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Our Pulpit.

The Daysman.

SERMON PREACHED BY
REV. A. J. MOWATT.

In St. Paul's Church Fredericton, June 24th.
Neither is there any daysman betwixt us that might lay his hand upon us both.—JOB IX: 33.

All we know of Job is from the book of Job. It tells us much about him, and much that we would like to know it leaves untold, but it tells us enough to teach us some useful lessons and unfold to us some great truths.

Job was a rich Oriental, his wealth consisting mainly in immense flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and droves of asses and camels. His sheep and camels were counted by thousands, and his oxen and asses by hundreds, and the people under him were enough to fill a fair-sized province. He had also a happy family of seven sons and three fair daughters. But the best thing of all about Job was his piety. He was as good as he was rich. For integrity, for nobleness of character, and for all that went to make a man an old-time christian, he had no equal. I suppose that the very ideal of oriental bliss was as near as may be realized in that sunny land where the good patriarch dwelt among his people. He moved about among them with true patriarchal dignity, interesting himself in all that was of interest to them, showing them from day to day in his own all but faultless walk and conversation what religion is and what it can do for a man, and lovingly and patiently leading them up to the fulness that is in God for them.

But a reverse of fortune came to the good Job. And so suddenly. One calamity after another, like successive waves, each one greater than the one that preceded it, came rushing upon him. First his property was taken from him. Next his seven sons while at a feast were stricken down in a moment. And last of all, and almost worst of all, he himself was brought down to the verge of the grave by a horrible ulcerous disease of some kind. The way he was dealt with was more like a judgment of Heaven than an ordinary dispensation of Providence, and that was the view his friends took of it, and so, instead of ministering to his consolation, they added rather to his bitterness. But his patience was extraordinary. When messenger after messenger, some of them only too glad to be such a messenger, came to him with the sad news of his losses, he meekly and reverently bowed his head and said, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

He was not always so resigned and submissive however. He had his doubts and fears, and question after question would come to him that he did not know how to answer, and he was oftentimes in great straits. Then he would give way to querulousness and wish he was dead. And no wonder, for his pain and distress were all but insufferable. Oh how he prayed for the grave's rest. But the Lord heard not those querulous prayers of His servant. He had something else in store for him, a grand world-future, years of prosperity.

One of the questions that seemed to have perplexed Job was this, the controversy that God had with him. Once he walked in loving fellowship with God dwelling in His fear and favor as in a blessed sunshine, and how he prospered. But without any reason seemingly the Lord withdrew His favor from him, and turned all his joy into woe, and poor Job was left to grope in the dark not knowing what to make of it. He did not know why God should deal with him as he was dealing with him, and so he felt so much the need of a daysman to mediate between them. But where was there such a daysman? 'For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.'

Now, we see here the necessity of a daysman. There is a controversy, a quarrel, a bitter alienation, between God and every one of us. Once man was all right with God, and so happy. But that first peace was broken, and ever since there has been more or less of trouble. I do not say that we always realize it. Sometimes we ignore God or try to. We live as if there was no God live in defiance of Him. We care not whether He is angry or pleased, whether foe or friend. And thus living we have

a sort of happiness. But we cannot thus live. Sooner or later He lets us know and feel that His friendship is necessary to our happiness. The troubles come. The darkness gathers, and out of it looks down upon us a flaming eye that we cannot hide from. We go on trying to make things work together for our good, but there is no doing that when God is not for us. The Egyptians tried that in the Red Sea, but the wheels of their chariots came off, and they soon saw that it was at a terrible disadvantage they were trying to do, and so they gave it up. But they did not give it up soon enough.

We can see how it works even among men—how badly it works. You and your neighbor have a quarrel, and you try to get along without one another. You try to hurt him all you can, and he tries to hurt you. But it is a poor way to get along. You may however. His friendship is not so necessary to you that you cannot get along without it, and your friendship is not so necessary to him that he cannot do without it. But it is otherwise with God. His friendship is so necessary that we cannot do without it.

Well now, this quarrel between God and us, this old feud, must be made up, if we are going to do anything. It is no use trying to do at all, if God is not with us. I have heard of people selling off and clearing out just because they had neighbors that they could not get along with. And so here is an ighbor, our God, on all sides of us, and how can we get along without Him? How can you farm, if the God in whose hands are the seasons, the showers and sunshine, is not with you to help you? How can you trade, carry on your vast commercial enterprises, send your ships from port to port, if the God who rules the winds and waves, is against you? You may see how it is to be done, but I cannot. The truth is it cannot be done, and the sooner we come to know it, the better for ourselves. Hence, we must have this unnatural quarrel with God, this quarrel that should never have been, terminated. And so we need a daysman, a mediator, one who understands us both, one who enjoys the confidence and esteem of both, that He might come between us, and heal up the wide long standing breach.

