

THE MAN GREATLY BELOVED

NO. 1089

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 5, 1873,
 BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto you, be strong, yes, be strong.”
Daniel 10:19.

I ANTICIPATE an objection to my preaching from this text and using it in reference to any persons in this congregation. “The words were spoken to Daniel and we are not Daniels”—that is probably the shape which the objection will take in certain minds. And my reply is, If we are not Daniels, at least we should desire to be and we should remember that there are possibilities of our being such. In many parts of Daniel’s character we can, by Divine Grace, tread in his steps. Daniel is not set up far above us as one who cannot be imitated—he is an example whom it should be our joy to follow.

“But,” cries one, “we shall never reach to Daniel’s height of Grace.” I pray God we may. Under all dispensations there have been men of the class to which Daniel belongs. The antediluvian period produced an Enoch who “walked with God and was not, for God took him,” and he, like Daniel, prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord. In the Patriarchal period there was an Abraham who is called “the friend of God,” with whom the Lord communed in a most peculiar manner. In the later days, under the Law, was there not a David, “a man after God’s own heart”? And though his character was more faulty, yet still his nearness of fellowship with God, as we read of it in the Psalms, puts him in the same category.

If you tell me that all these, and many more whom I might mention, belong to the olden times and to the days of miracles, and so forth, I would remind you that nowadays the child of God, under the Gospel, has privileges which were unknown to the greatest Believers in former dispensations! Even John the Baptist, of whom it was said that none born of woman was greater than he—it is said, also, he was less than the least in the kingdom of Heaven. With the clearer light and richer indwelling of the Holy Spirit, instead of being inferior to Enoch, or Abraham, or David, or Daniel, we ought to excel all these!

And, further, I would also remind you that the New Testament dispensation produced a John—and is there a nearer facsimile of Daniel anywhere than John? The two, though so very different in positions and in circumstances, were in their disposition, in their walk with God, in their familiarity with the Most High, and in the extraordinary visions of the future with which they were indulged, so much akin that I might say that Daniel was the John of the Prophets and that John was the Daniel of the Evangelists! Now, if there is one John produced under the Gospel, why not another? If two, why not 2,000 or twenty thousand?

“And why may I not be one of them?” each Christian may ask. The Spirit of God is not stinted. The dew from Heaven is not exhausted because it fell on Daniel’s branch and rested on John’s leaf. You may have it, my Brother, and under its fertilizing influence you may bud and blossom—and from every blossom shed around you the fragrance of fellowship with God! Moreover, if I waive the question of our imitating Daniel I would add that from another consideration I feel justified in using my text most freely—for every true Christian is, in some sense—and that a very deep and true sense, too, a “man greatly beloved.”

Though there are differences in the manifestation of the love of God, so that we may say there are elect ones out of the elect, yet all the elect are “greatly beloved.” There are choice spirits among the chosen, such as the 70 who were selected from the disciples, the 12 out of the 70, the three—Peter, James and John—out of the 12, and John out of the three. Election rises out of itself again and again, ascending like a pyramid. Yet, for all that, the common disciples, at the base of the pyramid, are “greatly beloved,” loved with an infinite love. The weakest babes in Grace are as truly loved as those who have come to the fullness of the stature of men in Christ Jesus.

There are delicious spots where the sun's light seems to rest most constantly, yet the sun of God's love shines on all the field which He has chosen. The goodly land owned the superior excellency of its Carmel and Sharon, yet from Dan to Beersheba, every acre was blessed of the Lord. Every heir of Heaven is purchased with the same blood, written in the same roll of life, called by the same Spirit, preserved by the same Divine power and is ripened under the same spiritual influences for the eternal Glory—surely, then, every Believer is “beloved,” and “greatly beloved,” too! Great love has been shown in the salvation of each one of us and in our preservation to this day.

Therefore, if none of us should be bold enough to hope that the expression of the text could be applied to us in any peculiar and eminent sense, yet our faith, without presumption, dares to know that we are men greatly beloved, seeing we have been saved by the Sovereign Grace of God and made near to God by the blood of Jesus Christ. We shall, however, expect every Christian, as he recognizes the great love which he has enjoyed, to recognize, also, the great *obligations* which spring out of it. This is but common honesty—if we eat the bread of children, we must render the obedience of sons.

