

All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. Eccles. 1 : 7 (R.V.)

The complaint of this chapter is the tiresome monotony of existence. Always the same tedious routine! The jaded soul of the worldling, who has put God out of his life, sees nothing fresh or interesting anywhere, and yawns with weariness. King Solomon had everything that the world could give to make his years rich, glad, and useful. But his heart turned away from God to things, from the only true God to idols, from the spiritual to the sensual, from heaven to earth; and he became a jaded voluptuary, who records his experiences on these pages, to warn coming generations. His words remind us of Byron's lament at his life being in the sere and yellow leaf; of the closing sentence of *Vanity Fair*; and of entries in the journals of the world's greatest wits and courtiers.

All the rivers of earthly joy may be flowing into your heart, but they will never fill it. They may recede, or dry up, or ebb; but if not, still they will never satisfy. The pleasures of this world after a while become monotonous, and pall on our taste. The appetite grows with its food. But in Christ there is perennial interest. The water that He gives rises up to eternal life. In his love and service there is always satisfaction and blessedness. We need not go outside of Him for new delights; and to know Him is to possess a secret which makes all things new.

I know of a gentleman, who has everything that wealth can give, but who is kept in a perpetual state of irritation, because he cannot eradicate the daisies from his lawn. There is a freckle on every flower, a stain on every leaf, a drawback in every lot, that we may be driven to find perfect fruition in God only.

江河都往海裡流，海卻不滿。 傳一7

這一章裡的牢騷是生存的單調令人厭倦。總是同樣單調乏味的例行公事。疲倦的世俗人，他們將神置於生命之外，在任何地方都看不到新鮮有趣的事物，他們疲倦地打呵欠。所羅門王擁有世界所能提供的一切，使他的年歲富裕、開心、並有用。但他的心離開神轉向事物，離開獨一真神轉向偶像，離開屬靈轉到肉體的享受，離開天上轉到地上；他成了一個疲憊的酒色之徒，在這幾頁經文中記錄他的經歷，為要警告以後的世代。他的話語使我們想起拜倫[註1] 悲嘆他的生命在枯萎的黃葉裡；使我們想起《浮華世界》的結語[註2]；也使我們想起世界上最偉大的智者和朝臣們日記裡的話語。

所有屬世樂河可以都流進你的心，但是永遠也不會填滿你心。這些樂河會消退、乾枯、衰減；但就算不會，它們也永遠不會使你滿足。這世界的快樂不久就會變得單調，使我們覺得乏味。食慾隨著食物增長。但是在基督裡繼續不斷有樂趣。神所賜的活水湧流直到永生(約四13)。在祂的愛和服事中，永遠有滿足與蒙福。我們不需要尋求神以外新的快樂；並且認識神便擁有了使萬事新鮮的祕訣。

我認識一位紳士，他擁有財富所能提供的一切，但仍然被困在無止盡的煩惱中，因為他不能從他的草坪上根除所有的雛菊。每朵花上都有瑕疵，每一片葉子上都有斑點，每一塊土地上都有缺點，以便驅使我們只在神裡面找到完美的果實。

[註1] 拜倫George Gordon Byron, 1788-1824, 英國詩人。

[註2] 《浮華世界》Vanity Fair, 英國小說家及詩人薩克雷William Makepeace Thackeray, 1811-1863, 的代表作。這部小說主要是諷刺迷戀追逐世俗的人。它的結語就是：「在我們中間有誰在這世界上是幸福的？在我們中間有誰得到他所要的？或是得到心中所想要而滿足？」"Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or having it, is satisfied?"

All his days are but sorrows, and his travail is grief. Eccles. 2:23 (R.V.)

What a glimpse this is into a heart that has put God out! Solomon's power turned away his heart, so that he was not perfect with God, as David, his father. He drifted from God; and plunged into pleasure and laughter; into building and planting; into the pursuit of science and learning. "Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. And, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind" (R.V.). Nothing can satisfy us but God. We were made for Him; and the heart, as Augustine says, must be for ever restless till it finds rest in Him. Thus the shell, brought home from the sea-shore and placed on the shelf, sighs each time you place it to your ear for the ocean whence it came.

We have no need to envy those who prosper in this world, but are without God, and without hope. Their days are sorrows, and their travail is grief, and at night their hearts take no rest. But if we are to avoid their inward anguish, we must avoid their fatal mistake, and learn to take God into our lives. The river of life, which is the Holy Spirit, flows at our feet; but we must stoop to take it freely.

