

I was the king's cupbearer. Neh. 1 : 11

The post was an important one. It gave its occupant the opportunity of coming into close contact with the king; it implied a character of unusual trustworthiness, since Oriental despots were very afraid of poison. But no one expected a royal cupbearer to do anything very heroic. He lived in the inner part of the palace, and was necessarily excluded from the great deeds of the stirring outward world. Nehemiah also was evidently a humble and retiring man. His response to the story of the ruined condition of Jerusalem was just a flood of tears and prayer to the God of heaven. And had you seen those tears and heard that prayer, you might have thought that just another flower was drooping, another seed falling into the ground to die.

But this was not all. These prayers and tears were supplemented by an earnest purpose, which was maturing with every hour. He gave himself to God to be used, if God would have it so, as an instrument in the execution of his recorded purpose. He was a man of faith. It mattered little enough that he was only a cupbearer, for that was no barrier to God; indeed, God might work more efficiently through a frail, weak man, than through the prince, the soldier, or the orator, since He cannot give his glory to another. What a glorious faith was his, which dared to believe that through his yielded life God could pour his mighty rivers! Why do we not yield ourselves in our helplessness to God, and ask Him to work through us, to fulfil his mighty purposes?

*We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others — that we are not always strong!*

我是作王酒政的。 尼一11

酒政這個職位非常重要。這位分提供機會接近君王。這顯示在這位分之人的特點是全然可靠，因為東方的君王非常害怕食物被下毒。除此之外沒有人期待一個酒政有什麼英勇的作為。他住在深宮，遠離外界重大事件的紛擾。尼希米顯然是一個謙卑、保守的人。當他聽到耶路撒冷被毀的消息，他的反應淚如泉湧，並向天上的神祈禱。若是你看到那樣的流淚和那樣的禱告，你也許會以為只是又有一朵花枯萎了，又有一粒種子落在地裡死了而已。

但故事並不在此停住。這些禱告和眼淚加上一個熱切的目標，隨著每個小時的流逝而醞釀成熟。如果神樂意的話，他願意奉獻自己讓神使用，作為執行神預定旨意的工具。他是一個有信心的人。他雖然只是作王的酒政，這一點無關緊要，對神而言，這沒有妨礙；比起王子、軍人、或演說家，神也許可以透過一個弱小的人作更有效的工，因為神無法將祂的榮耀歸給別人。尼希米的信心何等大！他相信藉著他順服的生命，神可以傾倒大能的江河。在無助的時候，我們為什麼不降服在神面前，求祂透過我們作工，來完成祂偉大的旨意呢？

我們屈膝時，何等軟弱！我們起來時，充滿何等能力！
所以，我們為什麼這樣錯待自己，錯待別人，
以致我們不能一直剛強！

So I prayed to the God of Heaven. Neh. 2: 4

All around the apartment in which this interview took place were effigies of idol gods: perhaps incense was burning before a shrine, and filling the air with its aroma. But Nehemiah, though standing amid these heathen emblems, and in the presence of the greatest king on earth, thought little of either one or the other, and prostrated himself in spirit before the throne of heaven. Remember that thou hast within thee a shrine, a temple into which at any moment, even amid the excitement of an earthly court, thou mayest retire and ask direction of thy King and Friend.

He had been sorely startled by the king's question; he did not know that his face had betrayed him. He had, doubtless, intended to seek an interview with the king, and formally state the whole case (see 1: 11). But to be taken thus at unawares, to have to state his case on the spur of the moment, appeared to take him at a great disadvantage; and he instinctively turned to prayer.

How little the king knew what was transpiring, or what had happened between his question and the reply which was given, apparently, without the loss of a moment. But how beautiful is the example for ourselves! You cannot acquire this habit of ejaculatory prayer unless you spend prolonged periods in holy fellowship. But when you are much with God in private, you will not find it difficult at any moment to step aside to ask Him a question. The busy mart or the crowded street may at any time become the place of prayer.

*A touch divine
And the scaled eyeball owns the mystic rod;
Visibly through His garden walketh God.*

於是我默禱天上的神。 尼二4

這次會談所在的房間到處是異教的神像；也許在一個神龕前正燒著香，香的氣味充滿房間。儘管站在這些異教偶像中間，面對著世上權力最大的君王，尼希米幾乎沒有去想這位君王或那些偶像，在靈裡他俯伏在天上的寶座前。請記住在你裡面有一個聖地，一個殿，在任何時候，即使是在地上王宮的激動中，你仍可以靜下心來，求你的王，祂也是你的朋友，的指引。

王的問話使他極度驚訝。他不知道他的面容已經顯露他的心境。無疑，他曾想尋找機會和王見面，並正式陳述整件事情(尼一11)。然而出乎意料地被問起，並要即時陳明他的心事，這讓他措手不及；但他直覺地轉向神禱告。