But where shall such a daysman be found? Job saw and felt the need of such a daysman, but it was not clear to him that there was any such. It is not always easy to find one who can act the part of a wise daysman between man and man in the small matters of their everyday life and business. Not one in a hundred, perhaps not one in ten thousand, has the necessary qualifications. You would not care to trust your interests, even when it was nothing more than a question of a few dollars, to the judgment of every go-between. But when it comes to such matters as those that lie between you and your God, the questions that concern your eternal salvation and the vindication of Divine justice, how much more difficult still to find one qualified to act the part of a true daysman. The patriarch Job, in the black despondency that came down upon his soul, looked all around him for some one to undertake a daysman's part for him with his God, but there seemed to be none. 'For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.'

Let us next see what sort of a daysman we need. According to Job he must be one who can lay his hand upon both of the disaffected parties. And no wonder he was not able to see where such a daysman was to be found. On the one hand, here is God, infinite in all His perfections, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, dwelling in light inaccessible, blessed forever. On the other hand, here is the sinner, and he is about as low as God is high, dust and ashes, weakness and worthlessness, wretchedness and woe. Now, the problem is to find the connecting link. How can these two, so far apart, so infinitely separated, be brought together into a blessed oneness? Where is to be found the daysman, who, on the one hand, can reach up to the heights of Godhead, and, on the other hand, can reach downward to the moral depths of our degraded manhood? You see, only man, however great and good, could not do, and yet he must be man. What is needed is one who is both God and man; and, in Christ, we have such a daysman. His Divinity is the hand that easily reaches up to Godhead and His Humanity is the other hand that easily reaches down to our poor sinful manhood. Thus what a daysman we know

But consider what it is to be the Daysman that is needed. There are men of great souls, gifted minds; men of splendid mental capacity, who cannot be what they want to be because they are fettered to dust and ashes, chained to a body that is weak with inherited disease, burdened with a crushing load of infirmities. When they would mount up godward as if on eagle wings, and desert themselves amid the glad empyrean of pure thought and desire, they receive such a check as hurls them prone in the dust. Hear the groaning of the mighty Paul, as lashed and lacerated with the thorn in his flesh, and chained to a body of death, he tried so hard, but vainly, to be what he wanted to be! 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? And if men, who are only men, creatures of the dust, find sometimes how hampering and hindering it is to them to have such a body as they have, we can faintly understand what it must have been to the Son of God to be a Son of man, what a weariness it must have been to drag along on foot mile after mile in that slow way to one who has been accustomed to step across all the ages, what a tediousness to grow up as a child has to grow and learn the slow lessons of life as a child has to learn them to one who has ever been and knows all knowledge, and what a sort of degradation it must have been to Him to be down here among men.

But that was not all. There was more than the mere inconvenience of the thing, and that was no little. You wear clothes sometimes that do not fit you. In our latitude at certain seasons it is often necessary to burden your limbs with furs and woollens until you are all out of shape and all useless for work or activity of any sort. And the Son of God with our humanity on Him would feel Himself like one who had clothes on that did not fit, and that were so much in the way of His Divine comfort. But then it was necessary for Him to be so clothed for our sakes. He could not otherwise be one with us. He could not otherwise understand us, and suffer with us and for us. He could not otherwise have a soft human hand to put into ours and lead us up to God—a hand of human flesh and sympathy to lay on our aches and pains and diseases and heal and alleviate them for us. Thus, to come down where we are in our sin and wretchedness and weakness, to take hold of us with His helpfulness, to make Himself little to correspond with our littleness, to be what we are in the very real way He is—to be such a Daysman as He is and must be, I say, how hard it is!

But worse still, He had justice to satisfy, He had a debt to pay, He had a broken law to make good. There were barriers in the way of reconciliation on the side of God as well as on man's side. God was willing to be reconciled—willing to make up the quarrel, most willing. But still, He could not overlook the wrong that man had done by his disobedience. It would not be right to overlook it—right to Himself, right to man, right to the universe. As the God and Judge of all, as at the head of all interests, the representative of all parties, God must see that every right is looked after, every one's interests are conserved. Man had done wrong, and there was no excuse for it. One thing we feel that we are in the wrong, that we have done the wrong, and if so, then justice demands satisfaction before a reconciliation can be effected.

