

# THE TELEGRAPH'S PULPIT.

The Cumber of the Earth Treated of by Rev. B. N. Nobles  
—He Deals With the Parable of the Figtree Which  
Brought Forth No Fruit.

“Luke, xv—7: ‘Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?’” The primary application of this parable of Jesus from which the text is taken, is readily perceived. The barren figtree was meant to illustrate the Jewish nation, planted of God among the nations of the earth for service, according to the election of grace and from which he had failed of obtaining the fruits of righteousness. The intercession of the vine-dresser in behalf of the figtree, and the further opportunity given it to become fruitful were illustrative of the intercession of Jesus for the nation and its additional opportunity of repentance and salvation under His fostering care. Such is the primary interpretation of this parable. But you should know that some, if not all parables and scriptures have more than the primary and local application, that is to say, the underlying principles enunciated are of universal application. Hence the principles enunciated in this parable apply to nations and individuals whether Jew or Gentile, saint or sinner. This morning I ask you to consider this parable in both these relations.

As this figtree had been planted in his vineyard and belonged to the husbandman, so the nations of earth were and are the Lord's. Especially was this the case with the Hebrew nation whom God had graciously chosen and planted among the nations; but in a most important sense this is true of all nations and kindreds and tongues and peoples. Nothing comes to pass by chance merely. The Hebrew nation and nations contemporaneous did not rise, prosper and fall into decay aside from the divine law, purpose and power. All nations of antiquity germinated and grew under the fostering hand of God and their decadence was at His word. They were His not by special choice for special service, as was Israel, but His by creation and nurturing. So also the nations of earth today. They have been planted and nourished of God—they are His.

And just as the figtree should have borne figs, so should all nations bring forth the fruits of righteousness. In speaking of the failure of Gentile nations to do this, Paul declares them without excuse, and were he to speak of present day nations among whom the fruits of unrighteousness so abound, he would declare them inexcusable also.

God has a right to ask and expect from all right-doing, and the downfall of nations has been because of their failure to fulfill His expectations. In long-suffering mercy He may have foreborne to visit upon them His displeasure and remove them as cumberers of the ground, so affording further opportunity of repentance; but in the end downfall came because of their persistence in evil. And the past is but a prophecy of the future. Therefore should nations learn wisdom in the light of this parable.

Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death in a nation as surely as in an individual. Therefore did the antediluvian world perish; therefore were the Amorites of Canaan cut off from the land; therefore were Nineveh and Babylon and the kingdoms they represented, destroyed; therefore was Israel sent into captivity, Jerusalem made desolate and the Jews scattered abroad; therefore fell the great Roman empire; therefore Turkey totters to her fall and Spain is threatened. And who knows but that another world may have been cut off ere this had it not been for the intercession of our Lord.

God looks today upon the nations of earth, and instead of good, lo evil. Long time hath this been so and He hath stayed His hand from judgment, while the cumberers of the ground have been continued. These years have been their day of grace, but assuredly if they turn not from their sins the issue must be downfall. Nor shall our own beloved nation escape. “God hath planted her and nourished her these many years, even as He did Israel of old. Fruits of righteousness hath He sought, nor altogether barren of good hath she been found, but her great national sins of intemperance and social impurity God cannot always wink at. If she repent not and cleanse herself from these iniquities, assuredly she, like the nations of the past, shall be cut off as a cumber of the ground. But we must pass on from this consideration of the parable in its application to nations to consider it in its application to individuals.

This figtree belonged to the husbandman. It was planted in his vineyard. It had been cultivated and nurtured there. It was his own. Even so, each and all of us belong to God. He is the proprietor of this earth and of mankind whom He hath created and placed here. The evil one hath no right whatever in this vineyard of God. I once heard a person say the devil was a squatter, and when he explained himself, he said: “A squatter is one who settles on land that is not his.” That is what the adversary and his hosts have done, settled on this earth—settled in the vineyard of the Lord, which they do not own a foot of—and have laid claim to the race. Their claim is false. “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,” sang the psalmist. He is the proprietor: all men belong to Him. As the old preachers used to say: We are God's by right of creation; His by right of redemption; His by right of preservation; and some are His by right of adoption and the new birth. This is a fact that is not recognized as it should be, that every man belongs to God—all he has and all he is.

