

That every man should bear rule in his own house. Esther 1 : 22

One of the prerequisites in choosing a presiding officer in the early Church was that he should rule well his own house; "for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?" (1 Tim. 3:4, 5).

When a man bears rule as husband and father in the love of God, there is no issue of commands which conflict with primary obligations; rather than that, his authority represents the divine authority. As Christ received his authority from the Father, so does a man derive and receive his from Christ; and in the recognition of his delegated right and ability to lead, the entire household becomes well ordered. The relaxation of the bonds of authority and government in our homes is one of the saddest symptoms of national decay, as it is among the predicted signs of the end (2 Tim. 3: 2, 3).

But, on the other hand, you must show yourself worthy to lead and rule your home. Your character must be such as to command respect. Those whom God has put into your charge require that you do not use your authority for selfish or capricious ends. Above all, love is the source of the truest authority. We count nothing hard or irksome that we do for those we love. Show love, and you will win love; and on love will be built respect, reverence, and obedience.

One of the most eloquent of modern Italians has said truly: "You can only obtain the exercise of your rights by deserving them, through your own activity, and your own spirit of love and sacrifice!" Christ's golden rule holds good in every phase of life--"In all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

使為丈夫的在家中做主。 斯一22

早期教會選監督的先決條件之一，就是這人應當把自己的家治理好：「人若不知道管理自己的家，焉能照管神的教會呢？（提前三4-5）」

當一個男人在神的愛中作丈夫並作父親管理時，就沒有指揮權與主要職責衝突的問題；更確切地說，他的權柄代表了神的權柄。正如基督從父神領受權柄，同樣一個男人從基督那裡得到他的權柄；整個家庭承認他為夫為父所代表的權力和領導能力，就顯得井然有序。家庭中權柄和管理的鬆懈，是國家衰落的一個最可悲的徵兆，如同它被列在末世徵兆之中一樣（提後三2-3）。

然而，反過來說，你必須顯示你配得領導和治理你的家。你的品格必須能贏得尊重。神交給你負責照管的人，要求你不可因自私或任性的目的而行使你的權柄。最重要的是，愛才是最真實之權柄的源頭。在為所愛的人做事時，我們不會以為辛苦麻煩。付出愛，你就贏得愛；尊重、景仰、以及順從都是建立在愛的基礎上。

一個現代意大利雄辯家真誠地說過：「你唯有透過你的行動、愛與犧牲的精神，才獲得行使你應得的權力！」基督的金科玉律適用於生活的各個層面 — 「無論何事，你們願意人怎樣待你們，你們也要怎樣待人。（太七12）」

Hadassah, that is, Esther. Esther 2: 7

Through this one girl-life God was about to save his people, though He was all the while hidden from view. The peculiarity of this book is that there is no mention of the name of God; but there is no book in the Bible more full of the presence and working of God for his own. His name is clearly in the water-mark of the paper, if it do not appear in the print.

We know that the meshes of evil plotting were laid for the hurt of Israel long before the fatal decree was made for the destruction of the entire nation; but here we find that God has begun his preparations for deliverance long before. In the beauty of Esther, in the position her uncle held at court, in the favour she won with the king, in the discovery through Mordecai of the plot against the king's life, there are the materials of a great and divine deliverance. God was clearly beforehand to the devil. The angels of light were on the ground before those of darkness were marshaled.

It is a sweet thought to carry with us always: God prepares of his goodness for the poor. He prepares the good work in which we are to walk, and the deliverances by which He will succour us in the hour of need. Do not dread the foe, be not fearful nor dismayed, as he draws his net around thee; God has prepared a way of escape, so that thou shalt be able to bear it. In the meanwhile, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; trust in the Lord; wait for the Lord; be silent to the Lord. He is more far-seeing, his plans more far-reaching, his help more certain, than all the stratagems of evil. God laughs at them. Into the pit they have dug, thine enemies shall fall.