Dr. Gordon records the story of a traveller in Barbary, who saw a beautiful clear spring of water, over which was inscribed the legend, "Drink, and be gone." Robbers infested the region, and were constantly on the track of the traveller, ready to waylay and rob him. Therefore he must snatch the cooling draught and hasten on. Shall we refuse ourselves all pleasure in this world? Shall we write Touch not on every innocent gratification? No; but as soon as we have tasted of the pleasant draught, and lingered long enough to refresh our jaded souls, to hasten to life's serious tasks.

他日日憂慮，他的勞苦成為愁煩。 傳二23

這是何等的一瞥，看見一顆將神排除在外之人的內心！所羅門的權力使他的心背離神，使他不像他父大衛那樣在神面前完全。他漂流離開神，投入享樂和歡笑；投入建築工程和農業種植；投入追求科學和學問。「凡我眼所求的，我沒有留下不給他的。誰知都是虛空，都是捕風。(10-11節)」除了神沒有什麼可以使我們滿足。我們是為神而造；正如奧古斯丁[註1]所言，我們的心必定永無安息，直到我們在神裡面尋得安息。正如從海岸邊帶回家放置在架子上的貝殼，每當你將它放在耳邊，便會聽見貝殼向著它的源頭——大海，發出歎息。

我們不必羨慕那些在世界通達的人，他們沒有神，也沒有希望。他們日日憂慮，他們的勞苦成為煩愁，連夜間心也不安(23節)。但如果我們想要避免他們內心的那種痛苦，就必須避免他們那樣致命的錯誤，而學習將神接入我們的生命中。生命河，就是聖靈，就在我們腳前湧流；但我們必須彎腰才能自由取用。

戈登博士[註2]記錄了一個在巴巴利[註3]旅行者的故事，這人看見一股美麗清澈的泉水，上面刻著這樣的告示，「你喝了，就趕緊離開。」強盜在這個地區猖獗，經常在路上追蹤旅行者，準備在半路搶劫他。所以他必須倉促飲用一口涼水，然後快快往前行。我們應當讓自己拒絕世上一切的快樂嗎？我們應當在每一處純真令人滿足的事物上，標上不要觸碰嗎？不，但是當我們已嚐過這歡暢的一飲，並逗留了足夠時間，使我們疲憊不堪的心得到復甦，便該趕快邁向生命嚴肅的使命。

[註1] 奧古斯丁Augustine, 354-430, 神學家。395-430任北非Hippo主教。他的教導注重人的墮落與神的恩典。是西方教父中最重要且多產的神學作家。最著名的著作有《神的城》*City of God*, 《懺悔錄》*Confessions*, 《三一神論》*The Trinity* 等。

[註2] 戈登博士A. J. Gordon, 1836-1895, 美國浸信會牧師、作家，Gordon College創辦人。著有《牧師的夢》*How Christ Came to Church*等書。

[註3] 巴巴利(Barbary)：埃及以外的北非諸國之舊稱，為舊時海盜的根據地。包括現今摩洛哥、阿爾及利亞、突尼西亞、利比亞地區。

He hath set eternity in their heart. Eccles. 3:11 (R.V., marg.)

The Preacher has been enumerating the various extremes and alternatives of existence, and the natural conclusion might seem to be that since each neutralizes the other, it might be as well for a man to do nothing at all. But a deeper thought is suggested. Man is greater than the changes around him; he has eternity in his heart, and therefore all the varied circumstances of human life resemble the wheels of some great machine, the cogs of which turn in different directions, but the effect is a forward motion, and the manufacture of a fabric that will outlive the machinery that made it. We are greater than circumstance, or change, or things. We have the capacity for the Eternal and Infinite. As the sea-shell sighs for the ocean, so our hearts cry out, though sometimes inarticulately, for God, for the living God. Christ said that foxes have holes and the birds their nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head; and this is true in another sense. The noblest men are those least able to rest anywhere short of God.

God made man in his own image; and nothing more surely attests the greatness of our origin than those faculties of the soul which are capable of yearning for, conceiving, and enjoying the Infinite, the Immortal, and the Divine. And every appetite in nature and grace has its appropriate satisfaction.

Let us come to Him who has the words of eternal life, who is Himself the Bread that endureth unto eternal life. He that cometh to Him shall never hunger; he that believeth in Him shall never thirst.