王根本不知道，在他問話與尼希米立即回答的瞬間，發生了什麼事。但這對我們是個多麼美麗的榜樣！你無法養成這種突然發出禱告的習慣，除非你經常花長時間與神交通。但是當你在私下多與神同在，你就會發現在任何時刻，將心退到一邊去問神一個問題，並不困難。忙碌的商場或擁擠的街道，在任何時候都可以變成禱告的場所。

一個神聖的觸摸，使鱗片掉下，
得開啓的眼睛，如今擁有奧秘的權杖； （徒九18）
看見神在祂的園中行走。

[出自英國詩人羅伯·勃朗寧 Robert Browning, 1812-1889, 的作品。]

Every one over against his house. Neh. 3: 28

This is the way to deal with the evil of this world. We are all fonder of starting schemes, forming committees, and discussing methods of work, than in setting definitely to work for ourselves. There is a lack of definiteness, and we hardly know where to begin. But this verse suggests that every one should begin over against his own house. Try and make your own neighbourhood a little more like what God would have it. It may be that you have gone too far afield in search of work; you are applying to the Foreign Missionary Society, or are waiting for a sphere of service; yet, all the time, there is that wretched neighbourhood, like a piece of ruined wall before you. Arise and repair it!

Meshullam repaired over against his chamber (ver. 30). Perhaps he was not rich enough to have a whole house; he lived in a single room, but he discovered that there was a little bit of the wall just opposite his window, which would not be built unless he set to it. Is not that a hint for college students, and for those who live in flats, or industrial dwellings?

The best way is not immediately to begin giving tracts, good though that is in its place. Ask God to give you an opportunity of showing kindness to your neighbours, so that they get to understand and trust you; and wait upon God until the answer comes--until He shall show you what step He would have you take next. This is the foundation of your bit of wall. Then plod on step by step, tier by tier. God will show you how. You may be unpractised in wall-building; but He is the Architect and Builder, and you are but a bricklayer's labourer at the best. Do as He tells you.

眾祭司各對著自己的房屋修造。 尼三28

這就是對付「這個世界的邪惡」的辦法。我們都更喜歡著手策劃，成立委員會，討論工作的方法，多過於我們自己確實著手作工。缺少明確，我們就幾乎不知道從哪裡開始。但這節經文提示，每個人應對著他自己的房屋開始修造。要試著使你居住的社區變得更像神想要的樣子。也許你到遠方找工作；也許你正在申請去外國宣道，或許你正在等一個適合你去服事的地方；但是，任何時候，你那可憐的近鄰，就像一面破城牆在你眼前。起來，修補它吧！

米書蘭修造對著他房間的城牆(30節)。也許他不夠富裕擁有一整棟自己的房子。他住一個單人房。但是他發現他的窗戶對面有一段城牆，除了他沒有人會去修造。這難道不是對大學生，或是住在公寓裡的人，或是住在狹小的工廠宿舍裡的人的一個暗示嗎？

發福音單張是好的。但是最好的途徑不是馬上出去發福音單張。求神給你一個機會，親切對待你的左鄰右舍，使他們開始了解並信任你。等候神，直到答案來臨，直到神指示你下一步祂要你做什麼。這是你的一段城牆的基礎。然後一步步地走，一層層的上。神會教你怎麼做。你也許對築牆不熟練。但神是最偉大的建築師和建造者。你頂多也不過是個砌磚的工人。就照著祂告訴你的去做吧！

Remember the Lord. Neh. 4: 14

It was uncommonly good advice. Amid all the wise precautions taken by this man of sanctified common sense, he kept bringing the people back to God. God was amongst them. God would fight for them. God was going to bring the counsel of their enemies to nought.

This would make a good motto for daily living. If in all circumstances we would remember the Lord, the way would be brightened; the burdens would fall; our spirits would never droop; and songs of joy would take the place of sadness. Whenever enemies assail and difficulties gather like storm-clouds, look away from them and remember the Lord. When hemmed in on every side, be sure that He can help you from his holy heaven; remember the Lord. When heart and flesh fail, and you do not know what to do for the best, be sure to remember the Lord, and act as in his most holy presence. What a comfort and strength it is to see a friend, when standing amid a crowd of adversaries intent on your destruction, and to know that he will act and speak for you! But remember that Jesus is always like that.

You say that you forget so soon; that you would remember, though at the critical moment you are betrayed into forgetfulness. But you must recall His precious promise, that the Holy Spirit will bring all things to remembrance. If only you will trust the difficulty into his hands, you will find that He will gladly undertake it; and as long as you leave it with Him, you will hear his voice rising in your heart, and saying, "Remember the Lord."

