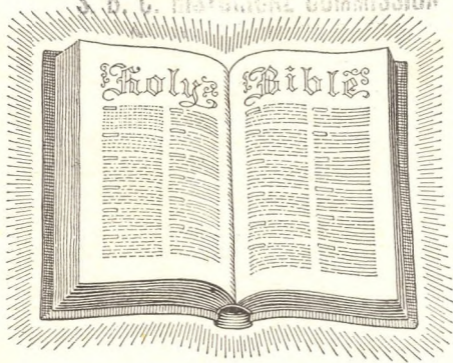


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# A STEWARDSHIP REVIVAL

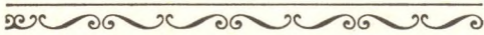
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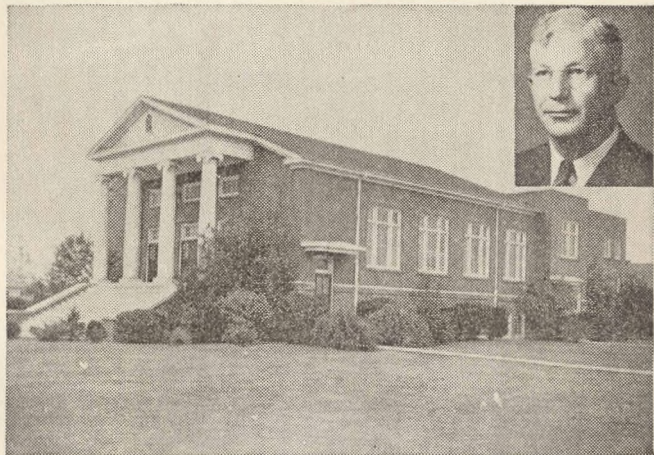


BACK TO THE BIBLE SERIES

By

**B. C. LAND, Director of  
Stewardship and Promotion  
Florida Baptist Convention  
Jacksonville, Florida**





**Dedicated to Pastor W. L. Meadows and First Baptist Church,  
Quitman, Miss.**

The publication of this tract is made possible by, and is dedicated to, Pastor W. L. Meadows and the First Baptist Church, Quitman, Mississippi. It was in this church that I saw my first Stewardship Revival. Though it occurred in October, 1930, it still lives to bless the church, the community, the country and the Cause.

I resigned in 1933, effective August 31. Rev. W. L. Meadows was called in the late fall to succeed me. He took over early in 1934. He has been pastor ever since—twelve years.

He began his work at a critical time for the church and the community. A big lumber mill which had operated there for years discontinued operation a few months prior. The discontinuance of this operation not only deprived the church and community of their biggest payroll, but it affected the morale of the people in the church and community. It was, therefore, Brother Meadows' first obligation to enhearten the church. He built on the solid foundation of God's financial plan of "tithes and offerings" and the Unified Budget, which the church adopted in the Stewardship Revival in 1930. That he succeeded, the twelve years since bear unimpeachable testimony.

Marvelous have been the accomplishments of those twelve years. A total of 500 members have been added, offerings in the amount of \$110,000 have been received, the bonded debt on the new building, in the amount of \$9,500 has been paid off, \$12,000 has been spent on remodeling, repairing, redecorating, and improving the property, \$22,000 given for Missions, Education, and Benevolence, \$8,500 to transport people from the country communities to the Quitman Church for Sunday School, preaching services and the Training Union. These are a few of the outstanding achievements of Pastor Meadows and this church. Truly, a great church and a worthy pastor! May the blessings of God abidingly abound and aboundingly abide upon them!

# A Stewardship Revival

What It Is

Why We Need It

How To Promote It

The words stewardship and revival are familiar to us. Their use is not confined to things religious. We use them freely and frequently in other fields. We talk about a revival of business and the stewardship of an officer of the law, for example.

But while these words themselves are familiar, this combination is not. One searches in vain for it in the religious books and literature of fifty years ago. Not until a time well within the memory of many of us do we find it. In fact, a stewardship revival is so new that many do not yet have a very clearly defined idea of it.

