

The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus. Ezra 1:1

There were many rays focused on this spot. In the first place, it had been definitely foretold by Jeremiah that the captivity would only last for seventy years. In the next place, Daniel, having learned from comparison of dates that the allotted time had nearly expired, had set himself to pray. Also, if Josephus be credited, the aged prophet had shown the young king the predictions of Isaiah in which his own name was clearly mentioned: "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden: . . . he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 45: 1, 13).

God is the fountain-head and source of all spiritual blessing, and of all those great movements for the uplifting and enlightenment of mankind which have swept from time to time over the world. Go to Him when you want to reach the heart of kings, prophets, and people. Oh for the faith of Samuel, Elijah, Daniel, and other stalwart men of God, that through Him we may stir up the spirits of those who will not listen to our appeals! For the fervent prayer of a righteous man still availeth much. In prayer you can touch the spring of all the stirrings that the world needs.

But it is not enough for God to stir men, they must obey. It appears that only a comparatively small number of captive Jews obeyed the divine stirring and came out of Babylon with the chief of the fathers. The call resounds for volunteers, but only a few respond; the inspiration breathes over us, but only some are susceptible to it. God works to will and to do, but only certain of the children of men work out what He works in. Whenever there is a divine stirring abroad, let us rise up and go.

耶和華 ... 就激動波斯王古列的心。 拉一1

有很多光線聚焦在「耶和華激動波斯王古列的心」這個點上。首先，耶利米已經確定的預言，被擄時間為期七十年(耶廿五11-12, 廿九10)。其次，但以理從比對日期知道指定的時間將至，就開始為此禱告(但九1-19)。並且，若約瑟夫[註]是可信的，年邁的先知但以理，曾向年輕的國王古列，展示先知以賽亞的預言，其中甚至明確提及王的名字：「論古列說，我耶和華所膏立的古列，我攙扶他的右手，... 他必建造我的城，釋放我被擄的民，不是為工價，也不是為賞賜。這是萬軍之耶和華說的。(賽四十四28-四十五13)」

神是一切屬靈福分的源頭，也是所有那些偶爾掃過全世界，推進並開啟人類文明偉大運動的泉源。若你想要觸動列王、先知、和眾民的心，你就要到祂面前。但願我們有撒母耳、以利亞、但以理，以及其他屬神偉人的信心，透過祂，我們可以激動那些不肯聽我們呼籲的靈魂！因義人懇切的禱告仍然大有功效(雅五16)。在禱告中你可以觸及這世界所需要之激動的泉源。

但是對神而言，人只被激動是不夠的，他們必須順從。事實顯示只有相對少數被擄的猶太人，順從神聖的激動而跟隨父輩首領離開巴比倫。對自願跟隨者的呼召再次響起，但只有少數人回應；聖靈的感動吹拂過我們，但只有一些人受感動。神使人立志行事，但只有一些人努力達成祂在人心所作的工。任何時候神激動人出去，讓我們起來，往前行(路十七19)。

[註] 約瑟夫 *Flavius Josephus*, 約37-100AD, 第一世紀最偉大的猶太歷史學家。他是法利賽人，屬利未支派。曾參與第一次猶太人的革命，後被擄至羅馬。著有《猶太古史記》*The Antiquities of the Jews*, 及《猶太戰記》*The Wars of the Jews* 等書。

Till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim. Ezra 2: 63

It must have been a great disappointment to these people who found themselves excluded from sharing as priests. Their names were not on the register, and so they had to wait until a properly-qualified authority could adjudicate their case. The mere inference of reason was not enough; they needed the direct corroboration of the anointed priest with Urim and with Thummim.

So in our life it is not enough to rely on the inference of reason, or to allow our Christian standing to be determined by the evidence of a document. We must seek the direct witness and testimony of the Holy Spirit. How many Christians there are who have no experimental knowledge of what the Apostle meant when he said that the Spirit witnesseth with our spirit that we are born again. They are always referring to inference, and the testimony of others; and therefore their consciousness varies, and they cannot eat of the holy bread of God. But when the Spirit of God speaks through the Urim and Thummim, and certifies that we are the children of God, giving us the white stone with its new name, and revealing Christ as dwelling within us, we have, immediately, boldness to enter into the holiest of all, and eat of the holy things.