哈大沙，就是以斯帖。 斯二7(直譯) [哈大沙是希伯來名，以斯帖是波斯名。]

神要透過這個女子的生命拯救祂的百姓，雖然祂一直都隱藏在人視線之外。《以斯帖記》這卷書的奇特之處，就是沒有提到神的名；但在聖經中卻再沒有一卷書像這卷書，充滿了神的同在以及神為祂百姓的作為。祂的名清晰地在水印裡，即使不用油墨印出來。

我們知道早在頒布那個要摧毀整個民族的重大諭旨以前，陰謀要傷害以色列人的網早已布置好了。但是在這裡我們發現，神在更早以前就開始預備祂的拯救。以斯帖的美貌，她義父在朝廷的職位，以斯帖得到王的寵愛，末底改發現暗殺王的計謀，這一切都成為神偉大拯救的工具。神顯然在魔鬼以前就預備好了。在黑暗的使者部署之前，光明的天使已經先來到地上。

我們總要懷著這個甜美的思想：神為困苦人預備祂的慈愛。祂預備善工要我們去行，並且預備我們需要之時的拯救。不要懼怕仇敵，不要害怕也不要灰心，神在你四圍拉開祂的保護網；神已經開一條出路，叫你們能忍受得住(林前十13)。同時，你要安息在主裡面，耐心等候祂，信靠主，等候主，安靜向著主。祂更有遠見，祂的計畫更長遠，祂的幫助更可靠，勝過仇敵一切的計謀。神嗤笑他們。你的仇敵必掉進他們所挖的坑中。

But Mordecai bowed not. Esther 3: 2

There was stern stuff in this old Jew. He was not going to prostrate himself before one so haughty and so depraved as Haman, albeit that he was the king's favourite. To be the only one in a city office that does not laugh at the questionable story; to stand alone on shipboard against the gambling mania; to refuse to countenance cleverness which is divorced from cleanness, and genius which is apart from goodness--this is to do as Mordecai did in the gate of the king's palace.

Only God can give this power, since of ourselves we are as reeds shaken by the wind. Sooner might a single ear of wheat resist the breeze that bends all its companions in the same direction, than we stand alone, whilst all our associates bow, unless God Himself enable us. But God is prepared to enable us. Listen: "I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." But the mistake we are so apt to make is to brace ourselves up by resolution and firm determination, in anticipation of some impending struggle. To do this is to fail. Live in Christ, look up into his face, derive from Him strength for the moment and at the moment; and often wrap about thee that exceeding great and precious promise, "I will make him to become a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write on him the name of my God." Oh to stand pillar-like amid men, bearing up the temple arch of truth, and inscribed with God's name, whilst the crowds go and come on the pavement beneath!

*Greatly begin! though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime—
Not Failure, but low aim, is Crime!*

惟獨末底改不跪不拜。 斯三2

這位猶太長者有骨氣。他不跪拜像哈曼這種既傲慢又邪惡的人，儘管哈曼是王的寵臣。在政府機關作個唯一對有爭議的故事不一笑置之的人；在船上獨自一人抵擋賭博的狂熱；不贊成「不潔淨的聰明」和「不善良的才華」——這就像末底改在朝門口所行的。

只有神能賜予這種能力，因為我們自己都如蘆葦隨風搖擺。當所有的同伴都妥協時，除非神給我們能力，我們的堅持，也不過像一株麥穗，頂著披靡所有麥穗的微風。但神已經預備加給我們力量。請聽：「我必堅固你，我必幫助你；我必用我公義的右手扶持你。(賽四十一10)」但我們很容易犯的錯誤，就是預期即將到來的奮鬥時，我們用堅定的決心振作自己。這樣做必定失敗。你務要住在基督裡，仰望祂的面容，從祂支取此時此刻所需的力量；常把自己包裹在祂又寶貴又極大的應許裡(彼後一4)，「我要叫他在我神殿中作柱子，他也必不再從那裡出去。我又要將我神的名，都寫在他上面(啟三12)」但願在人群中站立如柱子，支撐著真理之殿的拱門，其上銘刻著神的名字，而群眾在其下來來往往！

趁著還有時日，開始偉大的行動吧！
只有一句囑咐，你的眼光務要崇高，
罪過不在失敗，而在你的目標卑下！

[出自洛威爾James Russell Lowell, 1819-1891, 美國浪漫主義詩人。]

Who knoweth whether thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this? Esther 4: 14

What grand faith was here! Mordecai was in God's secrets, and was assured that deliverance and enlargement would come to his people from some quarter--if not from Esther, then from some other; but he was extremely anxious that she should not miss the honour of being her people's emancipator. Therefore he suggested that she had come to her high position for this very purpose.