Since this sort of revival is receiving so much emphasis today in both the press and the pulpit, and since it is destined to receive even more emphasis in the future, and since it is of such vital moment to our churches and the Kingdom, it behooves us to give some attention and consideration to it. In the hope of contributing to a clearer understanding and a deeper appreciation of it and of helping to promote such a revival, this message is sent forth in tract form.

## I. WHAT IS A STEWARDSHIP REVIVAL?

This is a vitally important question. It is very necessary that we know the right answer to it. In fact, the right answer is imperative. A wrong conception of a stewardship revival is sure to arouse prejudice and otherwise work harm and hurt, not only to a stewardship revival itself, but to the whole Cause of our Lord.

1. **Real Revival.** In the very outset, let it be clearly and definitely understood that a stewardship revival is a real revival. Some, ignorant of its real meaning, would have us believe that a stewardship revival is merely a money revival; that it is simply and solely an effort to increase the flow of money into the church treasury. Let there be no mistake. It always increases the flow of money into the church treasury, and that very materially, but this is a by-product and not its primary purpose. The increased receipts are simply symptomatic of a stewardship revival.

**Integrates Our Wills With Christ's.** A stewardship revival brings about in the **minds** and **hearts** of **God's people** such a sense of their relationship to God, the great Father-owner, and of their own stewardship, as transforms and revolutionizes their **thinking** and their **living**. A stewardship revival seeks, through means ordained of God,—the preaching and teaching of the Word under the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit,—

to integrate redeemed, regenerate wills with the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. The integration of the will of the believer with the will of Christ is the ideal for which every Christian should strive and for which he should earnestly pray. Such an ideal is attainable, but comparatively only a few ever attain it. Once it is realized, it spiritualizes and transforms everything. Life becomes different. It will never be the same again.

**Twin Impulses.** There are twin impulses in the heart of every true convert and every genuinely revived Christian; **evangelistic concern** for **lost** sinners and **economic concern** for **saved** sinners. Andrew is an illustration of the former. His first thought was of his brother Simon,—“and he brought him to Jesus” (John 1:42). Zachaeus illustrates the latter. His first thought was of his ill-gotten gains and his **economic concern** for, and interest in, the Kingdom of God,—“Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor”, etc. (Luke 19:8). The Pentecostal revival emphasized both these impulses. It made the Andrew impulse mighty in the salvation of three thousand souls in a single day; it made the Zachaeus impulse so mighty and so powerful that many sold houses and lands and shared their goods with the less fortunate. Ananias and Sapphira were killed for playing false with the **economic impulse**.

**Evangelistic Meeting Emphasizes Only One.** Unfortunately, the traditional revival emphasizes only the Andrew impulse. It never emphasizes the Zachaeus impulse except to raise money for the revivalist; and this is done in such a way that it is never constructive and permanent in its effects for good. This failure of the "protracted meeting" to emphasize the economic impulse divinely implanted in the heart of every born-again soul explains our present pitiable and pitiful predicament. No wonder our churches are paupers and "pan-handlers."

**Stewardship Revival Emphasizes Both** It neglects neither **evangelistic passion** for the lost nor **economic passion** for the churches. It regards them as twin impulses and as complementary—neither complete without the other. It brings about the reign of God in the economic relations of Christians.

**2. Scriptural Revival.** Not only is there Scripture teaching for a stewardship revival, but what is more, there is Scripture precedent for it. The Bible has a number of examples of stewardship revivals. The Old Testament gives several examples. For instance, there was one under Nehemiah, one under Hezekiah, one under Jehoida, and done under Josiah. Likewise, we find examples in the New Testament. The great Pentacostal revival which had its beginning immediately following the ascension of our Lord

and which continued for some time, was a stewardship revival. This revival touched every department of the lives of the people. As one reads the inspired record of it in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, the conclusion is inescapable that these Christians were so deeply revived and so thoroughly and completely transformed that they counted nothing too dear for their newly found Saviour and Lord.

The inspired record is clear and comprehensive. Evangelist Luke, speaking under the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit, says: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and the breaking of bread, and in prayer. . . . And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:42-47).

