

Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders, and cry unto the Lord. Joel 1:14
(R.V., marg.)

It was a terrible invasion. The locusts had lighted down upon the land of Israel; so that the seeds rotted under the clods; garners were desolate; the barns were broken down. Despair took hold of the husbandman; and the herds and flocks panted out their anguish. At this juncture the prophet called for a national fast.

Whenever our life is visited by special trials and perplexities, we should withdraw ourselves from common pursuits, and lay bare our heart-secrets, so that we may learn the cause of God's controversy with us. There is a reason and a needs-be; because He does not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men.

From time to time a call for prayer has issued from the hearts of men closest in touch with heaven. In the middle of the eighteenth century Jonathan Edwards issued such an appeal; and this led to that union of prayer, which played so significant a part in the origination of the great missionary societies. It was notably the effect of that appeal on Sutcliffe, Rylands, Fuller, and Carey, that led to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society at the close of the eighteenth century.

It may be that a wave of prayer is again about to break over the Church. There are many signs of it. We hear Christian people saying on all hands that they want to get back to God; and surely it would be one of the most significant signs of the unity of the Church and the power of the Holy Spirit, if such a prayer wave were to lift us all on to a new level of intercession for the Church of God and the world around us. We need not wait for the Church to appoint.

要分定禁食的日子，宣告嚴肅會，招聚長老，向耶和華哀求。 珥一14

這是一次很可怕的侵襲。蝗蟲突然降在以色列地，使穀種在土塊下朽爛，倉也荒涼，廩也破壞(17節)。農夫心中絕望；牛群和羊群也痛苦地喘息。在這危機中，先知大聲呼喚全國禁食。

無論何時我們的生命遭遇特殊的考驗和困惑，我們應當離開平日的追求，完全敞開我們內心的祕密，使我們可以明白神與我們爭辯的緣由。神必有一個原因使祂必須這樣做；因為祂不願意折磨人，也不願意讓人類受痛苦。

偶爾有一個「祈禱的呼召」是從那些與天上有最緊密接觸的人心中發出。在18世紀中葉愛德華滋[註]發出這樣一個呼籲；而促成同心的祈禱，這同心的祈禱在創立偉大宣教團體方面扮演了意義重大的角色。那呼籲的影響在蘇利夫、賴蘭斯、富樂、和克里的身上尤為明顯，也因此促進了18世紀晚期浸信會海外宣道會的成立。

可能又有一波的禱告即將在教會中發生。已經有許多這樣的跡象。我們聽到許多基督徒從四面八方說他們要回到神面前；如果這一個禱告的波浪，要把我們為神的教會和周圍世界的代禱提高到一個新的水平，肯定這將是教會和聖靈的能力聯合的一個最顯著的記號。在這事上，我們並不需要等教會來指派。

[註] 愛德華滋 Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758, 美國清教徒神學家。帶領18世紀美國基督教會大覺醒運動。

I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten. Joel 2: 25

How many years of our life have been consumed by the locust! Self in one form or another has sorely robbed us of our golden sheaves, reducing them to dust. Self-indulgence, frivolity, wanton spendthriftness of time, and talent, and opportunity, sloth and lethargy, mixed and evil motives, secret sins-- what a crew are there! They have played the part of the caterpillar, the cankerworm, and the palmerworm with the green promise and the yellow produce of our lives.

But God waits to forgive; to put away from his mind the memory of the wasted past; to place the crown of a new hope upon our brow--yea, more, to restore to us the years that the locust hath eaten. There shall be a revenue of glory to Him even from those wasted years. Either in the experience they shall have communicated to us for dealing with other men, or in the penitential and broken-hearted temper they shall have begotten in ourselves; those years shall yet yield crops of praise to God, and of fruitfulness to us. And, also, God is prepared so to add his blessing to us, in the present and future, as to give us in each year not only the year's produce, but much more, so that each year will be laden and weighted with the blessing of three or four beside. Where sin abounded, grace shall much more abound. Where we have sown, we shall reap; not thirty-fold only, but a hundred-fold. God is so anxious to give us as large a result as possible to show for our life's work, though we may have sadly wrecked its earlier portions. Did He not restore to Peter at Pentecost what he wasted in the hall of judgment? Did not Paul win harvests for Christ out of the years which preceded his conversion?