We none of us know, at the first, God's reasons for bringing us into positions of honour and trust. Why is that young girl suddenly made mistress over that household? Why is that youth taken from the ranks of the working-people, and placed over that great City church? Why is that man put forward in his business, so that he is the head of the firm in which he served as an office-boy? All these are parts of the divine plan. God has brought them to the Kingdom that He may work out through them some great purpose of salvation. They have the option, however, to serve it or not. They may use their position for themselves, for their own emolument and enjoyment, that they may surround themselves with strong fortifications against misfortune; but in that case they court destruction. Their position and wealth may vanish as suddenly as it came; or ill-health and disaster may incapacitate them.

If, on the other hand, all is used for God, though at the risk of perishing--for it seemed to Esther as though the action to which Mordecai urged her meant that--the issue is blessed. Those that love their lives lose them; those that are prepared to forfeit them keep them. The wheat grain which is buried in the soil bears much fruit.

焉知你得了王后的位分，不是為現今的機會嗎？ 斯四14

何等大的信心！末底改在神的隱密處，並且確信神的百姓必從某處得解脫，蒙拯救(14節) — 如果不從以斯帖，就會從別人而得；但是他極其渴望，以斯帖不該失去了作為她百姓的解救者的尊榮。所以他提示以斯帖，她得此尊貴的位分，就是為這個目的。

我們沒有人最初就知道，神把我們放在尊貴和值得信賴的位子上的原因。為什麼那個年輕女子忽然變成了那家的女主人？為什麼那個年輕人從事奉的行列中脫穎而出，被安排來治理那個大城的教會？為什麼那個人在工作中被提拔，從辦公室的小弟成了公司的主管？所有這一切都是神計畫的一部分。神把他們提升到尊位，為的是可以使用他們，達成救恩中某個偉大的目的。然而他們可以有選擇，做或不做。他們可以使用他們的地位只為自己，為自己的薪俸和享樂，這樣他們也許能為自己建造一個可以抵擋禍患的堅固碉堡；但是那樣做就招來毀滅。他們的地位和財富可能轉瞬即逝，正如臨到時一樣突然；或許疾病和災難也會使他們失去能力。

反過來說，倘若把所有的為神使用，雖然可能面臨死亡的危險 — 就像當時以斯帖遵照末底改催促她的而行，對她所意味的(16節末句) — 其結局卻是蒙福的。凡愛惜自己生命的，就失喪生命；凡預備好失去生命的，卻得到生命(太十六25)。一粒麥子埋在地裡，就結出許多的子粒來(約十二24)。

The King held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. Esther 5: 2

WHAT a beautiful type this is for each of us in our approaches to God!

FOR THE REPENTANT SINNER. YOU may have said with Esther, "I will go into the king's presence, and if I perish, I perish." But it is impossible for you to perish. None ever perished at the footstool of mercy. God is faithful to his promises, and just to his Son; and He can do no other--He wants to do no other--than forgive. As you stand amid the throng that surrounds his throne, He will espy you, and accept you graciously, because of the God-Man who sits at his right hand, and ever lives to intercede. In his name you may come boldly and obtain mercy.

FOR THE SUPPLIANT. YOU have a great boon to ask for yourself, or another. The King's court stands open; enter and lodge your petition. He will be very gracious at the voice of your cry: the golden sceptre extended, his word passed, that He will answer with the whole resources of his kingdom. The answer may not come at once, or in the way you expected; but no true suppliant was ever turned away without his complaint or cause being graciously considered, and in the best way met and adjusted.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN WORKER. Surely Esther represents a Paul prepared to be himself accursed, a Luther, a Brainerd. It is a lovely sight when the child of God is so oppressed with the burden of other souls as to sacrifice all else in order to plead their cause. Surely such find favour with God; they are kindred spirits with his own, and He bids them share his throne. God will do anything for those who are consumed by his own redemptive purpose.