**3. Different Revival.** Perhaps it will help us if we compare a stewardship revival with an evangelistic meeting. There are certain respects in which a stewardship revival and an evangelistic meeting are similar; and likewise, there are respects in which they are very dissimilar.

It will not be amiss to point out some similarities and some dissimilarities.

(1) **Similarities.** For instance, the Bible, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, preaching, prayer, and personal work are common to both. It is impossible to have a soul-stirring, old-fashioned evangelistic meeting apart from the preached Word, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and personal testimony. Just so, it is impossible to have a great stewardship revival without these same things. The promotion of a stewardship revival calls for everlasting emphasis upon these great truths.

(2) **Dissimilarities.** There are certain respects in which a stewardship revival is very different from an evangelistic meeting.

**Different Emphasis.** For instance, the emphasis is different. In the evangelistic meeting, the preacher's emphasis, the emphasis of the personal workers, the emphasis of the prayer meetings, and the emphasis of the music, stress only one great truth: salvation truth—the ruin of sin and salvation by the grace of God through faith in Christ. Over and over the preacher emphasizes that men apart from Christ are damned and doomed, and that only through Christ can they be saved. His mission of necessity limits the scope of his messages to a comparatively small portion of the Word, Sin, law, judg-

ment, hell, repentance, faith, and church relationship constitute the themes.

In the stewardship revival, however, it is very different. The evangelist preaches the Word just as faithfully as the evangelist in the protracted meeting, but his themes and his emphasis are different. He emphasizes God's ownership and our stewardship. He seeks thereby to bring about a right relation between the believer and his property.

**Different Objectives.** Not only is the emphasis different, but likewise the immediate objective. There are two objectives, the immediate and the ultimate, in a stewardship revival; but an evangelistic meeting has only one—the salvation of souls. The immediate objective of a stewardship revival is not the salvation of souls, but the reign of Jesus Christ in, and over, the economic relations of God's people. The ultimate objective is the salvation of souls.

**Bible Principle.** A stewardship revival proceeds on the Bible principle that if God's people are aroused, awakened, and alert to their duties, privileges, and responsibilities, the salvation of sinners will occur as an inevitable consequence. We see this in the revival at Pentecost. Peter and the other workers did not have to beg the three thousand to come to Christ. They were so impressed by the godly lives of the disciples that they came vol-

untarily. This is God's ordained way. We have reversed it so that we plead and persuade people, oftentimes, against their wills, into coming. God's way is the better way. Christians, awakened and aroused to their responsibility and their great privilege in Christ, and who go out under the empowerment and enduement of the Holy Spirit, giving self and substance to Christ, are always soul winners. The Psalmist says of such workers (Psalm 126:6): "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Only God knows what a revival would break out if all our people should suddenly experience a great stewardship revival. When the fountains of liberality are broken up, souls always come to Christ.

Dr. Walt N. Johnson, in "Stewardship Vitalized" gives the following very illuminating and convincing discussion of what it means to win Christians to stewardship: "When one minister who really believes in stewardship wins to stewardship to the pale degree of the tithe even a wage earner, counting the average wage at \$15 a week and the average earning life at twenty years, he puts \$1,560 into Christian work. If in one year he thus wins 100 such wage earners, he starts \$156,000 to coming into Christian work. If he keeps up this pace of winning 100 each year for twenty years, he opens up the sources of \$3,120,000 to flow into Christian work in a generation.

“Can we not find one Baptist minister in ten in the South who will average winning to the experience and practice of stewardship fifty Baptists a year for ten years? That would give us one million stewards. If this million stewards got the average wage of the world’s workers we should then have an income of \$78,000,000 per year for our work. This is a reasonable program, too. Let us get on to it.

“Long before the ten years are out, our present divisive issues would be forgot, and Christian stewardship would be looming as the supreme issue among us.”

(By permission Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee.)

## **II. WHY A STEWARDSHIP REVIVAL?**

A single word answers this question—need. That there is a crying need for a great spiritual stewardship awakening among Christians and in our churches, is patent.

The old-fashioned revival meeting simply does not solve problems. It brings new souls into the Kingdom and into the churches without making any provision for developing and training them. The Negro preacher put it very aptly when he said: “We dips ’em, and den draps ’em.” The consequence is that our people are “babes in Christ,” when they ought to be stalwart and strong in the Christian faith. This is painfully apparent and shows the need for a stewardship revival.