*Here would we end our quest;
Alone are found in Thee
The life of perfect bliss--the rest
Of immortality.*

祂將永生安置在世人心裡。 傳三11 [「永生」直譯：永遠]

傳道者已經列舉了各種不同存在的極端和選擇，那麼自然結論看起來就是，既然一件事抵消另一件事，一個人也可以什麼事都不做。但這提示一個更深的思考。人比他周圍的變化更重要；他的心中有永生，所以人類生活中所有的各種不同的環境像某個偉大機器的轉輪，它的齒輪向不同方向轉動，但是其效果是向前移動，並且製造出來的布匹會比製造它的機器更經久。我們比環境、變化、事物，更重要。我們有承受「永生」和「無限」的能力。正如海邊的貝殼向著大海發出嘆息，儘管有時非言語所能表達，我們的心也同樣向著永生的神發出呼喊。基督曾說，狐狸有洞，天空的飛鳥有窩，人子卻沒有枕頭的地方(太八20)；這在另一種意義上也是真實的。最高貴的人最不能在沒有神的地方安息。

神按自己的形像造人；在人心中有本能來渴慕、想像、並享受無限、不朽、神聖的神，沒有什麼比這樣的本能，更確實的證明我們源頭的高貴。並且自然和恩典中的每一種渴望，都有它適當的滿足。

讓我們來到這位有永生之道的的神面前，祂自己乃是那存到永生的食物。到祂這裡來的，必定不餓；信祂的，永遠不渴(約六35)。

在此我們結束尋求；
唯有在你裡面找著
完全幸福的生命 —
永恆的安息。

Behold, the tears of such as were oppressed. Eccles. 4: 1

*Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
But that cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west-- .
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.*

It is a sad, sad world, and perhaps must get sadder yet. It may be that we have not yet reached the darkest hour. Oh the tears of the oppressed; the tiny children; the terror-stricken fugitives from the Turk, the European trader, and the drunken tyrant of the home! Through all the centuries tears have flowed, enough to float a navy.

There need be no difficulty in accounting for them. Our race has elected the service of sin and self. Turning our back on God, for whom we were made, we have turned every one to our own way, and are inheriting the ancient curse of travail, tears, thorns, and death. It is quite true that many suffer innocently and vicariously, because we are members one of another; and by the mysterious arrangement of the Almighty the whole race is bound together by mysterious but indissoluble cords. In Adam all die, all suffer, all sorrow and weep, just as in Christ shall all be made alive. The pain must last, till the Stronger than the strong comes to divide the spoils, and set the captives free.

How comforting it is to realize that God knows our sorrows, puts our tears into his bottle, is afflicted in all our affliction, and bears us on his heart.

看哪，受欺壓的流淚。 傳四1

我的弟兄們啊，在悲傷隨著年歲來到之前，
你們聽見孩子們在哭泣嗎？
他們將頭靠著他們的母親，
但那樣也不能止住他們的眼淚。
小羊在牧場鳴叫；
小鳥在巢中歌唱；
小鹿與樹影玩耍；
新開的花兒對著西方搖曳；
但是，我的弟兄們啊，
這些年幼的孩子們在痛痛的哭泣！
在這無憂無慮的鄉間，
別人在遊玩，他們卻在哭泣！

這是一個淒慘的世界，或許必變得更加淒慘。我們可能還沒有到最黑暗的時刻。哦，受欺壓之人的眼淚；弱小的孩童；受驚嚇而逃亡的人離開土耳其，離開歐洲的商人，離開家裡醉酒的暴君！經過許多世紀以來所流的淚水，足以漂浮起一支海軍。

這些現象並不難解釋。我們人類已經選擇服事罪惡和自我。我們是為神而被造，卻背離了神，各人偏行己路(賽五十三6)，並且繼承古老的咒詛——辛勞、眼淚、荊棘、和死亡。的確，許多人無辜替他人受苦，因為我們所有的人都是這族類的成員，藉著全能者奧祕的安排，全人類被奧祕持久不變的繩索綁在一起。在亞當裡，人人都死亡，都受苦，都悲傷痛哭，正如在基督裡我們都活過來。痛苦必定持續，直到那比壯士更大的來到(太十二29)，重新分配戰利品，並使那被擄的得自由(路四18)。

當我們領悟到神知道我們的傷痛，祂將我們的眼淚收集在祂的瓶中，祂因我們的苦難而受苦，並且將我們放在祂心上，這是何等的安慰啊。

To draw nigh to hear is better than to give the sacrifice of fools. Eccles. 5:1 (R.V.)

This is certainly half of our business, when we kneel to pray. It is a drawing nigh to hear. One has truly said that the closet is not so much an oratory, in the narrow sense of making requests, as an observatory, from which we get new views of God, and new revelations of Him.

We are all inclined to be rash with our mouth. We rush into the presence of God, leave our card as on a morning call, and then plunge into the eager rush of our life. We have spoken to Him, but not stayed to hear what He would say in reply. We have suggested many things to Him, but have not sought for his comments, or suggestions, in return. We do not take time to fix the heart's gaze on the unseen and eternal, or to abstract our mind from the voices of the world, so as to hear the still small voice that speaks in silence and solitude.