Now let us proceed to the words themselves. In them I see, first, a choice title, “O man, greatly beloved.” Secondly, a common infirmity very gently rebuked—“fear not.” And then, thirdly, certain very gracious consolations given to meet that infirmity—“peace be unto you, be strong, yes, be strong.”

I. To begin then, the text glitters with a CHOICE TITLE. Daniel is said to be a “man greatly beloved,” or as some read it, “a man of desires”—a desirable man towards God whom God desired to commune with—in whose society the Lord delighted. He was a “man greatly beloved.” Now the great love of God to Daniel is very conspicuously seen in his character. I shall not describe his character as the reason why God loved him, far from it, but I shall mention his character as being the effect of God's great love to him.

God loved him greatly and therefore He made him this and that. The first token of the Lord's great love to Daniel which we shall consider was this—God gave him early *piety*. From his very youth Daniel feared God. We do not know the time at which he was brought fully to *know* the Lord, but it must have been in his boyhood, for while he was yet a stripling we find him playing the man for the Lord God of his fathers. It is true his early days were spent in captivity. He was of the royal house of Judah and he was carried away to Babylon. But there is something significant in the fact that he was carried captive at the same time that the holy vessels were taken from the temple of Jerusalem. What if I say that he was, himself, one of the holy vessels? For he was, indeed, a vessel fit for the Master's use and he and the golden vessels of the house of the Lord were in captivity together, yet still under the Divine care, so that they should not be profaned to unholy use.

My dear Friends, no one can ever overestimate the great privilege of being brought to God in childhood or youth! If it were only to be saved from the injury which a course of sin brings upon the mind. If it were only to escape from the regrets for the past which will arise when the conscience is in later days purged from sin. If it were only to have saved those precious hours of the early morning of life and to have used them in the Master's cause. If it were only for those three reasons—and they are but part of a great cluster—they are something for which eternally to bless the special love of God!

I appeal to those who have been brought to love the Lord in riper days and those especially who have come to know him in old age. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, you love the Lord who has called you to Himself, but have you not often said in your heart, “would to God I had known Him like Timothy, at my mother's knee”? And is it not at this time the dearest desire of your soul, that your children should not delay a decision for God so long as you did, but that they should cast in their lot with the people of God while yet the ruddy hue of youth is on their cheeks? I know I speak your very hearts. You, therefore, are witnesses to the fact that early piety is a choice blessing and he who has received it may think that he hears an angel say to him this morning, “O man, greatly beloved, when you were a child the Lord delighted in you.”

But, secondly, the great love of God to Daniel appeared in his early and thorough nonconformity to the world. He was placed in circumstances of peculiar peril, removed from every godly association, taken away from every sacred influence of holy hearth or gracious guardianship. He was carried into an idolatrous country and trained in an idolatrous court for a superstitious pursuit. Everything was done that could be done to make the young Hebrew forget the God of his fathers. His very name was changed as well as those of the three right worthy companions of his captivity.

They had grand names in the Hebrew, each one significant of some gracious Truth of God, but they were changed into mere Babylonian titles that they might forget that they were Jews and forget the name of God Himself!

Everywhere around them they saw idolatry, lust, and crime. There was nothing when they went abroad or when they stayed at home but what would suggest to them the abominations of the heathen. Yet here it was that while yet a mere lad, “Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.” The meat and wine that would be brought to Daniel would not have been of the kind that should have been eaten or drunk by an Israelite. The meat might have been defiled with blood or killed by strangling, in violation of the legal precept—and frequently the meat eaten by the Babylonians would be the flesh of an unclean animal.

The wine, also, would probably have been dedicated to the false gods by a libation of a part of it, and the meat would have been offered to idols—therefore Daniel determined to go too far rather than not far enough—and would not defile himself with the king’s meat, nor the king’s wine at all. It is always safest if you are at war with a deadly enemy to have a very high wall between you and him. There will be no fault in its being too high if he aims at destroying you. Any division which we establish between us and sin will never be too broad or too deep. Daniel, with surprising decision, determined that he would not defile himself with the king’s meat.