王向以斯帖伸出手中的金杖。 斯五2

這是一個何等美麗的象徵，說到我們各人就近神的情形！

對於悔改的罪人。也許你曾像以斯帖一樣的說，「我去見王，我若死就死吧。（四16）」然而你不可能死。從來不曾有人死在施恩座前。神信守祂自己的應許，祂對祂的愛子是公義的；除了赦免，祂不能做別的，也不要做別的。當你站立在圍繞神寶座的群眾當中，祂會認出你，並且要恩慈地接納你，都因那坐在祂右邊的「神而人者」，祂長遠活著替我們祈求（來七25）。奉祂的名，你可以坦然無懼的來得憐憫（來四16）。

對於懇求者。你擁有一個極大的恩惠可以為自己祈求，或為別人祈求。王的庭院一直是敞開的；進來提出你的祈求吧。祂必滿有恩慈地聽你呼求的聲音：金杖已經伸出，祂的話已傳來，祂必用祂國度的全部資源來回應。回應也許不是立時來到，也許不是按著你期望的方式；但是從未有一真心懇求的人被辭退，他的苦情或冤屈無不被親切地顧及，並以最佳的方式得到解決和調整。

對於基督的工人。以斯帖的確代表了像保羅那樣，預備自己被咒詛的人（羅九3），代表了路德，代表了布納雷德[註]。當神的兒女因著對他人的負擔而受重壓，以至願意犧牲一切為他們的益處代求，這是一幅何等美麗的圖畫。這樣的人必然蒙神喜悅；他們與祂有相同的志向，神吩咐他們與祂同坐寶座。神必為那些因祂救贖的目的而耗費的人，做任何的事。

[註] 布雷納德 David Brainerd, 1718-1747, 美國宣教士，受蘇格蘭宣道協會差遣，向紐約、新澤西及賓州的印第安人宣揚基督的福音。因其無私的奉獻與禱告生活，感化亨利馬丁(Henry Martyn)等多人獻身當宣教士。

As thou hast said, do even so to Mordecai the Jew. Esther 6: 10

Here indeed was a turning of the tables! Haman doing honour to the humble Jew, who refused to do honour to himself. Surely that day the old refrain must have rung through Mordecai's heart: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's." And there was an anticipation of yet other words: "For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name: behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

How evidently God was working for his child. The gallows, indeed, was being prepared, but it would be used for Haman; whilst the triumph that Haman thought to be preparing for himself was to be used for Mordecai.

This is not an isolated case. Anyone who has lived a few years in the world and has observed the ways of God could duplicate it with instances that have come under his own notice. Dr. Gordon told us once of a church in Boston that would not admit coloured people; and after a few years it broke up, and the edifice is now occupied by a flourishing coloured church.

Trust on, beloved friend, amid scorn, hate, and threatening death. So long as thy cause is God's, it must prevail. He will vindicate thee. Them that honour Him He will honour; whilst those that despise Him shall be lightly esteemed.

*Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting,
With exactness grinds He all.*

照你所說的，向 ... 猶太人末底改去行。 斯六10

這實在是一個局面的翻轉！哈曼尊榮這個卑微的猶太人，這人曾經拒絕給哈曼尊榮。那天這句古老的經文必在末底改心底迴響：「祂從灰塵裡擡舉貧寒人，從糞堆中提拔貧乏人；使他們與王子同坐，得著榮耀的座位：地的柱子屬於耶和華。(撒上二8)」並且還預告另一處聖經的話：「你略有一點力量，也曾遵守我的道，沒有棄絕我的名：看哪，我要讓他們來在你腳前下拜，也使他們知道我是已經愛你了。(啟三8-9)」

神向祂的兒女所行的，是何等明顯。木架，實在已經預備妥當，但卻要用在哈曼身上；哈曼想要為自己預備的勝利，卻歸給了末底改。

這並不是一個單獨的事例。任何人活在這世界稍有年日，並且看到神行事的法則，他就能在他所注意到的事得到同樣複製。古頓博士曾給我們講過，從前在波士頓有個教會不願接納有色人種；過了些年，這個教會分裂了，如今那個大廈被一個興旺的有色人種教會所佔有。

