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*HATH THE RAIN A FATHER?*

# Hath the Rain a Father?

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AUTHOR OF "A BAD PROMISE WELL BROKEN," "A SHADOW IN THE HARVEST  
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## THE PARENTAGE OF THE SHOWER.

“Hath the rain a father?”—*Job xxxviii. 28.*

**T**HIS book of Job has been the subject of unbounded theological wrangle. Men have made it the ring in which to display their ecclesiastical pugilism. Some say that it is a true history; others, that it is an allegory; others, that it is an epic poem; others, that it is a drama. Some say that Job lived eighteen hundred years before Christ; others say he never lived at all. Some say the author of this book was Job; others, David; others, Solomon. The discussion has landed some in blank infidelity. Now, I have no trouble with the books of Job or Revelation—the two most mysterious books in the Bible—because of a rule I adopted some years ago. I wade down into a Scripture passage as long as I can touch bottom, and when I cannot then I wade out. I used to wade in until it was over my head, and then I got drowned. I study a passage of Scripture so long as it is comfort and help to my soul; but when it becomes a perplexity and a spiritual upturning, I quit. In other words, we ought to wade in up to our heart, but



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never wade in until it is over our head. No man should ever expect to swim across this great ocean of Divine truth. I go down into that ocean as I go down into the Atlantic Ocean at East Hampton, Long Island—just far enough to bathe; then I come out. I never had any idea that with my weak hand and foot I could strike my way clear over to Liverpool.

I suppose you understand your family genealogy. You know something about your parents, your grand-parents, your great grand-parents. Perhaps you know where they were born or where they died. Have you ever studied the parentage of the shower—“Hath the rain a father?” This question is not asked by a poetaster or scientist, but by the Head of the universe. To humble and to save Job, God asks him fourteen questions: about the world's architecture, about the refraction of the sun's rays, about the tides, about the snow-crystal, about the lightnings; and then He arraigns him with the interrogation of the text: “Hath the rain a father?” With the scientific wonders of the rain I have nothing to do. A minister gets through with that kind of sermon within the first three years, and if he has piety enough he gets through with it in the first three months. A sermon has come to mean, to me, one word of four letters—“Help!” You all know that the rain is not an orphan. You know it is not cast out of the gates of heaven a foundling. You would answer the question of my text in the affirmative. Safely housed during the storm, you

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hear the rain beating against the window pane, and you find it searching all the crevices of the window sill. It first comes down in solitary drops, pattering the dust, and then it deluges the fields and angers the mountain torrents, and makes the traveller implore shelter. You know that the rain is not an accident of the world's economy. You know it was born of the cloud. You know it was rocked in the cradle of the wind. You know it was sung to sleep by the storm. You know that it is a flying evangel from heaven to earth. You know it is the gospel of the weather. You know that God is its Father.

If this be true, then how wicked is our murmuring about climatic changes! The first eleven Sabbaths after I entered the ministry it stormed. Through the week it was clear weather, but on the Sabbaths the old country meeting-house looked like Noah's ark before it landed. A few drenched people sat before a drenched pastor; but most of the farmers stayed at home and thanked God that what was bad for the church was good for the crops. I committed a good deal of sin in those days in denouncing the weather. Ministers of the gospel sometimes fret about stormy Sabbaths, or hot Sabbaths, or inclement Sabbaths. They forget the fact that the same God who ordained the Sabbath and sent forth His ministers to announce salvation, also ordained the weather. “Hath the rain a father?”

Merchants, also, with their stores filled with new goods and their clerks hanging idly around the counters, commit the same transgression. There

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have been seasons when the whole spring and fall trade has been ruined by protracted wet weather. The merchants then examined the “weather probabilities” with more interest than they read their Bibles. They watched for a patch of blue sky. They went complaining to the store and came complaining home again. In all that season of wet feet and dripping garments and impassable streets, they never once asked the question, “Hath the rain a father?”

So agriculturists commit this sin. There is nothing more annoying than to have planted corn rot in the ground because of too much moisture, or hay all ready for the mow wetted by a shower, or wheat almost ready for the sickle spoiled with the rust. How hard it is to bear the agricultural disappointments! God has infinite resources, but I do not think He has capacity to make weather to please all the farmers. Sometimes it is too hot, or it is too cold; it is too wet, or it is too dry; it is too early, or it is too late. They forget that the God who promised seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, cold and heat, also ordained all the climatic changes.

There is one question that ought to be written on every barn, on every fence, on every haystack, on every farmhouse: “Hath the rain a father?”

If we only knew what a vast enterprise it is to provide appropriate weather for this world, we should not be so critical of the Lord. Isaac Watts, at ten years of age, complained that he did not like the hymns that were sung in the English chapel.

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“Well, Isaac,” said his father, “instead of complaining about the hymns, go and make some that are better.” And he did go and make hymns that were better. Now, I say to you, if you do not like the weather, get up a weather company and have a president, and a secretary, and a treasurer, and a board of directors, and ten million dollars of stock, and then provide weather that will suit all of us. There is a man who has a weak head, and he cannot stand the glare of the sun. You must have a cloud always hovering over him. I like the sunshine. I cannot live without plenty of sunlight. So you must always have enough light for me. Two ships meet in mid-Atlantic; the one is going to Southampton, and the other is coming to New York. Provide weather that while it is abaft for one ship, it is not a head wind for the other. There is a farm that is dried up for the lack of rain, and here is a pleasure party going out for a field excursion. Provide weather that will suit the dry farm and the pleasure excursion. No, sirs, I will not take one dollar of stock in your weather company. There is only one Being in the universe who knows enough to provide the right kind of weather for this world. “Hath the rain a father?”

My text also suggests God's minute supervision. You see the Divine Sonship in every drop of rain. The jewels of the shower are not flung away by a spendthrift who knows not how many he throws, or where they fall. They are all shining princes of heaven. They all have an eternal lineage. They

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are all the children of a king. “Hath the rain a father?” Well, then, I say, if God takes notice of every minute raindrop, He will take notice of the most insignificant affair of my life. It is the astronomical view of things that bothers me. We look up into the night heavens and we say, “Worlds! worlds!” and how insignificant we feel. We stand at the foot of Mount Washington or Mont Blanc and we feel that we are only insects, and then we say to ourselves, “Though the world is so large, the sun is one million four hundred thousand times larger.” “Oh,” we say, “it is no use; if God wheels that great machinery through immensity, He will not take the trouble to look down at me.” Infidel conclusion! Saturn, Mercury, and Jupiter are no more rounded and weighed and swung by the hand of God than are the globules on a lilac bush the morning after a shower. God is no mere in magnitudes than He is in minutiae. If He has scales to weigh the mountains, He has balances delicate enough to weigh the infinitesimal. You can no more see Him through the telescope than you can see Him through the microscope; no more when you look up than when you look down. Are not the hairs of your head all numbered? and if Himalaya has a God, “hath not the rain a father?” I take this doctrine of a particular providence and I thrust it into the very midst of your every-day life. If God fathers a raindrop, is there anything so insignificant in your affairs that God will not father that? When Druryse, the gunsmith, invented the needle-gun which

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decided the battle of *Sadowa*, was it a mere accident? When a farmer's boy showed *Blucher* a short cut by which he could bring his army up soon enough to decide *Waterloo* for England, was it a mere accident? When *Lord Byron* took a piece of money and tossed it up to decide whether or not he should be affianced to *Miss Milbanke*, was it a mere accident which side the money was up and which was down? When the Protestants were besieged at *Beziers*, and a drunken drummer came in at midnight and rang the alarm bell, not knowing what he was doing, but waking up the host in time to fight their enemies that moment arriving, was it an accident? When, in the Irish rebellion, a starving mother flying with her starving child, sank down and fainted on the rocks in the night, and her hand fell over on a warm bottle of milk, did that just happen so? God is either in the affairs of men, or our religion is worth nothing at all, and you had better take it away from us, and instead of this Bible, which teaches us the doctrine, give us a secular book, as the famous *Mr. Fox*, the Member of Parliament, in his last hour cried out, “Read me the eighth book of *Virgil*.” Oh, my friends! let us rouse up to an appreciation of the fact that all the affairs of our life are under a King's command, and under a Father's watch. *Alexander's* war-horse, *Bucephalus*, would allow anybody to mount him when he was unharnessed; but as soon as they put on him the saddle and the trappings of the conqueror, he would allow no one but *Alexander* to touch him. And if a soulless horse could have so much pride in

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his owner, shall not we immortals exult in the fact that we are owned by a King? “Hath the rain a father?”

Again : my subject teaches me that God's dealings with us are inexplicable. That was the original force of my text. The rain was a great mystery to the ancients. They could not understand how the water should get into the cloud, and, getting there, how it should be suspended, or falling, why it should come down in drops. Modern science comes along and says, there are two portions of air of different temperature, and they are charged with moisture, and the one portion of air decreases in temperature so that the water may no longer be held in vapour, and it falls. And they tell us that some of the clouds that look to be only 'as large as a man's hand, and to be almost quiet in the heavens, are great mountains of mist, four thousand feet from the base to the top, and they rush miles a minute. But after all these brilliant experiments of Dr. James Hutton and Saussure and other scientists, there is an infinite mystery about the rain. There is an ocean of the unfathomable in every raindrop, and God says to-day as He said in the time of Job, “If you cannot understand one drop of rain, do not be surprised if My dealings with you are inexplicable.” Why does that aged man, decrepit, beggard, vicious, sick of the world and the world sick of him, live on ; while here is a man in mid-life, consecrated to God, hardworking, useful in every respect, who dies? Why does that old gossip, gadding along the street about every-

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body's business but her own, have such good health; while the Christian mother, with a flock of little ones about her whom she is preparing for usefulness and for heaven—the mother who you think could not be spared an hour from that household—why does she lay down and die? Why does that man, selfish to the core, go on adding fortune to fortune, consuming everything in himself, continue to prosper; while that man who has been giving ten per cent. of all his income to God and the church goes into bankruptcy? Before we make stark fools of ourselves, let us stop pressing this everlasting “Why?” Let us worship where we cannot understand. Let a man take that one question, “Why?” and follow it far enough and push it, and he will land in wretchedness and perdition. We want in our theology fewer interrogation marks and more exclamation points. Heaven is the place for explanation. Earth is the place for trust. If you cannot understand so minute a thing as a raindrop, how can you expect to understand God's dealings? “Hath the rain a father?”

Again: my text makes me think that the rain of tears is of Divine origin. Great clouds of trouble sometimes hover over us. They are black, and they are gorged, and they are thundrous. They are more portentous than Salvatoré or Claude ever painted—clouds of poverty, or persecution, or bereavement. They hover over us, and they get darker and blacker, and after awhile a tear starts, and we think by an extra pressure of the eyelid to stop that tear; but we cannot stop it. Others follow, and after awhile there



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is a shower of tearful emotion. Yea, there is a rain of tears. “Hath that rain a father?” “Oh!” you say, “a tear is nothing but a drop of limpid fluid secreted by the lachrymal gland; it is only a sign of weak eyes.” Great mistake. It is one of the Lord’s richest blessings to the world. There are people in Blakewell’s Island Insane Asylum, and at Utica, and in all the asylums of this land, who were demented by the fact that they could not cry at the right time. Said a maniac in one of our public institutions under a gospel sermon that started the tears, “Do you see that tear? That is the first tear I have wept for twelve years. I think it will help my brain.” There are a great many in the grave who could not stand any longer under the glacier of trouble. If that glacier had only melted into weeping, they could have endured it. There have been times in your life when you would have given the world, if you had possessed it, for one tear. You could shriek, you could blaspheme, but you could not cry. Have you never seen a man holding the hand of a dead wife who had been all the world to him — the temples lurid with excitement, the eye dry and frantic, no moisture on the upper or the lower lid? You saw there were bolts of anger in that cloud but no rain. To your Christian comfort, he said, “Don’t talk to me about God; there is no God, or if there is I hate Him! Don’t talk to me about God! Would He have left me and these motherless children?” But a few hours or days after, coming across some little thing that she had owned in her life, or some

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letters which she wrote when he was away from home, with an outcry that appals the room, there bursts the fountain of tears; and as the sunlight of God's consolation strikes that fountain of tears, you find out that it is a tender-hearted, pitiful, all-compassionate God who was the Father of that rain. “Oh!” you say, “it is absurd to think that God is going to watch our tears.” No, my friends. There are three or four kinds of them that God counts, bottles, and eternises. First, there are all parental tears, and there are more of these than of any other kind, because the most of the race die in infancy, and that keeps parents mourning all round the world. They never get over it. They may live to shout and sing afterwards, but there is always a corridor in the soul that is silent, though it once resounded. My parents never mentioned the death of a child who died fifty years before, without a tremor in the voice and a sigh. It was better she should die. It was a mercy she should die. She would have been a life-long invalid. But you cannot argue away a parent's grief. How often you hear the moan, “Oh, my child! my child!” Then there are the filial tears. Little children soon get over the loss of parents. They are easily diverted with a new toy. But where is the man that has come to thirty or forty or fifty years of age, who can think of the old people without having all the fountains of his soul stirred up? You may have had to take care of them a good many years, but you never can forget how they used to take care of you. During the past winter

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we have had many sea captains converted in this church, and the peculiarity of them was that they were nearly all prayed ashore by their mothers, though their mothers went into the dust soon after they went to sea. Have you never heard an old man, in the delirium of some sickness, call for his mother? The fact is, we get so used to calling her for the first ten years of our life, we never get over it, and when she goes away from us it makes deep sorrow. You sometimes, perhaps, in days of trouble and darkness, when the world would say, “You ought to be able to take care of yourself,” wake up from your dreams, finding yourself saying, “Oh, mother, mother!” Have these tears no Divine origin? Why, take all the warm hearts that ever beat in all lands and in all ages, and put them together, and their united throb would be weak compared with the throb of God’s eternal sympathy.

God also is the Father of all that rain of repentance. Did you ever see that rain? Do you know what it is that makes a man repent? I see people going about trying to repent. They cannot repent. Do you know, no man can repent until God helps him to repent? How do I know? By this passage: “Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance.” Oh! it is a tremendous hour when one wakes up and says, “I am a bad man! I have not sinned against the laws of the land, but I have wasted my life. God asked me for my services and I haven’t given those services. Oh, my sins—God forgive me!” When that tear starts it thrills all heaven. An angel cannot keep his eye off it, and

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the Church of God assembles around, and there is a commingling of tears—there is a rain of tears, and God is the Father of that rain, the Lord, long-suffering, merciful, and gracious. In a religious assemblage a man arose and said, “I have been a very wicked man. I broke my parents’ heart; I became an infidel; but I have seen my evil way, and I have surrendered my heart to God. But it is a grief I cannot get over that my parents should never have heard of my salvation; I don’t know whether they are living or dead.” While yet he was standing in the audience, a voice from the gallery said, “Oh, my son, my son!” He looked up, and he recognised her. It was his old mother. She had been praying for him for a great many years; and when at the foot of the Cross the prodigal son and the praying mother embraced each other, there was a rain, a tremendous rain of tears, and God was the Father of those tears. I wonder if it will not be so this morning? Oh that God would break us down with a sense of our sin, and then lift us up with an appreciation of His mercy! Tears over our wasted life; tears over a grieved Spirit; tears over an injured Father. Oh that God would move upon this audience this morning with a great wave of religious emotion. Repent! Repent! The king of Carthage was dethroned. His people rebelled against him. He was driven into banishment. His wife and children were outrageously abused. Years went by and he made many friends. He gathered up a great army. He marched again towards Carthage. Reaching the gates of Carthage,

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the best men of the place came out barefooted and bareheaded and with ropes round their necks, crying for mercy. They said, “We abused you, and we abused your family; but we cry for mercy.” He looked down upon the people from his chariot and said, “I come to bless, I did not come to destroy. You drove me out, but this day I pronounce pardon for all the people. Open the gates, and let the army come in.” The king marched in and took the throne, and the people all shouted, “Long live the king!” My friends, you have driven the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Church, away from your heart, you have been maltreating Him all these years; but He comes back to-day; He stands in front of the gates of your soul. If you will only cry for His pardon, He will meet you in a gracious spirit, and He will say, “Thy sins and thine iniquities I will remember no more. Open wide the gate; I will take the throne; My peace I give unto you.” And then all through the audience, from the young to the old, there will be a rain of tears, and God will be the Father of that rain.

## THE LAUGHTER OF THE BIBLE.

“Then was our mouth filled with laughter.”—*Ps.* cxxvi. 2.

“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh.”—*Ps.* ii. 4.

**T**HIRTY-EIGHT times does the Bible make reference to this configuration of the features and quick expulsion of breath which we call laughter. Sometimes it is born of the sunshine, and sometimes the midnight. Sometimes it stirs the sympathies of angels, and sometimes the cachinnation of devils. All healthy people laugh; whether it pleases the Lord or displeases Him, that depends upon when we laugh and at what we laugh. My theme this morning is the laughter of the Bible, namely: Sarah's laugh, or that of scepticism; David's laugh, or that of spiritual exultation; the fool's laugh, or that of sinful merriment; God's laugh, or that of infinite condemnation; Heaven's laugh, or that of eternal triumph. Scene: an Oriental tent. The occupants, old Abraham and Sarah, perhaps wrinkled and decrepit. Their three guests are three angels, the Lord Almighty is of them. In return for the hospitality shown by the old people, God promises Sarah that she shall become the ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sarah laughs in the face of God; she does not believe it. She is affrighted at

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what she has done. She denies it; she says, "I didn't laugh." Then God retorted, with an emphasis that silenced all disputation, "But thou didst laugh." My friends, the laugh of scepticism in all the ages is only the echo of Sarah's laughter. God says He will accomplish a thing, and men say it cannot be done. A great multitude laugh at the miracles. They say they are contrary to the laws of nature. What is a law of nature? It is God's way of doing a thing. You ordinarily cross the river at Fulton Ferry. To-morrow you change for one day and you go across Wall Street Ferry. You made the rule; have you not a right to change it? I ordinarily come in at that door (pointing to a side entrance) of the church. Suppose next Sabbath I should come in at the other door? It is a habit I have. Have not I a right to change my habit? A law of nature is God's habit—His way of doing things. If He makes the law, has He not a right to change it at any time He wants to change it? Alas! for the folly of those who laugh at God when He says, "I will do a thing;" they responding, "You can't do it." God says that the Bible is true—it is all true. Bishop Colenso laughs. Herbert Spencer laughs. Stuart Mill laughs. All the German Universities laugh. Harvard laughs—softly! A great many of the learned institutions of this country, with long rows of professors seated on the fence between Christianity and infidelity, laugh softly. They say, "We didn't laugh." That was Sarah's trick. God thunders from the heavens, "But thou didst laugh." The

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garden of Eden was only a fable. There never was any ark built, or if it was built it was too small to hold two of every kind. The pillar of fire by night was only the northern lights. The ten plagues of Egypt only a brilliant specimen of jugglery. The sea parted because the wind blew violently a great while from one direction. The sun and moon did not put themselves out of the way for Joshua. Jacob's ladder was only bow-parted and picturesque clouds. The destroying angel smiting the firstborn in Egypt was only cholera infantum become epidemic. The gullet of the whale, by positive measurement, too small to swallow a prophet. The story of the immaculate conception a shock to all decency. The lame, the dumb, the blind, the halt, cured by mere human surgery. The resurrection of Christ's friend only a beautiful tableau, Christ and Lazarus and Mary and Martha acting their parts well. My friends, there is not a doctrine or statement of God's Holy Word that has not been derided by the scepticism of this day. I take up this book of King James's translation. I consider it a perfect Bible ; but here are sceptics who want it torn to pieces. And now, with this Bible in my hand, let me tear out all those portions which the scepticism of this day demands shall be torn out. What shall go first ? " Well," says some one in the audience, " take out all that about the Creation, and about the first settlement of the world." Away goes Genesis. " Now," says some one, " take out all that about the miraculous guidance of the children of Israel in the wilderness." Away goes Exodus.



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"Now," says some one else in the audience, "there are things in Deuteronomy and Kings that are not fit to be read." Away go Deuteronomy and Kings. "Now," says some one, "the book of Job is a fable that ought to come out." Away goes the book of Job. "Now," says some one, "those passages in the New Testament which imply the divinity of Jesus Christ ought to come out." Away go the Evangelists. "Now," says some one, "the book of Revelation was preposterous: it represents a man with the moon under his feet and a sharp sword in his hand." Away goes the book of Revelation. Now there are a few pieces left. What shall we do with them? "Oh," says some one in the audience, "I don't believe a word of the Bible from one end to the other." Well, it is all gone. Now you have put out the last light for the nations. Now it is the pitch darkness of eternal midnight. How do you like it? But I think, my friends, we had better keep the Bible a little longer intact. It has done pretty well for a good many years. I hear there are old people who find it a comfort to have it on their laps, and children like the stories in it. Let us keep it for a curiosity anyhow. If the Bible is to be thrown out of the school, and out of the court room, so that men no more swear by it, and it is to be put in a dark corridor of the city library, the Koran on one side and the writings of Confucius on the other, then let us each one keep a copy for himself; for we might have trouble, and we should want to be under the delusions of its consolations, and we might die, and we should

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want the delusions of the exalted residence at God's right hand which it mentions. Oh, what an awful thing it is to laugh in God's face and hurl His revelation back at Him! After awhile the day will come when they will say they did not laugh. Then all the hypercriticisms, all the caricatures, and all the learned sneers in the *Quarterly Review* will be brought to judgment; and amid the rocking of everything beneath, and amid the flaming of everything above, God will thunder, "But thou didst laugh!" I think the most fascinating laughter at Christianity I ever remember was Theodore Parker. He made the Word of God seem ridiculous, and he laughed on at our holy religion until he came to die, and then said, "My life has been a failure: a failure domestically—I have no children; a failure socially, for I am treated in the streets like a pirate; a failure professionally, because I know but one minister that has adopted my sentiments." For a quarter of a century he laughed at Christianity, and ever since Christianity has been laughing at him. Now, it is a mean thing to go into a man's house and steal his goods; but I tell you the most gigantic burglary ever enacted is the proposition to steal these treasures of our holy religion. The meanest laughter ever uttered is the laughter of the sceptic.