1. **Church Members Reveal Need.** Dr. E. P. Alldredge classifies Baptists under five major heads as follows:

(1) **"Absentees."** Absentee members make up 25% of our total membership. These absentee members are made up of two groups: (a) 920,000 non-resident members, and (b) 480,000 young men and young women in the Armed Forces of our country; making a total of 1,400,000 absentee members, as compared with 4,200,000 resident members. If the reader is interested, he can take the membership of his own church, his own association, or his own state, and apply these percentages, and the results will be approximately correct.

(2) **"Has-Beens."** Thirteen per cent of our resident members are "has-beens." These "has-beens" are made up of three groups: (a) from 5% to 7% of them have retired by reason of old age and the infirmities of the flesh; (b) around 3% of them are temporarily inactive because of illness, personal or family; and (c) about 5% of them are proudly and calmly sitting back on what they used to do in the old church at home. In other words, 546,000 of our 4,200,000 resident members are "has-beens."

(3) **"Going-To-Be's."** We find that 30%, or 1,260,000 of our resident members belong to this class. It is composed of two divisions: (a) about 210,000 are mature people who are waiting until "the proper changes are made" and "every-

thing gets just right"; and (b) 1,050,000 are children and young people who have not yet reached serviceable age.

(4) **"Just Tolerables."** We find that 22% of our resident members, or approximately 924,000 Southern Baptists, are "Just Tolerables." They do just enough and give barely enough to salve their easy-to-satisfy consciences. Whatever they die of, it certainly will not be overwork.

(5) **"Crown Winners."** The records also reveal that 10% of our resident members, or 420,000 Southern Baptists, deserve to be classed as "Crown Winners"; for they are giving the best that is in them to the Lord's Cause all the time. They are the pride and joy of every pastor and every church. They do nearly all the work, teach nearly all the study courses, and do nearly all the giving.

**2. Attendance Records Show Need.** Again, need for a stewardship revival is seen in the poor attendance records of our churches. If all our 4,200,000 resident members attended all of our Sunday services, all our prayer meetings, and brought their tithes and offerings faithfully, we could afford to do without the non-resident members, but regrettably and unfortunately, such is not the case. Instead, we have a very different picture, as the following facts make apparent.

(3) **Church Only Partially Enrolled in Sunday School.** According to the records, only 70% of our Sunday School en-

rollment is made up of church members, and very often, the attendance falls much below this. In fact, the average Sunday School attendance on the part of our church members falls down to as low as 35% or 1,470,000 of our resident church members do not attend Sunday School on an average. It means that 1,200,000 of them are not even enrolled in Sunday School.

(2) **Attendance on Sunday Morning Service.** The church is fortunate indeed which has as many as 45% of its resident members in attendance on any single Sunday morning service. The average is far below this. This means that at the most, 2,210,000 of our 4,200,000 resident members are not present in the Sunday morning services of their churches. In a great many cases in our larger cities, the auditoriums are not large enough to hold half of the resident members if they should all decide to come at one time.

(3) **Church Partially Enrolled in Training Union.** Only about 14% of our church members, on the average, are enrolled in our Training Unions. The average attendance upon the Training Union is not much more than 10% of the resident membership—about 420,000 a week. This means, that some 3,780,000 resident members are totally lost to one of the greatest services of our churches every Sunday.

(4) **Attendance on Sunday Evening**

**Services.** The attendance on the Sunday evening services is much poorer than that of the Sunday morning service. The records show that only 15% of our resident church members are found at the Sunday evening services. In figures, this means that only 630,000 out of a total resident membership of 4,200,000 attend the evening services of their churches on the average.