Assurance is needful before we dare to appropriate the things which are freely given to us of God. Who of us is not able to verify this from his personal experience? We could not enjoy the Father's table, so long as there was a doubt about our sonship. But the assurance of faith may be ours as we wait in the presence of our great High Priest, speaking to us by the Holy Spirit, who witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God.

直到有用烏陵和土明決疑的祭司興起來。 拉二63

對於那些發現自己被排除在祭司職分之外的人來說，一定感到很失望。他們的名字不在冊上，所以他們必須等待一個正式合格的權威，來裁決他們的案件。僅僅理性的推斷是不夠的；還需要受膏的祭司用烏陵和土明直接證實。

所以在我們的生活中，僅僅依賴理性的推斷，或用文件就證明我們基督徒的身分，都是不夠的。我們必須尋求聖靈直接的見證。有多少基督徒對使徒所說的，聖靈與我們的靈一同見證我們重生(羅八16)，並沒有經歷上的認識。他們總是引用推理，以及別人的見證；因此他們內心的感覺並不相同，他們也不能領用神的聖餅。但是當神的靈藉著烏陵和土明說話，證明我們是神的兒女，賜給我們白石，石上寫著新名(啟二17)，顯明基督住在我們裡面的時候，我們就立刻勇敢地進入至聖所，吃聖物。

在我們勇敢取用那些神白白賜給我們的事物之前，需要有確據。我們中間誰不能從他親身的經歷證明這點呢？只要我們對我們有神兒子的名分存一絲懷疑，我們就不能享受天父的筵席。但是當我們等候在我們的大祭司面前時，祂藉著聖靈向我們說話，聖靈與我們的靈同證我們是神的兒女，我們就得到信心的確據。

And they set the altar upon its bases. Ezra 3: 3

This is the first thing that must be done before our temple-building or other undertakings can be crowned with success. It was well that the returned remnant made this their care; it augured well for their future. The new start that God Himself was giving would have been invalidated without that altar, which meant forgiveness for the past, and renewed consecration for the future.

Where is the altar in your life? Where the burnt sacrifice which betokens entire surrender of consecration? It cannot be too often insisted on, that since Christ died for all, all died in Him. We were not only saved by his death, we were included in it, but we must appropriate and identify ourselves with it. We must look up to God and say, "I desire that this death should be mine, to the world, to sin, to the flesh; make it so by the power of the Holy Ghost, that in Jesus I may be truly dead unto sin, but alive unto Thee."

Perhaps that last clause will help some souls most. Do not perpetually dwell on the dying side, but think much of the living side. Yield yourselves to receive God's life, which is the life of the Son of God in the surrendered nature. Be very sensitive, and "quick of scent," to every movement and prompting of the Holy Spirit. Seek the things which are above, where Christ, your life, is seated. So you will find your energy drained away from self to Christ. Because He lives you will live also. A maple tree planted on a barren soil sent out one of its rootlets to a richer patch not far away, and ultimately all its roothold was there, till finally it was bodily moved and transferred from its first position to this more salubrious one.

他們在原有的根基上築壇。 拉三3

這是我們在建築聖殿或其他工作可以圓滿完成之前，首先必須做的事。歸回的餘民將築壇的事當作他們的責任，是件好事；這預告他們有好的未來。若沒有這祭壇，神親自賜予的新開始便無法奏效，因這祭壇表示過去的罪蒙赦免，並且為未來更新奉獻。

你生命的祭壇在哪裡？那代表完全降服之奉獻的燔祭在哪裡？基督既替眾人死，眾人就都在祂裡面死了(林後五14)，這點不可能被過分強調。我們不只藉祂的死得救，我們也歸入祂的死(羅六3)，我們必須取用並且認同祂的死。我們必須仰望神，說，「我願向世界、向罪、向肉體都是死的(羅六11, 加六14, 五24)；求你藉著聖靈的能力來成就這事，使我在耶穌裡向著罪真是死的，向著你卻是活的。(羅六11)」