親愛的朋友，在譏笑、仇恨、和死亡的威脅中繼續信靠吧！只要你的動機是出於神，最終一定會得勝。神會替你申辯。尊重神的，神必看重他；藐視神的，他必被輕視(撒上二30)。

雖然神的磨坊緩慢研磨，
卻是磨得十分精細；
雖然祂保持忍耐等候，
但所有的都會被精準研磨。

[出自朗費羅 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1807-1882, 美國詩人，的作品。

詩中隱喻：無論等多久，審判終將到來；神鑒察秋毫，該受罰的必無倖免。]

What is thy petition, and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? Esther 7: 2

Amid the sensual conceptions of marriage that obtained in this heathen empire there was doubtless a consciousness in the king's breast of the essential unity between himself and his beautiful queen. She was his better self, and in her pleading he heard the voice of his own higher nature. To nothing less than this could he have made so far-reaching a promise. It was not so much Ahasuerus pledging himself to Esther, as Ahasuerus, the king, awakening to the appeal of a nobler Ahasuerus, for the most part buried. Such is the power of a pure and noble character awakening a nobler life. Will you try by your unselfishness and purity to awaken those around you to see and follow an ideal, which shall presently assume the form of the living Christ?

In these words of the king we are reminded that God is willing to do beyond what we ask or think. Not to the half of his kingdom, but to the whole extent of it, has God pledged Himself, "according to the power that worketh in us." But our prayer must be in the name, or nature, of Christ; that is, the nature of Christ must pray in us, and God must recognize Himself come back through the circle of our intercession to Himself. The Spirit must make intercession in us, according to the will of God. When the unselfish, lovely, and holy nature of Jesus pleads in us by the Holy Ghost, there is nothing that God will not do for us, even to the whole of his kingdom.

"If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you."

你要什麼，我必賜給你；你求什麼？ 斯七2

來自這個異教帝國注重美色的婚姻觀念中，王在心中大概意識到，他自己和他美貌的王后基本上是一體的。她就是王更美好的自己，並且在她的懇求裡，他聽見自己更高尚的品質所發出的聲音，使他只能至少做出如此遠大的承諾。與其說是亞哈隨魯王向以斯帖起誓，倒不如說是亞哈隨魯，當時的王，被一個更高貴，卻大部分被埋沒著的亞哈隨魯的請求所喚醒。這就是純潔高尚品格的能力，喚醒一個更高貴的生命。你願意試著以你的無私和純潔，去喚醒你周圍的人，讓他們看見並跟隨一個現今就具有基督活潑樣式的典範嗎？

王的這些話使我們再次想起，神樂意作超過我們所求所想的。不只是祂國的一半，而是祂國的全部，照著運行在我們裡面的大力(弗三20)，神已起誓賜給我們了。然而我們的禱告必須在基督的名裡，或是在祂的性情裡；那就是，必須是基督的性情在我們裡面禱告，神必定認得，是祂自己經過我們祈求的過程，循環回到祂那裡[註]。聖靈必然照著神的旨意在我們裡面祈求。當耶穌無私、慈愛、以及聖潔的性情，藉著聖靈在我們裡面懇求時，就沒有什麼是神不願為我們作的，即使是祂的整個國度。

「你們若住在我裡面，我的話也住在你們裡面；凡你們所願意的，祈求就給你們成就。(約十五7直譯)」

「你們若向父求什麼，祂必因我的名賜給你們。(約十六23)」

[註] 禱告的四個階段：a. 神起意；b. 神將祂起的意啟示給人；c. 人按神的意思禱告；d. 神成全。所以禱告是一個循環，由神起頭，最後又回到神那裡成全，而過程中經過人。最有價值的禱告，是一種揣摩神心意的過程，其結果不僅神成全禱告，更是藉此過程人與神的心意聯合。

Sealed with the king's ring. Esther 8: 8

In chap. 3:10 the king took the ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman. It is evident that he had resumed it from his chief officer's finger before sending him to execution. It was now entrusted to Mordecai, because it gave validity to the documents that proclaimed liberty to the Jews. Notice those words: "The writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's seal, no man may reverse," and apply them to that sealing with the Holy Ghost, of which we read so often in the New Testament.