*Only the waters which in perfect stillness lie
Give back an undistorted image of the sky.*

Keep thy foot; take off the shoes from thy feet, when entering the Presence-chamber, whether alone or with others. Walk warily and reverently; behold! He is near, before whom angels veil their faces with their wings. Come into his presence with holy fear. Let there be no irreverence in demeanour. One writes of the late Mr. Gladstone, "The House of God seemed to be to him at all times just what its name implied; and it is impossible to think of him at any service missing a response, or forgetting an 'Amen.' Devotion, earnestness, and concentrated attention were the regular attributes of his nature when engaged in worship. He realized in the simplest fashion that worship was communing with God."

近前聽，勝過愚昧人獻祭。 傳五1

當我們跪下禱告時，近前聽這件事的確是我們禱告事工的一半。有人曾實在這樣說過，內室(太六6)與其說是一個禱告室，只狹義地發出請求，倒不如說是一個瞭望台，從這裡我們得到對神新的認識、新的啟示。

我們都傾向於輕率發言。我們衝進神的面前，如同早晨拜訪時留下我們的名片，然後就投入匆忙的生活。我們對神說話，卻不停下來聆聽祂的回應。我們向神建議很多事情，但並不尋求祂回應的意見和建議。我們並不花時間專心注視看不見的和永恆的，不將我們的心思從世界的聲音中抽出，來傾聽那從安靜獨處中傳來的微小聲音。

唯有完全平靜的水面，
反映天空未被扭曲的影像。

保守你的腳步；脫下你腳上的鞋，當你進入與神同在的密室，無論是獨自一人還是和他人一起。謹慎虔敬地前行；看哪！祂就在近處，在祂面前天使用翅膀遮他們的臉(賽六2)。要帶著聖潔的敬畏進到祂面前。在那裡不要有不恭敬的舉止。有人這樣論及已故的葛拉斯頓[註]，「對他來說，神的殿一直都像這名所表示的；在任何禮拜中，絕不可能想到他漏掉回應，或忘記說『阿們』。虔誠、熱心、專注，乃是在敬拜中出自他本性的例常特質。他了解在這個最簡單的形式裡，敬拜就是與神相交。」

[註] 葛拉斯頓William Ewart Gladstone, 1809-1898, 英國維多利亞時代的政治家，當過數任首相。

Under the sun. Eccles. 6: 1

The Preacher constantly refers to what is done under the sun; and is not this the clue to so much that is puzzling in this book? If your horizon is limited to what the sun shines on, it is impossible to get the true standpoint of vision, or discover the real policy of life. If this world and the time-day are all, we are entangled in an inexplicable maze. It is impossible to believe in the existence of a benign and wise Creator unless there is more than we can see, larger than we can grasp. We have no choice but blank materialism, unless we believe there is someone and something over and above the sun, and that the sun and his attendant train of worlds is but a speck in the vastness of his existence.

O Christian soul, let you and me get beyond the sun, which one day will be no more, to the Lord, who is an everlasting light. Let us sit with Him in the heavenlies, and thence look down upon man and his little life. What inconsiderable atoms do kings and empires appear; even our affliction seems to be but light, and for a moment! Not on this side of the sun, but on that lies our true portion and home, our enduring substance.

In order to live as we should, the sun must be under our feet, a position which is only possible to those who are in Christ Jesus. "I knew a man in Christ," says the Apostle, "caught up into the third heaven, and he heard unspeakable things." Would you be unworldly, seek to become otherworldly. Do you want the sun to grow dim? --ask for the light which is above the brightness of the sun.

Set your affections on those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

日光之下。 傳六1

傳道者不斷提及「日光之下」人所作的事；難道這不是這卷書中令人困惑之事解答的線索嗎？如果你的視野被局限在日光所照的事物，你就不可能得到異象的真實立足點，也不可能發現生命真正的方針。如果這個世界和時日就是一切，我們就陷入莫名其妙的困惑中。要相信一位慈悲且智慧的造物主的存在是不可能的，除非有多過我們所能看見的，大過我們所能領會的。除非我們相信有位神，或有個事物在日光之上，並且日頭以及伴隨它的屬世的系列，只是祂廣大存在中的一顆微粒，否則我們就只有空虛的唯物論，別無選擇。

基督徒啊，但願你我越過日光，到主面前，這日光有一天將不復存在，而主是永恆的真光。願我們在天上與祂同坐(弗二6)，且從那裡往下觀看世人和祂渺小的生命。君王和帝國看起來像多麼渺小的微粒；甚至我們的痛苦似乎都變成至暫至輕(林後四17)！我們真正的產業和家園，我們永恆的基業，不在日光之下，而在日光之上。

為了過我們該有的生活，日光必須在我們腳下，這地位僅僅在基督耶穌裡的人才可能有。使徒保羅說，「我認得一個在基督裡的人，被提到第三層天上去，聽見隱祕的言語，是人不可說的。(林後十二2)」如果你願意脫俗，就要追求屬於另一個世界的事。你想讓日光變得暗淡嗎？就要尋求比日光更明亮的光。

要專心愛慕上面的事，那裡有基督坐在神的右邊(西三1)。

By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made glad. Eccles. 7:3 (R.V.)