也許上面最後一句話最能幫助某些人。不要永遠留在死亡這一面，而要多思想活的這一面。你要放下自己去接受神的生命，那是帶有順服性情的神兒子的生命。要對聖靈的每一個動作和激勵敏感，並且直覺敏銳。要尋求上面的事，那裡有基督 — 就是你的生命 — 坐在那裡(西三1, 4)。這樣你就會發現你的能量從自己流向基督直到耗盡。因為祂活著，你也要活著(約十四19)。一棵栽種在貧瘠土壤中的楓樹，長出一條根鬚伸到不遠處的一塊肥沃土壤中，最終整個根部都會長在那裡，直到最後整個樹身都移動，從原處移到那好土上。

Let us build with you. Ezra 4: 2

At first the world does its best to intimidate the Church; then it asks to be permitted to join with it. A most subtle temptation this. The child of God is greatly inclined to yield; the proposal seems so harmless, and so likely to be a means of blessing to the poor, hungry, weary world. But there is only one condition on which the world may be admitted; it must yield a true and humble submission to the cross, and be willing to give up all for Jesus--conditions which the world will not consider for a moment; and so its heart is filled with bitterness and gall, and it sets itself to hinder where it had professed willingness to help.

There are five things of which we are expressly bidden to beware--they are five phases of an unequal yoke: fellowship with unrighteousness; communion with darkness; concord with Belial; part with an unbeliever; agreement with idols. Let us beware of these things, and cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. There may seem to be great loss and needless sacrifice in dispensing with the help of Rehum and Shimshai; but if once we accepted their help, we should discover to our cost that they were adversaries still, and that their only desire was to retard our efforts.

We sometimes shrink from some great undertaking for God, and are inclined to accept the proffered aid of wealthy but ungodly men. But their help may be purchased by the cost of all that makes our work worth doing. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"

*Yea, with one mouth, O world, though thou deniest
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.*

請容我們與你們一同建造。 拉四2

世界先是竭盡全力威嚇教會，然後請求允許與教會結合。這是最狡猾的試探。神的兒女很容易讓步，因為這提議似乎並無惡意，甚至好像是祝福這個窮困、飢餓、疲乏世界的媒介。但是只有在一個條件下，世界才可被接納，那就是世界必須真實而謙卑地順服十字架，願意為耶穌放棄所有——這條件是世人一刻也不加考慮的；所以他們的心充滿了苦毒和怨恨，並且定意攔阻他們曾經聲稱願意幫助的事工。

有五件事情我們明確受囑咐要提防——不配同負一軛的五方面：與不義的人相交，與黑暗相通，與彼列(撒但的別名)相和，與不信的人有關係，與偶像達成協議(林後六14-16)。讓我們在這些事上儆醒，潔淨自己，除去身體、靈魂一切的污穢(林後七1)。免除利宏和伸帥(8節)的幫助，可能好像是很大的損失，和不必要的犧牲；但是一旦接受他們的幫助，吃了虧之後我們會發現，他們仍然是我們的敵人，他們唯一所圖的就是阻礙我們的努力。

有時我們從神某個偉大的事工退縮，傾向於接受有錢但不敬虔之人提供的援助。但是他們的幫助可能要用我們事工的一切價值來換取。「你們和不信的原不相配，不要同負一軛。義和不義有什麼相交呢？」

衆口同聲說，世人啊！雖然你不承認，
你仍是站在那一邊，而我是在這一邊。

The eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews. Ezra 5: 5

It was a delightful thought amid obloquy and opposition, like that which the Jews were at this moment encountering, to know that God was watching them with jealous care. We are reminded of the words of the Psalmist, quoted and authenticated by the Apostle Peter, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." And he goes on to argue, "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" The Jews certainly found it so; for the efforts of their enemies to induce them to desist from their work of temple-building were rendered nugatory and ineffectual by the special care exercised over them by their Almighty Friend.