We understand all about it. Here are two men who were once one, but now there is a bitter quarrel between them. The one wronged the other, inexcusably, wickedly, wronged him. Still, the one that was wronged is willing to have it made up between them—not patched up in any sort of way, but really made up, made up in a thoroughly business-like and honorable way. Substantial justice must be done. There are things he can overlook, and ought to overlook, and there are things that he cannot overlook, must not overlook—it would be wrong to overlook them. So the breach is healed in a way alike honorable to both, healed in such a way that neither can feel or say at any time that there are wrongs done that were never undone, rights and interests that were overlooked in the settlement. We all know how ready we are to cast up anything, where, in the settlement of a dispute, a claim has been overlooked. And so it is best for all parties that every claim be settled, every wrong be put right. Only thus can there be a real healing of the breach.

So with this wide breach between God and the sinner. God is anxious to have the breach healed, but if it is healed at all, it must be healed in a way

that is right all round. God's justice must be satisfied. His broken law must be honored. His authority must be upheld. But how is this to be done? The sinner cannot do it. By his sin he has put himself into circumstances where he is utterly incapable of doing the right it is his to do now, much less of doing anything towards giving satisfaction for past neglects and past misdeeds. Thus, so far as the sinner is himself concerned, the breach must ever be, and wider and wider grow as the years go by.

But a Daysman is found, not a mere go-between, but One who is really interested in both the parties. He loves the sinner, and He loves the Father. So, out of love for the sinner, and having a due respect to the Father's just claims, He undertakes to heal the breach, and to heal it so that every claim is made good, every right done, every interest conserved. What an undertaking! We cannot understand it. But when we see our Daysman in the garden, groaning, and praying, and agonising, and sweating blood, as we find Him doing there; when we see Him on yonder accursed tree dying in awful woe there; when we see Him borne to the tomb and buried there, we realize in some feeble way what a hard thing it is to be such a Daysman as we need.

O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head!
Our load was laid on Thee;
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
Bearing all ill for me.

A victim led, Thy blood was shed;
Now there's no load for me.
Still further, the Daysman's claims. I have spoken of the need there is for a Daysman, and of how hard it is to be the one we need. And yet, there is one, the Son of God, and just the Daysman in every respect that we are in need of. Now then, what is there here for us with such a Daysman as we have at hand?

And, one thing is clear, if there is a Daysman, we should avail ourselves of His services. Job felt it was a dreadful thing for him to have a controversy between him and his God going on. And it must be a dreadful thing for us to be in a state of irreconciliation with our God, the God in whom we live and move, the God with whom we have to do. We know how ill for us it is in so many ways to be in trouble with our neighbors. But we can pull up our stakes and go elsewhere; we can seek new neighbors. But here is a neighbor, our God, that we cannot get away from or do without. Go where we like He is there. And our bread comes out of His hand, and our very breath is from Him. And yet, are we not at peace with Him? Do we not love Him, and does He not love us? Is there a long-standing quarrel between us? Oh the risk we are running to let the years go by, and that breach between us and our God unhealed! And there is a Daysman here offering His services to us. He is our friend too, and will not suffer an interest that we have to be uncared for. Oh if we are wise, if we have any regard to what is for our present good and our future prospects, let us make haste to put our case into the hands of Jesus as our Advocate, our Daysman. There is no other mediator, no other way to come to God, and to neglect this way is to be lost.

You think perhaps your interests will be looked after whether you look after them or not. I ask you, if that is the way in other things. You know it is not, and as wise men you try to look after your own interests. You have a case in court perhaps. Well suppose you do not appear. You have no one there to plead for you, no one there to settle it for you, no one there in your interests in any respect, and you are not there for yourself. You know how it will be; the case will go against you.

And you have a case in the court of Divine Justice, a case that is hard on you, a case that means a tremendous loss if you lose it. But you are not concerning yourself about it. Here is one who can bring it out all right for you, but you steadily refuse to let Him to do it. O sinner, how cruel to Him, your friend! how cruel to yourself! As you value your soul, as you hope for Heaven, avail yourself of the services of the Divine Daysman.

A Daysman is so-called, because a day was appointed when he mediated between the contending parties. But I suppose it not unfrequently happened that one of the parties, the one that was most in the wrong and had most to lose, was not on hand at the time. He forgot the day, or, he let some wretched excuse stand in the way of his coming.

And, my hearer, now is the accepted time, to-day is the day of salvation. The great Daysman is at hand and on time