Who does not know that our most sorrowful days have been amongst our best? When the face is wreathed with smiles, and we trip lightly over meadows bespangled with spring flowers, our heart is often running to waste. The soul which is always blithe and gay misses the deepest life. It has its reward, and it is satisfied to its measure, though that measure is a very scanty one. But the heart is dwarfed, and the nature, which is capable of the highest heights, the deepest depths, is undeveloped; and life presently burns down to its socket without having known the resonance of the deepest chords of joy. "Blessed are they that mourn."

Stars shine brightest in the long dark nights of winter. The gentians show their fairest bloom amidst almost inaccessible heights of snow and ice. God's promises seem to wait for the pressure of pain to trample out their richest juice as in a wine-press. Sorrow brings us nearest to the Man of Sorrows, and is the surest passport to his loving sympathy. Only those who have sorrowed know how tender his comfort can be. It is only as the door shuts upon the joys of the earth that the window is opened to the blessedness of the unseen and eternal. Let sadness cover your face, Jesus will enter the heart, and make it glad, for the days in which you have been afflicted, and the years in which you have seen evil.

Is your face sad? Are you passing through bitter and trying experiences? Be of good cheer. Out of the sorrows that make the face sad will come ultimate joy. This affliction is working out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And the day is not distant when God will wipe tears from off all faces.

面帶愁容，終必使心喜樂。 傳七3

誰不知道我們最悲傷的日子就在最美好的日子當中呢？當我們滿面帶著笑容，輕快行走在春花點綴的草地上，我們的心常變成廢物。總是無憂無慮快樂的人，就錯過了最深刻的人生。深刻的人生有其獎賞，並且是照著自己的容量得到滿足，儘管那容量是很小的。人內心的成長受到阻礙，其本性本來能夠到達最高的高度，最深的深度，卻未得到開發。在尚未體驗喜樂最深弦的回響之前，人生很快就燒盡到底座了。「哀慟的人有福了。（太五4）」

在漫長幽暗的冬夜星星照耀最明亮。龍膽在人幾乎不能到達的冰雪高原綻放它極美麗的花朵。神的應許似乎在等待痛苦的壓力來踩榨出其豐富的汁液，如同在酒醉裡一樣。悲傷帶領我們極其靠近憂患之子[指耶穌。賽五十三3-4]，悲傷也是通向祂慈愛最確實的管道。只有那些經歷過悲傷的，明白神的安慰是多麼溫柔。只有當屬世歡樂的門關閉時，向著未見和永恆之福的窗才打開。讓悲傷掩蓋你的臉，耶穌必進入你心，並使你心歡樂，為著你所經歷痛苦的日子，以及你所看見罪惡的歲月。

你的臉有愁容嗎？你正經歷苦楚試煉嗎？不要灰心，振作起來吧！從使你面帶愁容的悲傷中，必有最終的喜樂來到。苦難正成就極重無比、永遠的榮耀（林後四17）。有一天神必擦乾所有人臉上的眼淚，那日子並不遠。

The King's word hath power. Eccles. 8:4 (R.V.)

When our King speaks it is done. He spoke in creation, and power went with his word to call all things out of nothing. He spoke in his earthly ministry, and power accompanied every word, in giving eyes to the blind and life to the dead. He spoke, and the paralysed had power to walk. He spoke, and the winds dropped, whilst the tumultuous waves were hushed to rest. He spoke, and men knew their sins were forgiven, to be remembered against them no more for ever. He spoke, and the dying thief passed into Paradise.

Whatever He bids you do by his word, be sure that He will enable you to do it by his power. He works in us to will and to work of his good pleasure; that is, He never directs us in any path of obedience or service without furnishing a sufficient supply of grace. Does He bid you renounce some evil habit? The power to renounce it awaits you. Claim it. Does He bid you walk on the water? The power by which to walk only waits for you to claim it. Does He bid you perform irksome duty? There is such transforming power issuing from Him as to make duty a delight, if only you will avail yourself of it. Whenever you are called to stand up to speak the word of your King, be sure to seek and obtain the power--that shall prove your best credential. Take the power of the King with you: it is his signet-ring, by which men will be convinced that you have been entrusted with his word.