It may be that you will have to encounter hatred and opposition in doing God's work; but be sure not to look at these things, but steadfastly to Jesus. Must you not watch the foe? No; you could not make a greater mistake. You must look away to the face of Jesus, and you will find that, He, like a good shepherd, is looking carefully and lovingly down on you, and watching the stealthy movements of your foe. Even when we are not directly conscious of that watchful eye, it still follows us. He knoweth the way that you take; and He is acquainted with the varied circumstances of your life. He has pledged Himself to be with you for ever; as Wordsworth once said of his beloved daughter Dora:

*Dear child, fair child, that walkest with me here,
Though thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine;
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
Thou worshippest at the temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when thou knowest not.*

神的眼目看顧猶大的長老。 拉五5

在辱罵和敵對之中，想到神的眼目在小心保護地看顧，就令人欣喜，正如猶太人此刻所遭遇的一般。我們想起使徒彼得引用並證實詩篇作者的話，「主的眼看顧義人，主的耳聽他們的呼求；惟有行惡的人，主向他們變臉。（彼前三12, 詩卅四15-16）」他接著勸說，「你們若是熱心行善，有誰害你們呢？（彼前三13）」這些猶太人確實發現情況真是如此，因為藉著他們這位全能的朋友特別的看顧，他們的敵人引誘他們停止建殿的工作所費的工夫，最終歸於徒然。

也許在做神的工作時你可能必須遭遇仇恨和敵對，但你切勿注目這些困難，要堅定注目耶穌。你不該提防你的仇敵嗎？不該！你不會犯比這更大的錯誤。你當轉眼注視耶穌的臉，你會發現，祂像一位好牧人，正在留心且深情地垂顧著你，並且在提防你仇敵一切鬼祟的行動。即使我們自己並未直接意識到那看顧的眼，神的眼目也一直伴隨我們。祂知道你所行的路，祂也深知你生命的各種境遇。祂已起誓要親自永遠與你同在；就像沃茲沃斯[1770-1850, 英國詩人]曾向他的愛女朵拉所說的：

親愛的孩子，美麗的孩子，你在此與我同行，
儘管你還不曾觸及嚴肅的思想，
你的本性並不因此而較少神聖；
你終年躺在亞伯拉罕的懷中，
你在神的內殿敬拜，
在你不知道時，神已與你同在。

The Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the King unto them. Ezra 6: 22

Yes, the hearts of men are in the hands of God, and He can turn them whither He will. There are many instances of this in Scripture. God gave Joseph favour with Pharaoh; Moses with the Princess; and Daniel with the King of Babylon. If certain matters can only be settled by reference to great men, kings or men of affairs, make the application; and then betake yourself to prayer, believing that as He inclined the heart of Darius, in the instance before us, so He can do as He will among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of earth.

That unkind overseer, that vexatious member of your home-circle, that great man whose help you so greatly need--these are accessible to God's Spirit, if only you are intent on seeking his glory, and doing his will. But you must be able to show, as these Jews could, that your cause is identical with the cause of God, before you can claim, with unwavering faith, his interference on your behalf.

Then when the answer comes, let us thank Him, separating ourselves still further from the filthiness around us, so as to keep the feast with joy. Do not be afraid of joy; when God makes you joyful, do not think it necessary to restrain your songs or smiles, for fear that an equivalent of sorrow will presently be meted out as a make-weight. Our blessed Lord was desirous that his joy might be in his disciples; it was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God; it is with exceeding joy that He will present us faultless before the presence of his glory. "Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

耶和華使他們歡喜，又使亞述王的心轉向他們。 拉六22

是的，人的心在神手中，祂可以照祂心意使他們的心轉向(箴廿一1)。在聖經中有很多這樣的例子。神使約瑟在法老眼前蒙恩(創四十一37-45)，使摩西在埃及公主眼中蒙憐愛(出二5-10)，又使但以理在巴比倫王面前受恩寵(但一3-7)。如果某件事只藉著提到偉人、君王、或做大事的人才能解決，你要應用這個原則，就請你專心禱告，相信就像在我們面前這個例子，祂使大利烏的心轉回，祂也可以照著祂的意思作在天上萬軍以及地上眾生身上。

那個不友善的督工，那個令你生氣的親戚，那個你極其需要從他得幫助的大人物 — 這些都是神的靈可以調度的，只要你專心尋求祂的榮耀，行祂的旨意。但是在你可以用堅定不移的信心要求神為你介入之前，你必須像這些猶太人一樣，能顯明你的目標與神的目標一致。

