

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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THE LION AND THE BEAR : TROPHIES HUNG UP.

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## A Sermon

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“Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear : and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.”—1 Sam., xvii. 36, 37.

DAVID had lived with God. Throughout many a solitary day he had kept his father's flock among the lone hills of Judah, and had worshipped the Unseen but Ever-present Lord. He had grown into an adoring familiarity with the Most High, so that to him the name of the one only living and true God was a deep and solemn joy. As you may have spied far up among the ramparts of the mountains a solitary lake, whose one office it is to mirror the face of heaven, so had David's hallowed life become the reflection of the light and glory of the Lord of hosts. It had not occurred to him in his meditations that base men would dare to challenge the infinite majesty of God, or that proud adversaries would come forward and defy the chosen people of the Most High ; and now that he hears the defiance and beholds the challenge, all his blood is up. He starts ! A holy rage is upon him ! Yes, it is true ; he hears Jehovah blasphemed ! How can it be ? The youth's holy soul is undergoing a new experience, he is bringing his whole life to bear upon it ; he reaches the conclusion that as bears and lions die when they meddle with sheep, so must Goliath fall now that he dares to attack the Lord and his people.

When David finds himself in the camp, and when he hears Goliath of Gath pouring forth his blasphemies against Jehovah, and defying Jehovah's people, he has no thought of having been mistaken in his former lofty adoration, he entertains no notion of adopting a lower style ; but he inwardly burns with indignation against the infamous reviler. An insult against God cannot be allowed. This abominable blasphemer must be silenced. Somebody must put him down, and so dispose of him that none shall ever dare again to do the like. David enquires whether somebody or other is not going to batter the brazen champion. If any man in the camp will meet this huge man-mountain, David will not stand in his way ; he is not so covetous of glory as to deprive a more

deserving person of these huge materials for renown. But it is imperative that some hand should silence that hillock of proud flesh. It is driven in upon David's devout heart that this blasphemous mouth must be shut, and God's name and God's people must be clear of such a brutal enemy.

About the stilling of this enemy and avenger David has no enquiry to make. It is going to be done, done soon, and done without any particular display. When he kept his sheep and the lion came, David did not raise the question whether he could kill the lion: he killed him, and then the question was settled. When the bear came, and was about to rob him of one of his lambs, he did not say to himself, "Have I a call to kill that bear?" Not he; but he killed him, and then he knew he was called to do it. He feels within him at this moment, "If nobody else will deal with this Philistine difficulty, I must do so; for I cannot live and see God opposed. Jehovah is all in all, and beside him there is none else: he can put an end to an opponent with a word; it must not be that he shall be insulted continually after this fashion. I feel an impulse upon me. This Philistine has defied the armies of the living God, and down he shall come." And so, yielding to the diviner impulses by which the truly great are led, David puts himself forward to stand in single combat with an enormous giant. Observe a stripling set over against a son of Anak: but when you have made the observation be sure to note that the stripling by no means asks your sympathy, or appeals to your pity. It sometimes happens that a tremor will come over a man when he feels that he has stepped out of the ranks, and come forward without any call from his fellow-men,—when he feels that he has taken up Jehovah's quarrel, and constituted himself the champion of the Most High. If he is not quite sure about his commission, and if he is not quite sure that God is with him, he will soon repent his own temerity, and make an ignominious retreat. In David's case there is no flush of excitement, no fierce light of eyes lit up with a semi-madness. Evidently he is quite at home, and has the entire business well in hand. He tells us why he is so bravely venturesome. It is well worth our while to see what made David so strong and confident; for, if it has never occurred to us hitherto, it may yet occur that we shall be called out to do some deed of daring for the Lord. Come, let us learn how to be Davids should a voice call us from among the sheepfolds. I wish that young men here would aspire to brave lives for the God of Israel. I would that for truth, and goodness, and the eternal glory, they would be ready to rise to the measure of their destined hour. Why should we all be mean men? Is there not room for a few downright devoted beings, who will lift their hand unto the Lord, and never go back? If self-sacrifice is wanted, let us make it. If some one is needed for a heathen land, or to bear testimony for truth in this almost apostate nation, let us cry, "Here am I! Send me!" God's David will not hang back through cowardly fear or dread of consequences, but will take up his place as God shall help him, and say, like Martin Luther, "I can do no other: so help me, O my God."