This figtree had been planted and nurtured in expectation of its producing fruit. It was, therefore, a very natural thing for the proprietor to come seeking fruit thereon. The purpose of the tree was to produce fruit. And God's purpose in man's being is that he should bring forth fruit—the fruit of holiness in character which insures righteousness in life. True, God had other secondary purposes also in man's creation. He was appointed to cultivate the ground, and to have dominion over all terrestrial creatures, but the ultimate good God sought was not man's sovereignty over and culture of the earth. Rather was it man's development toward the measure of Him in whose image he was created and the maintenance of his integrity and uprightness. This was the fruit which God desired man to bring forth.

Through sinless and in the image of Deity, nevertheless man was an undeveloped being when God breathed into the animal man the breath of life and man became a living soul. He was in his infancy—an infant man so to speak. And if he had maintained his integrity and through the exercise of himself in ways of righteousness, develop his germinal powers and capacities, he would have been fulfilling God's ultimate purpose of good for him. In him He would have found then the fruit of holiness which issues in an unselfish and right life. Now the fruit God sought in the first man He seeks in every man. Perfected manhood, perfected womanhood or rather, manhood and womanhood on the way to maturity and perfection—this, together with attendant righteousness, is what God seeks and has a right to expect in view of all His gracious provisions for the race. Does He find it in you? In me?

This figtree proved to be a barren figtree. The proprietor sought fruit year after year, but found none. It was a barren tree. Now let us question regarding ourselves. We admit God's proprietorship of us. We recognize this morning that we are under eternal obligations to the God of nature and of grace, who has given us through all these years, sunshine and shadow, cold and heat, dew and rain, so making the earth to bring forth and rejoice—who has preserved us from disease and death and provided us with life's necessities—who has given the Son of His love in order to our redemption and life. We acknowledge our obligations to this God. We do not dispute His proprietorship of men and His right to demand fruit—even manhood, womanhood.

But what hath God found? Verily in the race at large He has found no such fruit as He sought. Imperfection, uncleanness, selfishness, sin—human nature dwarfed, twisted, corrupted. These hath He found in the world at large, instead of holiness, purity, perfection. But what hath He found in us? In you, in me? If this morning the divine husbandman would pass up and down these aisles, seeking fruit, how would He find

## “JUST TREAD ON THE TAIL OF MY COAT.”



The Invitations Are Out for a Scrap.

matters? Have we the fruit of manhood, womanhood to show him—a holy character, an unselfish, right life? As He scans our lives and searches our hearts doth He discover even in immaturity these fruits? Does the conviction force itself upon any of us that we are as the barren figtree and that God is disappointed in us? Then let us mark more closely still this parable, even though it brings distress—the issue will be for our good.

This figtree was a cumber of the ground. It brought forth no fruit itself and by occupying the place where a good tree might be, it made the vineyard by that much less profitable. So it was judged a cumber of the ground. Did it ever occur to you, my brothers, that if any of us have been living a selfish, worldly life and are barren of the fruits God requires in us, that we have not only disappointed God and failed of our highest good, but that we have been cumbering the ground? Did it ever occur to you that God may be looking upon some of us even now as cumberers of the ground? And that the advisability of our removal may have been already considered? Would it not be a natural thing to do? Does not the fruit grower remove the valueless trees? Does he not prune away the useless twigs and branches because they not only produce no fruit themselves but prevent other branches bearing as they should? These cumberers are removed and ought to be, so you say. But in saying so may we not be passing judgment on ourselves? If for 2, 5, 10, 20, 40 years we have been enjoying God, earth and its abundance, and God's atmosphere and His sunshine and His truth and His protection and His grace, yet have brought forth no fruit upon God, why should we be continued? Wherefore should He spare us longer? Oh men, women, what if God should say of some of us this morning: “Cut him down, cut her down, for why cumbereth it the ground?”

Will you observe, this figtree had one to interfere for it even though it had been barren and unfruitful. “Let it alone this year that I may cultivate and if it bear fruit well; and if not, then I will cut it down.” Brothers, let me tell you we are not less fortunate than the figtree of the parable. We, too, have an intercessor, even Jesus. “He ever lives above for our intercession.” He knows our barrenness and sin and much hath it grieved Him, yet doth He intercede in your behalf and mine. What would have become of us had it not been for His intercession and care! How far have we fallen short of God's standards for us! How meagre indeed are the fruits of righteousness even in the most fruitful! Scarcely any of us dare claim to be other than cumberers of the ground! Surely if God had marked iniquity we would have been cut off long ago! But Jesus hath interceded and by His own toil through the Holy Spirit and by the enrichment of truth brought to us through providence and the Word, hath He sought to bring us unto fruitfulness. If He succeed, well; if He fail, woe. So I come to the last thought.