*Sustain me, that with Thee I walk these waves
Resisting!--Breathe me upward, Thou in me
Aspiring, Who art the Way, the Truth, the Life —
That no Truth henceforth seem indifferent,
No Way to Truth laborious, and no Life,
Not even this life I live, intolerable!*

王的話本有權力。 傳八4

在我們的王說話的時候，事便成就了(詩卅三9)。在創造時祂說話，能力隨著祂的話語從無有之中喚出萬有(創一章)。祂在地上傳道時，祂說話，力量伴隨著祂話語的每一個字，叫瞎眼的看見，叫死人復活(太九29, 約十一43)。祂開口，癱子便得著力量行走(太九6-7)。祂開口，風便止住，翻騰的海浪也平靜了(路八24)。祂開口，人們便知道他們的罪已獲赦免，永遠不再被記念(可二5)。祂開口，垂死的強盜便得以進樂園(路廿三43)。

無論祂藉著話語吩咐你做什麼，要確信祂必用祂的能力使你能夠去作這件事。祂在我們裡面運行，使我們立志行事，為要成就祂的美意(腓二13)；那就是，祂絕不會指示我們行在順從或服事的道路，而不供應我們足夠的恩典。祂吩咐你棄絕某些惡習嗎？棄絕惡習的力量等待著你。你要支取這能力。祂吩咐你行走在水面上嗎？行走的力量在等待你支取它。祂吩咐你履行你所厭惡的職責嗎？有這樣改變的力量從祂而來，要使責任變成喜樂，只要你運用它。當你被呼召起來宣講你王的話語，你要確實尋求並獲得這能力——那必是你最好的身分證明。將君王的力量帶在身邊；那是帶有祂印章的戒指。藉這能力，人們必信服你已接受祂話語的託付。

求你保守我，使我與你在抵擋的風浪中行走，
求你向我吹氣使我上騰，
你在我裡面使我有志氣，你是道路、真理、生命——
因此無一真理是無關緊要的，
無一通往真理的道路是艱辛的，
無一生命，甚至我今生的生命，是不能忍受的！

The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Eccles. 9: 11

This is true in another sense than the Preacher meant. His conclusion was that time and chance happen to all alike in the race and battle of life. To us it means that God comes to those who are not swift, but, like Mephibosheth, lame on both feet, and gives them the prize which they could not win; that He bends over those who are not strong, and gives them the victory which they could not procure. The Gospel is full of promise to younger sons, bruised reeds, lame and helpless souls, to babes and sucklings, to those that have no might; whilst it hides its secrets from the wise and prudent, and withholds its rewards from the swift and strong.

YOU ARE NOT SWIFT. Long ago the spring was taken from your life, and the elasticity from your feet. For many years you have lain by the Beautiful Gate, seeing the happy souls pass to the inner shrine, and coming out entranced. You have been content to live on their alms. But better things are in store. He who knows your case will even now give you perfect soundness. Though you cannot win the prize of your high calling by running, it shall be yours by receiving and taking. It is a gift; and though you have not legs you have surely hands.

YOU ARE NOT STRONG. But it is well. Many of us are too strong for God. He has to weaken us by touching the sinew of our thigh. When Jacob went from fighting to clinging, he became a prince with God. Isaiah left it on record that God gives power to the faint, and increases might to those who have no power. And the great Apostle of the Gentiles gloried in his infirmities, because he had discovered that when he was weak then he was strong, since the power of Christ was only perfected in weakness.

敏捷的未必能贏，強壯的未必得勝。 傳九11(另譯)

這與傳道者本意不同的另一種意義也是真實的。傳道者的結論是時機在人生的賽跑和爭戰中同樣地臨到每一個人。對我們而言，這意味著神臨到那不敏捷的人，像米非波設(撒下四4, 九章)那樣，雙腿都是瘸的，並將他們不能贏得的獎賞賜給他們；也意味著神俯就那不強壯的，將那他們不能獲得的勝利賜給他們。福音充滿應許向著年幼的孩童、壓傷的蘆葦、瘸腿無助的人、嬰兒和吃奶的、那沒有力量的；卻向那些聰明通達的人隱藏祂的祕密(太十一25)，制止敏捷、強壯的人得獎賞。

你並不敏捷。很久以前你生命的活力已被奪走，你的雙腳不再靈活。多年來你躺在美門旁(徒三2-8)，看見快樂的人進到聖殿裡面，並且歡欣陶醉地出來。你已經甘願靠著他們的賙濟生活。但還有更好的福分等待著。知道你情況的神，要賜你完全的健康。儘管你不能靠你的奔跑贏得崇高呼召的獎賞，你只要接受並收下，獎賞便是你的。這是一份禮物；儘管你沒有好的腿，但你確實有雙手。