(5) **Attendance on Mid-Week Prayer services.** To have barely 45% (and it is much lower in many cases) of our resident members attend the Sunday morning worship is bad enough; to have only 15% of our resident members attend the Sunday evening services is worse still, but the saddest of all is that only 5% of our resident members attend the prayer services of their churches. Reduced to figures, this means that only 210,000 members attend the weekly prayer meetings of their churches. It means that 90%, or 3,990,000 of our Baptists are conspicuously absent from the mid-week services of their churches. The prayer service has been called the powerhouse of the church. No wonder our churches are impotent when they should be potent, no wonder they are powerless when they should be powerful, no wonder they are weak when they should be strong! No wonder it takes more than twenty Baptists a year to win one convert to Christ and baptism! Need a stewardship revival? In the face of such

terrible, tragic facts, who would even try to gainsay it?

### 3. **Financial Records Reveal Need.**

There is a very vital relation between **giving** and **going**. Our financial records show how close and vital is this relation. We have seen what poor records our people make in going to the House of God. They are no better **givers** than they are **go-ers**. If they were better go-ers, they, no doubt, would be better givers; and likewise, if they were better givers, they would be better go-ers, for **giving** and **going** go hand in hand. Two things reveal our poor financial records.

(1) **Churches Giving Little or Nothing.** According to the records, we have a large number of churches who give almost nothing for their local work, and nothing for missionary, educational, and benevolent causes. In fact, the records show that 17%, or 4,386 of our 25,800 Southern Baptist churches give next to nothing for their local work and not a penny for missions, education, and benevolences. Surely, these 4,386 churches need a great, Holy Spirit led, church-centered, cross-motivated, Christ-controlled, stewardship revival! Such a revival would completely transform these churches and make them into great missionary agencies instead of liabilities.

(2) **Majority Resident Members Give Nothing.** Taking our 25,800 churches as a whole, barely 45% of the resident mem-

bership gives to the local work of their churches, and not much more than 35% of them give regularly to missions, education, and benevolence. If we count those who give when they attend, as one does who goes to a baseball game or a picture show, even then, less than 50% of our resident members give anything worthy of the name. A stewardship revival would change this. Louisiana Baptists have proved this by their great stewardship program in the last dozen years.

#### 4. Nominal Christianity Reveals Need.

Again, the need for a great stewardship revival is shown by what we may call nominal Christianity. We are told that St. Louis, Missouri, for example, is nearly 76% nominally Christian, that San Antonio, Texas, is nearly 71% nominally Christian, and that New Orleans, Louisiana, is nearly 55% nominally Christian. Moreover, we are told that the 16 outstanding cities of the South are nearly 50% nominally Christian. Are these cities 50% really Christian? Alas, alas, they are not even 25% really Christian! They are veritable hot-beds of sin and vice, where every sort of sin in the catalogue of crime goes on. How these nominally Christian cities need a great stewardship revival! Nor is nominal Christianity confined to the cities. Whatever might have been in the past, it certainly is not true now. There are wide areas, almost wholly destitute, in the country.

### III. HOW TO PROMOTE A STEWARDSHIP REVIVAL

Finally, we come to consider how may we promote a stewardship revival? The answer is very simple. A stewardship revival, with few exceptions, is promoted much the same way as an evangelistic meeting. For example, here are some things which are imperative to the promotion of a stewardship revival.

1. **Realize Need.** The very first thing that should be put down here is a realization on the part of the pastor and his members of the need for such a revival. There is not much hope, nor can there be, of our churches ever having a stewardship revival until we feel the need for it. As long as we are content to go along as we are going, we will continue to live at a poor dying rate; but if the time ever comes when we really feel the need for a great, mighty, soul-stirring, heaven-appointed stewardship revival, we are on our way.

2. **Heart-Hunger.** In the second place, there must be a real heart-hunger for a stewardship revival. One of the most hopeful signs on the horizon today is the fact that many of our pastors, Kingdom builders and leaders feel, deep in their hearts, an unspeakable need for such a revival.

3. **Persevering Prayer.** In the third place, there must be much earnest, effectual, persevering, persistent prayer. Like every other spiritual effort, the ef-

fort to have a spiritual revival must be baptized in prayer, or it is sure to fail. If there is present in the hearts of even a few members of a given church, a spirit of prayer for a stewardship revival, God will hear them and will send such a revival as surely as He lives and reigns in heaven.