On the molten wax the ring, with its royal device or perhaps the cutting of the royal profile, was pressed, giving sanction, validity, and irreversibility; so on the tender heart of the believer in Christ, the Holy Spirit impresses the likeness of Jesus. The seal does not leave an impression of itself, but of the sovereign; and the Holy Spirit reveals not Himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and aims only to leave the mark and superscription of Christ on the character. The word character is used in Hebrews 1:3 (see Greek). How wonderful, that as the image or character of the Father was impressed on Christ, so the Saviour's image and character are impressed on us! "Him hath God the Father sealed," says the evangelist. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye were sealed," says the Apostle.

This sealing us with the likeness of Jesus is God's attestation. It is his witness that we are born from above, and are become his sons and daughters. It is God's sign manual of his intention and decree that we should inherit an irreversible portion; and when God has once passed and sealed it, neither man nor devil can reverse it.

用王的戒指蓋印。 斯八8

本書三章10節說，王從自己的手上摘下戒指，給了哈曼。很顯然王在處死他的首席官員之前，從首席官員手上收回了戒指。如今這戒指交給末底改，因為用這戒指蓋印，使公文生效，宣告猶太人得自由(10節)。請留意這些文字：「奉王的名所寫、用王戒指蓋印的諭旨，人都不能廢除。(8節)」這也應用在聖靈的印記上，就如我們在新約裡常讀到的。

帶著國王圖案或者刻有國王肖像的戒指在熔蠟上按下，就賦予核准、生效和不能更改；同樣在基督信徒溫柔的心田上，聖靈也印下耶穌的肖像。印記不是留下印本身的圖像，而是留下至高者的圖像；聖靈不是啟示自己，而是啟示主基督耶穌，目的僅僅要在人的本質上留下基督的印記和名號。「本質」一詞曾用於希伯來書一章3節[和合本譯作「本體」]。何等美好！正如父神的「形像」或說「本質」印在基督身上，救主的「形像」和「本質」也同樣印在我們身上！福音書的作者說，「人子是父神所印證的。(約六27)」。使徒保羅說，「不要叫神的聖靈擔憂，你們原是受了祂的印記。(弗四30)」

將耶穌的樣式印在我們身上，就是神的證明。祂證明我們是從上頭生的，並且成為祂的兒女。這是神定意和命令的親筆簽名，使我們將來繼承一份不能更改的產業；一旦神允准，又蓋了印，人和魔鬼都不能更改。

The Jews had rule over them that hated them. Esther 9 : 1

Yes, my reader, a similar reversal awaits us in the near future! Now, the god of this world and his followers bear rule over us, and work their way with the servants of God. They butcher them like sheep, and scatter the ashes of their homes to the winds; and sometimes it seems as though God had forgotten to avenge the cause of his saints. But the hour is coming when the Almighty will arise on our behalf; and to him who has patiently kept his works unto the end, He will give authority over the nations. Listen to these great words: "Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Words more applicable to the case of the Jews in the days of Mordecai, and to the history of the Church, it would be impossible to find.

But mark a notable distinction. In the case of the enemies of the Jewish people, there was no quarter. Destruction and death were meted to those who had breathed out persecution and slaughter. But in the case of Christ and his Church, power is viewed only as an opportunity of securing salvation and life. The Saviour said, after his resurrection, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth; go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and lo, I am with you alway." And the Church says, as through suffering she passes to the right hand of power, "Lay not this sin to their charge; but out of our persecutors raise apostles to carry the Gospel to the confines of the earth."

猶大人反倒轄制恨他們的人。 斯九1

是的，親愛的讀者，類似的翻轉也在不久的將來等待著我們！現在，世界的神（指魔鬼。林後四4）和跟從他的人統治著我們，並且任意對待神的僕人。仇敵宰殺他們如羔羊，把他們的家化成灰燼揚在風中；有時候好像神已經忘記了替祂的聖徒伸冤。但是當全能者為我們興起，時候就到了；那忍耐遵守祂的命令到底的，祂就賜給他權柄制伏列國（啟二26）。請聽這偉大的話語：「那撒但一會的，自稱是猶太人，其實不是猶太人，乃是說謊話的，我要使他們來在你腳前下拜，也使他們知道我是已經愛你了。（啟三9）」這話更適合於末底改當時猶太人的情形，在教會的歷史中，不大可能找到。