Now, this was rather a strong position for a child to take up—a mere school-boy shall I call him?—for he was then at the college of the soothsayers, being taught in the wisdom of the Chaldeans. He was but a scholar and yet upon this he was very resolute. Being resolute he was not imprudent—he did not court persecution, but he went to work with that gentle courtesy which is always so becoming a companion of firmness. The “*Suaviviter in modo*” should always go with the “*Fortiter in re.*” Gentle manners are a fit robe for firm principles. We read, therefore, that Daniel “requested of the prince of the eunuchs, that he might not defile himself.”

Now, “God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.” So that after expressing a fear that he might be injured in health by not eating the food provided, he allowed him to make a trial of it. The trial of a diet of vegetables and water turned out most satisfactorily. Daniel and his friends were found to be both better in health and stronger in mind than the rest of the young students in the college. Was it not a grand thing for this young hero to have taken such a stand? We may hope that he who begins well will go on well—but, oh, abhor, young Christian, all faltering at the beginning, all bargaining with the world, all trying to parley with evil, all attempting to see how near you can go to sin! If you are not at the outset thorough for God, I fear you never will be.

Christians ought to grow in Grace, but I am sorry to say that with many of them they go from weakness to weakness. And all, I fear, because there is not a sound beginning. Every builder will tell you the necessity of having the foundation laid well. Let the foundation of your religion be decision, resolution, sincerity, and thoroughness. Your half-and-half Christian makes a fine pretense at godliness, builds very rapidly and daubs with his untempered mortar only to secure a fall. But may God make us deep Christians, those who know what they know and mean what they mean—and mean for God and for His Truth to be decided by His help.

Daniel was a man greatly beloved because even early he was distinguished for his nonconformity to the world. In later life we find another sweet result of God’s love in his courageous trust in God. He was called on two occasions, at any rate, in his life, to exhibit the utmost conceivable courage. Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed a dream. Daniel had before interpreted a dream for him and therefore on this occasion he obtained admittance to the king. He heard the king’s dream, but the interpretation of it was one which foretold the most grievous ill to the tyrant! How should he tell him the dreadful tidings? Only let the monarch lift his finger and Daniel’s head would roll upon the floor!

All the empire of Babylon was under the absolute sway of the despot, Nebuchadnezzar, and yet Daniel did not hesitate to tell him that he would be insane and that his hair would grow like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws—and that he would be driven from the abodes of men! I think I see him, with fearless manner and voice, bidding the monarch break his sins by righteousness and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, that his tranquility might be lengthened.

Now, in *these* days, it needs no great courage to speak the Truth of God because no sudden death awaits the boldest messenger of Christ. We live in days of liberty in which we may believe what we please and say almost what we will, but it needed heroic courage, then, to come like a Nathan, saying, “You are the man,” not to a David, with Grace in his heart,

but to one who had no fear of God before him—a Nebuchadnezzar who thought himself a God! And that was a brave deed on that dread night, when Daniel stood up in the presence of Belshazzar and all his court—while the princes and lords of the different provinces were gathered together—and there interpreted the handwriting on the wall. Remember, he was surrounded by a soldiery who could, in a moment, have put him to death.

And he stood before a young and proud monarch, licentious and imperious, who would make no account of human blood. And Daniel had to say to him, “You are weighed in the balances and found wanting; your kingdom is given to the Medes and Persians.” It needed no small spirit to be able to be the stern interpreter of a monarch’s final doom! When he had been young he had faced Nebuchadnezzar, and when he had grown gray with years, with the same calm and brave spirit he faced Belshazzar and rebuked him for his sins and for his proud defiance of the Lord God of Israel. He was a man greatly beloved to be such a lion as he was in the midst of all his foes.

Coupled with this, as another evidence of God’s love to him, was his wonderful endurance of prosperity. If I have already said that early piety is a great proof of God’s peculiar affection to a man, I think I may say that the power to endure popular esteem, success in life, wealth and rank is also a very special and peculiar token of the Divine favor. He was but a youth at the time when he went to Nebuchadnezzar and told him his dream and the interpretation. I suppose he was about 17 years of age when he sat in the king’s gate and was the head of all the king’s wise men in Babylon! Scarcely that number of years had rolled over his head when Ezekiel spoke of him as being well-known as the wisest man of his time.