The next laughter mentioned in the Bible is David's laughter, or the expression of spiritual exultation. "Then was our mouth filled with laughter." He got very much down sometimes; but there are other chapters where, for four or five times, he calls

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upon the people to praise and exult. It was not a mere twitch of the lips ; it was a demonstration that took hold of his whole physical nature. "Then was our mouth filled with laughter." My friends, this world will never be converted to God until Christians cry less and laugh and sing more. The horrors are a poor bait. If people are to be persuaded to adopt our holy religion, it will be because they have made up their mind it is a happy religion. They do not like an ultra-bilious Christianity. I know there are morbid people who enjoy a funeral. They come early to see the friends take leave of the corpse, and they steal a ride to the cemetery ; but all healthy people enjoy a marriage better than they do a burial. Now, you make the religion of Christ sepulchral and hearse-like, and you make it repulsive. I say, plant the rose of Sharon along the church walks, and columbine to clamber over the church wall, and have a smile on the lip, and have the mouth filled with holy laughter. There is no man in the world except the Christian that has a right to feel an untrammelled glee. He is promised that everything is the best here, and he is on the way to a delight which will take all the processions with palm-branches, and all the orchestras harped and cymballed and trumpeted, to express. "Oh !" you say, "I have so much trouble." Have you more trouble than Paul had ? What does he say ? "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; poor, yet making [many rich ; having nothing, yet possessing all things." The merriest laugh I think I ever heard has been in the sick room of God's dear

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children. When Theodosius was put upon the rack, he suffered very great torture at the first. Somebody asked him how he endured all that pain on the rack. He replied, "When I was first put upon the rack, I suffered a great deal; but very soon a young man in white stood by my side, and with a soft and comfortable handkerchief he wiped the sweat from my brow, and my pains were relieved. It was punishment for me to get from the rack, because when the pain was all gone the angel was gone." Oh! rejoice evermore. You know how it is in the army—an army in encampment. If to-day news comes that our side has had a defeat, and to-morrow another portion of the tidings comes, saying, "We have had another defeat," it demoralises all the host. But if the news come of victory to-day and victory to-morrow, the whole army is impassioned for the contest. Now, in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ report fewer defeats; tell us the victories. Victory over sin and death and hell. Rejoice evermore, and again I say rejoice! I believe there is more religion in a laugh than in a groan. Anybody can groan, but to laugh in the midst of banishment and persecution and indescribable trials—that requires a David, a Daniel, a Paul, a modern heroine.

The next laughter mentioned in the Bible that I shall speak of is the fool's laughter, or the expression of merriment. Solomon was very quick and simile: when he makes a comparison we all catch it. What is the laughter of a fool like? He says "it is the crackling of thorns under a pot." The kettle is

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swung, a bunch of brambles is put under it, and the torch is applied to it, and there is a great noise and a big blaze, and a sputter and a quick extinguishment. Then it is darker than it was before. Fool's laughter. The most miserable thing on earth is a bad man's fun. There they are, ten men in a bar-room. They have at home wives, mothers, daughters. The impure jest starts at one corner of the bar-room, and crackle, crackle, crackle it goes all around. In five hundred such guffaws there is not one item of happiness. They all feel demeaned, if they have any conscience left. Have nothing to do with men or women who tell smutty stories. I have no confidence either in their Christian character or their morality. So, all merriment that springs out of the defects of others—caricature of a lame foot or a curved spine, or a blind eye, or a deaf ear—will be met with the judgments of God either upon you or your children. Twenty years ago, in this city of Brooklyn, I knew a man who was particularly skilful in imitating the lameness of a neighbour. Not long ago, a son of the skilful mimic had his leg amputated for the very defect which his father had mimicked years before. I do not say it was a judgment of God; I leave you to make your own inference. So all merriment born of dissipation—that which starts at the counter of the drinking restaurant, or from the wine-glass in the home circle, the maudlin simper, the meaningless joke, the saturnalian gibberish, the paroxysm of mirth about nothing that you sometimes see in the fashionable club-room or the ex-

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quisite parlour at twelve o'clock at night—are the crackling of thorns under a pot. Such laughter and such sin end in death. When I was a lad, a book came out entitled "Dow Jr.'s Patent Sermons." It made a great stir, a very wide laugh all over the country, that book did. It was a caricature of the Christian ministry and of the Word of God, and of the day of judgment. Oh! we had a great laugh. The commentary on the whole thing is, that not long ago the author of that book died in poverty, shame, debauchery, kicked out of society and cursed of Almighty God. The laughter of such men as he is the echo of their own damnation.

The next laughter that I shall mention as being in the Bible is the laugh of God's condemnation. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." Again: "The Lord will laugh at him." Again: "I will laugh at his calamity." With such demonstration will God greet every kind of great sin and wickedness. Bad men built up villanies higher and higher. Good men almost pity God because He is so schemed against by men. Suddenly a pin drops out of the machinery of wicked men, or a secret is revealed, the foundation begins to rock. Finally the whole thing is demolished. What is the matter? I will tell you what the matter is. That crash of ruin is only the reverberation of God's laughter. On Wall Street there are a great many good men and a great many fraudulent men. A fraudulent man there says, "I mean to have my million." He goes to work reckless of honesty, and he gets his first

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\$100,000. He gets after awhile his \$200,000; after awhile he has his \$500,000. "Now," he says, "I have only one more move to make and I shall have my million." He gathers up all his resources; he makes that one last grand move, and he has not enough money of his own left to pay the ten cents on the Broadway stage on his way home. People cannot understand this spasmodic revulsion. Some said it was a sudden turn in Erie Railroad Stock, or in Western Union, or in Illinois Central. Some said it was Jay Gould. Some said it was Cornelius Vanderbilt. Some said it was Daniel Drew. They all guessed wrong. I will tell you what it was. "He that sitteth in the heavens laughed." A man in New York said he would be the richest man in the city. He left his honest work of chair-making and got into the city council some way, and in ten years stole \$15,000,000 from the city Government. Fifteen million dollars! He held the Legislature of the State of New York in the grip of his right hand. Suspicions were aroused. The grand jury presented indictments. The whole land stood aghast. The man who expected to put half the city in his vest pocket goes to Blackwell's Island, goes to Ludlow Street Gaol, breaks prison and goes across the sea, is re-arrested and brought back. Skilful counsel for a long while have attempted the clearance of that man, as yet not successful. Why? "He that sitteth in the heavens laughs." Rome was a great empire. She had Horace and Virgil among her poets. She had Augustus and Constantine among

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her conquerors. But what mean the defaced Pantheon and the Forum turned into a cattle-market, and the broken-walled Coliseum, and the architectural skeleton of her great aqueducts? What was that thunder? "Oh!" you say, "that was the roar of the battering rams against her walls." No. What was that quiver? "Oh!" you say "that was the tramp of hostile legions." No. The quiver and the roar were the outbursts of omnipotent laughter from the defied and insulted heavens. Rome defied God, and He laughed her down. Thebes defied God, and He laughed her down. Nineveh defied God, and He laughed her down. Babylon defied God, and He laughed her down. There is a great difference between God's laugh and His smile. His smile is eternal beatitude. He smiled when David sang, and Miriam clapped the cymbals, and Hannah made garments for her sons, and Paul preached, and John kindled with apocalyptic vision, and when any man has anything to do and does it well. His smile! Why, it is the 15th of May, the apple orchards in full bloom. It is morning breaking on a rippling sea. It is heaven at high noon, all the bells ringing. But His laughter—may it never fall on us! It is a condemnation for our sin. It is a wasting away. We may let the satirist laugh at us, and all our companions laugh at us, and we be made the target for the merriment of earth and hell; but God forbid that we should ever come to the fulfilment of the prophecy against the rejectors of the truth: "I will laugh at your calamity."



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But, my friends, all of us who reject the pardon of the gospel are to come under that tremendous bombardment. God wants us all to repent; He counsels; He coaxes; He importunes; He begs us; He comes down out of heaven; He put all the world's sin on one shoulder; he puts all the world's sorrow on the other shoulder, and then with that Alps on one side and that Himalaya on the other, He starts up the hill-back of Jerusalem to achieve our salvation. He put the palm of His right foot on one long spike, and He puts the palm of His left foot on another long spike, and then, with His hands spotted with His own blood, He gesticulates, saying, "Look! look! and live. With the crimson veil of My sacrifice I will cover all your sins. With My dying groan I will swallow up all your groans. Look! live!" But a thousand of you this morning turn your back to that, and then this voice of invitation turns to a tone divinely ominous, that sobs like a simoom or an equinox through the first chapter of Proverbs: "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all My counsel, and would none of My reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity." Oh, what a laugh that is! A deep laugh—a long, reverberating laugh—an overwhelming laugh. God grant we may never hear it! But in this day of merciful visitation, yield your heart to Christ, that you may spend all your life on earth under His smile, and escape for ever the thunder of the laugh of God's indignation.

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The other laughter mentioned in the Bible, the only one I shall speak of, is Heaven's laughter, or the expression of eternal triumph. Christ said to His disciples, "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh." That makes me know positively that we are not to spend our days in heaven singing long-metre songs. The formalistic and stiff notions of heaven that some people have would make me miserable. I am glad to know that the heaven of the Bible is not only a place of holy worship but of magnificent sociality. "What!" say you, "will the ringing laugh go around the circle of the saved?" I say yes; pure laughter, cheering laughter, holy laughter. It will be a laugh of congratulation. When we meet a friend who has suddenly come to a fortune, or who has got over some dire sickness, do we not shake hands, do we not laugh with him? And when we get to heaven and see our friends there, some of them having come up out of great tribulation, why, we will say to one of them, "The last time I saw you, you had been suffering for six weeks under a low intermittent"; or to another we will say, "You for ten years were limping with the rheumatism, and you were full of complaints when we saw you last. I congratulate you on this eternal recovery." Ye shall laugh. Yes; we shall congratulate all those who have come up out of great financial embarrassments in this world, because they have become millionaires in heaven. Ye shall laugh. It will be a laugh of re-association. It is just as natural for us to laugh

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when we meet a friend we have not seen for ten years as anything is possible to be natural. When we meet our friends from whom we have been parted ten or twenty or thirty years, will it not be with infinite congratulation? Our perception quickened, our knowledge improved, we will know each other at a flash. We will have to talk over all that has happened since we have been separated; the one that has been ten years in heaven telling us all that has happened in the ten years of his heavenly residence, and we telling him in return all that has happened during the ten years of his absence from earth. Ye shall laugh. I think George Whitefield and John Wesley will have a laugh of contempt for their earthly collisions; and Toplady and Charles Wesley will have a laugh of contempt for their earthly misunderstanding; and the two farmers who were in a lawsuit all their days will have a laugh of contempt over their earthly disturbance about a line fence. Exemption from all annoyance. Immersion in all gladness. Ye shall laugh. Christ says, "Ye shall laugh." Yes; it will be a laugh of triumph. Oh, what a pleasant thing it will be to stand on the wall of heaven and look down at Satan, and hurl at him defiance, and see him caged and chained, and we for ever free from his clutches! Aha! Aha! Yes; it will be a laugh of royal greeting. You know how the Frenchmen cheered when Napoleon came back from Elba. You know how the English cheered when Wellington came back from Waterloo. You know how Americans cheered when Kossuth arrived from

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Hungary. You remember how Rome cheered when Pompey came back victor over nine hundred cities. Every cheer was a laugh. But oh! the mightier greeting, the gladder greeting, when the snow-white cavalry troop of heaven shall go through the streets, and, according to revelation, Christ in the red coat.

## THE HOVERING BLESSING.

“And there was a great rain.”—1 *Kings* xviii. 45.

**A** LONG, consuming drought had come upon the land. The leaves crumpled; the earth brake open; the buckets came down on the stony bottom of the well, and found no water; the cattle bellowed with thirst on the banks of the ravine that was once all a-rush with liquid brightness. Alas! must the nation die? Up the side of Mount Carmel go Elijah, his servant, and King Ahab. There is a magnificent prospect from the top of Mount Carmel. You can look off upon the Mediterranean and see vessels moving up and down, carrying the commerce of great nations. It is a very conspicuous point. The sailor to this day calls it Cape Carmel. But Elijah did not go to the top of the mountain for the fine prospect. He went up there to pray for rain; and the Bible says he cast himself down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, and cried mightily unto the Lord that the land might not perish, but that the showers might come. As soon as he had finished the first prayer, he sent his servant to the outlook of the mountain to see if there were any signs of rain. The servant came back and said, “No signs of

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rain." Again Elijah prayed, and again the servant went to the outlook and came back with the same information; and the third time and the fourth, and no rain; and the fifth time, and no rain; and the sixth time, and no signs of rain. And then Elijah threw himself into a more importunate petition, and for the seventh time he cried unto the Lord, and for the seventh time he sent his servant to the outlook. Lo! the young man came back saying, "I see a little cloud five or six inches long, about the size of a man's hand." Elijah leaped from his knees and said to the servant, "Run and tell King Ahab to get down out of the mountain. The freshets will come, and unless he flies now, he will never get home." The servant starts for King Ahab. Ahab gets in the chariot and speeds down the mountain, and Elijah, more swift-footed than the horses, leads the chariot down the hill. The cloud that was only five or six inches long expands until the whole heaven is filled with gloom, and the wind blows up from the sea to the mountain and from the mountain to the sea, and the thunders boom, and there is a wild, overwhelming dash as the clouds burst, and the forests are drenched, and the earth sings. "And there was a great rain."

"Well," you say, "what is that to us? It is an incident long ago past. The last drop of that shower is exhaled, the very last leaf that was washed by it has gone into dust, and why do you present it this morning?" For a most practical purpose. I want to send this whole church to its knees. I want

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to have you understand that if you will only go up to the Carmel of prayerful expectation and look off, you can behold already vapours gathering into a cloud of mercy which will burst in torrents of salvation upon the people. I have to tell you three or four things about that wonderful prayer of Elijah which resulted so marvellously.

First: it was a *humble prayer*. Mark the language of the Bible: "He cast himself on the earth, and put his face between his knees." "Oh!" you say, "the posture of the body doesn't decide the earnestness of the soul." I know that; but the feeling of the soul very often indicates what shall be the position of the body. There was sorrow in your house. Clouds of bereavement hovered. You were afraid you would lose that loved one. You went to your room; you locked the door; you prayed for the recovery of that sick one. What position did you take? Did you sit upright? Did you stand? No; you either knelt or you threw yourself on your face before God. You had no idea position would have any effect with God, but the position you took was the result of your feeling. No wonder, then, that Elijah, with his own sins to confess, and the sins of a nation, took that humble posture, and it is most appropriate to-day for us. How are we living? Within a few years—yes, perhaps within a few hours—of our last account; yet, cold and worldly and selfish and proud. Where is the mercy-seat? How little we pray! Where is Jesus? How little we seek His society! Where are the impenitent?

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How little we do for their rescue! Where is heaven? How little its raptures kindle our soul! Cold and hard, ought we not to-day, you in the pew and I on the platform, to take before God the same posture that Elijah took? Tell me, are we all sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty? Are we the souls that have been ransomed? Was that Cross of inexpressible pain the price that was paid for our rescue? Look over the past five, ten, fifteen years of our life—how much wasted opportunity! Professing to live for God and eternity, has not our profession sometimes been a lie, and our position a by-word? Oh, my brethren and sisters, we must come down out of this pride. We must humble ourselves before God, as Elijah did. Church of God, repent! repent! To the dust! Put on sackcloth! Weep aloud for thy sin! Wail for the dead!

Again I remark in regard to this prayer of Elijah: It was *a persistent prayer*. He prayed once—no answer; twice—no answer; three times—no answer; four times—no answer; five times—no answer; six times—no answer; and the seventh time, when the blessing came; and if it had not come the seventh time, he would have kept on to the one hundredth time. An occasional petition for a blessing upon us and our families and our church does not amount to much. It wants persistent, unrelenting imploration. Prayer after prayer, besiegement after besiegement, prostration after prostration, a sobbing, a groaning of earnestness. If the prayer is not answered the first time, keeping on



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to the thousandth time, keeping on, though we die on our knees. A story is told of the Apostle James, that after he was dead they examined his body, and they found that his knees were calloused from much kneeling. Oh that we had some such persistence before God! Is not the object for which we struggle worth a struggle? It is your own heaven; and beside that, it is the question of the snatching back of your own loved ones from eternal disaster. Plead before God, and plead again. Do not give it up. Day in and day out, night in and night out, rising and retiring, in store, in street, in car—everywhere, by the throne of judgment, by the joys of heaven, by the horrors of hell—plead, plead until God shall come, and the church shall be moved, and the impenitent shall fly for mercy, and there shall be “a great rain.” Do not wait for others. Christians are very apt to wait for somebody else to do their duty.

When God's Spirit was so mightily poured out in 1837 all over this land, do you know where the influence started? It was from a blacksmith's shop, where a consecrated man stood day after day pounding the iron, and at the same time importuning God for the redemption of all the village where he lived; and it was the spark from that one forge which set the whole land on fire with Christian awakening and illumination. Oh, pray! pray! pray!

I remark again in regard to the petition of Elijah: It was a *definite prayer*. There were fifty things that Elijah would have liked to have had for himself;

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there were fifty things he would have liked to have had for the people; but he goes there and asks for just one thing, and that is rain.

My friends, there are too many glittering generalities in our prayers. I think that is the reason they do not amount to much. We must go before God with some specific errand, and say, "Here are my children, strangers to the covenant of grace, having no part or lot in the matter. O Lord, save my children!" and just call them by name. You have been asking that the commercial world be consecrated to Christ, and that was a glittering generality. Why do you not say, "Here is my partner in business, all absorbed in the world; O Lord, convert him by Thy grace, and show him that there is something better for his soul than this world"? I wish I could make you feel that you are responsible for some one soul. Do you not suppose that when you come before God in judgment, He will ask you about those over whom you had an influence? Will He not ask you about your own children? Will He not say, "Where is John, or George, or Mary, or Sarah, or Hannah? Where are they?" And if in that hour you say, "I don't know, I don't know," perhaps God will point and say, "There, do you see that? Do you know what that is? Why, that is the blood of their souls on your garment!"

I remark again that this prayer of Elijah was a *confident prayer*. There were no "maybe's" about it. Why was it that, when he was praying, he sent

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his servant to the outlook? It was because he knew rain was going to come, and he wanted to know the first moment of its arrival, so that he could get down the mountain. He knew that the rain would come, just as certainly as Carmel rose above him, and the Mediterranean lay beneath him. Have you the same positiveness of expectation? Do you believe God really means it when He says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"? or is your imploration a mere matter of indefinite "perhaps"? Then away with your prayers; they will die on your lips. Coming to God with such an insulting unbelief, He will spurn you away from Him. Oh, my dear brethren and sisters in Christ, how can we halt, and stagger, and doubt, with the Bible full of promises, and heaven full of glories, and God full of mercy and salvation for all the people?

Some years ago, a vessel went out from a port on Lake Erie. It was just as the ice was going out of the lake, and when it starts to go out it hardly ever returns. The vessel put out, but, strange to say, the ice returned and surrounded the vessel, and the captain saw they must go down unless some wonderful relief came from some source which he knew not. So he gathered the passengers in the cabin and said, "I will tell you the whole truth. I have done all I can to deliver this vessel, and we must go down unless more than human means are brought to our aid. Is there any one here that can pray?"

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It was all still for a minute. Then the first mate or the second mate said, with a good deal of tremor and modesty, "Let us pray!" So he knelt down before God, in the cabin, and told of their perils and of the loved ones at home, and how they would like to get home again, and asked God to "spare their lives and save the ship!" They arose, and lo! the ice had parted, and the vessel floated through the channel-way. One of the sailors said to the captain, "Shall we put on more sail?" He said, "No; there is a Hand guiding this vessel not seen of us. Let her alone." The vessel floated out into safe waters. And there comes a time—and that time is now—when the Church of God is all surrounded by a fierce worldliness. It is ice on the north, and ice on the south, and ice on the east, and ice on the west. Oh, let us implore God for the rescue, that the vessel of the church may ride out into calm, bright, and beautiful waters. "Before they call, I will answer. While they are yet speaking, will I hear." Oh, pray! pray! pray!

I remark again in regard to that prayer of Elijah:  
• It was a *successful prayer*. That is, he got what he wanted, which was rain; not rain only for the trough of the camel; not rain just enough to settle the dust; not rain enough to wet the cornfield; but enough to drench the forests and soak the fields, and slake the thirst of a whole nation. Rain for the mountains, rain for the valleys, rain for the trees, and rain for the cattle. It was a *great rain*! Now, are we making the prayer that will bring the same success? We do

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not want rain so much on the fields, but it is rain on the tender heart of childhood and the weary spirit of the old man that we need; it is rain on the heart, hard with the drought of sin or wilted under the sun-stroke of worldliness; it is spiritual rain that we need. How to get it? The way Elijah got it. All our preaching about it and talking about it will not bring it. We must pray and pray. We must go on the Carmel of Christian expectation and bow ourselves before the Lord, and then it will come. It always has come when the right kind of prayer went up. It *will* come as certain as there is a Lord, and you have a soul immortal to be set on trial on the last day. Prayer in private; prayer in public; prayer now; prayer perpetually.

But when did the rain come? The same day. When will our prayer be answered? To-day, if it be the right kind of prayer. We cannot wait until to-morrow. Some of these who are out of Christ, by to-morrow may be lifting up their eyes in a land far beyond the reach of mercy, and hope, and salvation, and it will be too late for them. For how much would I give up my hope in Christ for two hours? Not for all the wealth of the world at my feet. And if we cannot afford to give up our hope for two hours, can we afford to wait for the conversion of our friends until to-morrow, when this night their souls may be required of them? Oh, it is rain to-day that we want, we must have, and we *will* have, if, with all the concentrated passions and emotions and energies of our soul, we struggle for it. Do not your hearts already

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begin to kindle ? Do you not see that the prayers, like vapours, are ascending from the sea into a cloud a good deal larger than a man's hand ? Holy Spirit, speak now, with Thy omnipotent voice ! Lord, help us ! King of glory, come to the temple ! I feel overwhelmed with anxiety for the redemption of your souls. I feel that the eternity of many is at stake ; I feel that between rousing up from our lethargy, as Christians, and sleeping on in that lethargy, is the alternative between the happiness and the wretchedness of some who sat with you this morning at the breakfast table, and who will sit with you again at noon. What shall I say to rouse up my church to its work ? I will make a bargain with you. I ask that to-day, so far as your Sabbath-school duties and other duties will not interfere with it, you spend the afternoon in your rooms imploring the blessing of God on yourselves, your families, and the church. I will do the same. God is not far off, that He should not hear us. Oh, let us come before Him feeling our feebleness, but laying hold of the promises of a faithful God, as though this were the last day of our lives, and in the next few hours stupendous destinies were to be decided.

I see this morning some who have been backsliders from God. They once sat at the Communion table ; they sit there no more. Once they prayed ; they pray no more. Once upon their eyes there came the vision of a pardoning Jesus ; but now they stand with both their feet on the bleeding heart of the Son of God. Oh, wandering brother ! you cast God off, do

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you? Will it be strange if God casts you off? It will be harder for you at the last than for those who never took the first step heavenward. You showed that you knew your duty. How about all those precious scenes in which you once commingled? Where are they now? How can you meet Christ at last—that Jesus whom you have been persecuting by a wandering life? How can you look Him in the face at the last? Are you happy, backsliders? No, no; you have not seen an hour of happiness since you gave up your hope and wandered off, perhaps to please a sceptical companion. You say, “Oh, if I could only get back to those good old times when I did serve God!” The most wretched condition in all the world is that of a man who once was a member of the church and sat at Holy Communion, who has gone back. But Jesus will be just as glad to have you come now as He was the first time you started for Him. He waits to be gracious. Trust him. He will say nothing about what you have said against Him. He will say nothing about the days of your wandering. He will say nothing about the fact that you have been sitting in the seat of the scorners and laughed at Christianity, and despised that which you once loved. He will not throw that up to you at all, no more than did the father when the prodigal came back. The father did not say anything to the prodigal about his poor clothes or his hungered face, but he went right away to clothe him, and to robe him, and to feast him. And Christ will not say anything about what you have been doing so long,

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if you will only come to Him to-day, and do your works over again.