This figtree's future was determined during its time of probation. Oh, my brothers, these are our days of probation. Is the dresser of the vineyard succeeding in his efforts to make us fruitful, or is he failing? Is there even the prospect of success—of fruitfulness? Oh, what an awful case when husbandman and vine-dresser pronounce a man hopelessly barren of good and give him over to be removed as a cumber of the ground! God forbid that this should come to pass in the experience of any of us. But if any of us are still unholy in character and selfish and unrighteous in life after all that has been done for us, may we not be dangerously near to final ruin?

And now just a word to the one who says: “I am that person. I have been a great failure. I am a worldly, selfish man—a worldly, selfish woman; I have never brought forth fruit unto God.” Well, friend, what are you about to do? Try again? Turn over a new leaf? Ah, you and I have turned over a good many new leaves and it is not so that very soon the new leaf had been blotted by us like the old? No, friend, that is not the very best thing to do. Rather repent of thy ways and surrender unto the Lord Jesus who has been tugging at thine heart to lead you back to God, where your sins may be forgiven and yourself made strong by His life and spirit to do righteously and become holy, so becoming a fruitful tree in the vineyard of God. Yield to Him and yield to Him now. Who will? Who does?

### QUEBEC FIRE.

C. P. Telegraph and Dominion Express Companies Burned Out—Frank Mahon, Manager, Loses His Furniture.

Quebec, Jan. 14.—The main building and offices of the Canadian Pacific Telegraph and the Dominion Express Company, on St. Peter street, were destroyed by fire early today. The fire, which broke out about 5 o'clock, originated presumably from the furnace in the lower part of the building. The switch board and all telegraph instruments were destroyed. The company is said to have no insurance. The building, which belongs to Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick, is insured. The company has already established a temporary office nearby. The Great Northwestern Telegraph office, in the building adjoining the burned structure, escaped without injury. Frank Mahon, manager of the Quebec office, formerly connected with the C. P. R. at St. John, whose wife is a St. John lady, lost all his furniture, which was stored in the burned building.

### FRANCE SHARES DISAPPROVAL.

Minister to Serbia Withdraws as Regicides Were Not Punished.

Paris, Jan. 13.—The French minister to Serbia, M. Benoit, has been recalled and another official has been sent to Belgrade to act as chargé d'affaires. This is a result of the failure of King Peter to take

adequate means of redress for the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga. According to information received at the foreign office most, if not all, the ministers of the leading powers have been withdrawn or are about to withdraw from Belgrade.

### A “PLEASE READ ME” STAMP.

Scheme to Have Letters Forwarded by Telephone.

Washington, Jan. 13.—The United States postal authorities are considering plans for issuing a special stamp which, when attached to a letter, will authorize the postmaster at the office from which the letter is to be delivered to open and read it. The greatest value of this is to patrone living along rural free delivery routes who have telephones. They may order such stamps added to their important letters with the assurance that the obliging postmaster will open it and read the contents to them over the telephone, saving them a trip to the post office. The stamps, which will be better than one with the ordinary special delivery stamp affixed. Affixing this “please read me” stamp to the wrong letter may lead up to distressing incidents, but to those living away out in the country where it would be impossible to get a letter of importance to them in some hours, this method of mail by telephone will be, it is expected, hailed with appreciation. The plan is to send the letters along, of course, by the customary method, after they have been read to the addressee.

### CZAR'S SOFT WORDS.

(Continued from page 1.)

Pekin, now has a position in which he can exert influence for reform, although rank and age generally outweigh ability in the Chinese government circles. Brigadier General H. T. Allen, U. S. A., chief of the Philippine, says that there has been no substantial change in the Japanese proposition nor the Russian counter proposal since they were so lucidly set out by The Associated Press in its semi-official despatch from Peking last week. Constabulary has arrived here from Manila. He formerly was military attaché at St. Petersburg and will join the Russian army, as an observer, in the event of war.