We shall see what made David so calm and self-possessed as to venture where nobody else would venture, and take up the gauntlet

and dare to be the champion of the living God. Oh, souls that dwell apart, and wear each one a lone star upon his brow, here are kindred flames for you!

The first head will be, *the confidence of David*, and when I have spoken upon that, as God shall help me, we will then consider, for a little time, *David as the type of the great Son of David*, and think about *that confidence which we ought to repose in him*.

First, THE CONFIDENCE OF DAVID. He does not go to this battle with any kind of hesitation, calculation, or question of fear, but he is quite sure of the result, and proceeds about it with a quiet reserve of force. One would have thought that he himself was a colossal presence, and that the person to be assailed was some pigmy, for he talks with such calm assurance,—“Let no man’s heart fail him. Thy servant will fight with this uncircumcised Philistine.” It would have been fearful brag if it had not been simple matter of fact.

1. *The confidence of David*, in the first place, *was grounded upon his own personal experience*. Beloved, if you would display strong confidence in God, firm, calm, steady, you must look in large measure to the experience you have had of the goodness and faithfulness of God. The Lord in mercy often keeps young beginners from those severe and heavy trials which befall the more advanced, because to them this fountain of strength, namely, a profound personal experience, is not yet accessible, except in rare instances. The young have not as yet obtained much experience of the things of God; but those who have been led onward in the divine life a certain distance have tried and proved the promises, and the promise-keeping power and faithfulness of God, and they can draw from this well with the highest results.

But, beloved, I would have you remember that experience does not come to people if they sit quite still. When David was young in years he was old in experience, because he had watched the hand of the Lord in its dealings with him. He had not been an idler among the hills, but a worshipper, a worker, a student, a practical, living man of God. You must go and meet an experience if that experience is to bring you riches in both its hands. I mean this, David’s experience was that God delivered him out of the jaw of the lion, but he went and fought that lion; by his own dauntless valour he took the lamb out of his mouth, and he laid hold upon his jaws, and rent him in pieces. David went forth to meet that experience. And the bear—that came to David, certainly; but then he did not sit still and watch the bear, and let it come and roar, and ravin, and then retreat as it liked; but he struggled with that bear, and he slew him, and thus he gained his experience by the active discharge of his duty as a shepherd. He did what he was called upon to do with holy daring, and in so doing he learned the faithfulness of God. Many men have lions and bears, but no experience. Be alive, and get something out of all that happens around you.

You younger Christian men and women, I do pray you be faithful to your God; and put your trust in him. Try to do in your earliest days brave things, because in this manner you will be gaining and storing up an experience which will make you strong in after days to attempt yet more for God. I long to see a better race than the present, and how shall that be prepared but among the brave and loyal-hearted youth of



to-day? Do you not know the way in which God rewards his faithful servants here on earth? He does it usually by enabling them to do in the future something more than they have done before. You have fought in that battle. Take this as your reward,—you shall fight again to-morrow. You have achieved a second victory? Take this as your guerdon: you shall be led to a still sterner fight. Oh, you who have frowned down the face of death, and have bearded destruction in its own den, you shall lead a second forlorn hope, and pluck victory from the bloody brows of battle. You shall be among the choice warriors of the King, first in every fray. Some, perhaps, may think this a small reward, but this shows that their hearts are not yet raised into the lordlier chivalry, nor sworn into the innermost love of the great King. When the heart is wholly given up to Christ, our one desire is that we may glorify him.