你並不強壯。但沒有關係。對神來說，我們大多數人都過於強壯。神不得不觸摸我們大腿的筋，好使我們變軟弱(創卅二22-32)。當雅各從奮鬥轉成緊緊抓住時，他成了與神同在的王子[雅各的新名「以色列」意：神的王子。] 以賽亞記下：疲乏的，祂賜能力；軟弱的，祂加力量(賽四十29)。外邦人的大使徒保羅誇耀他的軟弱，因為他發現，當他軟弱時，他就剛強了，因為神的能力只在人的軟弱上顯得完全(林後十二9-10)。

If one do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength. Eccles. 10: 10

If this is true, as we know it is, may we not often use it as an appeal to God? There are times with all who work for God, when they are blunt, through much usage. The brain is blunt, and cannot think. The heart is blunt, and cannot feel. The voice is blunt, and has lost its ringing note. How often the evangelist, towards the end of a series of services, feels blunt! Sometimes also there are private sorrows, of which we cannot speak, which take off the edge. At all such times let us turn to God and say, "Put in more strength. Let thy power be magnified in my weakness. Give more grace, so that thy work shall not suffer." I suppose Paul meant this when he said that he gloried in infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Surely more work is done by a blunt edge and divine power, than by a sharp edge and little power.

This, however, does not justify us in seeking to be blunt. And when we are conscious that the edge is going off, it becomes us to seek a fresh whetting. The time is not lost in the harvest-field when the reapers whet their scythes with musical tinkle. A day in the country or a week by the seaside are very pleasant whetstones. Solomon says that friendship, the face of a friend, will sharpen a blunt edge; and full often we have been sharpened and quickened by seasons of holy fellowship. But after all, nothing gives us such a keen edge as the devotional perusal of the divine Word. Let us appropriate the words of the prophet, and each one ask to be made a new sharp threshing-instrument having teeth, that we may thresh the mountains, and make them small, and give our God as little anxiety as possible.

鐵器鈍了，若不將刀磨快，就必多費氣力。 傳十10

如果這是真的，正如我們所知道的，難道我們不應該將這事當作對神的懇求嗎？所有為神作工的人都有這樣的時候，在經過太多的使用，他們就鈍了。頭腦遲鈍，不能思考；心遲鈍，不能感覺；聲音鈍了，失去了它銀鈴般的音調。何等常見傳福音的人在一長串服事的末了變鈍了！有時也有我們無法表達的私人悲傷，使刀刃變鈍了。在所有這樣的時刻，但願我們轉向神，對祂說：「求你賜更多的力量。讓你的力量在我的軟弱上顯大。求你賜更多的恩典，好使你的工作不遭受損失。」我猜想當保羅說他誇自己的軟弱，好叫基督的能力覆庇他，便是這個意思(林後十二9)。鈍的刀刃和神的力量一起所作的工，顯然要比鋒利的刀刃和一點點力量所作的工更多。

然而，這並不足以讓我們為變成遲鈍作辯解。當我們感覺到鋒利的刀刃漸漸消失時，就該試圖磨快刀刃。在收割的禾場，收割者叮叮噹噹地打磨他們的鐮刀，不是浪費時間。在鄉間的一天，或是在海灘上的一週，都是非常令人愉快的磨刀石。所羅門說：友誼、朋友的臉，會磨快刀刃(箴廿七17)；我們經常在聖潔的交往中，刀被磨快，更有精神。但無論如何，沒有什麼比靈修細讀神的話語那樣使我們的刀刃鋒利。讓我們取用先知的話語，我們每一個人都尋求成為有快齒打糧的新器具，把山嶺打得粉碎(賽四十一15)，儘量不叫我們的神擔憂。

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand. Eccles. 11 : 6

We are all tempted to look too much to the winds and clouds. We study the faces of people, their moods and circumstances, and say, "It is not a favourable time to approach them about their souls. He does not look to be a likely case, or in a likely mood." But how do we know? If we are always waiting for favouring conditions, we shall resemble the farmer who is ever looking out for perfect weather, and lets the whole autumn pass without one handful of grain reaching the furrows; or who is always studying the clouds, seeking for a spell of hot summer weather; and presently the chance is gone, and the crop lost.

In fact, we can never tell what God is doing in the secrets of the heart. He may have been prosecuting his deep and wise designs with the souls that appear most untoward and unprepossessing. He may have led them to such a point that they are most eagerly yearning for the hand to lead them into the light. The eunuch in his chariot, might not, from a distance, have seemed specially ripe for the Christian evangelist; but, on coming near, he was discovered to be an inquirer. Saul of Tarsus was the least likely man in all Palestine to be a Christian; but God had been at work with him. Let us dare then to trust God, not looking for winds or sunshine, but scattering everywhere the precious seed of the Gospel.