### Conflicting Reports.

Washington, Jan. 14.—Mr. Takahira, the Japanese minister here, today called on Secretary Hay and informed him that the Japanese reply to the last Russian note had been delivered this morning. The reply amounts to a denial of all the important Russian propositions and Japan's counter proposals. It is said, are of a nature that will almost certainly make them unacceptable to Russia. Therefore, a most pessimistic view of the future is taken at Tokio. On the other hand, advice that the Japanese minister here is that Japan will not yield to any such pressure. The Japanese minister has supplied the state department an abstract of the last Japanese note.

Count Cassini, the Russian Ambassador, on his part, has acquainted the state department verbally as is his custom, with the nature of the Russian note, so that the department is fully informed, but as both these communications have been made in confidence, the officials do not feel they should make them public in whole or in part.

The state department today received a cablegram from U. S. Minister Allen, at Seoul (Korea), stating that the Korean newspapers are trying to incite the people against foreigners and especially against American interests.

The department feels that these interests can be cared for properly by the U. S. Marine Guard now in the Korean capital.

### Japan Orders 16,000 Ton Battleship.

London, Jan. 15.—The Daily Telegraph's Tokio correspondent says that the Japanese government, as a part of its programme of naval extension, has placed a contract in England for a 16,000-ton battleship. The correspondent of the Daily Mail at Shanghai reports the gradual and extensive movement of Chinese troops toward Shan Hai Kwan, in Chi Li province, probably with the view of securing the harbor of Ching Wan Tao, on the Gulf of Liao Tung, and the coal mines thereabouts against Russian seizure.

### Massacre of Foreigners Advocated.

London, Jan. 14.—The Seoul correspondent of the Daily Mail says that the native press is advocating the slaughter of all foreigners.

United States Minister Allen has ordered all American women and children to remain indoors, and he predicts that rioting by the military is imminent.

### Ginger Ale's Dandy Work.

Little Rock, Ark., Jan. 14.—As the result of drinking ginger ale flavoured with lemon extract, three men are dead from poisoning and two more are not expected to live.

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Established 1877  
Whooping Cough, Croup, Bronchitis, Cough, Grip, Asthma, Diphtheria

CRESOLENE A BOON TO MATRIMONY  
CRESOLENE is a long established and standard remedy for the disease indicated. It cures because the air rendered strong and healthy carried over the diseased surfaces of the bronchial tubes with every breath, thus prolonging and constant treatment. Those of a consumptive tendency, or suffering from chronic bronchitis, find immediate relief from coughs or influenza conditions of the throat. Descriptive booklet free.

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Cresolene dissolved in the mouth are effective and safe for coughs and irritation of the throat.

Antiseptic Tablets  
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### ALBERT COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL.

January Session Opened Tuesday—J. A. Cleveland Elected Warden—Financial Statement.

Hopewell Hill, Jan. 12.—The January session of the Albert municipal council opened at the schoolroom this afternoon, the full board being present as follows: Hopewell, W. J. Carvath, Levi Downey, Hillside-Jordan Steves, H. J. Steves, Harvey-O. W. Anderson, H. H. Tingler, Alma-Wm. Bennett, J. A. Cleveland, Elgin-W. B. Jones, John Garland, Coveville-Warner Leaman, S. S. Ryan, M. P. P.

All were members of the last board excepting Councilors Jones and Garland. J. A. Cleveland was unanimously elected warden for the new term, and appointed the following committee: Finance—Messrs. Rommel, Tingler, Steves, Leaman and Jones. Carnvath, Ryan, Garland, Highway—Messrs. Jones, Anderson, secretary-treasurer.

The report of Fred G. Moore, auditor, was read, showing the assessment ordered for 1903 to have been \$12,611.81; with the costs of collection, making \$12,757.52. This amount was apportioned as follows: Hopewell, \$2,368.91; Hillside, \$4,332.71; Alma, \$2,827.57; Harvey, \$2,139.36; Coveville, \$1,448.34; Elgin, \$1,450.21.

The general statement of income and expenditure is as follows: Receipts from collection of 1902: Hopewell \$2,368.91; Harvey \$2,139.36; Alma \$2,827.57; Hillside \$4,332.71; Coveville \$1,448.34; Elgin \$1,450.21.

Receipts from delinquent taxes: Hopewell \$66.53; Harvey \$62.12; Alma \$32.91; Hillside \$58.31; Coveville \$20.49; Elgin \$21.87.

Receipts from school taxes: Hopewell \$153.29; Harvey \$149.99; Alma \$100.00; Hillside \$169.12; Coveville \$62.23; Elgin \$65.16.