*Watch with me, Jesus, in my loneliness,
Though others say me Nay, yet say Thou, Yea;
Though others pass me by, stop Thou to bless.*

當記念主。 尼四14

這是個不尋常的好建議。這位有聖潔見識的人，在採取一切明智的防備措施之中，他同時不斷地把百姓帶回到神面前。神在他們中間。神會為他們爭戰。神正在使仇敵的計謀歸於無有。

這成為每日生活中一則美好的座右銘。如果在各種情況下，我們記得主，道路將會變得光明，重擔會脫落，我們的心情就不會下沉，喜樂的歌聲就會代替悲哀。當敵人來攻擊，困難如暴風雨前的烏雲聚集，我們應當把目光轉移離開這些困難，並且記念主。在四面被包圍時，當確信神會從神聖的天上來幫助你；當記念主。正當心靈和身體衰落，你不知道怎樣做才是最好時，當確實地記念主，並且行事好像在祂最聖潔的同在裡。當你站在一群定意要毀滅你的敵人中間時，看見一位朋友，並知道他會採取行動並為你表白，那是何等的安慰和力量啊！請記住，耶穌總是像這樣幫助我們。

你說你很快就會忘記；儘管在關鍵時刻你會被自己的健忘辜負了，但是你仍會想起來。你該回想祂的寶貴應許，那就是聖靈會叫你想起一切的事(約十四26)。只要你把困難交託到主的手中，你將發現祂樂意接手；只要你把困難交託給祂，你就會聽到祂的聲音在你的心裡響起，說：「當記念主。」

耶穌，請在我孤獨時和我一起守望，
儘管別人對我說：不，但是你說：是的；
儘管別人與我擦肩而過，但是你停下來為我祝福。

[出自英國女詩人羅希蒂, Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894, 的詩 *Old and New Year Ditties* (1862)]

So did not I, because of the fear of God. Neh. 5: 15

These were great words. Nehemiah had a perfect right to take this money. Not a word could be said even by his critics, if he did. He was doing a priceless work, and might justly claim his maintenance. On the other hand, the people were very poor, and he would have a larger influence over them if he were prepared to stand on their level, and to share with them. It was just so that the Apostle argued in 1 Cor. 9. And from both we learn that often we must forgo our evident rights and liberties in order to influence others for Christ. Do not always stand on your rights; but live for others, making any sacrifice in order to save some--even as Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us.

If Nehemiah did so much for the holy fear of God, what ought not we to do for love? Love is more inexorable than law. Its exactions are more stringent and searching. Are we doing as much for love of Jesus as generations before did simply on the score of duty? It is much to be questioned if Jesus does not get less, of outward service at least, out of his followers, than Mahomet or Buddha does. But what He does get is infinitely sweet to Him, in so far as love prompts it.

All around you people are doing things that they say are perfectly legitimate; they call you narrow and bigoted because you do not join with them; they are always arguing with you to prove you are wrong. But your supreme law is your attitude to you Master. "I cannot do otherwise for the love of Jesus."

"Not I, because of the fear of God."

"Not I, but the grace of God that was with me."

"Not I, but Christ liveth in me."

但我因敬畏神，不這樣行。 尼五15

這句話很了不起。尼希米完全有權利拿這份俸祿。如果他拿了，批評他的人也不能說一句。他做的是極有價值的工作，可以正當地要求他的生活費。但從另一面來看，百姓很窮困，如果尼希米預備好與他們站在同一線上，與他們同甘共苦，他就能對他們有更大的影響。這正是使徒在哥林多前書第九章中所闡述的。從這兩個例子我們學習到，我們必須常常放棄我們正當的權利和自由，目的是要為基督影響他人。不要總是堅持你的權利；要為別人而活，為要救一些人而作任何犧牲(林前九22) — 正如基督愛我們，為我們捨了自己(弗五2)。

如果尼希米因著敬畏神，做了這麼多；我們為了愛神，有什麼是不該付出的呢？愛比律法更難抵擋。愛的要求更嚴格、更徹底。我們因為愛耶穌而做的，與以前的世代為盡義務所做的，只是一樣多嗎？如果耶穌從祂的門徒所得到的外在服事，只和穆罕穆德或佛祖從他門徒所得到的不一樣多，那就大有問題了。耶穌從祂門徒所得到的，對祂是無盡的甜美，祂的門徒是按著愛的激勵而做的。

在你身邊，人們都在做那些他們聲稱完全正當的事情；他們說你狹隘固執，因為你不與他們同夥；他們總是與你爭辯，為了證明你是錯的。但是對你而言，至高的準則是你對你主人的態度。「因為愛耶穌，我不能不這樣做。」

「我不這樣行，是因敬畏神。(15節)」

「不是我，是神的恩與我同在。(林前十五10)」

「不是我，是基督在我裡面活著。(加二20)」

I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Neh. 6: 3

It was a sublime answer. Below was the Plain of Ono, where Nehemiah's foes awaited him. Let him once descend into it and he would become their easy prey; but he withstood their fourfold solicitation by considering the greatness of the work he was doing and the responsible position he was called to fill. Other-worldliness is the best cure for worldliness. Those whose affections are set on things above will have no difficulty in refusing the appeals of sense. Get your heart and hands deeply engaged in the great work of building God's Temple, and you will be proof to the most flattering proposals ever made by Madam Bubble.