Therefore, I would have you take care and kill your lions, and kill your bears, that you may store up your experiences, and be able to kill your Philistines. If David had not killed the first lion and bear, he would not have been able to meet any other ferocious creatures. There is any quantity of them about; but no one but brave David had specially cultivated their acquaintance: I say there is plenty of the raw material of experience about, only people do not go in for it. These evil creatures are up and down, all over the place, lions of one kind and bears of another, tearing or roaring, howling or hugging, drawing down or tossing up—in every way trying to destroy us; and if you be a born hunter, you shall have ages of experience within the next twelve months. Take care that you do it. Do not become constant idlers, and then talk about Christian experience. Oh for true, deep, rich experience! Some of you need it badly enough. What kind of experience will some professors have when they come to be sixty or seventy years of age? They never laboured in the Sunday School to teach a child, never stood up to preach Christ, never penetrated a lodging-house, nor entered a midnight-meeting to try and find out a wanderer for Jesus. These have no experience: they are hollow as drums. They have done nothing; their spiritual life has been a blank. If a sharp trial should come to them, upon what experience could they fall back? They are soldiers who have never smelt powder! Warriors who faint at the sight of blood! How shall they win eternal victory, who till this hour have taken their ease, and declined the labour and the danger of the war? I charge you, therefore, my beloved brethren and sisters, who know the Lord, be up and in earnest to slay your lions and your bears, that you may learn how to kill your Philistines: that is to say;—serve God with all your heart, and patiently bear the cross for his name's sake, so that when the time shall come for you to stand as a lone man for Christ, you may do it gloriously, and may bring honour to your divine Leader. As stands a rock in mid-ocean, bearing the full fury of the storm, so may we, in strength derived from a long, happy, useful experience in the past, be steadfast and unmovable, for the truth, and for the Cross.

That is our first note about David's confidence—it comes from experience, and ours must do the same.

2. You will notice, secondly, that in his confidence there is a *blend-ing of the human with the divine*. Observe: "Thy servant slew both



the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them":—That is the human. "David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine":—That is the divine side of it. In God's word the car of truth runs on two rails of parallel statement. A great many people want to pull up one of the rails. They will not accept two sets of truth. "Predestination and free agency, do not agree," so the modern Solomons assert. Who said, "they do not agree"? They do agree as fully as two rails on the tram line; but some narrow spirits must set aside either the one or the other, they cannot accept *both*. This has long been a puzzle on paper, but in practice it is ease itself. So here the practical action of the believer, throwing his whole might into his Master's service, perfectly well agrees with his falling back upon the working of God, and knowing that it is God that worketh all things for him. David's slaying of the lion and the bear and the Philistine is clear; but God's delivering him out of the jaw of the lion, and the paw of the bear, and the hand of the Philistine, is equally clear. Make it plain to your own self. I believe that, when I preach, I ought to prepare and study my sermon as if its success altogether depended upon me, but that, when I am thus thoroughly furnished, I am to trust in God as much as if I had done nothing at all. The same view should be taken of your life and of your service for God. Work as if you were to be saved by your works; and then trust Christ only, since it is only by faith in him that you are capable of a single good work. Work for God with all your might, as if you did it all; but then always remember that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." How is that Philistine to be killed? "By God," says one. True; but not without David. "By David," says another. Yes, but not without God. Put the Lord on the march with David and you put the Philistines into untimely graves. When David moves to the fight, God being with him, off comes Goliath's head. Nor champions' heads, nor demons' helmets, can stand against the man of God. "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

"Oh, but," they say, "Paul *may* plant, and Apollos *may* water," and yet nothing may come of it, for only God can give the increase. Where is that in the Bible? It is not there at all. The pure word is set to another key. According to the Scriptures the text runs, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase"; when believing people work, and follow up the work of the one with the service of the other, working together in sacred unity, then God gives the increase. It is not "Paul *may* plant, and Apollos *may* water," and they *may* do this in confidence in God, yet they *may* be disappointed. Not at all. It is not the Lord that is ever in question: we are the questionables. God is never behindhand, though we often are. Do not say, "David may go with his sling, and David may go with his stone." No, but if David goes with his sling and stone, in the name of the Lord of hosts, nothing can defend Goliath's forehead. He is bound to fall on his face to the earth. If you and I will go in the name of the Lord God of hosts to do what he calls us to do, our work shall be done. We shall not invoke that sacred name in vain, nor shall we be guarded and belted about with

the divine omnipotence, and after all make a failure of life. That is a happy confidence in God which clearly sees the blending of the human with the divine—the human nothing as to self-confidence, the divine everything as to the glory; yet the divine the more divine, because it condescendingly stoops to use the human.