Addressing the King of Tyre, Ezekiel said, “Are you wiser than Daniel?” Now, for a young man to be elevated to that position, we all know, or think we do, the dangers that must surround him. Even a man that has experience does not always find the lofty places of power furnish easy foothold for him—but for the young and inexperienced man to stand there he must be a man greatly beloved of God. And then remember that through 43 years or more of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Daniel was one of the great men of the kingdom! All through the reign of Belshazzar, on through the time of Darius the Mede we still find Daniel one of the greatest men in the Government.

Belshazzar had made him the third man in the kingdom, there being, I suppose, at that time two kings and, therefore, he could not be made the second—but he was made the next to the kings in all the empire. Yet never do you see him betraying any sense of his own greatness. His book is singularly free from any desire to set forth himself. Have not you often wondered where he was when the three holy children were put into the burning fiery furnace? I think if I had had the writing of the book of Daniel I should have wished to insert a verse or two to explain where I was. But Daniel is so forgetful of himself he does not exculpate himself or try to avert suspicion and leaves it open to us to think whatever we like.

We may be sure he was acting nobly, but he does not try to make us think so. He is nothing, the service of his people and of his God—this it was which absorbed all his thoughts. O, it is noble to see a man lifted up into the high places of wealth and position—made to wear a crown and scarlet robe—and yet, for all that, walking humbly with his God and fulfilling his duty without a flaw, even as those do who have not such high things to try them! I read this week of a vessel at sea which was overtaken by a storm and a mountainous wave, a very alp of water, went right over it, putting out the engine fires at once and sweeping away the wheel and the steering house, so that the vessel lay like a log in the trough of the sea.

Now many a man has been like that—a great mass of wealth and prosperity has come upon him, put out the fires of his former zeal, taken away all the steerage of his soul—and he has lain like a log tossed up and down between the waves of worldliness and pride and has become a total wreck. But Daniel was a man greatly beloved, for God set him on his high place and made his feet like hind’s feet. A further instance of God’s great love to him comes out in his firmness under trial. There will come to most men some special time in which they will be tested and it happened to Daniel in his old age. There were those who could not bear that he should always be in the front in political affairs and they plotted against him—but they found nothing against him except concerning his God.

They obtained a decree that none should pray during 40 days except to the king. But Daniel cared little for decrees—it was his custom, three times a day, to bow before his God with his window opened towards that dear country which still he loved, though he had been an exile from it these many years. And he, with that stern simple-heartedness which was so prominent in him, went to pray at the time he would have prayed if there had been no decree. He did not

alter the window—neither to the putting of it up nor the putting of it down—and as he had been accustomed to do before, he bowed his knees and prayed.

The lion's den was nothing to him—his duty was all and if the way of duty lay through the jaws of wild beasts, Daniel pursued it, still. And you know the result and how God vindicated His servant. Truly, I might have said, when he was thrown into the pit where the lions were raging, that the martyr was a man greatly beloved! And all confess that fact when they see him honored by Darius, brought up alive out of the pit where God had sent His angel to preserve him—then all who saw him confessed that he was a man greatly beloved! Let me add that here we ought not to forget that God's Grace and love shone conspicuously in making Daniel a man of such continuous devotion. Every day witnessed his constant regularity in prayer. Not that he was a Pharisee and thought that one time was better than another, but because he probably felt what most of us have—that if we have not a time for prayer we may neglect it altogether.

Three times a day, whatever might occur—notwithstanding the immense pressure of business upon the statesman's mind—three times a day he cried unto his God! And then he had his special times. Three weeks we find him spending in prayer and fasting. The top of his house witnessed to his regular devotions, but his special pleadings were by the lonely willows of the brook where he cried and wrestled with his God. And we find that as the result of this he was favored with manifestations from on high which he would never have received had his devotion been less regular or continued. It is no small token of God's love to a man if the man lives in the spirit of prayer—if he delights himself in prayer and if year after year prayer has not become a monotony to him. It is by God's Grace if prayer is real to him, yes, and if he so much hungers after more of it that he devotes lengthened seasons to its more intense exercise. If God privileges him to become mighty in prayer, then is he a man greatly beloved.