But there are those here who have not even gone as far as that; they have never taken the first step towards the kingdom. In what jeopardy they are to-day I cannot say, for I have no power to describe it. It all looks safe and well here, pleasantly clad as you are, and all the surroundings bright and beautiful; but is it not the fact that out of Christ you are in awful peril? Without warrant for another pulsation of the heart, do you not feel this morning like taking the first offer of security? I preach to you Jesus and the resurrection. Why stand amid those terrible uncertainties when you might be insured with eternal safety? Why will you be uncovered in pitiless storm when you might hide in the great rock of God's salvation? How do you suppose you will feel at the last, your Sabbaths all gone, your opportunities of mercy sped away, the trumpet sounded, and the throne of judgment set? Oh, to have had the Bible, and not have read it; to have been warned, and not to have heeded; to have been invited by all the pleading wounds of Christ, and not to have accepted them; to have had glorious Sabbaths of mercy like this, and yet not to have improved them; to have come so near heaven, yet to have missed it! There will be two things that will be said on that day. You will say one and God will say the other, if without repentance you appear before Him. Two things, one by you and one by the Lord. You, looking back on the wasted life, will say, "How have I hated instruc-



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tion, and my heart despised reproof! The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!" The other thing will be said by the Lord: "Because I called and ye refused, and stretched out My hand and no man regarded, therefore I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

## THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF.

“And he took the calf which they had made, and he burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.”—*Exod.* xxxii. 30.

**P**EOPLE will have a god of some kind, and they prefer one of their own making. Here come the Israelites, breaking off their golden earrings, the men as well as the women, for in those times there was masculine as well as feminine decoration. Where did they get these beautiful gold earrings, coming up as they did from the desert? Oh, they borrowed them of the Egyptians when they left Egypt. These earrings are piled up into a pyramid of glittering beauty. “Any more earrings to bring?” says Aaron. None. Fire is kindled; the earrings are melted and poured into a mould, not of an eagle or a war-charger, but of a silly calf; the gold cools off; the mould is taken away, and the idol is set up on its four legs. An altar is built in front of the shining calf. Then the people throw up their arms, and gyrate, and shriek, and dance mightily, and worship. Moses has been six weeks on Mount Sinai, and he comes back and hears the howling and sees the dancing of these golden-calf fanatics,

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and he loses his patience, and he takes the two plates of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments and flings them so hard against a rock that they split all to pieces. When a man gets mad he is very apt to break all the Ten Commandments! Moses rushes in and he takes this calf-god and throws it into a hot fire, until it is melted all out of shape, and then pulverises it—not by the modern appliance of nitro-muriatic acid, but by the ancient appliance of nitre, or by the old-fashioned file. He stirs for the people a most nauseating draught. He takes this pulverised golden calf and throws it in the only brook which is accessible, and the people are compelled to drink of that brook, or not drink at all. But they did not drink all the glittering stuff thrown on the surface. Some of it flows on down the surface of the brook to the river, and then flows on down the river to the sea, and the sea takes it up and bears it to the mouth of all the rivers; and when the tides set back, the remains of this golden calf are carried up into the Hudson, and the East river, and the Thames, and the Clyde, and the Tiber; and men go out, and they skim the glittering surface, and they bring it ashore, and they make another golden calf; and California and Australia break off their golden earrings to augment the pile. And in the fires of financial excitement and struggle all these things are melted together; and while we stand looking and wondering what will come of it, lo! we find that the golden calf of Israelitish worship has become the golden calf of European and American worship.

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I shall describe to you the god spoken of in the text, his temple, his altar of sacrifice, the music that is made in the temple, and then the final breaking up of the whole congregation of idolaters.

Pull aside this curtain, and you see the golden calf of modern idolatry. It is not like other idols, made out of stocks or stone, but it has an ear so sensitive that it can hear the whispers on Wall Street, and Third Street, and State Street, and the footfalls in the Bank of England, and the flutter of a Frenchman's heart on the Bourse. It has an eye so keen that it can see the rust on the farm of Michigan wheat, and the insect in the Maryland peach-orchard, and the trampled grain under the hoof of the Russian war-charger. It is so mighty that it swings any way it will the world's shipping. It has its foot on all the merchantmen and the steamers. It started the American Civil War, and under God stopped it, and it will decide the Turko-Russian contest. One broker, in September, 1869, in New York, shouted, "One hundred and sixty for a million!" and the whole continent shivered. This golden calf of the text has its right front foot in New York, its left front foot in Chicago, its right back foot in Charlestown, its left back foot in New Orleans; and when it shakes itself it shakes the world. Oh, this is a mighty god—the golden calf of the world's worship!

But every god must have its temple, and this golden calf of the text is no exception. Its temple is vaster than St. Paul of the English, and St. Peter of the Italians, and the Alhambra of the Spaniards,

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and the Parthenon of the Greeks, and the Mahal Taj of the Hindoos, and all the other cathedrals put together. Its pillars are grooved and fluted with gold, and its ribbed arches are hovering gold, and its chandeliers are descending gold, and its floors are tessellated gold, and its vaults are crowded heaps of gold, and its spires and domes are soaring gold, and its organ-pipes are resounding gold, and its pedals are tramping gold, and its stops pulled out are flashing gold; while standing at the head of the temple as the presiding deity are the hoofs, and shoulders, and eyes, and ears, and nostrils of the calf of gold.

Further: Every god must have not only its temple, but its altar of sacrifice, and this golden calf of the text is no exception. Its altar is not made out of stone as other altars, but out of counting-room desks and fireproof safes, and it is a broad, a long, a high altar. The victims sacrificed on it are the Swartouts, and the Ketchams, and the Fisks, and the Tweeds, and the Mortons, and ten thousand other people who are slain before this golden calf. What does this god care about the groans and struggles of the victims before it? With cold, metallic eye it looks on, yet lets them suffer. O heavens and earth, what an altar! What a sacrifice of body, mind, and soul! the physical health of a great multitude is flung on to this sacrificial altar. They cannot sleep, and they take chloral, and morphine, and intoxicants. Some of them struggle in a nightmare of stocks, and at one o'clock in the morning suddenly rise up shouting, "A thousand shares of New York Central

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—one hundred and eighty and a half! take it!” until the whole family is affrighted, and the speculators fall back on their pillow and sleep until they are awakened again by a “corner” in Pacific Mail, or a sudden “rise” of Rock Island. Their nerves gone, their digestion gone, their brain gone, they die. The gowned ecclesiastic comes in and reads the funeral service, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” Mistake. They did not “die in the Lord”; the golden calf kicked them!

The trouble is, when men sacrifice themselves on this altar suggested in the text, they not only sacrifice themselves but they sacrifice their families. If a man by an ill course is determined to go to perdition, I suppose you will have to let him go; but he puts his wife and children in an equipage that is the amazement of the avenues, and the driver lashes the horses into two whirlwinds, and the spokes flash in the sun, and the golden headgear of the harness gleams, until Black Calamity takes the bits of the horses and stops them, and shouts to the luxuriant occupants of the equipage, “Get out!” They get out. They get down. The husband and father flung his family so hard they never got up. There was the mark on them for life—the mark of the split hoof, the death-dealing hoof—of the golden calf.

Solomon offered in one sacrifice, on one occasion, twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep; but that was a tame sacrifice compared with the multitude of men who are sacrificing themselves on this altar of the golden calf, and

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sacrificing their families with them. The soldiers of General Havelock, in India, walked literally ankle deep in the blood of "the house of massacre," where two hundred women and children had been slain by the Sepoys ; but the blood around about this altar of the golden calf flows up to the knee, flows to the girdle, flows to the shoulder, flows to the lip. Great God of heaven and earth, have mercy ! The golden calf has none.

Still the degrading worship goes on, and the devotees kneel and kiss the dust, and count their golden beads, and cross themselves with the blood of their own sacrifice. The music rolls on under the arches ; it is made of clinking silver and clinking gold, and the rattling specie of the banks and brokers' shops, and the voices of all the exchanges. The soprano of the worship is carried by the timid voices of men who have just begun to speculate, while the deep bass rolls out from those who for ten years of iniquity have been doubly damned. Chorus of voices rejoicing over what they have made. Chorus of voices wailing over what they have lost. This temple of which I speak stands open day and night ; and there is the glittering god with his four feet on broken hearts ; and there is the smoking altar of sacrifice, new victims every moment on it ; and there are the kneeling devotees, and the doxology of the worship rolls on ; while Death stands with mouldy and skeleton arm beating time for the chorus—" More ! more ! more ! "

Some people are very much surprised at the actions

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of people in the Stock Exchange, New York. Indeed, it is a scene sometimes that paralyses description, and is beyond the imagination of any one who has never looked in. What snapping of finger and thumb, and wild gesticulation, and raving like hyenas, and stamping like buffaloes, and swaying to and fro, and jostling and running one upon another, and deafening uproar, until the president of the Exchange strikes with his mallet four or five times, crying, "Order! order!" and the astonished spectator goes out into the fresh air feeling that he has escaped from Pandemonium. What does it all mean? I will tell you what it means. The devotees of every heathen temple cut themselves to pieces and yell and gyrate. This vociferation and gyration of the Stock Exchange is all appropriate. This is the worship of the golden calf.

But my text suggests that this worship has got to be broken up, as the behaviour of Moses in my text indicated. There are those who say that this golden calf spoken of in my text was hollow, and merely plated with gold; otherwise, they say, Moses could not have carried it. I do not know that; but somehow, perhaps by the assistance of his friends, he takes up this golden calf, which is an infernal insult to God and man, and throws it into the fire, and it is melted, and then it comes out and is cooled off, and by some chemical appliance, or by an old-fashioned file, it is pulverised, and it is thrown into the brook, and, as a punishment, the people are compelled to drink the nauseating stuff. So, my hearers,



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you may depend upon it that God will burn, and He will grind to pieces the golden calf of modern idolatry, and He will compel the people in their agony to drink it. If not before, it will be so on the last day. I know not where the fire will begin, whether at the "Battery" or Central Park, whether at Fulton Ferry or at Bushwick, whether at Shoreditch, London, or West End; but it will be a very hot blaze. All the government securities of the United States and Great Britain will curl up in the first blast. All the moneys, safes, and depositing vaults will melt under the first touch. The sea will burn like tinder, and the shipping will be abandoned for ever. The melting gold in the broker's window will burst through the melted window-glass into the street; but the flying population will not stop to scoop it up. The cry of "Fire!" from the mountain will be answered by the cry of "Fire!" in the plain. The conflagration will burn out from the continent toward the sea, and then burn in from the sea toward the land. New York and London with one cut of the red scythe of destruction will go down. Twenty-five thousand miles of conflagration! The earth will wrap itself round and round in shroud of flame, and lie down to perish. What then will become of your golden calf? Who then so poor as to worship it? Melted, or between the upper and the nether millstone of falling mountains ground to powder. Dagon down! Moloch down! Juggernaut down! Golden calf down!

But, my friends, every day is a day of judgment, and God is all the time grinding to pieces the golden

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calf. Merchants of New York and Brooklyn, what is the characteristic of this time in which we live? "Bad," you say. Professional men, what is the characteristic of the times in which we live? "Bad," you say. Though I should be in a minority of one, I venture the opinion that these are the best times we have had in fifteen years, for the reason that God is teaching this nation as never before that old-fashioned honesty is the only thing that will stand. In the past few months we have learned as never before that forgeries will not pay; that the watering of stock will not pay; that the spending of \$50,000 on country seats and a palatial city residence, when there are only \$30,000 income, will not pay; that the appropriation of trust funds to our own private speculation will not pay. We had a great national tumour, in the shape of fictitious prosperity. We called it national enlargement; instead of calling it enlargement, we might better have called it a swelling. It has been a tumour, and God is cutting it out—has cut it out; and the nation will get well, and will come back to the principles of our fathers and grandfathers when twice three made six instead of sixty, and when the apples at the bottom of the barrel were just as good as the apples on the top of the barrel, and a silk handkerchief was not half cotton, and a man who wore a five-dollar coat paid for was more honoured than a man who wore a fifty-dollar coat not paid for.

The golden calf of our day, like the one of the text, is very apt to be made out of borrowed gold.

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These Israelites of the text borrowed earrings of the Egyptians, and then melted them into a god. That is the way the golden calf is made nowadays. A great many housekeepers, not paying for the articles they get, borrow of the grocer, and the baker, and the butcher, and the dry-goods seller. Then the retailer borrows of the wholesale dealer. Then the wholesale dealer borrows of the capitalist, and we borrow and borrow, until the community is divided into two classes, those who borrow and those who are borrowed of; and after awhile the capitalist wants his money, and he rushes upon the wholesale dealer, and the wholesale dealer wants his money, and he rushes upon the retailer, and the retailer wants his money, and he rushes upon the consumer, and we all go down together. There is many a man in this day who rides in a carriage and owes the blacksmith for the tire, and the wheelwright for the wheel, and the trimmer for the curtain, and the driver for unpaid wages, and the harness-maker for the bridle, and the furrier for the robe; while from the tip of the carriage tongue clear back to the tip of the camel's-hair shawl fluttering out of the back of the vehicle, everything is paid for by notes that have been three times renewed.

I tell you, sirs, that in this country we will never get things right until we stop borrowing and pay as we go. It is this temptation to borrow, and borrow, and borrow, that keeps the people everlastingly praying to the golden calf for help; and just at the minute they expect the help, the golden calf treads on them. The judgment of God, like Moses in the text,

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will rush in and break up this worship ; and I say let the work go on until every man shall learn to speak truth with his neighbour, and those who make engagements shall feel themselves bound to keep them, and when a man who will not repent of his business iniquity, but goes on wishing to satiate his cannibal appetite by devouring widows' houses, shall, by the law of the land, be compelled to exchange the brown-stone front on Madison Avenue or Beacon Hill for Newgate or Sing-Sing. Let the golden calf perish !

But, my friends, if we have made this world our god, when we come to die we will see our idol demolished. How much of this world are you going to take with you into the next ? Will you have two pockets—one in each side of your shroud ? Will you cushion your casket with bonds, and mortgages, and certificates of stock ? Ah, no ! The ferry-boat that crosses this Jordan takes no baggage—nothing heavier than a spirit. You may, perhaps, take five hundred dollars with you two or three miles, in the shape of funeral trappings, to Greenwood, but you will have to leave them there. It would not be safe for you to lie down there with a gold watch or diamond ring ; it would be a temptation to the pillagers. Ah, my friends ! if we have made this world our god, when we die we will see our idol ground to pieces by our pillow, and we will have to drink it in bitter regrets for the wasted opportunities of a lifetime. Soon we will be gone. Where are the veterans who, on the fourth of July, 1794, marched from New

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York Park to the "Battery," and fired a salute, and then marched back again? and the Society of the Cincinnati, who dined that afternoon at Tontine Coffee-house on Wall Street? and great Thorburn, who that afternoon waited fifteen minutes at the foot of Maiden Lane for the Brooklyn ferry-boat, then got in, and was rowed across by two men, with oars, the tide so strong that it was an hour and ten minutes before they landed? Where are the veterans that fired the salute, and the men of the Cincinnati Society who that afternoon drank to the patriotic toast? and the oarsmen that rowed the boat? and the people who were transported? Gone! Oh, this is a fleeting world—it is a dying world! A man who had worshipped it all his days, in his dying moment described himself when he said, "Fool! Fool! Fool!"

I want you to change temples, and to give up the worship of this unsatisfying and cruel god for the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the gold that will never crumble. Here are securities that will never fail. Here are banks that will never break. Here is an altar on which there has been one sacrifice that does for all. Here is a God who will comfort you when you are in trouble, and soothe you when you are sick, and save you when you die. When your parents have breathed their last, and the old, wrinkled, and trembling hands can no more be put upon your head for a blessing, He will be to you father and mother both, giving you the defence of the one and the comfort of the other; and when your children go away from you! the sweet darlings!

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you will not kiss them good-bye for ever. He only wants to hold them for a little while. He will give them back to you again, and He will have them all waiting for you at the gates of eternal welcome. Oh, what a God He is! He will allow you to come so close this morning that you can put your arms around His neck, while He, in response, will put His arms around your neck, and all the windows of heaven will be hoisted to let the redeemed look out and see the spectacle of a rejoicing Father and a returned prodigal locked in glorious embrace. Quit worshipping the golden calf, and bow this day before Him in whose presence we must all appear when the world has turned to ashes, and the scorched parchment of the sky shall be rolled together like an historic scroll.

## JOSHUA ON THE MARCH.

“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life.”—*Josh.* i. 5.

**M** OSES was dead. A beautiful tradition says that God kissed him, and in that act drew forth the soul of the dying lawgiver. He has been buried, only one person at his funeral, the same one who kissed him.— But God never removes a man until He has some one ready to take his place. God does not go around seeking among a great variety of candidates some one to take a vacant position; He just makes a man to fit that particular place. Moses had passed off the stage. Joshua, the hero of the text, comes out to take his place, and puts his foot so solidly on the platform of history that all ages hear the echo of his tread. He was a magnificent fighter, and he always fought on the right side. He never fought for personal aggrandisement, and never fought unless the Lord told him to do so. In my text, God gives him a military outfit, and one would think it must have been like plumed helmet to the head, and greaves of brass to the feet, and a habergeon for the breast: “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life.” “Well,” you say, “it does not require

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any great courage to go out with a backing like that." I reply, God promised Joshua no more than He promises you and me in our conflicts. The Framer of the universe, the Chieftain of all eternity, has pledged all His resources to see us through, and He promised no more than that to Joshua. God always stands by His people, and my object is to show you that He fulfilled this entire promise to Joshua, although his first battle was against a spring freshet, and his second battle against a stone wall, and his third battle while leading on a regiment of whipped cowards, and his fourth battle against the darkness as he marshalled the sun and the moon into his battalion, and his last battle against Death, the King of Terrors ; the hero of the text getting the victory in all these battles.

A general would usually prefer to start with a small conflict, that he might get his courage up and his men drilled ; but Joshua's undertaking was more of a job than the levelling of Fort Pulaski, or the thundering down of Gibraltar, or the taking of Sebastopol. His first undertaking was to cross the river Jordan in a spring freshet. At certain seasons of the year, and at certain points, that river could be easily forded, and the water would only come to the knee or to the girdle ; but at this season of which I am speaking the snow of Mount Lebanon had melted, and they were pouring down into the valley, and the valley had become one raging flood. It was easy enough in some seasons to cross the river, as when Lieutenant Molineaux was exploring that



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river Jordan, sometimes he had his boats in the water and sometimes he had them carried on camels' back, so shallow was the stream in certain places. But in spring, when Lieutenant Lynch attempted his exploration, his boats were knocked to pieces amid the twenty-seven rapids of that river, although they were lined with copper or galvanised iron. You might as well talk of wading across the Hudson River at Yonkers as to think of wading the river Jordan at the season of which I am speaking. The Canaanites on the other side felt perfectly secure. They looked across the river and saw the Israelites, and they said, "Aha! you can't get at us—we are safe anyhow until this spring freshet falls." The voice of the gurgling freshet was a lullaby to the Canaanites as they looked across the stream. But one day Joshua orders out his troops and tells them to fall into line. The Canaanites looking across say, "Ah! what's the matter now? I wonder if those Israelites are frightened? I think a panic must have struck them and they are going to run away, or they are going up near the mouth of the Jordan, expecting to cross there; and Joshua's army will be entirely destroyed before he gets here. Joshua is a lunatic."

"Forward, march!" cries Joshua to his troops. They pass on toward the river, and it seems as if the light-armed troops and the spearmen and the archers and all their leaders must be swept down in a fearful flood. Let them prepare, you say, for a watery grave. One mile ahead of the main army of Joshua go the

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priests, carrying a glittering box about four feet long by two feet wide. That glittering box is the ark of the covenant; and no sooner had the priests come down with that ark and with their foot touched the margin of the river, than Jordan parts by an Almighty fiat. Thirty miles above, the river stops on one side, while on the other side the water flows on down toward the salt sea. Forward now, you troops of Israel. Come right on. It is a dry path all the way through—a path of chalk, and broken shells, and pebbles. You will not even get the soles of your feet wet. March on. Come to the other bank. They reach the bank and they pull themselves up its steep—thirty or forty feet in height—they pull themselves up the bank by the oleanders and the tamarisks and the willows, until they reach the top. Now let them clap cymbals and shields, and sing a song of praise to the God of Joshua. No sooner have they climbed up this high bank than, with dash and roar and terrific rush, the waters of the Jordan break loose from their strange anchorage. You know how fast the waters roll when a milldam breaks; and the probability is that in the halt of that great river and in the piling up of the accumulated waters there must have been a dam lifted by God's hand half a mile high; and when that broke, oh the fury! What a predicament for Joshua and his troops! Why did not those waters stay parted until Joshua and his troops could find out whether they could cope with their enemies or not? I hear one of the unbelieving Israelites say, "Lord, why didst Thou not keep those

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billows parted, so that if we wanted to retreat we could go back dry-shod, just as when we advanced? We are engaged in a very risky experiment. How if these Canaanites eat us all up?"

Ah, my hearer! God never makes any provision for the Christian's retreat. He clears the path to Canaan, if we go ahead; if we go back, we die. It is dry-shod on a path of broken shell and pebbles in one direction. It is water forty feet deep in the rear. The same gatekeeper that swung back the crystal and amethystine door of Jordan to let you pass, hath bolted and barred the crystal and amethystine of the Jordan to keep you from going back. I declare it to-day: Victory ahead. Darkness, flood, ruin, and death behind.

You say, "Why didn't those Canaanites destroy Joshua and his troops while they had a chance? Here they were, on a bank thirty or forty feet high. There were the Israelites under Joshua down in the bed of the stream. Why didn't the Canaanites fight back these invaders? The Canaanites were familiar with their own country. The invading army were strangers to the country they were about to take. The Canaanites were all fresh troops. The soldiers under Joshua were travel-worn. Why didn't the Canaanites double up the right wing, and then double up the left wing, and then pierce the centre of Joshua's army?" I will tell you why they did not. The promise had been given, and the Lord God keeps His promise. "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."