4. **Stewardship Preaching.** Again, if we are to have a stewardship revival, we must preach the great stewardship themes of the Scriptures. There is no more fertile field for preaching the Word of God. I have been literally amazed time and time again in the last several months as I have been led by the Holy Spirit to delve into the great themes of stewardship revealed in the sacred Scriptures. It does not matter whether one is thinking of the Old Testament or the New, the truth is the same. One could preach endlessly on stewardship never repeating himself, for a lifetime, and still not exhaust this great field, so rich, so rare and so rewarding.

The content of our preaching determines what happens in the hearts and lives of those to whom we preach. Germany taught us this years ago. Germany wanted a certain type of citizen, and so she prepared a series of texts and put these textbooks in her schools. This explains the Kaisers and the Hitlers and the dictator-minded people of Germany. Now, we are told that the people of Germany must be educated along differ-

ent lines before they will ever think and act differently. Certainly they must. The lesson for us is this: whatever sort of revival we want we must point out messages in that direction. If, for example, we want to bring about a revived consciousness and appreciation of the church, then we must preach on the great theme of the church. If we want to bring about a revived appreciation and appraisal of the doctrine of eternal salvation, we must preach on this theme, emphasizing it ever and anon. If we want to bring about a revival of righteousness and sober thinking, we must preach on the great theme of the Christian life.

Now, what is the application. Simply this: if we want to bring about a revival among our people of the great doctrine of Christian stewardship, we must preach often and again on this subject. People will relish it, just as they do other themes of the Word of God. They will love it equally with any other theme of the Word if we will preach it. We have said God's people would not stand for us to preach on stewardship. There is not a word of truth in this. They will stand for us to preach anything in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit, which the Word of God teaches.

If we want to enlist the people in "tithes and offerings" we must preach for weeks on end on the great basic truths of God's ownership and man's stewardship. After weeks of such em-

phasis, if we will present the tithe as the acknowledgement of God's ownership and man's stewardship, and call for tithers, they will respond graciously and liberally.

I have seen this happen many times. I have seen God's people, aroused, alarmed, and awakened to these great themes have been unfolded to them. I have seen tears of joy and repentance stream down their faces as they have been brought to realize anew and afresh their relationship to God, and to dedicate themselves, their substance, their service, their all, to Christ. I have seen churches lifted to the mountain peaks of glory over the simple preaching of these themes of the blessed Word. God will bless His truth faithfully preached, simply proclaimed, without favor, whether it is salvation, truth, church truth, Christian life truth, baptism truth, Lord's Supper truth, prophetic truth, or stewardship truth. God is not partial to some particular part of His truth. God is behind all of His truth, regardless of what it is. How foolish to imagine that God's blessings are confined to some particular part of it.

God is the Author of all truth. God loves His truth. God will bless the preaching of all His truth. Beloved, preach stewardship truth. By it God will send a great, mighty, stewardship revival. Nothing is more needed in this day of increased riches and great wealth.

The church needs it. God's people need it. The world needs it. Our Missionary Cause needs it.

Beloved, let us preach and plan and pray for a mighty nation-wide stewardship revival.

**5. Person and Work of Holy Spirit.** Finally, if we are to have a real, Scriptural, spiritual, church-stirring, community-shaking stewardship revival, we must make much of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The inspired, infallible record of the great Pentecostal stewardship revival, in the Acts, reveals the illuminating and impressive fact that the Holy Spirit directed in all the details of the revival. The Holy Spirit was in the prayer meeting which preceded, accompanied and followed it. The Holy Spirit was in the preachers and the preaching. The Holy Spirit was in the planning and the personal work and the Holy Spirit was in the membership of the church. No wonder many sold their income-bearing properties and brought the money and put it in the church treasury! No wonder God killed Ananias and Sapphira for playing false with their financial relationship to Him!

Would we duplicate the revival at Pentecost, we must have the Holy Spirit in all our planning, praying, preaching, and programs as did the early church. To ignore Him and His work will mean failure and fruitlessness in all our efforts; to

recognize Him and to be infilled and inspired by Him will mean far-reaching witness for our Christ, our churches and all our Saviour's holy causes. Let us seek Him and be filled with Him! "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." (Zech. 4:6).

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