然而請注意一個明顯的區別。對猶太人的仇敵而言，沒有任何憐憫給他們。毀滅和死亡加給了凡曾經口吐迫害和殘殺的人（斯七3-10）。至於基督和祂的教會，權柄只被看作是一個獲得救恩和生命的機會。救主在復活之後曾說，「天上地下所有的權柄都賜給我了。所以你們要去，使萬民作我的門徒，奉父子聖靈的名，給他們施洗，凡我所吩咐的，都教訓他們遵守，我就常與你們同在。（太廿八18-20）」當教會經過苦難來到權能者的右邊（太廿六64），說，「不要將這罪歸於他們（徒七60）；但從逼迫我們的人中，興起眾使徒來，將福音傳到地極。」

Seeking the good of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed. Esther 10: 3 (R.V.)

This epitaph on the life of a simple-minded, true-hearted man, might be yours also. Why should you not from this moment adopt these twin characteristics? Go about the world seeking the good of people. It does not always mean that you should give them a tract, or a little book. It is much easier to do this than to sacrifice your own good in order to seek theirs. You may be quite sure that some little act of self-sacrifice or thoughtfulness for a weary mother, or crying child, for a sick friend, or for some person who is always maligning and injuring you, would do a great deal in the way of preparing an entrance for the Gospel message. It is thus that the genial spring loosens the earth and prepares the way for the germination of multitudinous life. Count the day lost in which you have not sought to promote the good of someone. Adopt as your own the pious Quaker's motto, "Do all the good you can, to all the people you can, in all the ways you can."

SPEAK PEACE TO PEOPLE. Soothe agitated and irritated souls. Throw oil on troubled waters. There are worried and anxious hearts all around us; a word of sympathy and earnest prayer with them will often remove the heavy load, and smooth out the wrinkles of care. Let the law of kindness be on your lip. Do not say sharp or unkind things of the absent, or allow your lips to utter words that will lead to bitterness or wrath. Seek peace and pursue it. And in order to this, let the peace of God that passeth all understanding keep your mind and heart.

*Come, my beloved ! We will haste and go
To those pale faces of our fellow-men!
Our loving hearts, burning with summer-fire,
Shall cast a glow upon their pallidness.*

為本族的人求好處，向他們說和平的話。 斯十3

這是一個心地單純、真誠之人一生的碑文，也同樣可以成為你的。你為什麼不在這個時刻採納這兩項特質呢？到世人中間為他們求好處吧！這不總是意味著你應該送他們一份福音單張、或一本福音小冊子。送福音單張或福音小冊子，比為求別人的好處而犧牲你自己的利益容易多了。也許你十分確實地去為一位疲憊的母親、或一個哭叫的孩子，或一位生病的朋友、或一些經常惡意傷害你的人，做一點很小的自我犧牲或體貼的事，這樣的舉動將會為打開福音信息的門作很好的預工。這就如溫和的春天鬆開大地，並且為萬物發芽做預備。你要將沒有竭力去為別人尋求好處的日子，算作浪費光陰。讓貴格會[英國基督教派之一，十七世紀成立。]這則虔敬的座右銘成為你自己的座右銘：「盡你一切所能的，對所有的人行善。」

向人說和平的話。安慰那些煩躁不安憤怒的人。調解爭端，平息風波。我們周圍充滿了煩惱焦慮的心靈；一句同情的話，和他們一起做個懇切的禱告，常常會除去重擔，撫平憂慮的皺紋。讓你唇上有仁慈的法則(箴卅一26)。不要背地裡說尖酸刻薄的話，也不要允許你嘴唇所出的言語帶來苦毒和忿怒。要尋求和睦，一心追趕(詩卅四14)。為了達到這個目標，讓神所賜出人意外的平安，保守你的心懷意念吧！（腓四7）。

來吧，我所親愛的！
趕快來到我們虛弱的同伴面前！
我們的愛心如同夏日燃燒的火，
必在他們暗淡的臉上投射光輝！