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But we cannot stop here. It is no place for Joshua's troops to stay. What is that in the distance? At the end of a grove of palms eight miles long is the chief city. It is a city of gold and harbours of huge impregnable walls that seem to reach the heavens and buttress the sky. That is the city that guards the mountain pass. That is Jericho, the great metropolis. Take it Joshua must. "Take it Joshua can't," say the unbelievers. Where are the battering rams for such a conflict as this? Why, the Canaanitish archers will come out on the top of the walls, and shoot destruction and death into these Israelites if they come anywhere near the walls.

This city in aftertime was taken by Pompey, and it was taken by Herod the Great, and it was taken by the Mohammedans; but this campaign is planned by the Lord Almighty. There are to be no swords, no shields, no battering rams. There is only to be one weapon, and that is to be a ram's horn. The crooked horns of the slain rams were punctured with holes so that the fingers could play on them, and then the musician would put this rustic instrument to his lips and make music for the people. Now the command is, that seven of the priests should take these rude musical instruments, and for six days they shall go around about the walls of Jericho once a day, and then on the seventh day they shall go around seven times blowing this curious rustic musical instrument, and the peroration of the whole scene is to be a great shout under which that wall

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from base to capstone is to tumble. Around the wall of Jericho the priests go once, and a failure. Not so much as a piece of mortar or plaster drops from the wall; not so much as a crevice opens; not so much as a rock gets loose. Around the city the second day, and a failure; the third day, and a failure; the fourth day, and a failure; around the fifth day, and a failure; around the sixth day, and a failure. "Ah!" say some of the unbelieving Israelities, "I told you so; those ministers are simply making fools of themselves. That wall stands as firm now after six days' surrounding as when it was first built. The fact is that our leader, Joshua, is getting spoiled; he thinks because he can conquer a spring freshet he can conquer a city wall. Come, now, let us be philosophic about this. It isn't reasonable that a ram's horn blown should knock down a city wall." And the wiseacres knit their brow and put their forefinger of the right hand against the forefinger of the left hand, and reason it all out that such a cause could not possibly produce such an effect. The encampment, I think, that night was full of philosophy and caricature, and if Joshua had been nominated for any prominent military position he would have received but few votes. Joshua's stock was down.

But the seventh day came—the climacteric day—and Joshua is up early according to the statement, and he is around among the troops looking at their condition, and he is impatient for the moment to come when he shall march on to the

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victory. At last the hour has arrived. The priests with these rude musical instruments go all around the city of Jericho once, and a failure. Around the city twice, three times, four times, and a failure. Around the city five times, six times, seven times, and a failure. There is only one more thing to be done, and that is to give a great shout. I see the Israelitish army straightening themselves up and filling their lungs for the vociferation such as was never before or since heard. Joshua rises up to the full stature and he gives the command. He feels the right moment has come, and he says, "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city"; and the command is heard, and the people altogether cry, "Down, Jericho! down, Jericho!" And that long line of solid masonry begins to quiver, and then crash go the walls, the temples, the palaces, until the earth quakes and the heavens are blackened with the dust, and the shriek of the crushed city and the huzza of the victorious Israelites commingle. "Oh," say the philosophers, who were croaking the night before, "we did it! we did it! Did you hear that shout? that was I, Joshua; is there anything else you want us to do? We are all ready." Ah! Joshua felt no boasting in his soul, for while he stood there amid the *débris* of that destroyed city, the old promise came ringing through his soul, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."

People cross the ocean to see a ruin. You need not go far. Stand a minute and look at the ruins of

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this city Jericho. There is one house that did not fall. Why did not that one house fall? Could the king have lived there? Could a very great and good man have lived there? Could a very good woman have lived there? No. I wonder that one house stood while all the rest of the city fell. Rahab lived there. She had been noted for her crimes. Yet she was saved. Because she had been a great sinner? No; because she had repented, and to prove to all the ages that there is mercy for the chief of sinners. There was a red cord hanging at the window of that house, and that cord was placed there by Divine injunction, and when that was seen no one dared damage those premises. When I see the colour of that cord it makes me think of the crimson cord let down for our deliverance; it makes me think that we ought to have swung out of the window of our soul the red cord of a Saviour's sacrifice, the red cord of a Saviour's mercy, the red cord of a Saviour's intercession. Mercy for the chief of sinners. All the other houses went down but Rahab's house: that stood. She repented; she trusted in God; she was saved. Mercy for the chief of sinners. Put your trust in that God, and nothing shall ever damage you; and when at last our world shall be surrounded more terribly than was Jericho, even by the trumpets of judgment and resurrection, the walls of rocks and mountains shall fall, crushing all the unpardoned—yea, when Nature's metal, bones, and ribs shall break, they who have Rahab's faith shall have Rahab's deliverance.

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“ When wrapt in fire the realms of ether glow,  
And heaven’s last thunder shake the world below,  
Thou undismayed shalt o’er the ruin smile,  
And light thy torch at Nature’s funeral pile.”

This is no place to stop. Joshua cries, “ Forward, march ! ” There is the city of Ai to be taken. “ Oh ! ” says a scouting party just come back from that city, “ you can take that very easily. Joshua, you need not go ; you stay, and a few of us will go and take that city.” They started out in pompous ardour to take the city of Ai. They got up in front of the city when the men of Ai came out and gave one yell, and away ran the Israelites like reindeer. Our Northern troops at Bull Run made slow time compared with those Israelites with the men of Ai after them. My friends, we have no right to go into the Lord’s conflict having only half our force. We have no right to a reserve corps. Body, mind, soul, reputation, property, everything must be marshalled, equipped, launched for God and against our enemies. If you are going to do any Christian work in that half-and-half way, instead of your taking the men of Ai, the men of Ai will take you. The Israelites never cut such a ridiculous figure as when following back. Did you ever see the Church of God retreat ? The Borneesian cannibals ate up Munson, the missionary. A thousand Christians said, “ Fall back ; you never can convert Borneo. See ! They have eaten up Munson, the missionary.” Tyndall delivers his celebrated lecture at Glasgow University. A great many people say, “ Oh ! it seems as if worldly philosophy is going to overcome Christian philo-



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sophy." Geology plunges its crowbar in the foundations of the earth, and people say, "There! the geological development is going to overthrow the Mosaic account of the Creation. Fall back!" The Church of God has no right to fall back. I see Joshua coming out that day of his encampment, and he looks up and sees the people running, and he puts his hand to his forehead, and he says, "Why, I really believe those are our men. They are running in retreat." And soon the retreating army come up. They say, "O general, we are all cut to pieces. Those men of Ai are awful people. We are all cut to pieces." Joshua falls down on his face in chagrin. It is the only time we ever see the back of his head. And he begins to whine, and he says, "O Lord God, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth." I am very glad he said that. I find he is only a man after all. Before he seemed supernatural, and then he could not be an example for us. I find he knows all about human discouragements. That man who conquered a feshet and who conquered a stone wall, there he lies making that lachrymose utterance. He is only a man. And sometimes you have seen a very good Christian

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man in our day, from overwork or from a sudden change of the weather, or from some venomous opposition, take the position which Joshua took—the back of the head up and the face down. But how did God arouse Joshua? Did He address him in some complimentary apostrophe? No; He says, “Get thee up. Why liest thou thus on thy face?” Joshua arose, I suppose looking mortified; but his old courage came back again. That was not his defeat. If he had been in that battle he would have rode conqueror. He marshals all the Israelites, and he says, “We will go up *en masse*, and we will take the city of Ai.” He takes most of his army and he hides it in the night behind a ledge of rocks. In the morning he marches up a small battalion of troops in front of the city, as by stratagem. The men of Ai say, “Ah! we will conquer those men very soon;” and the people of Ai pursue this little battalion, and the Israelites, as though they were frightened, fall back in the stratagem. No sooner are all the people of the city started in pursuit of that battalion, than Joshua stands on a rock, and I see his hair flying in the wind as he stretches out his spear toward the doomed city. And all the armed men behind the rocks rush for the city, and they capture it, and put it to the torch; and no sooner is it on fire than those Israelites in the city start down, pursuing the men of Ai; and the Israelites coming out of the city on one side, and the battalion that had fallen back suddenly coming up from the other side—between those two waves of Israelitish courage the victory was gained.

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And as I see the smoke of the burning city curling in the sky, and as I hear the groans of the defeated men of Ai, and the victorious shout of the Israelites, Joshua hears something better than that: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."

Joshua's troops cannot stop yet. "Forward, march!" says Joshua, for there is the city of Gibeon: it has put itself under the wing of Joshua's protection, and Joshua must defend it. And the people send word from this city to Joshua, "Come right away; there are five kings going to destroy us. Come right away." Joshua makes a three days' march in one night. It is a double quick. When the next morning dawns, there is Joshua, and there are his troops. Prepare now to see the Gettysburgh, the Waterloo, the Sedan of the ancients. Two armies are drawn out in line of battle near this city. The conflict opens with great slaughter. The Canaanites look up and they say, "Ah! it is Joshua—it is Joshua, who conquered the spring freshet and the stone wall, and who took the city of Ai. There's no use; he's a terrible man; there's no use." And they sounded a retreat. And as they started, the Israelites, with the spring of a panther, came after them over the rocks; and those Canaanites, with their sprained ankles and their gashed foreheads, went tumbling over the ledges of Bethoron; and in addition to Joshua's ammunition the catapults of heaven poured out a volley of hailstones, all the artillery of the sky shot bullets of ice, pounding the retreating army against the rocks.

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“Oh!” says Joshua, “this is a victory. But it is getting toward sundown, and those miserable Canaanites are going to get away from me, and they will come back some day, and they will besiege us, and perhaps attempt to destroy us. Oh for a day twice as long as any we have ever seen in this climate!” What is the matter with Joshua? Has he fallen in an apoplectic fit? No, he is in prayer. Look out now, for when a good man makes the Lord God his ally nothing is impossible.

Joshua rises, his face radiant with prayer, and he looks at the descending sun over the hills of Gibeon, and he looks at the faint crescent of the moon. As you sometimes see the queen of the night lingering around the palace of the day, he sees the faint crescent of the moon over the valley of Ajalon, and he lifts both hands in sublime apostrophe, one pointing toward the sun, the other pointing toward the moon, and in the name of the Lord who spake the world into being he lifts one hand, and says, “Sun, stand thou still over Gibeon”; and pointing the other hand to the moon, he says, “And thou moon, stand still over the valley of Ajalon.” And for twelve hours the planetary system halted. Those worlds that had never stopped an instant since they were created, stopped then and there. Look at the sundial. No change hour after hour. The sublime record is, “The sun stood still in the midst of heaven.” In those twelve additional hours gained by that stopping sun, in those twelve additional hours of that protracted day, there was enough time to demolish by

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the most tremendous battle ever fought, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon—five kings.

“ Oh! ” you say, “ the sun and the moon didn’t stand still. ” One man comes to me and says, “ According to the Copernican system, the sun stood still anyhow, and it was no miracle for it to stand still. ” Another man says, “ If you stop the sun, you upset the whole universe and throw everything out of order. ” Another man tells me it was only the refraction of the sun’s rays which made the sun seem to stand still. Another man tells me that all that was necessary to have this miracle right was to stop the world on its own axis, and it was not necessary to stop it in its revolution through its orbit. Well, my friends, I have always supposed that if a watchmaker could make a good watch, that the same watchmaker would know how to stop it, how to take it all apart, how to put it together again, how to start it again. That would be a very poor watchmaker who could not take a watch apart and put it together again and start it again. The universe is only God’s watch. I suppose He could make it. Then I suppose He could stop it. Then I suppose He could start it again and stop it again, and start it again and stop it again, and start it again and stop it again. But leaving to the Christian scientist and to the infidel scientist the settlement of that question among themselves, and wishing always that the Joshua of the church may get the victory over the Ammonites of the

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German Universities, I go on and tell you that I have seen the same miracle. Oh! not the sun standing still? Yes. A bad man does not live out half his days. His sun may set at noon. But a good man may prolong his days of usefulness. If a man in the strength of Joshua will go forth to fight against sin and in behalf of the truth, he shall live a thousand years, and it will be as one day.

John Summerfield was a consumptive Methodist. He stood looking fearfully white in old Sands Street Methodist Church, preaching the glorious gospel, and on the anniversary platform in New York, pleading for the Bible until the old book unrolled new glories the world had never seen. And on his deathbed he talked of heaven until the wing of the angelic messenger brushed the pillow on which he lay. Has John Summerfield's sun set? Has John Summerfield's day ended? No! He lives in the burning words he uttered in behalf of the Christian Church. He lives in the fame of that Christ whom he recommended to the dying people. He lives in the eternal raptures of that heaven into which he has already introduced so many immortal souls. Faint, and sick, and dying, and holding with one hand to the rail of the altar of the Methodist Church, with the other hand he arrested the sun in the heavens, seeming to say, "I can't die now; I want to live on and live on; I want to speak a word for Christ that will never die; I am only twenty-seven years of age. Sun of my Christian ministry, stand still over America." And it stood still.

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Robert McCheyne, of Scotland, was a consumptive Presbyterian. He used to cough in his sermon so hard that the people thought he would never preach again; but thousands in Aberdeen and Edinburgh and Dundee heard the voice of mercy from his lips. The people rejoiced under his ministry. His name to-day is fragrant in all Christendom, and that memory is mightier than ever was his living presence. The delirium of his last sickness was filled with prayer; and when in his dying moment he lifted his hand for a benediction upon his country, he was only practically saying, "I can't die now; I want to live on for Christ; I am only thirty years of age. Sun of my Christian ministry, stand still over Scotland." And it stood still.

A good many years ago there was a very consecrated Christian woman. She had a drunken husband, and there came to her the night of domestic calamity; she lost her children, and there came to her the night of bereavement; she lost her health, and there came to her the night of sickness; her soul departed, and there came to her the night of death. But in all these years of bereavement and calamity, sickness and death, the promise of God shone on her so brightly, she had songs in the night, and people used to go to her sick room and see how happy a Christian could be; and the story of that cheerful sick room has been told in all its branches of the family, and other nights of distress have been radiated by her bright and glorious night. The moon that illumined her night of tribulation

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was a reflection from the Sun of Righteousness, and when in the last hours of that night of tribulation she lifted her hand as toward the opening heaven, she was only practically saying, "Thou moon, stand still over the valley of Ajalon."

When will this Sabbath end? Seven o'clock to-night? No. The almanack says so. I deny it. There will be miracles to-day. Ye who toil in Sabbath-schools and reformatory institutions, go forth and do your best for God and the church, and after you have offered your most ardent prayer and uttered your most ardent exhortation, feel that your day of influence can never come to an end, and you can in triumph cry out, "Sun of this holy Sabbath, sun of my Christian work, stand thou still for ever and for ever." It shall obey you.

It is not yet quite sundown in Joshua's day, and we will have time for five royal funerals. Where are those five kings that Joshua took and whose armies he destroyed? They are there in that cave—the cave of Makkedah—hiding. Joshua has rolled a stone against it and they cannot get out. But before night, before this very sun which I am speaking about goes down, these five men are brought out, and, according to the ancient custom, the major-generals of Joshua now come up, and they put their foot on the neck of the terrible old kings, and they are beheaded, and their bodies are put back into the same cave, and the stone is rolled against it again; so that that cave has been to them head-quarters, first; prison, second; sepulchre, last;



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and all on the same day. Who will preach their funeral sermon? Massillon preached the funeral sermon of Louis XIV. Dr. Robert South preached a sermon commemorative of Charles I. Who will preach the funeral sermon of these five bad kings? Joshua. And what shall be his text? And what shall be the epitaph chiselled on the rock in front of the cave at Makkedah? Joshua i. 5: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."

"Oh!" you say, "it is a pity to bury these five kings so ignominiously." No, sir; before that rock is sealed up, I want to put in five more kings, first having them beheaded—king Alcohol, king Fraud, king Lust, king Superstition, king Bigotry. Have them all in. Cover them over with a mound of broken decanters and the *débris* of their miserable doings. Roll a rock against that cave, so that they never can get out. Then chisel for these last five kings the same epitaph you had for the other five kings, and let all the Christian reformers and philanthropists, before the sun of their protracted day of usefulness is ended, come up and read it—Joshua i. 5: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."

Now it is time for Joshua to go home. He is an old man. He is a hundred and ten. Washington went down to the Potomac, and at Mount Vernon spent the evening of his day. Wellington died peacefully at Walmer Castle. Now give Joshua, the oldest warrior of the ages, a chance to rest. No! The greatest battle of all his lifetime opens—mightier

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than the one against the spring freshet, mightier than the one against the stone wall, mightier than the one in which he led the regiment of whipped cowards, mightier than the one in which he fought back the darkness, marshalling the sun and moon in his battalion. He comes out now against the greatest king of earth, a king who has more subjects than all the present population of the earth. His throne is a pyramid of skulls. His chariot is the world's hearse. The playground and the park around his palace is the world's graveyard. All the sicknesses of the world are marshalled on his side. It is the King of Terrors, the conqueror of thousands of years. Now, Joshua, you have your match. No! For if this is Joshua's greatest battle it is Joshua's greatest victory. He gathers his friends around him and he gives his valedictory. It is full of an old man's reminiscences. Young men tell what they are going to do. Old men tell what they have done. And as sometimes by the winter fire you have heard your grandfather or great-grandfather talk of Monmouth or Yorktown or Bunker Hill, shouldering his staff as though it were a musket, to show you how the field was won, so Joshua fights all his battles over again in the last days of his life.

As I stand looking at the old man and see his white hair over his wrinkled brow, and his upper lip compressed against his sunken gum, I wonder if God has fulfilled the entire promise of the text, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." And while I am wondering

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the old man tells the same story twice and in the same breath, as sometimes you know old people forget and will tell the same story twice. He says, "This day I go the way of all the earth, and not one thing of all the good things that God has promised concerning you has failed. All have come to pass. Not one thing thereof has failed." And then in his dying moment he says to the people, "Now make your choice: which God are you going to have, the God of the Ammonites or the God of Israel? As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Oh how natural that was! When a good man dies, his chief anxiety is about his family. We want our children saved. Joshua wanted all his family saved. Living, dying, be that our prayer. Consent to everything else we can, but consent to eternal parting at the tomb we never can. By the cradle in which their infancy was rocked, by the bosom on which they first lay, by the burning prayers we have offered for their salvation, by the blood of the new covenant, by the Lord God of Joshua, it shall not be. Jehovah-jirah, we take Thee at Thy oath: "I will be a God to thee and thy seed after thee." Dead, the old chieftain must be laid out. He is a hundred and ten years old. Touch him very gently. Stretch out those old feet that once walked the dry path of the parted Jordan. Close those lips which blew the blast that dropped the walls of Jericho. Fold that arm which stretched out the spear against the doomed city of Ai. Fold it across the heart that exulted when the five kings fell. But where shall we get

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the burnished granite fit to be the headstone and the footstone of this greatest of warriors? Oh, I bethink myself now. I imagine at his head it shall be the sun that stood still above Gibeon, and at his foot it shall be the moon that stood still over the valley of Ajalon.

## THE JORDANIC PASSAGE.

“And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, and the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.”—*Josh.* iii. 15-17.

**N**OT long ago we saw Joshua on a forced march. During that hour we saw him cross the Jordan, blow down the walls of Jericho, capture the city Ai, demolish five kings, the astronomy of heaven changed to give him time enough to completely whip out his enemies. It was my grief and yours on that occasion that we could not stop to consider more deliberately the Jordanic passage. I stayed for some three or four weeks at Williamsport, on the banks of the Potomac, just after the Confederate army had crossed over, and the broken ammunition wagons and the dead cavalry horses that strewed the beach brought back to my mind vividly the solemn and dreadful scenes which had there recently transpired. Washington crossed the Delaware when crossing was pronounced impossible; but he did it by boat. Xerxes crossed the Hellespont with two million men; but he did it by a bridge.

### *The Jordanic Passage.*

The Israelites crossed the Red Sea; but the same orchestra that celebrated the deliverance of one army sounded the strangulation of the other. This Jordanic passage differs from all. There was no sacrifice of human life. Not so much as the loss of a linchpin. The vanguard of the host, made up of the priests, advanced until they put their foot at the brim of the river, when immediately the streets of Jerusalem were no more dry than the bed of that river. It was as if all the water had been drawn off, and then the dampness had been soaked up with a sponge, and then by a towel the road had been wiped dry. Yonder go the great army of the Philistines, the host in uniform; following them, the wives, the children, the flocks, the herds. The people look up at the crystal wall of Jericho as they pass, and think what an awful disaster would come to them if, before they got to the opposite bank of tamerisk and oleander and willows, that wall should fall upon them; and the thought makes the mothers hug their children closer to their hearts and to quicken their pace. Quick, now! Get them all upon the bank—armed warriors, wives, children, flocks, herds—and let this wonderful Jordanic passage be completed for ever.

Seated this morning on the shelving of limestone, I look off upon that Jordan where Joshua crossed under triumphal arch of rainbow woven out of the spray—the river which afterwards became the baptistery where Christ was sprinkled or plunged, the river where the borrowed axe-head miraculously swam at the prophet's order, the river illustrious in

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the history of the world for heroic faith and Omnipotent deliverance, and typical of scenes yet to transpire in your life and mine, scenes enough to make us from sole of foot to crown of head to tingle with infinite gladness. Standing on the scene of that affrighted and fugitive river Jordan, I learn for myself and for you, first, *that obstacles when they are touched vanish.* The text says that when these priests came down and touched the edge of the water with their feet, the water parted. They did not wade in chin deep, or waist deep, or knee deep, or ankle deep, but as soon as their feet touched the water it vanished. And it makes me think that almost all the obstacles of life need only to be approached in order to be conquered. Difficulties touched vanish. It is the trouble, the difficulty, the obstacle there in the distance, that seems so huge and tremendous. The Apostles Paul and John seem to hate cross dogs. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians, "Beware of dogs;" and John seems to shut the gate of heaven against all the canine species when he says, "Without are dogs." But I have been told that when these animals are furious and they come at you, if you will keep your eye upon them and advance upon them, they will retreat. So the most of the trials of life that hound your steps, if you can only get your eye upon them, and keep your eye upon them, and advance upon them, crying, "Begone!" will slink and cower.

There is a beautiful tradition among the American Indians, that Maratan was travelling in the invisible world, and one day he came to a barrier of brambles

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and sharp thorns which forbade his going on, and there was a wild beast glaring at him from the thicket ; but as he determined to go on and did proceed, the brambles were found to be only phantoms, and the beast was found to be a powerless ghost, and the impassable river that forbade his rushing to the embrace of his dusk Garatelda proved to be only the phantom of a river. Well, my friends, the fact is that many things that cross our pathway are only the phantoms, only the delusions of life. Difficulties touched are conquered. Put your feet into the brim of the water and Jordan retreats. You sometimes have a great duty to perform ; it is a very disagreeable duty. You say, "I can't go through it ; I haven't the courage, I haven't the intelligence to go through it." Advance upon it and Jordan will fly. I always sigh before I begin to preach at the greatness of the undertaking ; but as soon as I start it becomes an exhilaration, and any duty undertaken with a confident spirit becomes a pleasure, and the higher the duty the higher the pleasure.