Oh, children of the Great King, let us pray that we may know the grandeur of our position before Him; the high calling with which we have been called; the vast responsibilities with which we are entrusted; the great work of co-operating with God in erecting the city of God. Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ! Called to sit with Christ in the Heavenlies! Risen, ascended, crowned in Him! Sitting with Christ, far above all principality and power! How can we go down--down to the world that rejected Him; down to the level of the first Adam, from which, at so great cost, we have been raised; down to the quarry from which we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged! No, it cannot be; and as we make our choice, let us look to the living and ascended Christ to make it good. Put your will on his side, and expect that the energy of the power that raised Him from the dead will raise and maintain you in union with Him. For "your life is hid with Christ in God."

我現在辦理大工，不能下去。 尼六3

這是一個莊嚴的回答。底下是阿挪平原，尼希米的仇敵在那裡等著他。假設他一下去，就成為他們獲得的獵物；但他拒絕了他們四次請求，因為他考慮到正進行之工作的緊要，以及他蒙召要達成的職責。關切來世是對付今生世俗的良藥。凡愛慕「上面的事」的人(西三2)，就能毫不費力地拒絕感官的誘惑。使你的心和手都深深投入建造聖殿的大工，你就能抵抗虛幻夫人極諂媚的提議。[虛幻夫人是《天路歷程》一書情節近尾聲時出現的一個人物，專以她的美色、錢囊、床榻，誘惑天路客偏離正路。]

大君王的兒女們啊！讓我們祈禱，使我們認識我們在祂面前地位的尊貴；認識我們所蒙呼召的崇高(弗一18)；認識所交託給我們的巨大責任；認識與神一同建造神城的大工。神的後嗣，與基督同作後嗣(羅八17)！蒙召與基督一同坐在天上(弗二6)！在祂裡面復活、升天、作王！與基督同坐，遠超過一切執政的、掌權的(弗一20-21)！我們怎能下去——下到那棄絕祂的世界；下到首先的亞當(林前十五45, 47)的水平，我們是用重價從那水平被抬舉上來的；下到那採石場，我們是從那裡被鑿出來的；下到那坑中，我們是從那裡被挖出來的！不，不能；當我們做選擇的時候，讓我們仰望那位永活、升天的基督，來做美好的選擇。把你的意志放在祂那邊，指望那叫祂從死裡復活的能力也叫你復活(弗一19-20)，並保守你與祂的聯合。因為「你們的生命與基督一同藏在神裡面。(西三3)」

It was not found. Neh. 7: 64

Certain claimed the maintenance of the priests, and were challenged to show their name in the register of the priestly line. In all likelihood they were descended from the sons of Aaron, but through marriage outside the priestly clan, and through the fact also of the name of the mother's father being adopted, their names were not reckoned in the priestly genealogy; consequently, their claim for priestly maintenance and service could not be established.

Is there not something like this still? Men, who were called to be God's priests, drop out of the register of those who serve before Him. It may be they are not sure of their genealogy, and have lost the assurance of sonship; their spirit is no longer filled with the blessed co-witness of the Holy Ghost. God is afar from them; and, being out of harmony with Him, they are out of sympathy with their fellows. They are, therefore, rightly put out of the priesthood.

Now trace this matter back to its beginning. As likely as not you will find it originated in some worldly alliance. He that will be a friend of the world is necessarily an enemy with God. For a mess of pottage Esau loses his birthright.

But all this can be put right. There has arisen a Priest, who holds the Urim and Thummim in his hand: God's own Priest after the order of Melchizedek. "Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God." He waits to reinstate the erring soul, restore it to the priestly office, and give it priestly food and maintenance.