就是蝗蟲 ... 那些年所吃的，我要補還你們。 珥二25

我們生命中有好多年被蝗蟲吃掉了！我們的「己(自我)」以這種或那種形式嚴重地搶奪了我們的金黃禾捆，使之變為塵土。放縱，輕浮，任意浪費時間、天資、和機會，懶惰和昏睡，摻雜邪惡的動機，暗中的罪 — 這是何等邪惡的一夥啊！他們扮演了我們生命青嫩時與果子成熟時的毛毛蟲、蝻子、和剪蟲的角色。

但是神等待要赦免；要將荒廢的過去從祂心中的記憶除去，要把新希望的冠冕加在我們頭上 — 是的，更多，補還我們那些蝗蟲所吃掉的年歲。甚至從那些荒廢的年歲也有榮耀歸給祂。不論是這些荒廢年日的經驗教導我們對待他人，或是這些年日在我們裡面產生憂傷痛悔的心；那些年歲還產生對神讚美的果子，並產生豐碩果實給我們。神如此預備為要現在並將來賜福給我們，正如每年都給我們不只是一年的出產，而是更多，以致每年增加三、四倍。罪在哪裡顯多，恩典就更顯多了(羅五20)。在我們播種之處，必有收割；不只是三十倍，而是百倍。神是如此渴望盡量賜給我們大的成果，來展示我們生命的工作，儘管我們可能已經弄壞了先前的部分。祂難道沒有在五旬節時，為彼得恢復他在耶穌受審之處(因三次否認主)所荒廢的嗎？難道保羅在他信主之前的那些年，沒有促使他為基督贏得收成嗎？[保羅未信主時逼迫基督徒，信主後成為福音使者。(加一13-24)]

I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain. Joel 3: 17

This will be the lot of the chosen people in the millennial age. The Holy God will make the city in which He resides a Holy place. But it is true universally. Wherever the Holy God dwells, there you have holiness--for it is the attribute of his nature, as heat is of fire. Holiness is not It, but He. Do you want it? Then you must invite Him to come.

When God comes into a day, it becomes holy unto Him. When his presence is revealed in a bush, it is holy ground. When He descends on a mountain, the fences are erected, that unhallowed feet may not draw nigh. When He fills a building like Solomon's Temple, the whole is consecrated, and may not be employed for sacrilegious purposes. Best of all, if He dwell in our hearts, they too are rendered holy to Himself.

When the apostle prays that the God of Peace should sanctify us wholly, he goes on to ask that spirit, soul, and body, should be as a temple filled with God. The holy man is he who is God-filled and God-possessed. It is not enough to possess God; we must be possessed by Him. He who has more of God is surely holier than other men; and he is the holiest who has most. Behold, Christ stands at the door and knocks: He longs to come in and abide, never again to depart; He brings with Him the holiness for which He has taught us to yearn.

"Is it true, Ignatius," said the Roman emperor to the Christian martyr, "that you carry about your God within you?" "it is even so," replied the bishop, "for it is written, I will dwell in thee, and walk in thee." And for that answer they cast him to the wild beasts. But what they deemed blasphemy is literally true of the Holy Spirit.

我是耶和華你們的神，且又住在錫安我的聖山。 珥三17

這是千禧年時神選民的分。聖潔的神必使祂所居住的城成為聖地。這是普遍的真理。無論聖潔的神住在哪裡，你就能在那裡得到聖潔 — 因為這是祂的特性，就像熱是火的特性。聖潔不是一件東西，而是祂自己。你想要聖潔嗎？那麼你必須邀請祂進來。

當神臨到一個日子，這日就成為聖。當祂在樹叢中顯現，那裡就成為聖地。當祂降在一座山上，柵欄就豎立起來，不聖潔的腳不可以靠近(出三1-5)。當祂充滿一個建築像所羅門的聖殿，整個殿就分別為聖，而且不可被用來做褻瀆神的用途。最好是，如果祂住在我們心裡，我們的心就成聖歸給祂。

當使徒祈求賜平安的神使我們全然成聖時，他接著祈求神使我們的靈、魂、與身子都應當像殿一樣被神充滿(帖前五23)。聖潔的人乃是被神充滿並被神佔有的人。擁有神還不夠；應該讓祂擁有我們。擁有神更多的人確實比別人更聖潔；擁有神最多的人就是最聖潔的人。看哪，基督站在門外叩門；祂渴望進來並且居住，不再離去(啟三20)；祂帶來聖潔，就是他教導我們要渴慕的(彼前一15-16)。

羅馬皇帝對基督徒殉道者說：「是真的嗎？伊格那丟[註]，你帶著你的神在你裡面？」主教回答道：「正是如此，因為經上記著，我要在你裡面居住，在你裡面行走。(林後六16)」因為這個回答，他們把他扔給野獸群。他們認為講「你帶著你的神在你裡面」是褻瀆，但這句話對於聖靈完全是真實的。

[註] 伊格那丟 Ignatius, 約35-107AD, 為使徒後期的教會領袖之一，安提阿教會的主教。最終被羅馬皇帝投入野獸群中殉道。在從安提阿押解至羅馬受審並處決途中，所經各地，教會多有代表來祝福他，他在途中寫了七封書信致小亞細亞七個教會。成了除新約聖經外最早期的教會文獻。