Power in prayer is one of the most Divine of the Lord's gracious gifts. I could mention here, today, the name of one, a name well known to you, of one whose prayers God has heard these many years and helped him to feed thousands of orphans and send forth scores of missionaries. Whenever we think of him, we think of him as a man greatly beloved. And whenever I look upon a man who is powerful in prayer, who, by supplication, brings down blessings on his own family and the Church and his neighborhood, I know that there is to be found a man who is, indeed, greatly beloved.

I think that I have shown you that the outward signs of God's love to Daniel were such as many of us have enjoyed, in a measure, and may enjoy still more, for there are some here who were saved in youth—some who early began to be decided for God. There are some here who have been brave for Christ and have not denied the faith—who have sustained prosperity and have endured trial, too—and who have, by Divine Grace, been taught to plead with God. Perhaps they will not recognize themselves, but we may be able to recognize them and call them men greatly beloved. In one word, there was one crowning token of God's love to Daniel and that is the perfect consistency of his life.

Daniel seems to me to be as nearly as possible a perfect character. If anyone should ask me for what peculiar virtue I count him to be famous, I should hardly know how to reply. There is a combination in his character of all the excellencies. Neither do I think I could discover anything in which he was deficient. Sinner he was, doubtless, before the eyes of God—but he is faultless towards man. His was a well-balanced character. There is an equilibrium maintained between the different Graces, even as in John's character, which is also exceedingly beautiful. There is, perhaps, a touch of loveliness about the character of John—a tender softness that we do not find in Daniel. There is somewhat more of the lion in the Prophet and of the lamb in the Apostle, but still they are, each of them, perfect after his kind.

All through Daniel's life you do not find a flaw—there is no breakdown anywhere. There was a great occasion in which he might have broken down, but God helped him through it. There he was, a business man for a long lifetime, a man bearing the burden of State and yet never once any accusation could be brought against him of any wrongdoing. A man of large transactions will usually be chargeable with something or other of wrong performed through his subordinates, even if he, himself, should be strictly upright. But here was a man rendered by Grace so upright and so correct in all that he did that nothing could be, even by his enemies, brought against him except concerning his religion! A great mark of Grace was this—an ensign of piety far too rare.

Many are Christians and will, we hope, creep into Heaven, but, alas! alas! Alas—the less said about their inconsistencies the better! It is a special mark of a man greatly beloved, when he is consistent from the beginning to the end through the Grace of God.

II. But my time will fail me and therefore I must hasten, in the second place, to notice that Daniel became the subject of a COMMON INFIRMITY. He was full of fear on one occasion and therefore an angel said to him, “Fear not.” I am glad of this, because it teaches us that even the best of men may be subject to very great fears! I was pleased to read in our lesson, just now, of Daniel on his face and of Daniel dumb and so on, for it shows that he was touched with our infirmities and that great as God made him, he was nothing in himself and owed all his greatness to the Grace of God.

Those fears on the part of Daniel were not the result of personal trial just then. They came to him, indeed, when he had been highly honored by revelations from God. But his fears sprang from a sight of his Lord and from a sense of his own unworthiness! Just a word on that. You may be a man greatly beloved and, therefore, you may have a clearer sight of the Lord Jesus than other men have—and for that very reason you may feel a greater shame and confusion of face whenever you think of yourself. Remember how Daniel says concerning himself, “There remained no strength in me, my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.”

O Beloved, if the Lord ever favors you with much love and with nearness of access to Himself, you must expect the other side of it—that is to say, you must feel your own *nothingness*, baseness, unworthiness—and while you feel that I do not wonder that you almost wish you had never been born and feel as if the sooner this life was ended the better—feel as if you were unfit to do anything for God’s people, unfit even to bear Christ’s name! And yet, all the while you may be a man greatly beloved and may be eminently blessed.

Look at Job—when he is covered all over with sores he justifies himself in some measure—but the moment he sees his God what does he say? “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see You; therefore I abhor myself.” It is sure to be so—great love from God will make you have great humbleness of soul and lay you low in the dust. Do I address a Brother who has been finding out, lately, more of the deformity of his own heart than he ever did before? Did he come up here this morning crying, “Alas! Woe’s me?” No, dear Brother, not, “woe’s you,” but, “O man greatly beloved.” Though you have found this out through a sight of your Lord, yet fear not, this is a blessing to you and not a curse!