卻尋不著。 尼七64

有些人要求領取祭司的生活費，但他們被要求先在祭司族譜的名冊上找出他們的名字。他們極有可能確實出身亞倫後代，但由於與祭司家族以外的人通婚，並且隨母姓，他們的名字沒有被算進祭司的族譜裡面；因此，他們所要求祭司的薪俸與職任就不能確立。

現在不是還有像這樣的事情嗎？蒙召作神祭司的人，從在神面前服事之人的名單中消失。可能是因為他們對自己的家譜不確定，而失去了兒子名分的確據；他們的靈不再充滿聖靈有福的同證。神離他們很遠；因為他們失去了與神和諧的關係，他們就失去了同輩的認同。因此，他們被摒除在祭司的職任之外，是應當的。

現在我們追尋這件事的起始。很可能你會發現，它是起源於某種與世界的聯合。與世俗為友的人，就必定與神為敵(雅四4)。以掃因為一碗紅豆湯，就失去了他長子的名分(創廿五29-34)。

但所有的這些都可以被糾正。有一位祭司已經興起，祂手中握有烏陵和土明：祂照著麥基洗德的等次作神的祭司。「祂凡事該與祂的弟兄相同，為要在神的事上，成為慈悲忠信的大祭司。(來二17)」祂等待著要使犯錯的人恢復原職，使他歸回到祭司的職位上，並賜他祭司的食物和供應。

The joy of the Lord is your strength. Neh. 8: 10

"The sad heart tires in a mile," is a frequent proverb. What a difference there is between the energy of the healthy, joyous heart and the forced activity of the morbid and depressed one! The one leaps to its task, the other creeps to it. The one discovers its meat and drink in self-sacrifice, the other limps, and stoops, and crawls. If you want to be strong for life's work, be sure to keep a glad heart. But, be equally sure to be glad with the joy of the Lord. There is a counterfeit of it in the world, of which we must beware--an outward merry-making, jesting, and mad laughter, which hides an aching and miserable heart. Solomon compares the joy of the world to the crackling of thorns under a pot, which flare up with great speed, but burn out before the water in the pot is warm.

Ours must be the joy of the Lord. It begins with the assurance of forgiveness and acceptance in the Beloved. It is nourished in trial and tribulation, which veil outward sources of consolation, and lead us to rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus. It is independent of circumstances, so that its possessors can sing in the stocks. It lives not in the gifts of God, but in God Himself. It is the fruit of the Spirit, who begets in us love, joy, peace, long-suffering. Get the Lord Himself to fill your soul, and joy will be as natural as the murmur of a brook to its flow.

And such joy will always reveal itself to others. You will desire to send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared. Your joy will be contagious; it will shed its kindly light on sad and weary hearts. As Rutherford said, we have a new heaven in the heaven of every soul we bring there.

耶和華的喜樂是你們的力量。 尼八10(直譯)

「悲傷的心熬不到一哩路。」是一句常聽見的諺語。一顆健康喜樂的心所顯的活力，與一個病弱沮喪的心勉強做活動，何等不同！一個是跳躍地迎接任務，另一個則是緩慢地爬向任務。一個是在自我犧牲中都能找到享受，另一個卻是一瘸一拐，彎腰駝背，匍匐爬行。如果你想要剛強面對人生中的工作，一定要保持一顆喜樂的心。但同時要確定是因耶和華的喜樂而歡欣。我們必須提防世界上的冒牌貨——外面的狂歡作樂，瘋狂大笑，這些虛假的喜樂隱藏疼痛悲哀的心。所羅門將世上的歡樂比作鍋下燒荊棘的爆聲，迅速地燃起火焰，卻不等鍋中的水變熱，就燒盡了(傳七6)。

我們的喜樂必須是耶和華的喜樂。這喜樂開始於在愛子裡的赦免和接納的確據。這喜樂在試煉和磨難中得到培養，試煉磨難雖然掩蓋了外面安慰的來源，卻帶領我們藉著我們主耶穌，在神裡面歡欣。這喜樂與環境無關，擁有這喜樂的人，即使在枷鎖中也能歌唱讚美神(徒十六22-25)。這喜樂不是活在神所賜予的事物中，而是活在神自己裡面。這喜樂是聖靈所結的果子，聖靈在我們裡面生出仁愛、喜樂、和平、忍耐(加五22)。讓主自己來填滿你的心，喜樂將會自然產生，像小溪的流水自然發出潺潺之聲。

如此的喜樂總會向他人顯露出來。你會願意分給沒有預備的人。你的喜樂會傳染給他人；這喜樂仁慈的光芒照亮眾人痛苦疲乏的心。就像盧德福[註]所說的，我們將每一個靈魂帶到天上，我們就有一個全新的天。

[註] 盧德福Samuel Rutherford, 1600-1661, 蘇格蘭牧師及神學家。1636年因不服國教之主教制度而入獄。在獄中寫下他最著名的書簡，是寫給他曾牧養的個別信徒的。共有365封，多屬靈修珍品。今在網路上仍可讀到這些書簡。

The seed of Israel separated themselves. Neh. 9: 2

This is the beginning of the true life. Turn to the story of creation, and you learn, first, that God divided the light from the darkness; next, the waters of the clouds from those on the earth; and next, the seas from the land. It was only thus that He could effect his purpose of substituting kosmos for chaos. So, in the development of the inner life, there must be separation and judgment; the discrimination of the false from the true, the evil from the good. "Separate Me . . . for the work whereunto I have called them."