3. Thirdly, I want you to notice in David's confidence that *he had so practically observed the service of the human side that he speaks of it first*. Concerning his experience, David says first, "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear." In fact, he begins not with what God did, but with what he did himself. Hear him,—“Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.” David does not conceal the fact that he had given both lion and bear their due. There is neither modesty, humility, nor truthfulness in giving the lie to the grace of God within you. A holy act should not be repudiated by its author any more than a brave boy should be disowned by his father. If you did work valiantly by the help of the Spirit of God, you did do it, and should not refuse to say so. How are you to glorify God by denying the fruit of his Spirit? It is the glory of God that he led you to holy labour, and helped you in it; and though you would not speak to your own honour, yet the Lord must be praised,—praised out of the weakness and unworthiness of our human nature. David speaks of the human side first, because Saul had said to him, “Thou art not able to go against this Philistine.” In effect he replied, “Hear what I did, and see whether I am not able to meet the case.” Sometimes when the question is asked, “Is this possible?” let the Lord's anointed one say, “Ay, for I have done it myself.” In a slothful church, a church that has no faith in God—and there are many such—the question is asked, “Can this be done—done by such poor creatures as we are?” It is not an ill thing if one who has had experience of the Lord's power bears a bold testimony, and says, “This can be done, for in days gone by I did the like.” What is wanted is to give facts and dates, and get into the region of reality. David put the human into the very forefront. I wish you would remember this when you hear the idle night-birds hooting at our working for the Lord. The lazy-bones of our orthodox churches cry, “God will do his own work”; and then they look out the softest pillow they can find, and put it under their heads, and say, “The eternal purposes will be carried out: God will be glorified.” That is all very fine talk, but it can be used with the most mischievous design. You can make opium out of it, which will lull you into a deep and dreadful slumber, and prevent your being of any kind of use at all. God delivers David, and Israel, and slays Goliath; but David is also there in full force, and nothing is done without his sling and stone. David does not hesitate to state it, and the Holy Ghost does not hesitate to record it: why should it be otherwise? Personal action; keep that ever before your reverent eye. Every man has his own place to fill. Fill yours. There is something for you to do. By God's grace do it.

4. But now again, although David thus speaks of the human first, yet

*he speaks of the divine most.* “No, say you : he does not speak of the divine *most*: there are several verses about the human, and we have only one upon the divine.” Listen ! All the points which David makes concerning the human are about the divine too ; for when a man who has faith in God speaks, if he says, “I did this, I did that,”—it is but another, and sometimes a braver way of saying that God did it. Of course, we all believe in miracles, and that God can do anything and everything. But hearken : we do not believe in God using such poor creatures as we are, though that would be the greatest miracle, and the most astonishing marvel. It would be a marvellous thing indeed, if at any time one of us should cry, “I did it: I did it. The Lord has worked through such a creature as I am.” It is a solemn pleasure to feel that the ever-blessed Lord has used you for his praise. I have felt it to be a joy too great for words, and I have bowed my head to worship under a sense of so high an honour. Be not slow to see the hand of the Lord working with you and by you. It may sometimes be more practically useful to believers to hear of what God did by you than to hear abstractly of what God has done by his own bare arm. It redounds more to God’s glory that he has wrought acts of grace by such poor creatures as we are than if he had wrought them by seraphim and cherubim. Not without men doth God aim at his highest glory, or else they would not have been created ; but *in* men and *by* men will the Lord be great to the ends of the earth.

5. Now I want to go a little farther, and show that *David’s confidence rested mainly in the immutability of God, the divine Worker.* He says, “The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.” In the divine character there are usual features and ordinary lines of action. God has “*ways*.” He does not behave in one manner to-day, and in another to-morrow, but his tones and methods are fixed. Our God is not capricious ; we know what to expect from him, for he has revealed to us “the way of the Lord.” All through the Bible you read of God’s way. Therefore, when certain events happen we know where they will end. From experience of the past we gather prophecies of the future, and we foretell things to come. Let me show you a few objects in conjunction, and let us take observations. See ! Before my mind’s eye there pass a lion, and a believing man : God gives that believing man victory over the lion. Study the second picture ;—A bear and a believing man : God helps that believing man to get the victory over the bear. God, who is the same to-day as yesterday, will be the same to-morrow. A third picture is before me,—a huge giant, and the same believing man—well, God will give him victory over the Philistine. I am sure of it. It is the way of him. I want you, my dear brother, to feel that if God has blessed you in the past he will bless you still. You were helped : you can never forget it : you were helped right through. It was a severe crisis in your life, and you were wonderfully carried over it : does not this fact fill you with hope ? There came another somewhat different trial, as different from the former trouble as a bear may be from a lion ; but you were again helped—very remarkably helped. You have not forgotten it : you cannot forget it though your hair be grey. Are not such encouragements very many and very sweet ? Why, I can furnish my