Difficulties touched are conquered. Jordans advanced upon vanish. There are a great many people who are afraid of death in the future. John Livingstone, once on a sloop coming from Elizabethport to New York, was dreadfully frightened because he thought he was going to be drowned, a sudden gust coming up. People were surprised at him. If there was any man in all the world fit to die, it was good John Livingstone. So there are now a great many good people who shudder in passing a graveyard,



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and they hardly dare think of Canaan, because of the Jordan that intervenes; but once they are down on a sick bed, all their fears are gone. The waters of death dashing on the beach sound like the mellow song of ocean shells. The departing ones swell the blossoms of the Tree of Life. The music of heavenly castles comes stealing over the waters. Crossing now is only a pleasant sail. How long the boat is coming! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Christ, the Priest, advances ahead, and the dying Christian goes over dry-shod on coral beds and flowers of heaven and paths of pearl.

“ Oh, could we make our doubts remove,  
These gloomy doubts that rise,  
And view the Canaan that we love  
With unbeckoned eyes!

“ Could we but climb where Moses stood,  
And view the landscape o'er,  
Not Jordan's stream nor death's cold flood  
Could fright us from the shore.”

Again: This Jordanic passage teaches me the *completeness of everything that God does*. When God put an invisible dam across the Jordan and it halted, it would have been natural, you would suppose, for the waters to overflow the region round about, so that great devastation would have taken place. But when God put a dam in front of the river, He put a dam on either side of the river, so, according to the text, the waters halted and reared and stood there, not overflowing the surrounding country. Oh the completeness of everything God does! One would think if the water of Jordan had dropped until it was only

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two or three feet deep, that the Israelites might have marched through and have come up on the other bank with soaked and saturated garments, as men come ashore from a shipwreck, and that would have been a wonderful deliverance. So it would. But God does something better than that. One would suppose, if the water had been drawn off from the Jordan there would have been a bed of mud and slime through which the army would have had to march. Draw off the water from the Hudson or the Connecticut, and there would be many days, and perhaps many weeks, before the sediment would dry. Yet here, immediately, God prepares a path through the depths of the Jordan. It is so dry the passengers do not even get their feet damp.

Oh the completeness of everything that God does! Does He make a universe? It is a perfect clock, running ever since it was wound up, fixed stars the pivots, constellations the intermoving wheels, and ponderous laws the weights and mighty swinging pendulum; the stars in the great dome striking midnight, and the sun with brazen tongue tolling the hour of noon. The slightest comet has upon it the chain of a law which it cannot break. The thistle-down flying before the schoolboy's breath is controlled by the same law that controls the sun and the plants. The rosebush in your window is governed by the same principle that governs the great tree of the universe, on which stars are ripening fruit, and on which God will one day put His hand and shake down the fruit. A perfect universe! No

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astronomer has ever proposed an amendment. Does God make a Bible? It is a complete Bible. Standing amid its dreadful and delightful truths, you seem to be in the midst of an orchestra, where the wailings over sin and the rejoicings over pardon and the martial strains of victory make a chorus like the anthem of eternity. This book seems to you an ocean of truth, on every wave of which Christ walks, sometimes in the darkness of prophecy, sometimes in the splendours with which He walked on Galilee. In this book, apostle answering to prophet, Paul to Isaiah, Revelation to Genesis; glorious light turning the midnight of sorrow into the midnoon of joy; piercing every fog, unflickering in every tempest. Oh, this book is the kiss of God on the soul of lost man! Complete Bible; no man ever proposed an improvement. Does God provide a Saviour? He is a complete Saviour. God-man, divinity-humanity united in the same person. He set up the starry pillars of the universe, and the towers of light; He planted the cedars on the heavenly Lebanon; He struck out of the rock the rivers of life singing under the trees, singing under the thrones; He unquarried the sardonyx and the chrysolite and the topaz of the heavenly wall, pulling down jasper for the foundation and heaving up amethyst for the capital, and swinging twelve gates which are twelve pearls. In one instant He thought out a universe, and yet He is a child crying after His mother, feeling along the side of the manger while He is learning to walk. Omnipotence sheathed in the muscles and flesh of a child's

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arm ; Omnipotence strung in the optic nerve of a child's eye ; infinite love beating in a child's heart ; The great God appearing in the form of a child one year old, five years old, fifteen years old. While all heaven were ascribing to Him glory and honour and power, on earth they called Him "this fellow." While the heavenly host, with folded wing over face, bowed down before Him, and cried, "Holy, holy!" on earth, they denounced Him as a blasphemer and a sot. Rocked in a boat on Gennesaret, and yet He it is who undirks the lightning from the storm-cloud and dismasts Lebanon of its forests, and holds the five oceans on the tip of His finger as a leaf holdeth a raindrop. Oh, He is a complete Saviour ! Rubbing His hand over the place where we have a pain, until it is soothed, yet the stars of heaven the adorning gems of His right hand ! Holding us in His arms when we take the last view of our dead, and sitting down with us on the tombstone, and while we plant roses there, He is planting consolation in our heart, every chapter a stalk, every verse a stem, every word a rose. A complete Saviour ! a complete Bible ! a complete universe ! a complete Jordanic passage ! everything that God does complete !

Again : I learn from this Jordanic passage that *between us and every Canaan of success and prosperity there is a river that must be passed.* "Oh, how I should like to have some of those grapes on the other side!" said some of the Israelites to Joshua. "Well," said Joshua, "if you want some of those grapes, why don't you cross over and get them?" A river of

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difficulty between us and everything that is worth having. That which costs nothing is worth nothing. God did not intend this world for an easy parlour through which we are to be drawn in a rocking-chair ; but we are to work our passage, climb masts, fight battles, scale mountains, ford rivers. God makes everything valuable difficult to get at for the same reason that He puts the gold down in the mine, and the pearl clear down in the sea ; it is to make us dig and dive for them. We acknowledge this principle in worldly things. Would that we were wise enough to acknowledge it in religious things. We are not surprised to find that Cornelius Vanderbilt used to have his hands blistered, rowing a ferry-boat. We are not surprised to find that A. T. Stewart used to sweep out his own store. You have had scores of illustrations under your own observation where men have had it just as hard as they could have it, and yet after awhile had it easy. Now the walls of their home blossom with pictures. Carpets that made foreign looms laugh, embrace their feet. The summer wind lifts the tapestry about the window gorgeous enough for a Turkish Sultan. Impatient steeds paw and neigh at the door, or moving therefrom, the gilded harness tinkling with silver, and the carriage moving through that sea of New York life, a very wave of beauty and splendour. Who is it ? Why, it is the boy that came to New York with a dollar in his pocket and his estate slung over his shoulder in a cotton handkerchief. The silver on the harness of that dancing span is petrified

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sweat drops. That beautiful dress is the faded calico, over which God put His hand approvingly, turning it to Turkish satin or Italian silk. Those diamonds are the tears which suffering froze as they fell.

Oh, there is a river of difficulty between us and every earthly achievement. You know it is so in regard to the acquisition of knowledge. The ancients used to say that Vulcan struck Jupiter on the head, and the goddess of wisdom jumped out, illustrating the truth that wisdom comes by hard knocks. There was a river of difficulty between Shakespeare the boy holding the horse at the door of the London theatre, and that Shakespeare the great dramatist, winning the applause of all nations by his tragedies. There was a river of difficulty between Benjamin Franklin with a loaf of bread under his arm, walking the streets of Philadelphia, and that same Benjamin Franklin the philosopher just outside Boston, playing kite with the thunderstorm. An idler was cured of his bad habit by looking through the window night after night at a man who seemed sitting at his desk turning off one sheet of writing after another until almost the dawn of morning. The man seated there writing until morning was the industrious Walter Scott. The man who looked at him through the window was Lockhart, his illustrious biographer afterward. Lord Mansfield, pursued by the press, pursued by the populace, because of a certain course he had taken, shook his fist in the face of the mob, and said, "Sirs, when one's last end comes, it can-

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not come too soon if he fall in defence of the law and the liberty of his country." And so there is, my friends, a tug, a jostle, a trial, a push, an anxiety, through which every man must go before he comes to worldly success. Now, be wise enough to apply the principle in religion. Eminent Christian character is only attained by Jordanic passage. No man just happens to get good. Why does that man know so much about the Scriptures? He was studying the Bible while you were reading a novel. He was on fire with the sublimities of the Bible while you were sound asleep. It was by tugging and toiling and pushing and running in the Christian life that he became so strong. In a hundred Solferinos he learned how to fight. In a hundred shipwrecks he learned how to swim. Tears over sin, tears over Zion's desolations, tears over the impenitent, tears over graves, made a Jordan which that man had to pass.

Sorrow stains the cheek and sinks the eye, and pales the brow and thins the hand. There are mourning garments in every wardrobe. There are deaths in every family record. All around us are the relics of the dead. The Christian has passed this Red Sea of trouble, and yet he finds that there is the Jordan of death between him and heaven. He comes down to the Jordan of death and thinks how many have been lost there. When Lieutenant Molineaux was exploring the Jordan in Palestine, he had his boats all knocked to pieces in the rapids of the river; and there are a great many men who have gone down in

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the river of death. The Atlantic and the Pacific have not swallowed so many. It is an awful thing to make shipwreck on the rock of ruin. Masts falling, hulks splitting, death coming, groaning in the water, moaning in the wind, thundering in the sky; while God, with finger of lightning, writes over all the scene, "I will tread them in My wrath, and I will trample them in My fury." The Christian approaches this raging torrent, and as he nears it his breath gets shorter, and his last breath leaves him as he steps into the stream; but no sooner has he touched the stream than it is parted, and he goes through dry-shod, while all the waters wave their plumes, crying, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," and there shall be no more sea, and there shall be no more death.

When I see the Israelites getting through Jordan and getting up the banks, and I see their flocks and herds following right on after them, the suggestion comes through my mind that perhaps after all the best part of the brute creation may have a chance in the great future. You say, "Harmonise with that theory the passage, 'The spirit of the brute goes downward.'" I can harmonise these two things a great deal easier than I can harmonise the annihilation of the brute creation with the ill-treatment they here receive. I do not know but that in the clear atmosphere of that other country there may be a bird heaven. I do not know but that on those fair banks there may be a lily heaven, a rose heaven,



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an amaranthine heaven. When I see a professed Christian man abusing his horse, my common sense of justice tells me that that horse ought to have a better time in the future than his driver! If really the jaded and abused car and omnibus horses of our cities have any better country to go to when they leave this world—I do not know that they do, I do not know that they do not—but if they do have such a country to go to, I should like to see them the moment when, their galled necks cured, and their foundered knees straightened, and their coughing distempers healed, free from the collar and the tight check-line and the twisted bit, they shall range in the celestial pasturage for ever and for ever. I do not say it is so, but I should not be offended if I should find at last that not only all the Israelites got through the Jordan, but the best part of the brute creation got in after them.

But whether that be so or not, there is one thing certain I get from my text, and that is, we have a right to expect our families to go with us. Some of your children have already gone up the other bank. You let them down on this side the bank; they will be on the other bank to help you up with supernatural strength.

The other morning, seated at my table, all my family present, I thought to myself how pleasant it would be if I could put them all in a boat and then get in with them, and we could pull across the river to the next world, and be there, and be there all together. No family partings. No gloomy obsequies.

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It would not take five minutes to go from bank to bank ; and then in that better world to be together for ever ! Would it not be pleasant if you could take all your family into that blessed country, and you could all go together ? I remember my mother in her dying hour said to my father, " Father, wouldn't it be pleasant if we could all go together ? " But we cannot all go together ; we must go one by one. What a heaven it will be if we have all our families there ! To look around and see that all your children are present. Rather have them all there and you go with bare brow for ever, than one of them missing and all the garlands of heaven for your coronal. Lord God of Joshua, give them safe Jordanic passage !

Every Christian will go over dry-shod. Those of us who were brought up in the country remember, when the summer was coming on, in our boyhood days, we always longed for the day when we could go barefooted ; and, after teasing our mothers in regard to it a good while and she having consented, we remember now the delicious sensation of the cool grass and the soft dust of the road when we put our uncovered foot down. And the time will come when these shoes we wear now—lest we be cut of the sharp places of this world—shall be taken off, and with unsandalled foot we shall step into the bed of the river. With foot untrammelled from pain and fatigue we shall begin that last journey. When, with one foot in the bed of the river and the other foot on the other bank, we spring upward, that will be heaven. I pray for all my dear people safe Jordanic passage.

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That is what the dying Christian husband felt when he said, "How the candle flickers, Nelly! put it out; I shall sleep well to-night and awake in the morning."

One word of comfort from this subject for all the bereft. You see our departed friends have not been submerged, they have not been swamped in the waters; they have only crossed over. These Israelites were as thoroughly alive on the eastern bank of the Jordan as they had been on the western bank of the Jordan, and our departed Christian friends have only crossed over. They are not sick nor dead, not exhausted, not extinguished, not blotted out; but with healthier respiration, and stouter pulsation, and keener sight, and better prospect. Crossed over! their sins, their physical and mental disquietude, all left on this side. Impassable obstacle between them and all human and Satanic pursuit. Crossed over! I shake hands of congratulation with all the bereft in the consideration that their departed Christian friends are safe. Why was there so much joy in certain circles of New York this past week? It was because they heard from their friends who were on board the *City of Brussels*. It was thought that vessel had gone to the bottom of the sea; and when the friends on this side heard that their friends had arrived safely in Liverpool, was it not right to congratulate the people in New York that their friends had got safely across? And is it not right this morning that I congratulate you that your departed friends are safe on the shore of heaven? Would you have them back again? Would you have those old

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parents back again? You know how hard it was sometimes for them to get their breath in the stifling atmosphere of the summer. Would you have them back now? Did they not have their burden long enough? Would you have your children back again? Would you have them take the risks and the temptations which threaten every human pathway? Would you have them cross Jordan three times—in addition to the crossing already, crossing again to greet you now, and then crossing back after a while? Certainly you would not want to keep them for ever out of heaven.

“Pause now and weep, not for the freed from pain,  
But that the sigh of love would bring them back again.”

I ask a question, and there seems to come back an answer in heavenly echo. “What, will you never be sick again?” “Never be sick again.” “What, will you never be tired again?” “Never be tired again.” “What, will you never weep again?” “Never weep again.” “What, will you never die again?” “Never die again.” Oh, you army of departed kindred, we hail you from bank to bank! Wait for us. When the Jordan of death shall part for us as it parted for you, come down and meet us half-way between the willowed banks of earth and the palm groves of heaven. May our great High Priest go ahead of us and with His bruised feet touch the waters, and there shall be fulfilled the words of my text: “And all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.”

## ROCKS ON BOTH SIDES.

“There was a sharp rock on the one side, and there was a sharp rock on the other side.”—1 *Sam.* xiv. 4.

**T**HE cruel army of the Philistines must be taken and scattered. There is just one man, accompanied by his body-guard, to do that thing. Jonathan is the hero of the scene. I know that David cracked the skull of the giant with a few pebbles well slung, and that three hundred Gideonites scattered ten thousand Amalekites by the crash of broken crockery; but here is a more wonderful conflict. Yonder are the Philistines on the rocks. Here is Jonathan with his body-guard in the valley. On the one side is a rock called Bozez; on the other side is a rock called Seneh—these two rocks as famous in olden times as in modern times are Plymouth and Gibraltar. They were precipitous, unscalable, and sharp. Between these two rocks Jonathan must make his ascent. The day comes for the scaling of the heights. Jonathan on his hands and feet begins the ascent. With strain and slip and bruise, I suppose, but still on and up, first goes Jonathan, then goes his body-guard. Bozez on the one side, Seneh on the other side. After a sharp tug and push and climbing, I see the head of

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Jonathan above the hole in the mountain, and then I see the head of the body-guard above the hole in the mountain; and there is a challenge, and a fight, and a supernatural consternation. These two men, Jonathan and his body-guard, drive back and drive down the Philistines over the rocks, and open a campaign which demolishes the enemies of Israel. I suppose that the overhanging and overshadowing rocks on either side did not balk or dishearten Jonathan or his body-guard, but only roused and filled them with enthusiasm as they went up. "There was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side."

My friends, you have been or are now, some of you, in this crisis of the text. If a man meet one trouble, he can go through it. He gathers all his energies, concentrates them upon one point, and in the strength of God, or by his own natural determination, goes through it. But the man who has trouble to the right of him and trouble to the left of him is to be pitied. Did either trouble come alone, he might endure it; but two troubles, two disasters, two overshadowing misfortunes are Bozez and Seneh. God pity him! "There is a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side."

In this crisis of the text is that man whose fortune and health fail him at the same time. Nine-tenths of all our merchants capsize in business before they come to forty-five years of age. There is some collision in commercial circles and they stop payment. It seems as if every man must put his name on the

back of a note before he learns what a fool a man is who risks all his own property on the prospect that some man will tell the truth. It seems as if a man must have a large amount of unsaleable goods on his own shelf before he learns how much easier it is to buy than to sell. It seems as if every man must be completely burned out before he learns the importance of always keeping fully insured. It seems as if every man must be wrecked in a financial tempest before he learns to keep things snug in case of a sudden euroclydon. When the calamity does come, it is awful. The man goes home in despair, and he tells his family, "We'll have to go to the poor-house." He takes a dolorous view of everything. It seems as if he never could rise. But a little time passes and he says, "Why, I am not so badly off after all; I have my family left." Before the Lord turned Adam out of Paradise, He gave him Eve; so that when he lost Paradise he could stand it! Permit one who has never read but three or four novels in all his life, and who has not a great deal of romance in his composition, to say that if, when a man's fortune fail, he has a good wife, a good Christian wife, he ought not to be despondent. "Oh!" you say, "that only increases the embarrassment, since you have her also to take care of." You are an ingrate; for a woman as often supports a man as the man supports the woman. The man may bring all the dollars, but the woman generally brings the courage and the faith in God. Well, this man of whom I am speaking looks around and he finds his

family is left, and he rallies, and the light comes to his eye, and the smile to his face, and the courage to his heart. In two years he is all over it. He makes his financial calamity the first chapter in a new era of prosperity. He met that one trouble—conquered it. He sat down for a little while under the grim shadow of the rock Bozez, yet he soon rose and began like Jonathan to climb.

But how often it is that physical ailment comes with financial embarrassment. When the fortune failed it broke the man's spirits. His nerves were shattered. His brain was stunned. I can show you hundreds of men in New York to-morrow whose fortune and health failed at the same time. They came prematurely to the cane. Their hand trembled with incipient paralysis. They never saw a well day since the hour when they called their creditors together for a compromise. If such men are impatient, and peculiar, and irritable, excuse them. They had two troubles, either one of which alone they could have met successfully. If when the health went, the fortune had been retained, it would not have been so bad. The man could have bought the very best medicament, and he could have had the very best attendance, and long lines of carriages would have stopped at the front door to inquire as to his welfare. But poverty on the one side and sickness on the other, are Bozez and Seneh, and they interlock their shadows and drop them in upon the poor man's way. God help him! "There is a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other



side." Now, what is such a man to do? In the name of Almighty God, I will tell him what to do. Do as Jonathan did—climb, climb up into the sunlight of God's favour and consolation. I can go through the churches and show you men who lost fortune and health at the same time, and yet who sing all day and dream of heaven all night. If you have any idea that sound digestion and steady nerves, and clear eye-sight and good hearing, and plenty of friends, are necessary to make a man happy, you have miscalculated.

I suppose that these overhanging rocks only made Jonathan scramble the harder and the faster to get up and out into the sunlight; and this combined shadow of invalidism and financial embarrassment has often lifted a man up the quicker into the sunlight of God's favour, and the noonday of His glorious promises. It is a difficult thing for a man to feel his dependence upon God when he has ten thousand dollars in the bank and fifty thousand dollars in government securities, and a block of stores and three ships. "Well," the man says to himself, "it is silly for me to pray, 'Give me this day my daily bread,' when my pantry is full, and the canals from the west are crowded with bread-stuffs destined for my storehouses." Oh, my friends! if the combined misfortunes and disasters of life have made you climb up into the arms of a sympathetic and compassionate God, through all eternity you will bless Him that in this world there was a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side.

Again: That man is in the crisis of the text who has *home troubles and outside persecutions at the same time*. The world treats a man well just as long as it pays best to treat him well. As long as it can manufacture success out of his bone and brain and muscle, it favours him. The world fattens the horse it wants to drive. But let a man see it is his duty to cross the track of the world, then every bush is full of horns and tusks thrust at him. They will belittle him; they will caricature him; they will call his generosity self-aggrandisement; and his piety sanctimoniousness. The very worst persecution will sometimes come upon him from those who profess to be Christians, on the principle that religious wars are the most bitter wars. Now, the world sometimes takes after him, the newspapers take after him, public opinion takes after him, and he is lied about until all the dictionary of Billingsgate is exhausted on him. You often see a man whom you know to be good and pure and honest set upon by the world, and mauled of whole communities, and vicious men take on a supercilious air in condemnation of him; as though Lord Jeffrey should write an essay on gentleness, or Henry VIII. talk about purity, or Herod go to blessing little children. Now, a certain amount of persecution rouses a man's defiance, stirs his blood for magnificent battle, and makes him fifty times more a man than he would have been without the persecution. So it was with the great reformer when he said, "I will not be put down; I will be heard." And so it was with Millard the preacher, in the time of Louis

XI. When Louis XI. sent word to him that unless he stopped preaching in that style he would throw him into the river, he replied, "Tell the king that I will reach heaven sooner by water than he will reach it by fast horses." A certain amount of persecution is a tonic and an inspiration; but too much of it and too long continued becomes the rock Bozez, throwing a dark shadow over a man's life. What is he to do, then? Go home, you say. Good advice that. That is just the place for a man to go when the world abuses him. Go home. Blessed be God for our quiet and sympathetic homes! But there is many a man who has the reputation of having a home when he has none. Through unthinkingness or precipitation there are many matches made that ought never to have been made. An officiating priest cannot alone unite a couple. The Lord Almighty must proclaim banns. There is many a home in which there is no sympathy, and no helpfulness, and no good cheer. The clangour of the battle may not have been heard outside; but God knows, notwithstanding all the playing of the "wedding march," and all the odour of the orange blossoms, and the benediction of the officiating pastor, there has been no marriage. Sometimes men have awakened to find on one side of them the rock of persecution, and on the other side the rock of domestic infelicity. What shall such an one do? Do as Jonathan did. Climb! Get up into the heights of God's consolation, from which you may look down in triumph upon outside persecution and home trouble. While good and great

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John Wesley was being silenced of the magistrates and having his name written on the board fences of London in doggerel, at that very time his wife was making him as miserable as she could, acting as though she were possessed with the devil, as I suppose she was, never doing him a kindness until the day she ran away; so that he wrote in his diary these words: "I did not forsake her; I have not dismissed her; I will not recall her." Planting one foot, as John Wesley did, upon outside persecution, and the other foot on home trouble, he climbed up into the heights of Christian joy, and after preaching forty thousand sermons and travelling two hundred and seventy thousand miles, reached the heights of heaven, though in this world he had it hard enough, "a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side."