When God put his hand to man's highest culture, He separated Shem from his brethren; Terah's house from other kindred clans; and Abraham from his people. What weight this gave to those solemn words, "I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people. And ye shall be holy unto Me; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine" (Lev. 20: 24, 26). It was not that God had no care for the great world; but that He desired to concentrate his attention on a few, that when they had fully caught his thought they might pass it on to mankind.

This accounts for the cry of the Holy Ghost through the Apostle, "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." We must be separate in our practices, cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit; in our pursuits, going with Christ without the camp; in our pleasures; and in our alliances. "Follow the Christ--the King! Live pure! Speak true! Right wrong! Follow the King! Else, wherefore born!"

以色列的後裔將自己分別出來。 尼九2(直譯)

分別乃是真實生命的開端。回到神的創造，你發現，首先，神將光與暗分開；接著，含水氣的雲與地上的水分開；再接著，海與陸地分開。唯有如此祂才能實現祂的計畫，以和諧有秩序的宇宙取代混沌。同樣的，在內在生命的成長中，必須有分別和判斷；區分真假、善惡。「要為我分別... 去作我召他們所作的工。(徒十三2)」

在神著手於人類最高文明時，祂首先將閃與他的弟兄分開；使他拉的家與其他的親族分開；使亞伯拉罕與他的本族分開(創十二1)。以下這些嚴肅的話語，份量多麼重啊，「我是耶和華你們的神，使你們與萬民有分別的。你們要分別歸我為聖；因為我耶和華是聖的，並叫你們與萬民有分別，使你們作我的民。(利二十24, 26)」並不是神不在意全世界的人；而是祂要將祂的注意力集中在少數人身上，使他們完全明白祂的心意之後，可以將神的心意傳給全人類。

這就說明聖靈藉著使徒保羅呼喊說，「因此，你們務要從他們中間出來，與他們分別，不要沾不潔的物。(林後六17)」在生活的實行上，我們必須有分別，潔淨自己，除去身體靈魂一切的污穢(林後七1)；在我們的追求上，與基督同行，出到營外(來十三13)；在我們的喜好娛樂上有分別；在我們與人結盟上有分別。「跟隨基督這位君王！過純潔的生活！說話誠實！糾正錯誤！跟隨這位君王！除此之外，為何而生！」[註]

[註] 引自阿弗雷得 Lord Tennyson Alfred, 1809-1892, 英國詩人, 的《王的田園詩》*Idylls of the King*.

The children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering. Neh. 10: 39

It was about this time that Malachi wrote the memorable words, "Bring ye all the tithes into my storehouse that there may be meat in my house; and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord, if I will not pour you out a blessing." When a people has separated itself to God, there will be no lack in its house, no failure in its supplies, no lack for its ministers. So with the individual. All they that had separated themselves entered into an oath to charge themselves yearly for the service of the house of God. Separation is the negative side of consecration.

How does this touch you, my friend! What proportion of your income are you setting apart for the service of God? The amount that a man gives in proportion to his income is a sure gauge of the genuineness and depth of his religious life. The Jew gave about a third of his yearly income to God; do we come up to this standard? Yet we speak of the Jews with contempt, as hard-fisted and miserly. These old Jews might set an example to us newer Christians. How often we reverse our position from God's ideal! He puts us over his estate that we should send Him all the produce, after deducting what is necessary for our maintenance, and that of our families. But we engross the entire proceeds for ourselves, sending Him an odd guinea, or half-crown, when we can easily spare it. Let us see that we give at least a fixed proportion of our income, and as much more as we can. Do not forsake the House of your God; so shall the heavens be opened in blessing. "There is that giveth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it sendeth to poverty."

以色列人和利未人要將 ... 祭奉到 ...。 尼十39

大約就在這個時期，先知瑪拉基寫下這令人難忘的話語，「萬軍之耶和華說，你們要將當納的十分之一，全然送入倉庫，使我家有糧；以此試試我，是否 ... 傾福與你們。(瑪三10)」當一個民族分別自己歸給神，他們的家就沒有缺乏，不會缺糧，不缺服事的人。對於個人也是同樣的道理。凡是將自己分別出來的人，就起誓為每年神殿裡的事奉負起責任。分別乃是奉獻的消極面。