Perhaps, too, Daniel’s great fears had been awakened by the disclosures that had been made to him of the history of the nations and especially of his own people. He had a peculiar anxiety for his own people. Did you ever get into that state and begin to look upon the world and upon the country and upon the Church—and then fall into a fit of trembling? I do assure you it is wonderfully easy to put on the garb of Jeremy, the weeping Prophet. If you look abroad even on this little island of ours, you see mischief everywhere coming to the front and error prevailing—and the cause of the Truth of God seems to be like a tempest-tossed ship—almost a wreck. Truly one might find plenty of room for weeping and lamentation!

And if we look at the world at large and see how infidelity spreads, “Woe is me!” we may well say. Yes, Daniel had seen the history of the world for a long period to come—therefore he was full of fear. And are you full of fear, too? Well, it is a part of the lot of men whom God greatly loves that they should bear the troubles of the times—that they should be like Christ on the behalf of their age—and should bear the sins of men upon their hearts and plead concerning them before the living God. I think, too, that Daniel’s sorrow was occasioned, partly, by the repetition of those words to him—“The vision is true, but the time appointed is long.” It seemed to come over and over to Daniel. “The time is long.” I do not know any trouble that presses more heavily on my heart than that.

It seems to be a dreadful long while since God has worked a miracle—such a while since the Church has had any great thing done in the midst of her. Christianity only holds under its power a miserable minority of mankind—the number of evangelical Christians in the world is a contemptible fraction as compared with the mass of idolaters and Muslims, Catholics and the like. The true Churches do not seem to be growing and meanwhile the challenges of the infidel come to us and we do not seem to have the pluck to reply to them as they ought to be replied to. One thousand and eight hundred years and more have gone by—and no progress or scarcely any!

O Lord, how long! How long! How long! How long! And yet Jehovah is the Lord. Yes He is the only God and He could, in a moment, enlighten the darkness of mankind. And His Spirit could raise up men who should flash like flames of fire amidst the midnight of the times. Why does He tarry? This is the cry which the Church universally sends up wherever she lives near to God. And if any here have been favored to be beloved of God, I am sure this will weigh upon them, “How long Lord, how long? Why do You tarry?”

III. Now we close, in the third place, by noticing THE CONSOLATIONS which the angel brought to Daniel and which, in proportion as we are greatly beloved and the subject of like fears, he brings to us. He said to him first, "Peace be unto you." So he says to every one of the beloved here—"Peace be unto you. Why are you fretting, worrying, tossed up and down in your mind? Peace be unto you." Let peace be yours first because you are "greatly beloved." Whatever is happening or not happening, you are greatly beloved. The Lord loved you before the earth was. He redeemed you with the blood of His own Son. He has called you into fellowship with Jesus—Peace! You are beloved—does not that give you peace? "Hush, my Babe," says the mother, "lie still and slumber." And the sweetest hush in all her lullaby is the mention of her own love. So, dear child of God, be still, be calm! You are beloved of Heaven!

And next, fear not, peace be unto you, God is still ruling—He ruled the world before you were born and accomplished all His will—He will rule it when you are dead and He will fulfill His own decrees. Why do you worry yourself? What use can your fretting serve? You are on board a vessel which you could not steer even if the great Captain put you at the helm, of which you could not so much as reef a sail, yet you worry as if you were captain and helmsman! O be quiet! God is Master—do you think that all this din and hurry-burly that is abroad means that God has left His Throne? No, man, His coursers rush furiously on and His chariot is the storm—but there is a bit between their jaws and He holds fast the reins—and guides them as He wills! Jehovah is still Master—believe it! Peace be unto you—be not afraid!

And whereas you are disturbed about the length of time—with what do you measure? With your own age of 70 years, or with days and weeks—do you measure so? Have you ever seen the measuring line of the Eternal and do you know that if this world were to last through millions of millions of years, yet it would be but a speck between the two eternities that should precede and follow? God's life is not made up of ticks of the clock! He can wait, He can wait. He can let generations of wicked men follow one another, yes, He could for 10,000 years 10,000 times told, permit the devil to trail his chain around the world and yet at the end be more than conqueror, and the more glorious a conqueror because of the length of the battle!