Again: That woman stands in the crisis of the text who has *bereavement and a struggle for a livelihood at the same time*. Without calling names, I speak from observation. Oh! it is a hard thing for a woman to make an honest living even when her heart is not troubled and she has a fair cheek and the magnetism of an exquisite presence. But now the husband or the father is dead. The expenses of the obsequies have absorbed all that was left in the savings bank; and, wan and wasted with weeping and watching, she goes forth—a grave, a hearse, a coffin behind her—to contend for her existence and the existence of her children. When I see such a battle as that open, I shut my eyes at the ghastliness of the

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spectacle. Men sit with embroidered slippers and write heartless essays about woman's wages, but that question is made up of tears and blood, and there is more blood than tears. Oh, give woman free access to all the realms where she can get a livelihood, from the telegraph office to the pulpit. Let men's wages be cut down before hers are cut down. Men have iron in their souls and can stand it. Make the way free to her of the broken heart. May God put into my hand the cold, bitter cup of privation, and give me nothing but a windowless hut for shelter for many years, rather than after I am dead there should go out from my home into the pitiless world a woman's arm to fight the Gettysburgh, the Austerlitz, the Waterloo for bread. And yet how many women there are seated between the rock of bereavement on the one side and the rock of destitution on the other, Bozez and Seneh interlocking; their shadow and dropping them upon her miserable way. "There is a sharp rock on the one side and a sharp rock on the other side." What are such to do? Somehow let them climb up into the heights of the glorious promise: "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in Me." Or get up into the heights of that other glorious promise: "The Lord preserveth the strangers, and relieveth the widow and the fatherless." O ye sewing women, on starving wages—O ye widows, turned out from the once bountiful home—O ye female teachers, kept on niggardly stipend—O ye despairing women, seeking in vain for

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work, wandering along the docks, thinking to throw yourselves into the East River last night—O ye women of weak nerves, and aching side, and short breath, and broken heart! you need something more than human sympathy; you need the sympathy of God. Climb up into His arms. He knows it all, and He loves you more than father or mother or husband ever could or ever did; and instead of sitting down wringing your hands in despair, you had better begin to climb. There are heights of consolation for you, though now “there is a sharp rock on the one side and a sharp rock on the other side.”

Again: That man is in the crisis of the text who *has a wasted life on the one side and an unilluminated eternity on the other.* Though a man may all his life have cultivated deliberation and self-poise, if he gets in that position, all his self-possession is gone. There are all the wrong thoughts of his existence, all the wrong deeds, all the wrong words—strata above strata, granitic, ponderous, overshadowing. That rock I call Bozez. On the other side are all the retributions of the future, the thrones of judgment, the eternal ages angry with his long defiance; piled up, concentrated, accumulated wrath. That rock I will call Seneh. Between these two rocks Lord Byron perished, and Absalom perished, and Alcibiades perished, and Herod perished, and ten thousand times ten thousand perished. O man immortal, man redeemed, man blood-bought, climb up out of those shadows. Climb up by the way of the Cross. Have your wasted life forgiven. Have your eternal


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life secured. This morning just take one look to the past and see what it has been, and take one look to the future and see what it threatens to be. You can afford to lose your health, you can afford to lose your property, you can afford to lose your reputation; but you cannot afford to lose your soul. That bright, gleaming, glorious, precious, eternal possession you must carry aloft in the day when the earth rocks down and the heavens burst. O God, help that man to save his soul!

You see from my subject that when a man goes into the safety and peace of the gospel, he does not bemean himself. There is nothing in religion that leads to unmanliness or unwomanliness. The gospel of Jesus Christ only asks you to climb as Jonathan did—climb toward God, climb towards heaven, climb into the sunshine of God's favour. To become a Christian is not to go meanly down; it is to come gloriously up—up into the communion of saints, up into the peace that passeth all understanding, up into the companionship of angels. He lives up. He dies up. Oh, then, accept the wholesale invitation which I make this morning to all the people. Come up from between your invalidism and financial embarrassment. Come up from between your home trouble and your outside persecution. Come up from between your bereavements and your destitutions. Come up from between a wasted life and an unilluminated eternity. Like Jonathan, climb with all your might, instead of sitting down to wring your hands in the shadow and in the darkness, a sharp rock on this side and a sharp rock on the other side.

## THE SWORD OF ELEAZAR.

“His hand clave unto the sword.”—2 *Sam.* xxiii. 10.

 GREAT general of King David was Eleazar, the hero of the text. The Philistines had opened a battle against him, and his troops ran; but he with three other men held the field. He fought with such ferocity that the Philistines were appalled and routed. Putting his hand on the hilt of his sword, he swept the fingers around until the tips of the fingers were clenched on the other side. Now with a down-stroke laying open the head of the Lord's enemies from cranium to chin, now coming in upon them with a sharp thrust at the vitals, and now, with swift, keen, glittering stroke, leaving the carcasses of his enemies by the roadside. “Fall back!” shouted the officers of the Philistine army. The cry ran all along the line—“Fall back!” Eleazar, having cleared the field, throws himself on the ground to rest; but the sinews of his hand have been so long clenched around the sword that the hilt of it has entered the palm of the hand, and the gold wire around the hilt has broken the skin of the palm, until he cannot drop the sword which he has so illustriously wielded. That is what I call magnifi-



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cent fighting for the Lord God of Israel, and we want more of it. I am going to take your time this morning in showing how Eleazar took hold of the sword, and how the sword took hold of him.

In the first place, I notice that he took hold of that sword with a tight grip. The soldiers in his army who ran away could easily drop all their weapons whenever they wanted to do so. I hear their swords clanging on the rocks as they throw them down in fright. But Eleazar's hand clave unto his sword. The fact is, that in this Christian conflict we want a tighter grip of the gospel weapon—the two-edged sword of God's truth. I am sick and tired of seeing people with only half-and-half a hold. They take hold of a part of God's Word and let the rest go, and the Philistines, seeing their loose grip, wrench the entire sword away. The only safe thing for us to do is to put our thumb down on the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis, and sweep our hand on around until the New Testament shall come in the palm, and sweep the fingers still on around until the tips of the fingers clutch on the words "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." I like an infidel a great deal better than I do one of these namby-pamby Christians who takes hold of God's Word with the tips of his fingers, and knows what part to keep and what part to let go. God, by positive miracles, has kept this book together, and it is a Damascus blade. In a sword factory the severest test they can apply to a sword is the winding of the blade around a gun-barrel like a ribbon, and then

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when the sword is let loose it springs back to its old shape. This sword of God's Word has been put to that test, and it has been bent this way and that way, and wound this way and that way; but it always springs back again. Just think of it! A book written eighteen centuries ago, and some of it thousands of years ago, yet published to-day, at the rate of twenty thousand copies a week, and more than one million copies a year. A book miraculously written, miraculously preserved, and miraculously scattered, is a book you want to keep a tight grip of. Bishop Colenso will try to wrench out from your fingers the five books of Moses; Strauss will try to wrench out from your fingers the miracles; Renan will try to wrench out of your hand the entire life of Christ; your infidel friend will try to wrench out of your hand all the Bible. But with Eleazar's grip and in the strength of the Lord God of Israel, hold on to it! He who gives up the Bible, or any part of it, gives up pardon and life and peace and heaven.

Again: I notice in Eleazar's grip of the sword an entire self-forgetfulness. He did not realise that the hilt of the sword was eating down into the palm of his hand, and that while he was taking hold of the sword the sword was taking hold of him. He forgot the pain in his hand in his desire to destroy the Philistines. His hand clave unto his sword. Now, in our Christian work we want self-forgetfulness. If we are all the time afraid we are going to get hurt, we will not kill the Philistines. Who cares whether our hand is hurt or not? When we are battling in

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such a glorious conflict, let us throw our whole nature into it, in entire self-abnegation and self-forgetfulness. I would rather live five years more, and have them industrious and consecrated to Christ, than to live fifty years more and have them indolent and useless. What are pain and persecution, and misrepresentation and falsehood, when we are engaged in the service of such a Master? Do not be groaning because you are so tired, or because you meet with such severe rebukes from the world. Stop thinking of your wounded hand and think of the victory. We have all noticed how men can overcome physical hindrances when they are engaged in a great worldly enterprise. What were the everlasting frosts to Dr. Kane engaged in Arctic exploration? What was gout to Torstensten, the Swedish general, who was carried on his cot at the head of his army, the enemy flying when they saw the pillow of the sick man advancing? What was scrofula to Dr. Samuel Johnson doing the work of five professors at Oxford? What was invalidism to Alexander Pope poetising for all time and for the nations, although so weak that every morning he had to be sewed up in canvas before he could stand at all? What was lameness to Lord Nelson when he had the enemies of England to beat back? What were dropsy and heart-disease and a half-dozen other complaints to Commodore Vanderbilt when he had the stock of the New York Central Railroad to advance? When we see worldly men overcoming every kind of impediment in order that they may succeed, what ought not we to overcome in

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the gaining of heavenly crowns for ourselves and our fellows? And yet how many Christians go wringing their hands. They say, "Oh, my hand! my hand! It is so numb and it is so wounded. There is blood on the hilt and there is blood on the hand." When Eleazar plunged into the conflict with such a holy recklessness he did not think whether he had a hand, or an arm, or a foot, or think of anything but victory. "His hand clave to the sword."

Ah, my friends! how little we are willing to suffer for Christ and His cause compared with those who were suffocated, or who were drowned, or who were burned, or who were chopped to pieces for the truth. You do not appreciate the roll of the martyrs—one hundred and fifty thousand perishing for Christ in the Inquisition; two hundred thousand perishing under Julian; one million Waldenses slain; and in the history of the Christian Church it has been estimated that fifty million have suffered martyrdom. But we must go to heaven in a Pullman sleeping-car, our feet on plush, the bed made up early so we can sleep nearly all the way, the black porter of death to wake us up just in time to enter the golden city. We must have all the spiritual surgeons with salve and lints and bandages to look after our bruised hand; while Eleazar of the text forgets that the hilt of the sword is imbedded in the flesh. "His hand clave to the sword."

Again I remark that Eleazar's hand proves that he had done a great deal of hard hitting with his sword, and that something had got hurt. When I

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see Eleazar and the three other brave men driving back a whole army of Philistines, I am not surprised that "his hand clave to his sword." The fact was, every time the point of the sword struck an enemy, the hilt of the sword struck deeper into Eleazar's hand. It has long ago been discovered in military life, you cannot conquer an enemy by rose-water speeches. You must have sharp and destructive work ; it is only to be done by hard hitting. There are intemperance, and fraud, and gambling, and lust, and ten thousand regiments—armed regiments—of Philistine iniquity. Soft sermons in morocco cases laid down by kid gloves in the presence of an exquisite audience will never do the work. We must call things by their right names. We must expel from our churches the hypocrites who eat the sacrament on communion days, and then devour widows' houses between meals ! We have to quit expending all our wrath on the Hittites and Jebusites and Girgashites of olden time. Let those poor wretches go, when we have so many living illustrations of appalling iniquity that need to be dragged out and slain. Herod is here. Ahab is here. Jezebel is here. The destroying angel is here. The massacre of the infants is here. We must, sandal on foot, helmet on head, heart-plate over heart, Eleazar-sword in the right hand, hit so hard that the result will not only be seen in the gashes of fallen iniquity, but in the adherence of the sword to our own hand. In other words, we want a few John Knoxes turned out into the church. We are refining on Christian

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work—the whole tendency is in that direction—and we are so refined in it that we send apologetic word to iniquity when we propose to attack it, and with a sword, silver-chased, presented by the ladies, we ride out on a white palfrey covered with embroidered housing, and we put spurs into the war-charger just enough to make him dance gracefully, and then we send a missive, delicate as a wedding card, asking the old black giant of sin to surrender. Christian women saved by the sacrifice of Christ, and with a glorious mission given them, sometimes staying home from Sabbath-school class because their fall hat is not done! and Methodist churches, which used to shake our cities with rousing revivals, sending around a committee to ask demonstrative worshippers if they will please to say “Amen” and “Hallelujah” a little softly. We are trying to baptize the Church of God in this day with cologne and balm of a thousand flowers, when it wants a baptism of fire from the Lord God of Pentecost. Oh! we are so afraid somebody will criticise our sermons, or our prayers, or our exhortations, that we forget our desire for the world’s conquest in the fear we will get hurt; while Eleazar goes into the conflict with such enthusiasm he does not care whether he is hurt or not. “His hand clave unto the sword.”

Again: I notice how hard it was for Eleazar to get his hand and his sword parted. He had been fighting against the Philistines so long that the sinews had clutched around the sword and it became rigid, and when he gets through with the conflict he cannot

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drop it. And I see his three comrade warriors coming up to help him, and they bathe the back of the hand of Eleazar, and they try to relax the muscles and the sinews. They cannot get it loose. The sword sticks fast. They pry open the fingers, and they pry back the thumb, and after they succeed they find the curve of the wound corresponds with the curve of the hilt. "His hand clave unto the sword." You and I have seen the same thing many a time. There are in the United States a great many aged ministers. They are too decrepit or invalid to take parishes. They fought a mighty battle for God in other days. Their names are in the church records styled "*Emeritus*," or the words are put down, "a minister without a charge." They have taken off the heads of more Philistine iniquities than you could count from noon until sundown. They were a self-denying race of ministers. They had few books and small salaries, and they swam spring freshets to meet their appointments. Put that old, worn-out minister into a prayer-meeting, or put him some Sunday into the pulpit, or put him in a sick room where a dying man wants consolation, and it is the same old gospel ring of admonition and petition. The sword which for half a century has been wielded against the Philistines is so imbedded in the old man's hand he cannot drop it.

On the second floor, in the front room, my father lay a-dying. It was Saturday morning, about four o'clock. Just three years that day my mother had left him for the skies, and he had been homesick to

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join her society ever after. He was eighty-three years of age. Ministers of the gospel came in to comfort him in his last hours, but he comforted them. He knew more Scripture than any of them. Oh, how wonderfully the words sounded out from his dying pillow, "I have been young, and now am I old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread"! He was full of the goodness of God and the mercy of Christ. They bathed his brow, and they bathed his hands, and they bathed his feet, and they succeeded in straightening out the limbs, and they succeeded in brushing back the white hair from the temples; but they did not succeed in bathing open the right hand so it would stay open. They bathed it open, and it came shut. They bathed it open again, and it came shut. What was the matter with the thumb and the fingers of that dear old hand? The fact was that Eleazar's sword had so long been clutched by the fingers that the sinews would keep bending that way. His dying hand clave unto the sword.

I preach this sermon this morning as a tonic. I want you to take hold of God's truth with such an ineradicable grip that all the forces of earth and hell cannot loosen it, and I want you to strike so hard for God that it will re-act, and while you take the sword, the sword of God's truth will take you. After the battle is over and the war is gone, soldiers gather together and they show their scars. One soldier rolls up his coat-sleeve, and he says, "There I was wounded in the arm"; and another soldier pulls



down his collar, and he says, "There I was wounded in the neck"; and another soldier says, "I have never had any use of that limb since the gunshot fracture." Oh, my Christian friends! when we get back our bodies on the resurrection day, I wonder if we will have any scars to prove our spiritual bravery? Jesus will stand there, scars on His hands, scars on His feet, scars on His brow, scars over His heart, won in the great battle of redemption, and all heaven will sob aloud with emotion and gratitude. Ignatius will stand there and point to the marks where the tooth and the paw of the lion seized him in the Coliseum. John Huss will show where the coals first scorched his foot on that day when his spirit took wing of flame and rose from Constance. Hugh McKail will point to the mark on the neck where the axe struck him. McMillan and Campbell and Freeman, the American missionaries, who with their wives and children perished in the awful massacre at Cawnpore, will show where the daggers of the Sepoys struck them. The Waldenses will show where their bones were broken on that day when the Piedmontese soldiery pitched them over the rocks. And all who have nursed the sick and cared for the poor will show the evidences of earthly exhaustion, and Christ shall wave His scarred hand over the scarred multitude, saying, "Ye have suffered with Me on earth, now be glorified with Me in heaven." And the great organs of eternity will take up the chant, and St. John the martyr will sweep the keys with his fingers: "These are they who came out of great

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tribulation, and had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." But on that day what will be your chagrin and mine if it shall be told on the streets of heaven that in this world we shrank back from all toil, from all hardship, from all fatigue? No battle-scars to show the glorified; not so much as one ridge on the palm of the hand to show that just once in all this great battle for God and the truth we clutched so tight and struck so hard that the hand clave to the sword.

## EXILES BROUGHT BACK.

“Yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him.”—2 *Sam.* xiv. 14.

**T**HAT passage I never noticed until last week. The wise, witty, and imaginative woman of Tekoah said this in trying to persuade David to take back his beautiful but recreant son Absalom. For exquisite stratagem woman has no equal in the other sex. If there had been a plain demand that Absalom be taken back it would have been ineffectual, but this woman composed a fiction which completely captured David's heart. She winds up the story by asking him to imitate the Lord, saying, “Yet doth God devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him.”

Indeed, then, are we all banished from God? What do you mean by banishment? Well, it means being driven away and wearing fetters. It means bitter absence from home. It means in some places and on some occasions an expatriation to Siberia to delve in the mines and to be fastened in a chain-gang. Yes, the whole race is banished; our first parents from Paradise; the recreant angels banished from heaven; the whole human family banished from

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peace. Where is the worldly man who has anything worthy of the name of happiness? What are those anxious looks of the brokers, of the bankers, of the merchants, of those men in the club-house, of that great multitude of people who tramp up and down Broadway? Banished from God. Banished from peace. Banished from heaven. Sin has broken in, and it has snapped all the strings of the heart; it has untuned all the instruments of earthly accord; it has thrown the whole earth into a jangle. An old writer tells of two brothers who went out to take a walk in the night, and one of them looked up to the sky and said, "I wish I had a pasture-field as large as the night heavens." And the other brother looked up into the sky and said, "I wish I had as many oxen as there are stars in the sky." "Well," said the first, "how would you feed so many oxen?" Said the second, "I would turn them into your pasture." "What! whether I would or not?" "Yes, whether you would or not." And there arose a quarrel, and when the quarrel ended one had slain the other. And so there has been a ridiculous contest in all ages of the world, sometimes about immaterial things, sometimes about supposititious things; and if this man had all the night heavens for an estate, he would not be happy, and if that man had as many oxen as there are stars in the sky, he would not be happy. Banished from God. Banished from peace. Banished from heaven. Now, if my sermon should stop just here, it would be as though a man should look through the wicket of a peni-

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tentiary and say to the incarcerated, "What a hard time you have! What a small room! What poor fare! What a hard pillow! Alas for you!" No, sir, I will not go to the wicket of the prison until I can say, "Sirs, do you know what this document is? Can you read that signature at the foot of the page? That is the governor's signature. You are a free man." If my sermon should stop at this point, it would be as though I went into a penal colony, and should say to the slaves, "On what small limits you are kept. It is most dreadful that you are never to be allowed to go home to your families. Alas for you!" No, I will not go to that penal colony until I can say, "Sirs, I have good news to tell you. The Queen has taken your case into especial clemency, and in two or three weeks you are to go home to your wives and children. Give me your toiled, blistered hand in congratulation." A man who tells only half the story of the gospel might better not tell any of it.

A few days ago there was a terrible wreck down at Bridgehampton, Long Island. Thirty Indians, who were wreckers, went out to bring ashore the cargo. A hurricane struck them before they could get ashore, and all the thirty perished. When that hurricane struck them would it not have been inhuman for some one to stand on the shore, through a speaking trumpet crying out to them, "You will be lost! Your wives will be widows! Your children will be orphans! You will be lost!" You have no right to speak to them at all unless you can speak to them

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through rocket and lifeboat. Now, I come out to-night to the rescue. You are in the surf, and I throw you a life-line. You are in prison, and I offer you the King's pardon. You are banished, "yet doth God devise means by which His banished shall not be expelled from Him." When you are far away from home and you get a large package of letters, which do you read first? The letter from home. You shuffle the letters in your hand until you come down to the well-known handwriting. You throw the other letters aside, open the envelope, and plunge into the tidings. Now, the world has to-night a great many messages for you—letters of loss and gain, and emolument and preferment; but I come out as the Lord's postman. I have a package of letters. Which will you read first? "You say, "Give us the one from home." Here it is. God your Father writes to you, asks you to return immediately, telling you the ship is ready to transport you, that all the expenses of the voyage are paid, the sails are already filled with the breath of heaven, that the pilot has his hand on the helm, and all things are ready; for "God hath devised means that His banished shall not be expelled from Him." To-night I gather all the Bible writers into a great orchestra, and they unfold the celestial music, and they take up the gospel instruments—the harp, the clapping cymbal, and the trumpet. David puts his imperial fingers among the strings and plays, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean"; and Isaiah sweeps the bow across the viol, singing, "Though your sins be

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as scarlet, they shall be as snow"; and John puts the apocalyptic trump to his lips, and blows this blast: "Whosoever will, let him come"; while the old prophet, with beard flowing down over breast heaving with emotion, claps the cymbals of my text, saying, "God hath devised means that His banished be not expelled from Him." And then I wait to hear the echo. I hear it far up the sky, in the cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," and in the beating of the surges of song against the base of the throne, like "the voice of many waters."

Well, my friends, what are some of the means that "God has devised that the banished be not expelled from Him"? In the first place, the footpath up through the rifts of skull-shaped Calvary. Constantine has designated that hill as the one on which Jesus died. Dean Stanley says there are on that hill shattered fragments of limestone rock cleft evidently of the crucifixion earthquake. And, my friends, it is through that fissure of the rock that our path to pardon lies; through the earthquake of conviction, under the dripping crimson of the Cross. Ah! do you not like the smell of blood? Neither do I; but without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Our debts are never to be paid unless from the cloven arteries of Jesus Christ they are liquidated.

"Hallelujah! 'tis done.  
I believe on the Son,  
I'm saved by the blood  
Of the crucified One."

No wonder that Mr. P. P. Bliss wrote that hymn

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expressive of his own salvation. When the railroad bridge broke down at Ashtabula, he was not harmed, but went over into the glories of that redemption of which he had been singing. Oh yes! if we ever come to God we shall come over the hill of Calvary. Coming up to-night through those fissures in the rock, you going up, Christ coming down, you will meet, and there will be joy on earth and joy in heaven over your souls pardoned and forgiven. Now the Christian tracks the blood all around the shelving of the grey limestone rock on Calvary—the blood of the great martyrdom of Jesus Christ. The spring rains came, and they washed the red carnage into the valley at the foot of the mountain; but the Christian easily finds the red mark on the rock, and the glimpse of it in song or sermon stirs all his sensibilities and crowns all his prayers. If it were needed that all the host of heaven should be gathered for one great battle, there would be only one name that could rally the universe, and that is the name of Jesus!