我的朋友，這點如何感動你呢？你將你收入的多少比例，分出來為著服事神的用途呢？一個人按他收入比例的奉獻金額，確實衡量出他敬虔生活的真實光景與深度。猶太人奉獻給神的大約是他年收入的三分之一；我們達到這個標準嗎？但我們還輕視猶太人，說他們吝嗇小氣。古時的這些猶太人，可以為我們現代的基督徒立下榜樣。我們常常從神的理想倒退下來啊！祂派我們管理祂的產業，我們應該在扣除我們與家人所需的生活費之後，將餘下所有的出產奉給祂。然而我將全部的出產獨佔為己有，在手頭容易時，只奉給祂一個零頭的基尼[值21先令]，或一個銀幣[值2先令6便士]。但願我們留心照著我們收入固定的比例來奉獻，照我們所能的儘量擺上。切勿離棄神的家；如此天就敞開祝福。「有施散的，卻更增添；有吝惜過度的，反致窮乏。(箴十一24)」

A certain portion should be for the singers. Neh. 11 : 23

It was the king's command, and it was very right and sensible, because they enlivened and quickened the life of the entire community. A mere utilitarian spirit might have refused to maintain them, because they did not contribute to the handicrafts of the community. They only sang the praises of God; but they fulfilled a very important part in the life of the city, and they deserved the portion which was regularly contributed to them.

You sometimes feel your life to be comparatively useless. You can only say a kind word to those who are doing the main business of the world. When the brothers had wrought all day at the clearing for the farm; their sister Hope sang through the evening hours to cheer them and drive away their sense of fatigue. That was all she could do; but was she not deserving of maintenance? You can only sing your song of hope, and keep the heart of the toilers sweet and fresh. You can only get inspiration from God's heart and pass it on. You can do little but learn to detect, and translate into music that men love, the deep undertones of God's creation. But it is well. You are needed in God's world.

There are invalids, who lie on their back through weary months and years, that are the inspiration of their homes, and to their side the elders and the children come for counsel and comfort. Sing on, ye sweet choristers, that alleviate our depressions and start our hearts to high endeavour! Ye that by night, in sleepless hours, stand in the house of the Lord, praise ye the Lord when all the busy life of men is hushed! The King will see to it that ye do not miss your maintenance, your portion day by day.

為唱歌的 ... 必有一定之糧。 尼十一23

這是王的命令，非常正確且合理，因為歌唱的使整個社區活潑有生命力。一個功利的人也許會拒絕供給歌唱的，因為歌唱的並沒有為社區的工藝生產貢獻什麼。他們所做的僅僅是唱歌讚美神。但他們在城市生活中發揮了一個很重要的作用，所以配得定期給他們的供應。

你有時會覺得你的生命比較沒有用處。你只能對世上做大事的人說一句善意的話。當弟兄們結束了一整天清理農地的操勞之後，「希望」姐妹整晚為他們歌唱，鼓勵他們，驅走疲勞。那是她所能做的。難道她不配得生活供應嗎？你只能唱你的希望之歌，讓辛勤勞作的人感到甜蜜清新。你只能從神的心中得到靈感，並將這樣的靈感傳出去。你所能做的很有限，但你學習發現神創造的深意，並將這種靈感轉化為人所喜愛的音樂。這是好事。神的國度需要你。

有長年累月久臥病的人成為他們家庭的鼓勵，老人和孩子都到他們那裡尋求幫助和安慰。可愛的詩班成員們啊，繼續歡唱吧，使我們內心的抑鬱得以疏緩，並努力邁向高處！當忙碌的人們靜默無聲時，你在不眠之夜，站在神的殿中，讚美神！我們的王必負責，讓你每天都得著生活所需的供應。

David, the man of God. Neh. 12: 24, 36, 37, 45, 46

How long the influence of David has lingered over the world, like the afterglow of a sunset! Mark the characteristic in him which laid the foundation of his supremacy over the hearts of his countrymen. He was pre-eminently "a man of God." Notwithstanding his terrible fall, his people recognized that his salient characteristic was Godward. Would you be one of God's men?

(1) GIVE ALL TO GOD. Too many live lives of piecemeal consecration, giving a bit here and a bit there, but never all. David surrendered himself to do God's will utterly, and in all, and so became a man after God's own heart. With what joy God's voice seems to quiver, as He says, "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13: 22). Without reserve, holding nothing back, yield yourself to God, to be, and do, and suffer his will, whatever it may be.

(2) TAKE ALL FROM GOD. "It is not what we give to Jesus, but what we take from Him, that makes us strong, helpful, and victorious day by day." Accept this as a fact, that in Jesus God has made all his fulness dwell. There is nothing we require, for life or godliness, that is not stored in Him; but the terrible loss of our lives is that we take so little. We have ourselves to blame if we are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.

(3) USE ALL FOR GOD. It sometimes appears as though Christian people were urged to yield themselves to God only that their lives might be more comfortable. But the supreme and final end in all surrender must be that his will be done, his glory promoted, and Himself magnified whether in life or death.