因此，當回應臨到，我們要感謝祂，更要進一步從我們周圍的污穢中分別出來，使我們歡樂守節。不用害怕喜樂：當神使你充滿喜樂時，不要以為需要壓抑你的歌聲和歡笑，唯恐很快便會有等量的悲傷臨到作為平衡。我們可稱頌的主渴望祂的喜樂能常在祂的門徒裡面(約十五11)；祂因著那擺在前面的喜樂，就輕看羞辱，忍受了十字架，便坐在神寶座的右邊(來十二2)；祂要使我們無瑕無疵，帶著無與倫比的喜樂，站在祂榮耀之前(猶24)。「你要因耶和華你神賜給你的一切福分歡樂。(申廿六11)」

I was strengthened, as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me. Ezra 7: 28

It was no small work that the good Ezra had undertaken. To lead a great expedition across the inhospitable desert; to convoy the sacred vessels and a large treasure of gold and silver; to set magistrates and judges over all that great district beyond the river--this was no slight task, and he needed strength. But in the simple language of his heart the good hand of his God was upon him, and that was sufficient to nerve and strengthen him.

It is wonderful what resistless might comes to the soul, when it realizes that it is treading the path and working out the career determined for it from all eternity by the Almighty. The thought imparts the same kind of impulse to the soul, as the touch of love or authority on the arm. We are reminded of the veteran, who, when charged by the Duke of Wellington to take a difficult position, turned to him and said, "I will go, sir; but first give me a grip of your conquering hand."

Think, soul, of what that hand is which holds the waters in its hollow, and spreads the curtains of the sky, and was nailed to the cross; that brought blessing with its touch to so many weary sufferers, and now holds the mysterious book, sealed with seven seals; that caught Peter, and lay lightly on the heads of the little babes. That hand is strengthening thee for a work for which by nature thou art unequal, but to which thou hast been evidently called. Go forward: it holds, guides, empowers thee. It can lead thee before kings, princes, and nobles, so that thou shalt not fear; it can preserve thee from dangers innumerable; it can shield thee from the fire of the enemy; and none, man or devil, can pluck you out of the Father's hand.

因耶和華我神的手幫助我，我就得以堅強。 拉七28

可敬的以斯拉所承擔的不是一件小事。領導一次大規模的長途旅行，越過荒涼的沙漠，護送聖殿的器皿和大量金銀財寶，在河西地區設立士師、審判官——這不是一件微不足道的工作；因此，以斯拉需要力量。但是從他心裡簡單的言語中，提到神施恩的手在他身上，這就足以使他剛強壯膽。

何等奇妙，那不可抗拒的力量臨到這人，當他領悟到：他正走在全能者在永遠裡為他所定的道路上，並且他努力達成的事工，也是全能者在永恆裡為他所定的。這思想給他注入同一種的衝力，正如愛或權柄的手觸摸他的膀臂。我們想起那位老兵，當他奉惠靈頓公爵[註]的命令去執行艱巨的任務時，他轉身向著公爵，說，「先生，我去；但是請用你得勝的手握我一下。」

靈魂啊，你要思想那是怎樣的一隻手，那手用手心量諸水(賽四十12)，那手鋪張穹蒼如幔子(賽四十22)，那手曾被釘在十字架上；那手曾觸摸過多少疲倦的受苦者，帶給他們祝福；現今那手拿著被七印封嚴、奧祕的書卷(啟五1-7)；那手曾拉住彼得(太十四31)，那手曾輕輕按在嬰孩的頭上(可十13-16)。那隻手正在加強你去做的一件事，其性質是你不勝任，卻是你明顯蒙召去做的。奮勇向前吧！因那隻手托住、引導、加力給你。那手能引你到君王、王子、和貴冑面前，使你無所懼怕；保護你脫離危險；護庇你躲過敵人的炮火；無論人或鬼魔，誰也不能從天父手裡把你奪去(約十29)。

[註] 惠靈頓公爵 Arthur Wellesley, 1769-1852, 英國名將、政治家。曾於1815年滑鐵爐之役打敗拿破崙。

Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them at Jerusalem. Ezra 8: 29

They were protected by God, whose presence with them across the wild desert made it needless to ask for an escort of soldiers; but they had to take care of the precious vessels of his house. It was a reciprocal trust. So it must be with us, as we are taught in 2 Tim. 1: 12, 14. There are two deposits, as the margin shows. We deposit ourselves, and all we are and have, with God; whilst He deposits with us his sacred Gospel, the vessels of which we must "guard through the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us," and be prepared to defend with our blood.