The steamboat bell was ringing on Lucerne Lake, and I had only a few moments in which to go up and see the dying lion sculptured in the rock, representative of the courage of the eight hundred of the Swiss Guards who perished defending the royal honour. It is one of Thorwaldsen's finest works in stone. There lay the dying lion, spear in the side, life-blood oozing away, while with the paw, and in his dying breath, the lion seemed to be defending the national escutcheon. At the foot of the rock



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there was a fountain of limpid water where any one might drink. Then there were ivy branches and flowering plants dropping down from the cliffs that made the whole scene a joy for ever. No Swiss can look upon that dying lion without thinking of the courage of the eight hundred Guards that fell, and every drop of blood in his veins is stirred with patriotism. But to-night behold sculptured in the Rock of Ages the Lion of Judah's tribe, the spear in the side, the life-blood oozing away, His dying struggle for our deliverance; while beneath the rock is the fountain of God's love in which your soul may drink, and the scene is all run over with roses of Sharon and lilies of the valley odorous with heaven. If those Swiss can afford to kneel down at the foot of a sculptured rock worshipping the memory of their patriots, can we not to-night afford to kneel down at the foot of the hill, crying—

“ Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

Among the means that God has devised that the banished be not expelled from Him, I notice still further spiritual influences; I do not mean any influence gone up from earth and etherealised, but the Divine Spirit. Some call Him the Comforter; it is best for my purpose to-night that I call Him the soul-saving power of the nations. When that influence comes upon a man, how strangely he acts! He cries, he trembles, he says things and does things that five minutes before he could not have been

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coaxed or hired to say or do. The human soul and religion seem antagonistic elements ; but this Divine spiritualism seems the harmonising chemistry that brings into comity these opposing elements. The general mode of the Holy Spirit is in selecting means that are utterly insignificant, and then making them the steps of Christian ascent. At a fair in England a man stepped up to a pedlar's stand and bought something. Then he took a leaf from a catechism and wrapped the article in that leaf ; but one line of that catechism ushered his soul into the kingdom of God. Two men were wrestling on the green. One threw the other. A Christian man came along and said, "It will be sad indeed if Satan trips up your hope and you are both eternally overthrown." That ushered both of them into the kingdom of God in due time. Oh, it is a mighty Spirit. Sometimes people laugh under it. Sometimes they pray under its power. There is a soul bowed down. The Holy Spirit is bowing him down. There is an anxious one. There is a deriding face trying to throw off religious impressions. It is often the case when the Holy Spirit comes to a man's heart, he acts infernally to throw off the impression. I think when Richard Baxter stood before Jefferies, Lord Jefferies had the Spirit of God in his heart ; but, oh, how violently he resisted Him ! crying out, "Richard, do you think to poison the ear of the Court ? Richard, you are an old knave. Richard, you have written and carried low books, each one as full of heresy as an egg is full of meat. Richard, I will look after you." And when

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the friends of Richard Baxter sobbed aloud with their grief, Jefferies shouted "Silence, you snivelling calves!" Oh, I believe the Holy Spirit was in that man's heart, and it was with violence that he was trying to drive Him out. And so sometimes when the Spirit comes to a man he prays, and sometimes he blasphemes: but the Holy Spirit always comes with one idea, and that is to show men that "God hath devised means that the banished be not expelled from Him."

That Holy Spirit is in this house to-night. You have felt strangely ever since you came into this room. There are doors opening in your soul that have never been opened. You are wondering where you will come out at the last. You see that these Christian people are on a road that you are not travelling, and though you may not admit the words heaven or hell in your mind, you are conscious of the fact that there must be two destinies, two careers, two conditions, two termini, two worlds antagonistic and everlastingly swung apart. Oh, what is this suppressed agitation? What is this awful silence? The Holy Spirit! The infinite Spirit! The eternal Spirit! The Divine Spirit! The lightning-footed and fire-winged Spirit! The armed Spirit! The all-conquering Spirit! The omnipotent Spirit! He comes down upon your soul with an avalanche of power. He commands you to repent; He begs you to believe; He asks you to live. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost?"

Among the means that "God has devised that the

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banished be not expelled from Him," I notice also Christian surroundings. First, there is the influence of ancestral piety. Was there not a good man or woman in your ancestral line? Is there not an old Bible around the house with worn covers and turned down leaves, giving you the hint that there was some one who prayed? Was there a family altar at which you used to bow? The carpet may have been worn out, and the chair may have been sold for old furniture, and the knee that knelt on the one and beside the other may never again be pliant in earthly worship; but you remember, do you not remember? Ah, that Christian homestead! the memory of it to-night almost swamps your soul. When the first death came to the house, what was it that comforted the old people? When you stood fanning them in their last hour, what was it gave them courage, the dear old departing souls? Oh, you banished ones, hear the voice of the Christian dead to-night bidding you come home. I remember my father was one day ploughing in a new ground. It was very hard ploughing, and I remember how the sweat dropped down on the plough handles, and I remember at noon hearing my mother as she stood at the corner of the house far away, calling us to come home, that the table was spread, and the dining hour had arrived. And some of you are down in life, and you have a hard time. It is rough ploughing, and there is the sweat of toil and the sweat of many sorrows. Do you not hear to-night voices from heaven, crying, "Come home, the table is spread, the banquet is

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ready. Come home"? Is there not in your present surroundings a Christian influence? Is there not a Christian wife, or husband, or child, or brother, or sister? Through that influence God has been calling a great while. Oh, yours must have been a persistent case to have withstood so much and withstood so long. What will you do next? What will God do next? He will somehow break up this monotony. Will it be fire, or storm, or the opening furnaces of the doomed world? What next? God will not be for ever repeating these messages of invitation and alarm. What next? There will be a change in your case, O soul! On the road you travel there is a turn just ahead of you. This night thy soul may be required of thee. As I was seated in a chair on the deck of a steamer mid-Atlantic the night of a cyclone, an English lord whispered in my ear, "Do you know that the barometer has fallen very much, and we are going to have a tremendous change in the weather?" I said, "No; I have no apprehensions." But before morning we found what a change three or four hours could make in the Atlantic Ocean. From being a scene where we were lounging in arm-chairs on the deck, it became a scene where we were holding on with both hands for life! Oh, hearer! have you examined the barometer of your soul? Does it tell smooth sailing or a cyclone? Some of you have been called by the gospel for many years. Do you suppose that God will always keep on in that line? No, I tell you plainly, my dear hearer, there will be a change in your case.

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I suppose you have seen the statue of Napoleon at St. Helena — emaciated, sick, broken-hearted, banished. Then you may also have seen the representation of the Triumphal Arch of the Champs Elysées, Paris—a representation of Napoleon in full power, mounted at Austerlitz. Oh, what a contrast between the two Napoleons! Will you, my hearer, pine in exile, or will you ride the victor? Will your eternity be banishment or enthronement? There is only one question that makes my heart quake and my lip quiver and my strength give away, and that question is this: Where will you spend the million centuries of your existence?

## THE SPIDER IN PALACES.

“The spider taketh hold with her hands and is in kings’ palaces.”—*Prov. xxx. 28.*

**W**E are all watching for phenomena. A sky full of stars shining from January to January calls out not so many remarks as the blazing of one meteor. A whole flock of robins takes not so much of our attention as one blundering bat darting into the window on a summer eve. Things of ordinary sound and sight and occurrence fail to reach us, and yet no grasshopper ever springs up in our path, no moth ever dashes into the evening candle, no mote ever floats in the sunbeam that pours through the crack of the window shutter, no barnacle on ship’s hull, no burr on a chestnut, no limpet clinging to a rock, no rind of an artichoké, but would teach us a lesson if we were not so stupid. God in His Bible sets forth for our consideration the lily, and the snowflake, and the locust, and the stork’s nest, and the hind’s foot, and the *Aurora Borealis*, and the ant-hill. One of the sacred writers, sitting amid the mountains, sees a hind skipping over the rocks. The hind has such a peculiarly shaped foot that it can go over the steepest places without falling; and

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as the prophet looks upon that walking of the hind's foot on the rock, and thinks of the Divine care over him, he says, "Thou makest my feet like hind's feet, that I may walk on high places." And another sacred writer sees the ostrich leaving its egg in the sand of the desert, without any care of incubation, and walk off; and the Scripture says that is like some parents, leaving their children without any wing of protection or care. In my text, inspiration opens before us the gate of a palace, and we are inducted amid the pomp of the throne and the courtier, and while we are looking around upon the magnificence, inspiration points us to a spider plying its shuttle and weaving its web on the wall. It does not call us to regard the grand surroundings of the palace, but to a solemn and earnest consideration of the fact that "the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

It is not very certain what was the particular species of insect spoken of in the text; but I shall proceed to learn from it, in the first place, the *exquisiteness of the Divine mechanism*. The king's chamberlain comes into the palace and looks around and sees the spider on the wall, and says, "Away with that intruder"; and the servant of Solomon's palace comes with his broom and dashes down the insect, saying, "What a loathsome thing it is!" But under microscopic inspection I find it more wondrous of construction than the embroideries on the palace walls and the upholstery about the windows. All the ma-



### *The Spider in Palaces.*

chinery of the earth could not make anything so delicate and beautiful as the prehensile with which that spider clutches its prey, or as any of its eight eyes. We do not have to go so far up to see the power of God in the tapestry hanging around the windows of heaven, or in the horses and chariots of fire with which the dying day departs, or to look at the mountain swinging out its sword-arm from under the mantle of darkness until it can strike with its scimiter of the lightning. I love better to study God in the shape of a fly's wing, in the formation of a fish's scale, in the snowy whiteness of a pond lily. I love to track His footsteps in the mountain moss, and to hear His voice in the hum of the rye-fields, and discover the rustle of His robe of light in the south wind. Oh, this wonder of Divine power that can build a habitation for God in an apple blossom, and tune a bee's voice until it is fit for the eternal orchestra, and can say to a firefly, "Let there be light," and from holding an ocean in the hollow of His hand goes forth to find heights and depths and lengths and breadths of omnipotency in a dewdrop, and dismounts from the chariot of midnight hurricane to cross over on the suspension-bridge of a spider's web! You may take your telescope and sweep it across the heavens in order to behold the glory of God; but I shall take the leaf holding the spider and the spider's web, and I shall bring the microscope to my eye, and while I gaze and look and study and am confounded, I will kneel down in the grass and

*The Spider in Palaces.*

cry, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty!"

Again: My text teaches me that insignificance is no excuse for inaction. This spider that Solomon saw on the wall might have said, "I can't weave a web worthy of this great palace. What can I do amid all this gold and embroidery? I am not able to make anything fit for so grand a place, and so I will not work my spinning jenny." Not so said the spider. "The spider taketh hold with her hands." Oh, what a lesson that is for you and me! You say, if you had some great sermon to preach, if you only had a great audience to talk to, if you only had a great army to marshal, if you only had a constitution to write, if there was some tremendous thing in the world for you to do—then you would show us. Yes, you would show us! What if the Levite in the ancient temple had refused to snuff the candle because he could not be a high priest? What if the humming-bird should refuse to sing its song into the ear of the honeysuckle because it cannot, like the eagle, dash its wing into the sun? What if the raindrop should refuse to descend because it is not a Niagara? What if the spider of the text should refuse to move its shuttle because it cannot weave a Solomon's robe? Away with such folly! If you are lazy with the one talent, you would be lazy with the ten talents. If Milo cannot lift the calf, he never will have strength to lift the ox. In the Lord's army there is order for promotion, but you cannot be a general until you

### *The Spider in Palaces.*

have been a captain, a lieutenant, and a colonel. It is step by step, it is inch by inch, it is stroke by stroke, that our Christian character is builded. Therefore be content to do what God commands you to do. God is not ashamed to do small things. He is not ashamed to be found chiselling a grain of sand, or helping a honey-bee to construct its cell with mathematical accuracy, or tingeing a shell in the surf, or shaping the bill of a chaffinch. What God does He does well. What you do, do well, be it a great work or a small work. If ten talents, employ all the ten. If five talents, employ all the five. If one talent, employ the one. If only the thousandth part of a talent, employ that. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." I tell you, if you are not faithful to God in a small sphere, you would be indolent and insignificant in a large sphere.

Again: My text teaches me that *repulsiveness and loathsomeness will sometimes climb up into very elevated places*. You, perhaps, would have tried to kill the spider that Solomon saw. You would have said, "This is no place for it. If that spider is determined to weave a web, let it do so down in the cellar of this palace, or in some dark dungeon." Ah! The spider of the text could not be discouraged. It clambered on, and climbed up higher and higher and higher, until after a while it reached the king's vision, and he said, "The spider taketh hold with her hands and is in kings' palaces." And so it often is now, that things

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that are loathsome and repulsive get up into very elevated places. The Church of Christ, for instance, is a palace. The King of heaven and earth lives in it. According to the Bible, her beams are of cedar, and her rafters of fire, and her windows of agate, and the fountains of salvation dash a rain of light. It is a glorious palace, the Church of God is. And yet sometimes unseemly and loathsome things creep up into it: evil-speaking and rancour and slander and backbiting and abuse, crawling up on the walls of the church, spinning a web from arch to arch, and from the top of one communion tankard to another. Glorious palace, in which there ought only to be light and love and pardon and grace. Yet a spider is in the palace.

Home ought to be a castle. It ought to be the residence of everything royal. Kindness, love, peace, patience, and forbearance ought to be the princes residing there; and yet sometimes dissipation crawls up into that home, and the jealous eye comes up, and the scene of peace and plenty becomes the scene of domestic jargon and dissonance. You say, "What is the matter with the home?" I will tell you. A spider is in the palace! A well-developed Christian character is a grand thing to look at. You see some man with great intellectual and spiritual proportions. You say, "How useful that man must be!" But you find amid all his splendour of faculties there is some prejudice, some whim, some evil habit that a great many people do not notice, but that you have

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happened to notice, and it is gradually spoiling that man's character. It is gradually going to injure his entire influence. Others may not see it, but you are anxious in regard to his welfare, and now you discover it. A dead fly in the ointment. A spider in the palace.

Again : My text teaches me that *perseverance will mount into the king's palace*. It must have seemed a long distance for that spider to climb in Solomon's splendid residence ; but it started at the very foot of the wall and went up over the panels of Lebanon cedar, higher and higher, until it stood higher than the highest throne in all the nations—the throne of Solomon. And so God has decreed it that many of those who are down in the dust of sin and dishonour shall gradually arrive in the King's palace. We see it in worldly things. Who is that banker in Philadelphia ? Why, he used to be the boy that held the horses of Stephen Girard while the millionaire went in to collect his dividends. Arkwright toils up from a barber's shop until he gets into the palace of invention. Sextus V. toils up from the office of a swineherd until he gets into the palace of Rome. Fletcher toils up from the most insignificant family position until he gets into the palace of Christian eloquence. Hogarth, engraving pewter pots for a living, toils up until he reaches the palaces of world-renowned art. And God hath decided that though you may be weak of arm and slow of tongue, and be struck through with a great many mental and moral deficits, that

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by His almighty grace you shall yet arrive in the King's palace. Not such an one as is spoken of in the text—not one of marble, not one adorned with pillars of alabaster and thrones of ivory and flagons of burnished gold—but a palace in which God is the King and the angels of heaven are the cupbearers. The spider crawling up the wall of Solomon's palace was not worth looking after or considering as compared with the fact that we who are worms of the dust may at last ascend into the palace of the King immortal. By the grace of God may we all reach it! Oh! heaven is not a dull place. It is not a worn-out mansion with faded curtains and outlandish chairs and cracked ware. No; it is as fresh and fair and beautiful as though it were completed but yesterday. The kings of the earth shall bring their honour and glory into it. A palace means splendour of apartments. Now, I do not know where heaven is, and I do not know how it looks; but if our bodies are to be resurrected in the last day, I think heaven must have a material splendour as well as a spiritual grandeur. What will be the use of a resurrected foot, if there be nothing to tread on; or of a resurrected hand, if there be no harp to strike, and no palm to wave, and no place to take hold in the King's palace? Oh, what grandeur of apartments when that Divine hand which plunges the sea into blue and the foliage into green, and sets the sunset on fire, shall gather all the beautiful colours of earth around His throne, and when that arm which lifted the pillars of Alpine



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rock and bent the arch of the sky shall raise before our soul the eternal architecture, and that hand which hung with loops of fire the curtains of morning shall prepare the upholstery of our kingly residence! A palace also means splendour of association. The poor man, the outcast, cannot get into the Tuileries or Windsor Castle. The sentinel of the king or the queen stands there and cries, "Halt!" as he tries to enter. But in that palace we may all become residents, and we shall all be princes and kings. We may have been beggars, we may have been outcasts, we may have been wandering and lost, as we all have been, but there we shall take on regal power. What companionship in heaven! To walk side by side with John, and James, and Peter, and Paul, and Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb, and Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, and Micah, and Zachariah, and Wilberforce, and Oliver Cromwell, and Philip Doddridge, and Edward Payson, and John Milton, and Elizabeth Fry, and Hannah More, and Charlotte Elizabeth, and all the other kings and queens of heaven. O my soul, what a companionship!

A palace means splendour of banquet. There will be no common ware on that table. There will be no unskilled musicians at that entertainment. There will be no scanty supply of fruit or beverage. There have been banquets spread that cost a million of dollars each; but who can tell the untold wealth of that banquet? I do not know whether John's description of it is literal or figurative. A great many

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wise people tell me it is figurative ; but prove it. I do not know but that it may be literal. I do not know but that there may be real fruits plucked from the Tree of Life. I do not know but that Christ referred to the real juice of the grape when He said that we should drink new wine in our Father's kingdom. I do not say it is so, but I have as much right for thinking it is so as you have for thinking the other way. At any rate, it will be a glorious banquet.

Hark ! the chariot is rumbling in the distance. I really believe the guests are coming now. The gates swing open, the guests dismount, the palace is filling ; and all the chalices, flashing with pearl and with jet and carbuncle, are lifted to the lips of the myriad banqueters, while standing in robes of snowy white they drink to the honour of our glorious King ! " Oh ! " you say, " that is too grand a place for you and for me. " No, it is not. If a spider, according to the text, could crawl up on the wall of Solomon's palace, shall not our poor soul through the blood of Christ mount up from the depths of its sin and shame and finally reach the palace of the eternal King ? " Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound ; that whereas sin reigned unto death, even so may grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. "

In the far East there is a bird called the huma, about which is the beautiful superstition that upon whatever head the shadow of that bird rests, upon

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that head there shall be a crown. O thou Dove of the Spirit floating above us, let the shadow of Thy wing fall upon this congregation, that each at last in heaven may wear upon his head a crown! a crown! and hold in his right hand a star! a star!

## THE FATHER'S KISS.

“When he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.”—*St. Luke xv. 20.*

I HAVE often described to you the going away of this prodigal son from his father's house, and I have shown you what a hard time he had down in the wilderness, and what a very great mistake it was for him to leave so beautiful a home for such a miserable desert. But he did not always stay in the wilderness; he came back after a while. We don't read that his mother came to greet him. I suppose she was dead. She would have been the first to come out. The father would have given the second kiss to the returning prodigal; the mother the first. It may have been for the lack of her example and prayers that he became a prodigal. Sometimes the father does not know how to manage the children of the household; the chief work comes upon the mother. Indeed, no one ever gets over the calamity of losing a mother in early life. Still, this young man was not ungreeted when he came back. However well appalled we may be in the morning, when we start out on a journey, before night, what with

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the dust and the jostling, we have lost all cleverness of appearance. But this prodigal, when he started from the swine-trough, was ragged and wretched, and his appearance after he had gone through days of journeying and exposure you can more easily imagine than describe. As the people see the prodigal coming on homeward, they wonder who he is. They say, "I wonder what prison he has broken out of. I wonder what lazaretto he has escaped from. I wonder with what plague he will smite the air." Although these people may have been well acquainted with the family, yet they don't imagine that this is the very young man who went off only a little while ago with quick step and ruddy cheek and beautiful apparel. The young man, I think, walks very fast. He looks as though he were intent upon something very important. The people stop; they look at him; they wonder where he came from; they wonder where he is going. You have heard of a son who went off to sea and never returned. All the people in the neighbourhood thought that the son would never return, but the parents came to no such conclusion. They would go by the hour and day and sit upon the beach, looking off upon the water, expecting to see the sail that would bring home the long-absent boy. And so, I think, this father of my text sat under the vine looking out towards the road on which his son had departed; but the father has changed very much since we saw him last. His hair has become white,

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his cheeks are furrowed, his heart is broken. What is all his bountiful table to him when his son may be lacking bread? What is all the splendour of the wardrobe of that homestead when the son may not have a decent coat? What are all the sheep on the hillside to that father when his pet lamb is gone? Still he sits and watches, looking out on the road, and one day he beholds a foot traveller. He sees him rise above the hills, first the head, and after a while the entire body, and as soon as he gets a fair glance at him he knows it is his recreant son. He forgets the crutch and the cane and the stiffness of the joints, and bounds away. I think the people all around were amazed. They said, "It is only a foot-pad; it is only an old tramp of the road; don't go out to meet him." The father knew better. The change in the son's appearance could not hide the marks by which the father knew the boy. You know that persons of a great deal of independence of character are apt to indicate it in their walk. For that reason the sailor almost always has a peculiar step, not only because he stands much on shipboard, amid the rocking of the sea, and he has to balance himself, but he has for the most part an independent character, which would show itself even if he never went on the sea; and we know from what transpired afterward and from what transpired before that this prodigal son was of an independent and frank nature, and I suppose that the characteristics of his mind and heart were the characteristics of his walk. And

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so the father knew him. He puts out his withered arms toward him. He brings his wrinkled face against the pale cheek of his son. He kisses the wan lips. He thanks God that the long agony is over. "When he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

Oh, don't you recognise that father? Who was it? It is God! I have no sympathy with that cast-iron theology which represents God as hard, severe, and vindictive. God is a Father, kind, loving, lenient, gentle, long-suffering, patient, and He flies to our immortal rescue. Oh that we might realise it to-day! A wealthy lady in one of the eastern countries was going off for some time, and she asked her daughters for some memento to carry with her. One of the daughters brought a marble tablet, beautifully inscribed, and another daughter a beautiful wreath of flowers. The third daughter came and said, "Mother, I brought no flowers nor tablet, but here is my heart. I have inscribed it all over with your name, and wherever you go it will go with you." The mother recognised it as the best of all the mementoes. Oh that to-day our souls might go out towards the Lord Jesus Christ—towards our Father—that our heart might be written all over with the evidences of His loving-kindness, and that we might never again forsake Him! Lord God, this day, by Thy Holy Spirit move upon our affections!

In the first place, I notice in this text the father's

## *The Father's Kiss.*

*eyesight*; in the second place, I notice the father's *haste*; and in the third place, I notice the father's *kiss*.