*Say not, the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain;
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been things remain.*

*For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.*

早晨要撒你的種，晚上也不要歇你的手。 傳十一6

我們都忍不住過分注意風和雲。我們仔細觀察人們的臉色，以及他們的情緒和處境，並說：「現在不是一個接近他們談論靈魂的好時機。他好像不是合適的人選，或是他的心情好像不合適。」但我們如何知道呢？如果我們總是在等待最有利的狀況，我們便像農夫總在尋找完美的天氣，而讓整個秋天過去，連一把穀種都未撒到犁溝裡；或像一個人總是觀察雲，在找一段炎夏的天氣，一下子機會過去了，而農作物的收成也損失了。

事實上我們永遠也不知道，神在人心中隱祕處的作為。在看起來最頑強最惹人厭的人心中，祂可能已施行又深又有智慧的計畫。祂可能已引導他們到一個地步，他們極熱切渴望有一隻手領他們進入光明。從遠處看，這位坐在馬車裡的太監，可能不像已經特別預備好，來聽基督福音使者的傳講；但一接近，就發現他是一個尋求的人(徒八26-38)。大數的掃羅是全巴勒斯坦最不可能成為基督徒的人；但神已經在他身上作工。那麼就讓我們勇敢信靠神，不再尋找風和陽光，而是在各處遍撒福音的珍貴種子。

你不要說：奮鬥沒有功效，
辛勞和傷痛都落空；
敵人沒有喪膽，也沒有失敗，
事情仍然和以前的一樣。

因為當疲倦的浪濤陡然拍岸，
似乎在這裡難得有一寸進展，
在後方的遠處，經過小溪與港灣的形成，
大海的水，正在靜靜湧入。

The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words. Eccles. 12: 10

The wise preacher or teacher is not content with merely teaching the people knowledge, he will ponder and seek out and set in order the lessons of divine wisdom; and when these are settled, he will go on to find out acceptable words. We must be careful to secure the "apples of gold," and no less careful to place them in the "pictures of silver." Not that we are to make beauty of language an object in itself; but having conceived high and holy thoughts we should give them a worthy expression, so that the Royal word may ride forth in a becoming equipage. It is unfit that the vessels of the sanctuary should be carried only in badger skins; their first covering at least must be "all of blue." If we are stewards in God's household to give his children food, let us serve it up suitably. The linen should be clean, and the table garnished.

Remember, however, that the words of the wise are as goads and nails. They must have points, sometimes to prick to duty, at other times to stick fast in the memory. In every sermon or lesson there should be points. To arrest and compel attention is more important than to please the ear. Do not refine and beautify it to such an extent that there may be nothing left to stir the conscience and lacerate the heart.

Words that best fit the enunciation of God's truth are given from the One Shepherd. We are enriched by Him, not only in all knowledge but in all utterance. He who made the mouth can put his words into the mouth. Ask Him to speak to you, that you may speak in accents borrowed from his tone; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.

傳道者專心尋求可喜悅的言語。 傳十二10

智慧的傳道者或教師不以僅僅教導人知識為滿足，他要默想，尋找屬神智慧的教訓，並按條理整理出來；當這一切都安排好之後，他要繼續尋求可喜悅的言語。我們必須小心取得「金蘋果」，並同樣小心將金蘋果放在「銀器」裡(箴廿五11)。我們不是要使話語的美好成為目標；而是我們心中既懷著崇高神聖的思想，就該合適地表達出來，好使神尊貴的話語乘駕相稱的車隊出行。聖所的器皿不合適僅包在海狗皮裡來搬運；至少第一層包裝必須是「純藍色」的(民四4-12, 藍色預表屬天)。如果我們是神的管家，要分糧給祂的兒女，就讓我們以適當的方式端上菜餚。桌布應當是乾淨的，餐桌應當佈置好。

無論如何要記住，智者的言語好像刺棒和釘子(11節)。他們必須有尖頭，有時刺痛人去履行職責，有時牢牢刺入人的記憶中。每篇講章和教案都應該有尖頭。吸引人注意並迫使人專心，這比取悅人的耳朵更重要。不要修飾美化講章到一個地步，沒有剩下什麼來攪動人的良心並撕裂人的心腸(徒二37)。

最適合發表神真理的言語，都是一位牧者所賜的(11節)。我們從神所得的豐盛，不僅在於一切的知識，也在於一切話語的表達。祂造人的口，也能將祂的話語放進人的口中(出四11-12)。要祈求神對你說話，好使你能採用從神來的語氣聲調說話，因為不是你們在說話，而是你們父的靈在你們裡頭說話(太十20)。