OUR DEPOSIT WITH GOD. How safe are they who commit their all to God! Faraday was asked, when dying, on what supposition he depended as he contemplated the other world; and he replied, "I am relying on no supposition, but on a certainty; I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him."

GOD'S DEPOSIT WITH US. But let us be true to our trust. The Holy Bible, the Doctrines of the Christian Church, the Day of Rest, the House of God, the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Christian Baptism--these are some of the vessels which have been passed down to us, and we must hand on intact. Be ye clean that carry them! Oh, what joy it will be when we reach our destination, and can resign our trust, and weigh out the deposit, and hear the Master's "Well done!" But, in the meanwhile, whilst marching across the yellow sands, where wild dangers lie in wait, let us not seek the escort of creature or worldly might; but boast of the Hand of our God, which is for good upon all them that seek Him.

你們當警醒看守，直到你們在耶路撒冷... 過了秤。 拉八29

他們蒙神保守，祂的同在使他們越過荒涼的沙漠，卻無需求王派兵護送(22節)；但是他們必須照顧神殿的寶貴器皿。那是一種相互的信任。我們必須有這種信任，如同提摩太後書一章12與14節所教導的。那裡有兩個交託。我們將自己以及一切所是和所有都交託神；同時祂將祂神聖的福音、以及器皿交託我們。這器皿(善道)我們必須「靠著那住在我們裡面的聖靈牢牢的守著」，並且隨時預備用我們的血去護衛。

我們交託給神的。那些將自己的一切交託神的人，是多麼安全啊！法拉第[Michael Faraday, 1791-1867, 英國物理學家，電學之父。]在彌留之際被問到，他是基於怎樣的假設去思考另一個世界的[指來生。來二5]；他回答說：「我不是倚靠假設，而是倚靠一個確據；我知道我所信的那位，也確信祂能保守我所交託祂的。」

神交託給我們的。另一面，讓我們忠於我們所受的託付。聖經、基督教會的教義、主日、神的家、主的晚餐的條例、以及基督徒的浸禮 — 這些都是歷代傳遞下來，交給我們的器皿，我們必須完全無損的傳遞下去。你理當潔淨自己，才能搬運它們！當我們到達終點，可以放下所託付我們的，過了秤(33節)，並聽到主說「做得好！」那是何等的喜樂！同時，我們越過遍佈兇險的漫天黃沙時，不要尋求屬世力量的護衛；而要誇耀我們神施恩的手，祂必幫助一切尋求祂的人(22節)。

The people have not separated themselves. Ezra 9: 1

This was only too true! There had been, on the part of princes and rulers, gross intermarriage with the people of surrounding lands. The holy seed had become mixed and diluted. And it was the more sad that this should have taken place, when it was to cleanse his people from such alliances, and the evils to which they inevitably led, that God had passed them through the purging fires of the seventy years' captivity. It afflicted the good Ezra sorely. With every sign of Oriental grief he poured out his soul before God. And this is the lesson we should carry with us. It has been truly said that communion with the Lord dries many tears, but it starts many more. We no longer sorrow with the sorrow of the world; but we become burdened with some of the griefs that still rend the heart of the Lord in the glory.

This fellowship between the Lord's people and the world is becoming increasingly close as we near the end of the age. In the appointments of our homes, our amusements, books, and practices, there is very little to choose between the one and the other. If there is any distinction, it lies in a certain sadness with which Christians take their pleasures, as though remembering a something better. But the rest of us do not grieve over it; we do not rend our clothes: we do not take these things to heart, as though they specially concerned us.

Let us at least separate ourselves after the manner of Christ, who frequented the temple, acknowledged the State, accepted invitations to great houses; but his heart and speech always revolved about his Father. What if it led to our being cast out without the camp!