whole house with the bears' skins and lions' skins. Are we going to be discouraged now? Here is another crisis, and there is another difficulty: are you dismayed? The way of God—have you not learned it yet? Do you not know God's habitudes by now? If he helped you then, and then, and then, and then, he will surely help you now. Why you must feel, I should think, like Drake when he had been round the world, and yet was nearly wrecked at the harbour's mouth. He was coming up the Thames, when a fierce storm broke over him, and his ship was well-nigh driven on shore. He cried to his sailors, "No, no, this won't do. We have been safely round the world, and we are not going to be drowned in a ditch like this. We shall get safe up to London." Your present affliction is a mere ditch of a trouble compared with what you endured years ago. You who have breasted Atlantic billows, are you doomed to drown under the languid ripples of an everyday life? Let it not be so. "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them. The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." We serve an immutable God. *We* change a thousand times a day, but he changes never. Our pilgrimage leads us along a good old way; our chart and our compass are the same as those of our youth; and the divine consolation, upon which alone we rely, is in every respect unaltered and unalterable. Hear Jehovah speak,—*"I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."*

6. This leads me to close by observing that *David's confidence also proceeded upon his firm conviction that, the immutable God being with him, he himself would be sufficient for the present emergency.* Now, you see, I bring the man in again, but it is that you may think of God all the more. We want immutability applied to ourselves, or we are not comforted. It is a very easy thing to say, "Yes, God is unchangeable;" and then we turn round and say,—*"God is glorious, but I am such a poor creature."* Yes, and you were such a poor creature when you slew the lion; and just such a poor creature when you slew the bear. If you are just such a poor creature still, it is probable that by just such a poor creature God is going to get to himself one more victory to the glory of his great grace. Does it ever come over you who are getting into years to tremble at times? to tremble involuntarily, with a sore sense of utter nothingness? Your trembling is partly physical weakness, and partly mental weariness: you say, "For what God has helped me to do, to his name be praise!" But you go on to enquire, "Can I continue under so great a pressure? Shall I do this present deed, and bear this present burden which my Lord has laid upon me?" Why, dear friend, of course you will. What you have done before you will do again; and greater things than these will you do. I want you to unite with David in a sense of personal capacity for all the outlying future. Not only say, "The Lord that delivered me will deliver me," but say also, "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and thy servant can slay this Philistine too. Yes, I killed the beasts, and in God's name I will kill the champion." Old battles lend us new weapons. Yesterday's griefs are the mothers of to-day's joys. An old affliction may prove to be the best cure for

new distress. Poor, poor Mary ! She weeps for Lazarus ; but Jesus will comfort her concerning her brother. Are not his former mercies laid up in store in her soul ? Her heart had known secret passages of gracious experience, which prepared her to see her brother rise again. And you, poor Thomas, beginning to doubt ; why, Thomas, you are the very man who lost estate, and health, and yet glorified God ! Oh, brother Thomas, we shall not believe your hard speeches against yourself : you are the man who bore the brunt of poverty, and slander, and persecution, and bereavement, and sickness ; and you triumphed in them all. You sometimes tell other people how wonderfully, when you were in the fire, another walked with you amid the glowing coals. And have you not sometimes said that your afflictions are among your most precious possessions ? Well, and God will bless you still. It shall not only be the same God, but it shall be the same Mary, and the same Thomas, working still as God would have them work, and bearing up under trials, and proving themselves to be more than conquerors through him that loved them.