It is a child's fight that lasts but for an hour, but vast is the conflict of nations when they struggle with each other from year to year—when a campaign does but open the war, when another campaign does but kindle the strife and a third does but inflame the passions—and another brings forth all the fury of the combatants and only far on at the close comes the grand crash which ends all! Shall the wars of God be less in length than the battles of men? You have seen but one campaign, or perhaps but the first flight of the artillery which commences the fight—you have not seen the crossing of the bayonet that may yet be to come—for time of tribulation such as the world has never seen is yet in reserve. But rest you sure of this—it is all short to Him with whom a thousand years is as one day—and one day as a thousand years! Come down from the measuring place, child, come down! It is *God* that weighs and measures. Leave that alone and sit down at His feet and be still. Be still! It is all well! It shall surely end well. God is still Master!

Then he adds "be strong," as if these fears of Daniel made him weak and as if it was important that he should be strong. Now, if there is any importance in us at all, and there is not much, certainly anything that we can do in our present place will require of us all our strength. And since our fears decidedly weaken us, for all practical purposes they should be shaken off. Therefore the angel says twice, "Be strong, yes, be strong." And, Beloved, we ought to be strong in faith, for God deserves it. He has given us promises of our own security, of His own ultimate conquest and the triumph of His own cause—and God has never lied. Why, then, should we doubt Him? They that trust in Him have never been confounded. He deserves that we should rely upon Him and if things grew blacker—and the times were worse and true religion were almost crushed out and lived only in one solitary man's heart—*that* man ought yet to believe that God would be conqueror, yet, and have no doubts, for why should even *he* distrust the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Infallible, the Immutable and true!

O Brothers and Sisters, while you have this ground and foothold for your strength, remember your work demands all your strength! How can you pray with these doubts about you? How will you teach others while you are doubting yourself? How can you perform your service when sighs come from you? Soul, sweet Soul, is that what should stream from the worker for the Lord God of Israel? Be strong, then! Fall before the Lord in earnest prayer and ask Him to take away your fretfulness and make you, as you are greatly beloved, to be strong. Remember, Beloved, specially those of you

who are at all prominent, that others will take their cue from you and if you speak with bated breath, with trembling language, others will be weak, too. Therefore, fear not—be strong, yes, be strong.

And remember, there is no cause for alarm. Have you not lived long enough to see that always when men have judged that things went worst they have been going best? There is an undercurrent which the eyes see not which is often stronger than the upper flow. And besides, if it were not so, have you never seen it, have not your fathers told you, that the darkest part of the night is that which precedes the dawning day? Have you never perceived that when true religion, either in your own soul or in the world, seems to have gone back that suddenly it makes a leap again? There will come waves upon the beach and each one will seem stronger than its fellow—but then there will follow one that sucks them all back and you might think the sea was retiring from its strength—yet the flood tide is coming in, coming even while that wave recedes so far.

All is working for progress, though there may seem to be a delay here and there. The stream rushes on like a mighty Niagara and you are there by the shore in a little eddy, revolving round and round in a tiny vortex. And you say the stream is rushing in the wrong direction—it has made no progress—“I am weary with this circular motion.” Ah, but you have never been in the broad current, or if your eyes have gazed upon it, it has been dazed with the sight of its breadth and length and you have not understood it! The Lord reigns! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns and Jesus sits at His side, while Truth, like His angel, follows at His heels, still mighty! The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall yet perform His Word!

And the Spirit that for a while has hidden His great might and concealed Himself in the secret chambers of His Church shall come forth and the day shall be in which the Lord’s Truth shall be declared among the people with power! Even with such power that the world shall bow before it and the song shall go up unto the Lord God Almighty—and He shall be worshipped from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same! O you virgin souls that have followed the Lamb up to now where ever He goes, follow Him still! Keep your garments unspotted from the world! Be rigidly faithful to the Truth of God and conscience. You are men greatly beloved, let not your spirits fail you. Let no man’s heart fail him because of Goliath that stalks before us! He is but a creature and will fade and die. Fear not, peace be unto you, be strong, yes, be strong! The Lord strengthen you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Daniel 10.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.