神人大衛。 尼十二24, 36, 37, 45, 46

如同落日餘暉，大衛對後世的影響何等久遠！請注意大衛的特質，這特質奠定了他超越本國同胞的基礎。他是一個卓越的「神人」。儘管他也曾可怕地跌倒，他本國的人仍然承認他顯著的特點，是他面朝向神。你也願意成為一個屬神的人嗎？

1. 向神獻上一切。太多的人過著零碎奉獻的生活，這裡奉獻一點，那裡奉獻一點，但從不全部獻上。大衛自己完全順服神的旨意，並在一切事上將自己獻上給神，因而成為合神心意的人。神的聲音似乎因著極大的喜樂而顫抖，當祂說，「我尋得耶西的兒子大衛，他是合我心意的人，凡事要遵行我的旨意。（徒十三22）」你要毫無保留，完全將自己交託給神，作祂要你作的人，行祂要你作的事，無論神的旨意如何，都接受。

2. 從神支取一切。「不是我們給了耶穌什麼，而是我們從祂那裡支取什麼，使我們每天剛強、有用、而且得勝。」要接受這個事實：神使祂一切的豐盛都居住在耶穌裡面（西二9）。我們所需求的一切，無論是為生活，還是為敬虔，沒有不儲存在耶穌裡面的。然而我們生命嚴重的損失，在於我們從祂那裡支取太少。如果我們貧窮、困苦、眼瞎、赤身，我們只能責怪自己。

3. 為神花費一切。有時基督徒受催促降服神，僅僅是因為這樣做可能會使他們的生活更加舒適。但是降服的終極目的是讓神的旨意得以成就，讓祂的榮耀得以提升，無論是生是死，都叫祂顯大（腓一20）。

Remember me, O my God! Neh. 13: 14, 22, 31

Thrich in this chapter this humble man asks to be remembered. We cannot think that he expected to purchase God's favour because of his sacrifices and endeavours. Of this he was already assured. But being a redeemed soul, he desired that his works might come up in remembrance before God, and secure a reward. There is no harm in keeping the eye fixed on the reward for faithful toil in the Lord's service. It was a constant incentive in the life of the great Apostle that he might so run as to obtain; so finish his work that he might win the crown.

Note the three departments of service mentioned in this chapter, in connection with which Nehemiah breathed this petition. He had turned all Tobiah's household stuff out of the temple, so that the whole structure should be given up to the service of God. He had secured the Sabbath from desecration, so that its holy rest and calm were preserved intact. And he insisted on the purity of the holy seed being untainted by foreign alliances. Consecration to God, the Rest of Faith in the inner life, and the separation of God's children from the world, are the counterparts of these in our own time.

Shall we not humbly set ourselves to seek them for the professing Church? Nehemiah was an ungifted, simple-hearted man, but he was able to secure them as the instrument and channel of God's purposes. Why should not God work through us for the same ends. But, first, let us see to it that each of these particulars is being realized in our own personal character and life. Let every room of the heart be for God; let no voice break the inner peace. Then what God has done for us, we may confidently plead as within his scheme for others.

我的神啊，求你記念我！ 尼十三14, 22, 31

尼希米這個謙卑的人，在這章經文裡三次求神記念他。我們並不認為尼希米是指望用他的犧牲和努力來獲得神的恩寵。他自己確實沒有這個意念。但是作為一個蒙救贖的人，他渴望他的工作能夠在神面前被記念，並得到獎賞。定睛於為服事神忠心勞苦而得的獎賞並沒有害處。這獎賞就是在偉大使徒保羅的生命中，持續鼓勵他奔跑要去得的；他完成他的工作，就可以贏得冠冕(腓三13-14, 提後四7-8)。

請注意這一章提到三方面的服事，為此尼希米提出了三次的「求神記念」。他已經將多比雅的家具從聖殿中拋出去，這樣聖殿就能夠完全用來服事神(7-13節)。他確保安息日不被人褻瀆，因而這個神聖的安息和寧靜得蒙保守完整(15-22節)。他堅持保守聖潔後代的純潔，以免因與外族結親而受玷污(23-30節)。在我們這個時代，我們的服事同樣有這三方面：分別為聖歸神，內在生命有信心的安息，神的兒女與世界有分別。

難道我們不應該謙卑地定意為神的教會來尋求這三方面嗎？尼希米是一個沒有恩賜、心地單純的人，但是他卻能作為完成神旨意的管道，來達到以上幾點。為什麼神不藉著我們達成同樣的目標呢？然而，首先讓我們留意這幾點都實現在我們自己個人的品格和生命中。讓我們心中的每個角落都為著神；不讓任何聲音攪擾我們裡面的安寧。然後按著神在我們身上所做成的，我們就可以有把握在神的計畫裡為別人祈求。