are living among strangers and foreigners, profane in all their thoughts and habits. And to hold the statutes and commandments of the Lord as more to be desired than wealth or honor—yea, dearer to you, as Daniel accounted them, than even life itself!

So shall you honor God, and glorify Christ, and bless and praise His precious name in a way in which nothing else but decision of character can possibly lead you to do. God grant us all to have Christ for a Savior, and to live to His praise. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—DANIEL 6

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.