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## → SERMONS ←

### THE PATH TO SUCCESS.\*

BY PRESIDENT WILLIAM F. KING, D.D., LL.D., CORNELL COLLEGE, MT. VERNON, IOWA.

*My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:*

*So shall thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.—PROV. iii., 1, 4.*

*Give me now wisdom and knowledge.—II. CHRON. i., 10.*

HAVING, through the favor of God, been brought to another college commencement, we give you all a cordial greeting this morning as members of our college family, and as interested friends.

The day on which we have assembled is made sacred by divine appointment and many pleasant associations. Its holy quiet is helpful to meditation and to worship.

“How still the morning of the hallowed day!  
Calmness sits throned on yon morning cloud.  
Mute is the voice of rural labor, hushed  
The plough-boy's whistle and the milk-maid's song.”

The only sounds lingering on our receptive ears are the fading echoes of the sweetly chiming bells from yonder tower and the sweeter melodies of chanted psalms from divinely attuned hearts. Calm is the day, and safe was the slumber of the night under the watch-care of Arcturus and Orion, Sirius and Pleiades, still shining in their courses, bright and young, as when the shep-

\* A Baccalaureate sermon.

is incidental to the design aimed at; for He does not study style of rhetoric in any degree, but simply aims at conveying His thought. Hence He speaks in homely words, such as those of our text: "The very hairs of your head are numbered."

#### God's Children in Dark Hours.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

No human life is all sunshine and over smooth water. Some of the noblest characters in Bible history were men who travelled to Heaven through dark nights and in the teeth of many a "blizzard." Abraham was the "Friend of God," rich and prosperous; yet it was a faith-trying journey, enveloped in painful mystery, which he made to Mount Moriah with his beloved son marked for the sacrifice. Joseph was led through deep pit and dark prison to the premiership of Egypt. Daniel praised God in a lion's den, and Jeremiah, the sorrowful Dante of Hebrew literature, looked up to the stars of the divine promises from the depths of a dungeon. The catalogue of Paul's trials embraces almost everything that human nature can live through. And time would fail us to recount all these heroes of faith described in the epic of the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews.

As it was in those days, so it is in our days. The very best people, those who love God, and whom God loves, are not always happy. Our Heavenly Father never promises unbroken sunshine to any of His children. That might be an appeal to our selfishness—a bribe to serve God for the immediate happiness it would insure. No opportunity would be afforded to test the capacity of faith in hard weather if its voyages were only over placid seas. Clipper-ships are not tested at the wharves—but out in the hurricanes. Hard as it is to believe, yet it is a Bible-truth that whom God *loves*, He chastens and scourges; and He does it just because He loves them. Chemists never throw gravel-stones into their crucibles; it is only the ores which contain gold or silver which are subjected to the red-hot furnace. Old as this truth is, we have to make a fresh application of it

every time that we are called to face afflictions.

(1) Some Christian lives are shadowed by a naturally desponding temperament. Brother Hopeful looks at almost everything through a rose colored glass; but poor Brother Fearing carries a "Slough of Despond" in his mind nearly all the way to the Celestial City, and can only sing bass. He is a man of a choice spirit nevertheless, and goes through the river of death triumphantly. Many of my readers will recall that glorious and successful minister of Christ, Dr. Edward Payson, of Portland, who was afflicted with the most morbid despondency. Satan assailed him often with temptations that drove him well-nigh to despair. The devil, like a skulking highwayman, is very apt to attack God's people when they are "walking in darkness and see no light." Dr. Payson had a wonderful power—in spite of his morbid temperament—both to lead souls to Christ and to comfort the sorrowing; and his dying hours displayed the most exalted ecstasy of rapture. Heaven will probably be all the brighter to those Christians who have travelled thither through the deepest valleys of death-shade.

(2) Some of my readers may be passing through very dark hours of pecuniary adversity. Their business has been shattered, or their incomes have dwindled down almost to the vanishing point. These are gloomy times, dear friends, but I hope it is not too dark for you to see to read God's precious promises, or too dark for you to keep the straight road of integrity. For your comfort let me assure you that while I have known thousands of Christians to be badly demoralized by prosperity, I have rarely known one to be damaged by adversity. Such blizzards are very apt to drive a true Christian under the safe covert of Jesus Christ. When his earthly assets run low, his heavenly assets appreciate. Christian courage shines splendidly in the dark. When a commercial tempest had swept away Arthur Tappan's fortune, and he drew out his watch and handed it to his assignees, saying, "I keep nothing from my creditors," he was richer in God's

sight and in human estimation than he was six months before. It is very uncomfortable to be poor; but grace is not graduated by income, and the man who has a clear conscience and the Lord Jesus Christ within him, and the atmosphere of love all around him, and the glories of Heaven right before him, is one of the Lord's millionaires.

(8) We often find ourselves involved in deep perplexities as to the course we ought to pursue. When we have light it is easy enough to walk in the light; no one need go astray in broad noonday. Then we can walk by sight. Faith is trusting God in the dark. Prayer is often the cry of the soul in the darkness to an unseen Saviour; and lo! He appears to us in the fourth watch of the night walking as over the billows and speaking to us the assuring words: "It is I; be of good cheer; be not afraid." Wonderful deliverances and guidances often come to us in these seasons of perplexity. "Light is *shown* for the righteous." And as we tread the ploughed fields of duty, light is hidden in the furrows and breaks forth.

The grandest triumph of faith is to trust an all-wise and loving God in the darkest hours. We cannot discover the "why" or the "wherefore" of our special afflictions. Our Heavenly Father did not consult us before the trial came, and does not explain to us why He permitted it. He *owns* us, and has as perfect a right to appoint for you and me a path through a pitch-dark tunnel or a valley of the shadow of death as He has to direct our footsteps over a meadow purpled with flowers. The dark path may prove to be the most richly profitable portion of our life-journey. The eye of Faith, like the eye of the body, has the power to enlarge its pupil, and so comes very soon *to see in the dark*. It discovers new beauty in Bible-truths which it never noticed before. It discovers the preciousness of a hope in Christ as never before; and gets new views of the unchanging love of *Him* who sticketh closer than a brother.

### Comfort in Life's Sorrows.

BY ARCHDEACON FARRAR.

The only comfort for Christians is in God. That living God is to them no vague abstraction, no passionless combination of laws, no stream of tendency making for righteousness, but He is our Father in Heaven revealed in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord. With Him at their side they can face the storm of the world's obloquy with pitying forgiveness. Walking in His footsteps they can bear without groaning the burden of their cross. They will not quail when the furious tyrant flings them into the seven-times heated furnace, for His Spirit will be to them as a soft whistling wind amid the flame, and while they walk unbound in the midst of fire the form of Him who walketh with them is the form of the Son of God. They can enter not only without horror, but with a smile of triumphant peace even into the chill waters of the dark river, for they enter it not alone; and then,

What lies above?  
Sunshine and spring,  
Sky blue and love.

"I know what is my gain," said St. Ignatius. "Of nothing in this world am I ambitious save to gain Christ. Whether it is fire or cross, or the assault of wild beasts, or the wrenching of my bones, the crunching of my limbs, the crushing of my whole body—let the tortures of the devil all assail me so I do but gain Christ Jesus."

If you would find consolation you must listen to the invitation of your Lord: "Come unto Me all ye who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you peace." If you have found Christ, if you are in Christ, if your life be, as St. Paul expresses, "hid with Christ in God," then, though weak, you are in reality strong, though destitute, you are rich, though persecuted, you are not forsaken, though cast down, you are not destroyed. There is no other secret than this.