Receipts from other sources: Jury fees \$153.29; Scott act fees \$100.00; Fines in bastardy cases \$200.00; Fines from other sources \$49.77; Licenses \$120.00; Sheriff's fees \$21.13; From railway office \$7.79; Alma wharf rent \$21.00.

Expenditure: School drafts \$1,638.75; School drafts \$1,638.75; Contingencies and salaries \$2,377.50; On account of poor \$1,962.45; On account of roads \$409.29; On account of Scott act \$49.77; On account of lunatic asylum \$9.00; Constables' costs \$15.00; Criminal costs \$13.77; Refunds \$4.89; Jurors' fees \$24.80; Board of health \$19.32; Valuation \$67.35.

Steadman suit \$20.00; Geo. Barnett, col. justice \$20.00; At. paid at bank \$270.00; Albert Railway debentures \$2,000.00; Albert Railway coupons \$1,200.00.

Total expenditure \$14,093.87; Balance from 1902 \$14,093.87.

Friend—“By the way, how did the new play take last night?”

Herole Actor—“The play was all right; but they evidently mistook me for the villain. At any rate, they booed me every time I came upon the stage.”

### SIGNATURES TOO MUCH ALIVE.

Petitions from Cape Breton for repeal of Scott Act Rejected.

Ottawa, Jan. 12.—Petitions were forwarded recently from Cape Breton to the government, asking for the repeal of the Scott Act. There were the required number of names to warrant the matter being submitted to popular vote, but after examination here it was decided that too many of the signatures were in the one handwriting to be regarded as valid. Therefore the petition was not accepted. The Scott Act has been in force in Cape Breton for twenty-two years.

### PHOTOS BY RADIUM.

London Photographer Claims to Have Taken Them.

London, Jan. 11.—Mr. Ulyett, a photographer, has succeeded in obtaining a photograph by means of radium. He says he placed a group of articles in a dark cupboard, and over a box with a glass top, containing a very small quantity of radium bromide. An exposure of twelve hours was given, after which the plate was developed in the usual way, though very slowly.

The death has taken place at Dartmouth of Robert Wilkinson, aged eighty-four, who was the last survivor of the Franklin Relief Expedition, which set out in 1861 and spent three years in the Arctic regions, vainly seeking the lost explorer.

### COLD IN THE HEAD.

Can be Cured in a Few Minutes by Inhaling Catarrhoxone.

By gently breathing Catarrhoxone through the mouth and slowly exhaling through the nostrils, cold in the head can be cured in a few minutes.

Catarrhoxone is very simple and pleasant to use, and is guaranteed to cure colds, Catarrh and all winter influenza or your money back.

Miss Helen Brown, Adrian, N.S., writes: “I have used Catarrhoxone and always found it satisfactory. It gives immediate relief to coughs and colds in the throat, and is the cleanest and most convenient cure for Catarrh I have met.”

Mr. Robert Kennedy, Kingston, N. B., writes: “I would be without Catarrhoxone for the world. For cold in the head, coughs and influenza it is indispensable. It is so pleasant and convenient that it can be used anywhere.”

Carry a Catarrhoxone inhaler in your vest pocket—use it now and again, and you won't have colds or prevent as well as cure them. Physicians pronounce Catarrhoxone the most marvellous cough and cold cure of the age and state that it has no equal for bronchitis, lung trouble and catarrh.

Two months' treatment costs one dollar, and is guaranteed to cure or your money back. Trial size 25c. All druggists, by mail from N. C. Nelson & Co., Kingston, Ont., or Hartford, Conn., U. S. A.

**DR. WOOD'S NORWAY PINE SYRUP**

Coughs, Colds, Bronchitis, Pain in the Chest, Whooping Cough, Sore Throat, Asthma, Hoarseness, Sore Throat, all throat and lung troubles.

It is pleasant to take and is soothing to the lungs. There is nothing to equal it for stopping that tickling sensation in the throat, and the persistent cough that keeps you awake at night.

DRUGGISTS AND MOST EFFECTIVE.

Have you tried Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup in your family for the last five years, and have found it the quickest and most effective medicine for all kinds of coughs and colds I have ever used. My little son had a severe attack of bronchitis, he has been using half a bottle of the Syrup he was completely cured. I cannot praise it enough.

Wm. W. J. Fawcett, Arthur, Ont.

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Made by THE E. B. EDDY CO., and sold by all Grocers