“ Ah, you do not know my trouble, dear sir ! ” No, my dear friend, and you do not know mine, and I am not going to tell you. It would not comfort you if I told you my distresses ; and it certainly would not comfort me if you told me all your ailings, and moanings, and sighings. I expect that we have each to suffer the best trouble that could have been appointed us. If you had my cross it would be an unsuitable burden for you ; and if I had yours, it would be a grievous load for me. Never let us dream of changing, nor even of comparing our different lots : the settlements of Providence are wiser than our fancies ; the will of the Lord is better than the wit of man. Let each man choose the cross which God has chosen for him. He knew our weight, and how to adapt our burden to our strength. If any good is to come of the rod, it will be a rod that is handled by the Lord in his own way ; not under the direction of our daily folly, but under the guidance of his infinite wisdom and prudence. He knows where each one of us requires to come under discipline. He knows the specific nature of each believer, even as a careful vine-dresser understands the peculiarity of each of his vines. In the season of pruning the Great Husbandman knows which branch wants cutting off. You cry, “ Not so, Lord. Here is a branch lower down ; if I must be pruned, cut that off. ” The Lord is going to spare that shoot, for it is a fruit-bearing one ; but the other which you like so much would only run to wood, and so he is going to cut it away. Afflictions sent us according to our own desires would not be afflictions, but amusements. The bastinado applied by the culprit himself would not amount to much. I do not know that we should be able to make a wise selection of afflictions even if we had the choice of them. I am afraid that we should be like the soldier who was never pleased by the drummer. When he cried, “ Do not hit me so high, ” the drummer tried him lower down. But he did not like that any better, for he cried, “ Higher ! Higher ! Don't cut me in pieces ! ” Now, in very truth our afflictions anywhere, or anyhow, are grievous. We would rather escape them altogether, and therefore it is not left to our choice ; but the infinite wisdom of God appoints the affliction, and appoints it suitably to the man.

I fall back on that fact. David is confident that God is with him. He is confident also that he is with God. He is confident that God has helped him—confident that he was enabled to do valiantly in years gone by, by the divine help, and that he will do so again, and so he comes forward to meet the present emergency.

I do not know for whom my message at this hour may be specially meant. It comes to me ruggedly, but with a good deal of impressiveness. I have an inward conviction that there are some here to whom it is sent—children of God who are placed in positions where it is incumbent upon them to stand out, and bear open witness for the truth. There is little doing for the Master : everybody is cowardly and backward. Awake, ye brave ! Speak out, speak out, and silence the foe ! Like packs of hounds the proud thinkers mouth it against the Lord ; but a single fearless voice will quiet the whole kennel of them. Come to the front of the fight, ye that are truly men, and the Lord will be with you. Remember how he has helped you in times past, and let the God of your salvation be your God for ever and ever.

Now, I am going to close with a few remarks upon the second head. DAVID IS A VERY FIT AND WONDERFUL TYPE OF THE GREAT SON OF DAVID, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

If Saul had really believed David—which I am afraid he did not—the story that David told him should have encouraged him to have placed much confidence in the young hero. Any believing man in the camp who really trusted Jehovah, as David did, would have said, “ I see in you, young man, one whom God has smiled upon. He has enabled you to slay both a lion and a bear, and therefore I am assured that you will give a good account of this uncircumcised Philistine before long.” Transfer all this from David to David’s Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, and it comes to this :—What he has already done should constrain us to believe in him. I speak both to saints and sinners for a moment to-night. If you have any doubt about whether Jesus Christ is able and willing to help you in your present trouble, and to deliver you from your present doubt, and despondency, and despair, remember what he has already done. He has left the thrones and royalties of heaven to be born into this world as a babe, and to hang upon a woman’s breast. It is a marvel. We speak of it as though we understood it, but we do not. The Incarnation is a miracle among miracles, and rises like an Alp above all other mountains of mystery. It is a wondrous thing that the One Almighty God should veil himself in a human form, but Christ has done so. “ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Being found in fashion as a man, our Lord bowed himself to learn obedience by the things which he suffered. He lived a life of sorrow, temptation, slander, reproach, that he might finish the work entrusted to him. In nothing failing, he fulfilled the obedient life, and prepared for the atoning death. The time came for him to encounter greater foes than he had met before, but this did not disturb him : calmly he met all things as they were appointed him. He came at last to his cross, and there the stupendous load of human guilt was laid upon his shoulders, and he bore it all. As in righteousness he was strong to labour, so in atone-



ment he was strong to suffer. It needed Deity to bear the weight of human guilt, but he did bear it, and he so bore it that he finished transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness for his people. You see he slew each lion and bear as it came, and in nothing was he dismayed. Then he went down into the grave, and met with death, and grappled with it. Death, by dying, he destroyed. He rifled the sepulchre, and brought resurrection to light for all his people. Wondrous was that battle of Christ with the lion of the pit for our sakes! He kept his flocks by night and by day, never failing to protect his own. The lion prowled around, and sought to enter the sheepfold; but the Shepherd's watchfulness was always there to keep him off. At last, with a tremendous roar, the monster leaped into the sheepfold. He had hoped that all were slumbering; but divine love never sleeps. The Shepherd received him on his breast, and held him aloft till he had strangled him. As Samson rent the lion of old, so did our Good Shepherd destroy the destroyer when he laid down his life for the sheep.