以色列民 ... 還沒有從那地的民中分別出來。 拉九1(直譯)

這竟然是真的！已經有首領和官長與周圍的民混雜通婚。聖潔的後裔已經變得混雜不純正(2節)。神雖使他們經過煉淨的火，就是七十年被擄，為要潔淨祂的百姓離開與異族聯姻，以及因此無可避免地帶來罪惡，更可悲的是，這樣的通婚竟然又發生。這使敬虔的以斯拉極其痛苦。他用每一個東方人表達哀傷的方式在神面前傾心吐意(3節)。這是我們應該學習的功課。確實曾經有話這樣說，與主親密交通，就擦去我們許多的眼淚；但這裡以斯拉與神親密的交通，卻是淚流滿面(6-15節)。我們不再為世界的苦難悲傷，而是為著那撕裂榮耀主心腸的事，心裡憂傷。

越靠近末世，主的百姓與世界的來往也變得更加緊密。家庭約會、娛樂、書籍、業務，在這些事上，很難在這個與那個之間作選擇。如果我們與世界還有什麼區別，就是基督徒在世上的快樂中還帶著某種的哀傷，彷彿想到我們還有一件更美好的事。我們中間其餘的人甚至並不為此傷心；我們不會撕裂衣服：因我們並不在意這些事，不像這些事與我們有特別的關係。

至少讓我們照著基督的樣式分別自己，基督常去聖殿，承認政權，接受豪門邀請；但是祂的心和祂的言語總是圍繞著祂的父。如果我們被驅逐到一個沒有聖徒相聚的環境，我們會怎樣呢？

We also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it. Ezra 10: 4

This narrative reminds us of the story of Achan, who took of the accursed thing, and kindled the anger of the Lord against the children of Israel. There must be confession and the putting away of evil ere communion with God can be re-established.

It is not given to everyone to be an Ezra. There are abuses to deal with, and wrongs to right, on every side; but they require to be dealt with by those who are specially adapted or qualified for the work. Be always ready to do such work, if there should be no one else. It was the life motto of a great man always to act as though there were no one else who would. Still, Nehemiahs and Ezras are not given very largely to the Church or the world; and, for the most part, we must be content to be of those who say, "Be of good courage, and do it; we also will be with thee." But though this seems but a little thing, it may lead to great results. Many a man has been urged to a noble deed by the encouragement he received at a critical hour from some unknown and obscure disciple.

If you cannot do a great thing, identify yourself with one who can. Stand by him, identify yourself with him in public or private; by sympathy and prayer. Though the strongholds of evil are great and high, they may be swept away before an avalanche of snowflakes, any one of which would melt in the warm hand of a child.

Oh for more of that magnanimity, which is quick to recognize the matters that belong to certain elect souls--not envying, nor disparaging, but frankly confessing their eminent qualifications, and falling in to further and accelerate their success, which will be the gain of all!

我們必幫助你，你當奮勉而行。 拉十4

這段記述使我們想到亞干的故事，他取了當滅的物，而使耶和華的怒氣向以色列人發作(書七1)。在恢復與神交通之前，必須認罪並除掉罪惡。

不是每個人都可以成為以斯拉。各方面都有許多弊病要處理，有許多錯誤要糾正；但需要有特別合適且勝任的人來處理。若沒有別人，你就要隨時預備自己來做這工作。一個偉人的人生格言乃是：好像無人願意，我就去做。儘管像尼希米、以斯拉的人在教會或世界上並不常有；而對絕大多數人而言，我們都只是那些說，「你當奮勉而行，我們必幫助你。」的人。雖然這似乎微不足道，仍可達到偉大的成果。許多人受催促從事高貴的行動，正是由於在關鍵時刻，來自某個默默無聞、不起眼之信徒的鼓勵。

如果你不能做大事，你就去認同一個能做的人。無論公開還是私下，藉著表同情與祈禱，支持他，認同他。雖然邪惡的堡壘又大又高，它們終必被雪崩掃除，即使積成雪崩的每一片雪花，若放在小孩子溫暖的手中都會融化。

哦，但願你有更寬大的胸襟，能迅速認出某些被選上的人所做的事——不嫉妒，也不輕視，坦率承認他們卓越的資格，加入行列來推進，並加快這些事的成功，那將是全體的益處。