To begin: The father's *eyesight*. "When he was yet a great way off his father saw him." You have noticed how old people sometimes put a book on the other side of the light; they can see at a distance a great deal easier than they can close by. I don't know whether he could see well that which is near by, but I do know that he could see a great way off. "His father saw him." Perhaps he had been looking for the return of that boy especially that day. I don't know but that he had been in prayer, and that God had told him that that day the recreant boy would come home. "The father saw him a great way off."

I wonder if God's eyesight can descry us when we are coming back to Him? The text pictures our condition—we are a great way off. That young man was not farther off from his father's house, sin is not farther off from holiness, hell is not farther off from heaven, than we have been, by our sins; away off from God—ay, so far off that we could not hear His voice, though vehemently He has called us year after year. I don't know what bad habits you may have formed, or in what evil places you have been, or what false notions you may have entertained; but you are ready to acknowledge, if your heart has not been changed by the grace of God, that you are a great way off—ay, so far off that you cannot get back of



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yourselves. You would like to come back. Ay, this moment you would start if it were not for this sin, and that habit, and this disadvantage. But I am to tell you of the Father's eyesight. "He saw him a great way off." He has seen all your frailties, all your struggles, all your disadvantages. He has been longing for your coming. He has not been looking at you with a critic's eye or a bailiff's eye, but with a Father's eye; and if a parent ever pitied a child, God pities you. You say, "Oh, I had so many evil surroundings when I started life." Your Father sees it. You say, "I have so many bad surroundings now, and it is very difficult for me to break away from evil associations." Your Father sees it; and if this moment you should start heavenward, as I pray you may, your Father would not sit idly down and allow you to struggle on up towards Him. Oh no! Seeing you a great way off, He would fly to the rescue. How long does it take a father to leap into the middle of the highway, if his child be there and a swift vehicle is coming and may destroy him? Five hundred times longer than it takes our Heavenly Father to spring to the deliverance of a lost child. "When he was yet a great way off his father [saw him."

And this brings me to notice the father's haste. The Bible says he ran. No wonder. He didn't know but that the young man would change his mind and go back. He didn't know but that he would drop down from exhaustion. He didn't know

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but something fatal might overtake him before he got up to the door-sill, and so the father ran. The Bible for the most part speaks of God as walking. "In the fourth watch of the night" it says, "Jesus came unto them *walking* on the sea." "He *walketh* upon the winds." Our first parents heard the voice of the Lord *walking* in the garden in the cool of the day; but when a sinner starts for God, the Father runs to meet him. Oh, if a man ever wants help it is when he tries to become a Christian. The world says to him, "Back with you; have more spirit; don't be hampered with religion; time enough yet; wait until you get sick; wait until you get old." Satan says, "Back with you; you are so bad that God will have nothing to do with you"; or, "you are good enough and need no Redeemer. Take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." Ten thousand voices say, "Back with you. God is a hard master. The church is a collection of hypocrites. Back into your sins; back to your evil indulgences; back to your prayerless pillow. The silliest thing that a young man ever does is to come home after he has been wandering." Oh, how much help a man does want when he tries to become a Christian! Indeed, the prodigal can't find his way home to his father's house alone. Unless some one comes to meet him, he had better have stayed by the swine-trough chewing the carobs of the desert. When the sea comes in at full tide, you might more easily with your broom sweep back the surges than you could

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drive back the ocean of your unforgiven transgressions. What are we to do? Are we to fight the battle alone, and trudge on with no one to aid us, and no rock to shelter us, and no word of encouragement to cheer us? Glory be to God, we have in the text the announcement, "When he was yet a great way off his father *ran*." When the sinner starts for God, God starts for the sinner. God does not come out with a slow and hesitating pace; the infinite spaces slip beneath His feet and He takes worlds at a bound. "The father ran!"

Oh, wonderful meeting when God and the soul come together! "The father ran!" You start for God and God starts for you, and this morning and this house is the time and the place when you meet; and while the angels rejoice over the meeting, your long-injured Father falls upon your neck with attestation of compassion and pardon. Your poor wandering, sinful, polluted soul and the loving, the eternal Father's have met.

I remark upon the father's kiss. "He fell on his neck," my text says, "and he kissed him." It is not every father that would have done that way. He would have scolded him and said, "Here, you went off with beautiful clothes, but now you are all in tatters; you went off healthy, and come back sick, and wasted with your dissipations." He didn't say that. The son, all haggard and ragged and filthy and wretched, stood before his father. The father charged him with none of his wanderings; he just

*The Father's Kiss.*

received him, he just kissed him. His wretchedness was a recommendation to that father's love. Oh, that father's kiss! How shall I describe the love of God? The ardour with which He receives a sinner back again? Give me a plummet with which I may fathom this sea; give me a ladder with which I can scale this height; give me words with which I can describe this love. The apostle says in one place, "unsearchable"; in another, "past finding out." Height overtopping all height, depth plunging beneath all depth, breadth compassing all immensity. Oh, this love! Don't you believe it? Has He not done everything to make you think so? He has given you life, health, friends, home, the use of your hands, the sight of your eye, the hearing of your ear; He has strewn your path with mercies, He has fed you, clothed you, sheltered you, defended you, loved you, importuned you, all your life long. Don't you believe He loves you? Why, this morning, if you should start up from the wilderness of your sin, He would throw both arms around you. To make you believe that He loves you He stooped to manger and cross and sepulchre. With all the passions of His holy nature roused, He stands before you to-day, and would coax you to happiness and heaven. Oh, this father's kiss! There is so much meaning and love and compassion in it—so much pardon in it—so much heaven in it. I proclaim Him the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Lest you would not believe

### *The Father's Kiss.*

Him, He goes up Golgotha, and, while the rocks are rending and the graves are opening and the mobs are howling and the sun is hiding, He dies for you. See Him. See Him on the mount of Crucifixion, the sweat on His brow tinged with the blood exuding from His lacerated temples. See His eyes swimming in death. Hear the loud breathing of the sufferer as He pants with a world on His heart. Hark to the fall of the blood from brow and hand and foot on the rocks beneath—drop, drop, drop! Look at the nails! How wide the wounds are! Wider do they gape as the weight of His body comes down upon them. Oh, this Crucifixion agony. Tears melting into tears; blood flowing into blood; darkness dropping no darkness; hands of men joined with hands of devils to tear apart the quivering heart of the Son of God! Oh, will He ever speak again? Will that crimson face ever light up again? He *will* speak again, while the blood is suffusing his brow and reddening His cheek and gathering on nostril and lip, and you think He is exhausted and cannot speak, He cries out until all the ages hear Him, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" Is there no emphasis in such a scene as that to make your dry eyes weep and your hard heart break? Will you turn your back upon it, and say by your actions what the Jews said by their words: "His blood be on us, and on our children"? What does it all mean, my brother, my sister? Why, it means that for our lost race there was a Father's kiss.

## *The Father's Kiss.*

Love brought Him *down* ; love opened the gate ; love led to the sacrifice ; love shattered the grave ; love lifted Him up in resurrection—sovereign love, omnipotent love, infinite love, bleeding love, everlasting love.

“ Oh, for this love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break ;  
And all harmonious human tongues  
The Saviour's praises speak.”

Now, will you accept that Father's kiss ? The Holy Spirit asks you to. The Holy Spirit comes to you this morning with His arousing, melting, alarming, inviting, vivifying influence. Hearer, what creates in thee that unrest ? It is the Holy Ghost. What sounds in your ears to-day—the joys of the saved and the sorrows of the condemned ? It is the Holy Ghost. What influence now tells thee that it is time to fly, that to-morrow may be too late ; that there is one door, one road, one Cross, one sacrifice—one Jesus ? It is the Holy Ghost. Don't you think He is here ? I see it in these solemn looks ; I see it in these tearful eyes ; I see it in these blanched cheeks ; I see it in the upturned face of childhood and the earnest gaze of old age. I know it from this silence like the grave. The Holy Ghost is here ; and while I speak the chains of captives are falling, and the dungeons of sin are opening, and the prodigals coming and the fathers running, and angels are shouting and devils are trembling. Oh, it is a momentous hour. It is charged with eternal

*The Father's Kiss.*

destinies. The shadows of the eternal world flit over this assemblage. Hark! I hear the songs of the saved—I hear the howlings of the damned. Heaven and hell seem to mingle and eternity poises on the pivot of this hour. Thy destiny is being decided—thy doom is being fixed. The door of mercy so wide open begins to close. It trembles on its hinges and soon will be shut. These go into life, and those go into death. These have begun the march to heaven, and those have commenced to die. These have begun to rise, and those have begun to sink—Hallelujah! hallelujah! Woe! woe! It seems to me as if the judgment were past. I imagine it is past. I imagine that all the sentences have been awarded, the righteous enthroned, the wicked driven away in his wickedness. Shut all the gates of heaven; there are no more to come in. Bolt all the gates of darkness—no more to be allowed to come out. Hark! the eternal ages have begun their unending tramp! tramp!

## HEROES IN COMMON LIFE.

“Thou, therefore, endure hardness.”—2 *Tim.* ii. 3.

**H**ISTORIANS are not slow to acknowledge the merits of great military chieftains. We have the full-length portrait of the Baldwins, the Cromwells, and the Marshal Neys of the world. History is not written in black ink, but with red ink of human blood. The gods of human ambition did not drink from bowls made out of silver, or gold, or precious stones, but of the bleached skulls of the fallen. But I am to-day to unroll before you a scroll of heroes that the world has never acknowledged; they who faced no guns, blew no bugle-blast, conquered no cities, chained no captives to their chariot-wheels, and yet, in the great day of eternity, will stand higher than those whose names startled the nations; and seraph, and rapt spirit, and archangel will tell their deeds to a listening universe. I mean the heroes of common, every-day life.

In this roll, in the first place, I find all the heroes of the sick room. When Satan had failed to overcome Job, he said to God, “Put forth Thy hands and touch his bones and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.” Satan has found out what we



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have all found out, that sickness is the greatest test of one's character. A man who can stand that can stand anything; to be shut up in a room so fast as though it were a bastille; to be so nervous you cannot endure the tap of a child's foot; to have luxuriant fruit which tempts the appetite of the robust and the healthy, excite your loathing and disgust when it first appears on the platter; to have the rapier of pain strike through the side or across the temple, like a razor, or to put the foot into a vice, or to throw the whole body into a blaze of a fever. Yet there have been men and women, but more women than men, who have cheerfully endured this hardness. Through years of exhausting rheumatisms and excruciating neuralgias they have gone, and through bodily distresses that rasped the nerves, and tore the muscles, and paled the cheeks, and stooped the shoulders. By the dim light of the sick-room taper they saw on their wall the picture of that land where the people are never sick. Through the dead silence of the night they heard the chorus of the angels. The cancer ate away her life from week to week and month to month, and she became weaker and weaker, and every "good-night" was feebler than the "good-night" before—yet never sad. The children looked up into her face and saw suffering transformed into a heavenly smile. Those who suffered on the battlefield, amid shot and shell were not so much heroes and heroines as those who in the field hospital and in the asylum had fevers which no ice could cool and

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no surgery could cure. No shout of comrade to cheer them, but numbness, and aching, and homesickness; yet willing to suffer, confident in God, hopeful of heaven. Heroes of rheumatism; heroes of neuralgia; heroes of spinal complaints; heroes of sick headache; heroes of lifelong invalidism; heroes and heroines. They shall reign for ever and for ever. Hark! I catch just one note of the eternal anthem: "There shall be no more pain." Bless God for that!

In this roll I also find the heroes of toil who do their work uncomplainingly. It is comparatively easy to lead a regiment into battle when you know that the whole nation will applaud the victory; it is comparatively easy to doctor the sick when you know that your skill will be appreciated by a large company of friends and relatives; it is comparatively easy to address an audience when in the gleaming eyes and the flushed cheeks you know that your sentiments are adopted; but to do sewing where you expect that the employer will come and thrust his thumb through the work to show how imperfect it is, or to have the whole garment thrown back on you to be done over again; to build a wall and know there will be no one to say you did it well, but only a swearing employer howling across the scaffold; to work until your eyes are dim, and your back aches, and your heart faints, and to know that if you stop before night your children will starve. Ah! the sword has not slain so many as the needle. The great battle-fields of our last war were not Gettysburgh, and Shiloh, and South

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Mountain. The great battle-fields of the last war were in the arsenals, and the shops, and the attics, where women made army jackets for a sixpence. They toiled on until they died. They had no funeral eulogium, but in the name of my God, this morning I unroll their names among those of whom the world was not worthy. Heroes of the needle; heroes of the sewing-machine; heroes of the attic; heroes of the cellar; heroes and heroines. Bless God for that!

In this roll I also find the heroes who have uncomplainingly endured domestic injustices. There are men who for their toil and anxiety have no sympathy in their homes. Exhausting application to business gets them a livelihood, but an unfrugal wife scatters it. He is fretted at from the moment he enters the door until he comes out of it. The exasperations of business life augmented by the exasperations of domestic life. Such men are laughed at, but they have a heart-breaking trouble, and they would have long ago gone into appalling dissipations but for the grace of God. Society to-day is strewn with the wrecks of men who, under the north-east storm of domestic infelicity, have been driven on the rocks. There are tens of thousands of drunkards in this country to-day, made such by their wives. That is prose! But the wrong is generally in the opposite direction. You would not have to go far to find a wife whose life is a perpetual martyrdom. Something heavier than the stroke of a fist, unkind words, staggerings home at midnight, and constant mal-

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treatment which have left her only a wreck of what she was on that day when, in the midst of brilliant assemblage, the vows were taken, and full organ played the wedding march, and the carriage rolled away with the benediction of the people. What was the burning of Latimer and Ridley at the stake compared with this? Those men soon became unconscious in the fire, but here is a fifty-years' martyrdom, a fifty-years' putting to death, yet uncomplaining. No bitter words when the rollicking companions at two o'clock in the morning pitch the husband dead drunk into the front entry. No bitter words when wiping from the swollen brow the blood struck out in a midnight carousal. Bending over the battered and bruised form of him who, when he took her from her father's home, promised love, kindness, and protection, yet nothing but sympathy, and prayers, and forgiveness before they are asked for. No bitter words when the family Bible goes for rum, and the pawnbroker's shop gets the last decent dress. Some day, desiring to evoke the story of her sorrows, you say, "Well, how are you getting along now?" And rallying her trembling voice and quieting her quivering lip, she says, "Pretty well, I thank you; pretty well." She never will tell you. In the delirium of her last sickness she may tell all the secrets of her lifetime, but she will not tell that. Not until the books of eternity are opened on the thrones of judgment will ever be known what she has suffered. Oh! ye who are twisting a garland for the victor, put it

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on that pale brow. When she is dead the neighbours will beg linen to make her a shroud, and she will be carried out in a plain box with no silver plate to tell her age, for she has lived a thousand years of trial and anguish. The gamblers and the swindlers who destroyed her husband will not come to the funeral. One carriage will be enough for that funeral—one carriage to carry the orphans and the two Christian women who presided over the obsequies. But there is a flash, and a clank of a celestial door, and a shout: "Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates, and let her come in!" And Christ will step forth and say, "Come in! Ye suffered with Me on earth, be glorified with Me in heaven." What is the highest throne in heaven? You say, "The throne of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb." No doubt about it. What is the next highest throne in heaven? While I speak it seems to me that it will be the throne of the drunkard's wife, if she, with cheerful patience, endured all her earthly torture. Heroes and heroines.

I find also in the roll the heroes of Christian charity. We all admire the George Peabodys and the James Lenoxes of the earth, who give tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars to good objects. Last week Moses H. Grinnell was buried, and the most significant thing about the ceremonies, as I read them, was that there was no sermon and no oration; a plain hymn, a prayer, and a benediction. Well, I said, that is very beautiful. All Christendom

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pronounces the eulogium of Moses H. Grinnell, and the icebergs that stand as monuments to Franklin and his men will stand as the monuments of this great merchant, and the sunlight that plays upon the glittering cliff will write his epitaph. But I am speaking this morning of those who, out of their pinched poverty, help others—of such men as those Christian missionaries at the West, who are living on 250 dollars a year that they may proclaim Christ to the people; one of them, writing to the secretary in New York, saying, “I thank you for that \$25. Until yesterday we have had no meat in our house for three months. We have suffered terribly. My children have no shoes this winter.” And of those people who have only half a loaf of bread, but give a piece of it to others who are more hungry; and of those who have only a scuttle of coal, but help others to fuel; and of those who have only a dollar in their pocket, and give twenty-five cents to somebody else; and of that father who wears a shabby coat, and of that mother who wears a faded dress, that their children may be well apparelled. You call them paupers, or ragamuffins, or emigrants, or tatterdemalions. I call them heroes and heroines. You and I may not know where they live, or what their name is. God knows, and they have more angels hovering over them than you and I have, and they will have a higher seat in heaven. They may have only a cup of cold water to give a poor traveller, or may have only picked a splinter from under the

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nail of a child's finger, or have put only two mites into the treasury ; but the Lord knows them. Considering what they had, they did more than we have ever done, and their faded dress will become a white robe, and the small room will be an eternal mansion, and the old hat a coronet of victory, and all the applause of earth and all the shouting of heaven will be drowned out when God rises up to give His reward to those humble workers in His kingdom, and say to them, "Well done, good and faithful servant." You have all seen or heard of the ruin of Melrose Abbey. I suppose in some respects it is the most exquisite ruin on earth. And yet, looking at it, I was not so impressed—you may set it down to bad taste—but I was not so deeply stirred as I was at a tombstone at the foot of that abbey—the tombstone planted by Walter Scott over the grave of an old man who had served him for a good many years in his house—the inscription most significant, and I defy any man to stand there and read it without tears coming into his eyes—the epitaph: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Oh! when our work is over, will it be found that because of anything we have done for God, or the church, or suffering humanity, that such an inscription is appropriate for us? God grant it.

Who were the bravest and deserved the greatest monument, Lord Claverhouse and his burly soldiers, or John Brown, the Edinburgh carrier, and his wife? Mr. Atkins, the persecuted minister of Jesus

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Christ in Scotland, was secreted by John Brown and his wife, and Claverhouse rode up one day with his armed men and shouted in front of the house. John Brown's little girl came out. He said to her, "Well, miss, is Mr. Atkins here?" She made no answer, for she could not betray the minister of the gospel. "Ha!" Claverhouse said, "then you are a chip of the old block, are you? I have something in my pocket for you. It is a nosegay. Some people call it a thumbscrew, but I call it a nosegay." And he got off his horse, and he put it on the little girl's hand, and began to turn it until the bones cracked, and she cried. He said, "Don't cry, don't cry; this isn't a thumbscrew; this is a nosegay." And they heard the child's cry, and the father and mother came out, and Claverhouse said, "Ha! it seems that you three have laid your holy heads together, determined to die like all the rest of your hypocritical, canting, snivelling crew; rather than give up the good Mr. Atkins, pious Mr. Atkins, you would die. I have a telescope with me that will improve your vision," and he pulled out a pistol. "Now," he said, "you old pragmatical, lest you should catch cold in this cold morning of Scotland, and for the honour and safety of the king, to say nothing of the glory of God and the good of our souls, I will proceed simply and in the neatest and most expeditious style possible to blow your brains out." John Brown fell upon his knees and began to pray. "Ah!" said Claverhouse, "look out, if you



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are going to pray : steer clear of the king, the council, and Richard Cameron." "O Lord," said John Brown, "since it seems to be Thy will that I should leave this world for a world where I can love Thee better and serve Thee more, I put this poor widow woman and these helpless, fatherless children into Thy hands. We have been together in peace a good while, but now we must look forth to a better meeting in heaven. And as for these poor creatures, blindfolded and infatuated, that stand before me, convert them before it be too late ; and may those who have sat in judgment in this lonely place on this blessed morning, upon me, a poor, defenceless fellow-creature—may they, in the last judgment, find that mercy which they have refused to me, thy most unworthy but faithful servant. Amen." He rose up, and said, "Isabel, the hour has come of which I spoke to you on the morning when I proposed hand and heart to you ; and are you willing now, for the love of God, to let me die ?" She put her arms around him, and said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord !" "Stop that snivelling," said Claverhouse. "I have had enough of it. Soldiers, do your work. Take aim—Fire !" And the head of John Brown was scattered on the ground. While the wife was gathering up in her apron the fragments of her husband's head—gathering them up for burial—Claverhouse looked into her face, and said, "Now, my good woman, how do you feel now about your bonnie

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man?" "Oh!" she said, "I always thought weel of him; he has been very good to me; I had no reason for thinking anything but weel of him, and I think better of him now." Oh, what a grand thing it will be in the last day to see God pick out His heroes and heroines! Who are those paupers of eternity trudging off from the gate of heaven? Who are they? The Lord Claverhouses, and the Herods, and the Lord Jeffreys of the earth. They had sceptres, and they had crowns, and they had thrones, but they lived for their own aggrandisement, and they broke the heart of nations. Heroes of earth, but paupers in eternity, I beat the drums of their eternal despair. Woe! woe! woe!

But there is great excitement in heaven. Why those long processions? Why the booming of that great bell in the tower? It is coronation day in heaven. Who are those rising on the thrones, with crowns of eternal royalty? They must have been great people on earth, world-renowned people. No. They taught in a ragged school! Is that all? That is all. Who are those souls waving sceptres of eternal dominion? Why, they were little children who waited on invalid mothers. That all? That is all. She was called "Little Mary" on earth. She is an empress now. Who are that great multitude on the highest thrones of heaven? Who are they? Why, they fed the hungry, they clothed the naked, they healed the sick, they comforted the heart-broken. They never found any rest until they

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put their head down on the pillow of the sepulchre. God watches them. God laughed defiance at the enemies who put their heels hard down on these His dear children; and one day the Lord struck His hand so hard on His thigh that the omnipotent sword rattled in the buckler, as He said, "I am their God, and no weapon formed against them shall prosper." What harm can the world do you when the Lord Almighty with unsheathed sword fights for you?

I preach this sermon this morning in comfort. Go home to the place just where God has put you to play the hero and heroine. Do not envy any man his money, or his applause, or his social position. Do not envy any woman her wardrobe or her exquisite appearance. Be the hero or the heroine. If there be no flour in the house, and you do not know where your children are to get bread, listen, and you will hear something tapping against the window pane. Go to the window, and you will find it is the beak of a raven, and open the window, and there will fly in the messenger that fed Elijah. Do you think that the God who grows the cotton of the South will let you freeze for the lack of clothes? Do you think that the God who allowed the disciples on Sunday morning to go into the grain-field, and then take the grain and rub it in their hands and eat—do you think God will let you starve? Did you ever hear the experience of that old man—"I have been young, and now I am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread"? Get up out

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of your discouragement, O troubled soul, O sewing woman, O man kicked and cuffed by unjust employers, O ye who are hard bestead in the battle of life and know not which way to turn, O you bereft one, O you sick one with complaints you have told to no one! Come and get the comfort of this subject. Listen to our great Captain's cheer: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

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