All this is done and finished, and you may trust our divine Immanuel to do all that remains. Nothing remains to be done for a sinner that is at all comparable to the far greater things which have been done already. Infinitely more has been wrought for and in a child of God than he will ever want between now and heaven. He may trust Jesus for that little remainder, if any remainder there be, since so much has been already achieved. As I see our great David going forward now to meet any lion that lurks in the way against his people, or any Goliath that stalks abroad and defies the host of God, I feel perfect confidence that he who slew the lion and the bear will make sure work of all that is yet to arise.

Dear friends, at the present time we may be comforted, whatever our adversary may be, by the full conviction that there is as much necessity for Christ to meet our present adversary as for him to meet the former ones. David slew the lion and the bear: it was needful that they should be slain. When the time came, it was equally needful that Goliath of Gath should be slain. And so to-day, if your sin has been removed by Christ, one great necessity has been supplied: if you have now been brought to a dead halt, another necessity has arisen, and another supply will be forthcoming. Our Lord never fails to do everything that is necessary for his people. He never has bungled over anything yet, and he never will. He will not fail nor be discouraged till the Eternal purpose is fulfilled, and the blood-bought ones are safe at the right hand of God, even the Father. Wherefore, comfort yourself with that full conviction.

I believe also that an imperious necessity to work rests upon the heart of Christ now, even as it did aforetime. Our ever sympathetic, ever immutable Lord, has the same power at this moment wherewith to meet the renewed necessities of his beloved. Power! He has infinite power! If when he was here in weakness he destroyed sin and death and hell, what will he not do now that all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth? Oh, my soul, how delightful it is to plunge into a bath of faith and rest in Jesus! Not trust Christ?

Not trust Christ, sinner, now that he is at the right hand of God? Why, his children of old trusted him when he was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief! Not trust him at whose girdle swing the keys of heaven and death and hell? Not trust him whose very wish is law throughout all worlds that God has made? Begone, O base suggestion! Oh, come and trust him, whatever the difficulty! Trust him over the head of Goliath, for he hath already slain both the lion and the bear.

It comes to this: that we must just go forward against everything that stalks before us in opposition, for there can be no reason why Christ should not overcome it, since he has overcome all that has gone before. I know that we are always apt to think that our present trial is peculiar and surprising; but there are no surprises with Jesus. He foreknew all that would happen to his people before he undertook to save them. He shed not his blood in the dark: he knew what they would be. If they wander and fall into sin, he foreknew it all; and all hardness of heart, and everything else that we lament and deplore. Jesus saw it all; and made provision to save us "notwithstanding all." All that can interpose between us and heaven Jesus can drive away, even as the shadows flit before the sunlight. All has been foreseen, and steadfast love is resolved to see the business through. Our great redeeming Substitute did not pledge his name as our Surety without counting the cost, nor did he enter upon covenant engagements blindly, as silly men too often do. He knew that it would cost him his own heart's blood, but he drew not back. He knew what power would be requisite for the achievement of his purpose, and he was not daunted. He has undertaken, and he will go through with it. As the Lord liveth, Christ will suffer no defeat. You have not to do to-day with a puny mortal man that can be put aside, and huffed, and made to fear and turn his back. You have to do with a greater than David; and if David resolutely ran to meet his foe, and paused not till he came back with his gory head, a grizzly trophy of his courage, you need not be afraid that Christ will return defeated. He has taken up this glove, and he will fight this battle through. He will have the victory all along the line; and when the last great "Hallelujah" goes up to heaven, there will be no laments to mingle with it; neither will Christ have to put away his escutcheon with a bar sinister upon it because he was in part defeated.

Never! "The Lord reigneth." The Breaker has gone up before us, and the King at the head of us. We shall march through, even to the dividing of the spoil. He has led captivity captive, and we shall triumph through his name if we are resting in him. Oh, that you would trust him—you that do not as yet rely upon him! May his great Spirit bring you to believe in him, for his name's sake. Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Samuel xvii.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—84 (Song II.), 73.