

## ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

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*Kneeled upon his knees three times a day,* v. 10. It is well to form the habit of constant prayer, of lifting the heart to God quickly from time to time in all the changing circumstances of the day. But it is well also to have frequent and definite seasons for prayer, when with deliberation we may review God's blessings and give Him thanks, examine our hearts and confess our sins and ask for all the things we need for our bodies and souls.

*As he did aforetime.* He did not court martyrdom. After the signing of the decree he did not obtrude his devotions any more than he had done before. He went into his chamber, where he would probably not have been seen unless he had been watched. Nor did he wish to be disobedient to the laws of the land. He was a loyal subject of the king and a high officer of the State, and in ordinary matters would gladly conform to the king's decrees. But this was not an ordinary matter. The supreme authority in Daniel's life was the will of God. His life ran upon the lines of God's will as a train upon its rails, and when God's will was plain, the decrees of an earthly monarch could no more affect his conduct than the whistling wind can affect the onward sweep of the locomotive. Now, he had no doubt that loyalty to God and the needs of his own soul demanded that he should continue in daily prayer; and so, when he knew that the decree was signed, calmly and steadfastly he continued to kneel and pray as he did aforetime.

This is a great example. In order that our lives may be strong and noble it is necessary that we discover and lay down for ourselves principles of conduct in accordance with the will of God. We should not elevate matters of indifference into principles, but where God's will and our duty are plain, we must be as immovable as rock. Neither fashion, nor public opinion, nor human law, should move us then.

*These men assembled,* v. 11. What had Daniel done to these men that they were plotting against his life? Nothing. He had simply done his duty according to his ability

in the sphere where Providence had placed him. But his ability was great and his fidelity was equal to it, and so he had risen to pre-eminence. And now envy pursued him. How vile a thing is envy! Here is a homely but accurate picture of the filthy passion (The poem is quoted from memory):

"A glow-worm sat in the dusk;  
As I passed through the woods I found it,  
Bright as a diamond it shone,  
With a halo of light around it.

A toad came up from the fen,  
It was ugly in every feature;  
Like a thief it crept to the worm,  
And it spat on the shining creature.

'What have I done,' said the worm,  
'As I sat here in silence nightly?'  
'Nothing', replied the toad,  
'But why do you shine so brightly?'

*The law of the Medes and Persians is that no . . . statute may be changed,* v. 15. If this was the law, it was a very bad law. Consistency is not a virtue in itself, but only consistency in what is right. If one has made up his mind wrongly he should not be afraid to unmake it; nor should he be afraid to break a vow if it is a wicked vow.

*Thy God . . . will deliver thee,* v. 16. This was a proper reflection for Daniel but not for the king. As far as the king was concerned, he had no right to suppose that God would interfere to prevent the consequences of his wrong action. And, as a matter of fact, the reflection brought him no comfort. "His sleep went from him." Happy is the man who, even in the midst of alarms, can lie down to quiet sleep, because his heart condemns him not and he has confidence toward God.

*No manner of hurt was found upon him,* v. 23. Do we always learn from this lesson that God will deliver His people from such danger as that to which Daniel was exposed, if, like Daniel, they trust in Him? We do not. In the early days of Christianity there was a time when every public disaster was laid at the door of the Christians, who were supposed to have drawn down the anger of the gods. If the Nile failed to rise and fer-