

THE LION-SLAYER—THE GIANT-KILLER

NO. 1253

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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Your servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he has 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 Samuel, 17:36, 37.

WE have all thought a great deal of the courage of David in meeting giant Goliath, but probably we have not given him credit for his conduct in a previous contest. We have not sufficiently noticed that immediately before the encounter with the Philistine he fought a battle which cost him far more thought, prudence and patience. The battle of words in which he had to engage with his brothers and with King Saul was a more trying ordeal to him than going forth in the strength of the Lord to smite the uncircumcised boaster. Many a man meets with more trouble from his friends than from his enemies. And when he has learned to overcome the depressing influence of prudent friends he makes short work of the opposition of avowed adversaries.

Observe that David had first to contend with his own brothers. I hardly think Eliab was so much swayed by envy as has been supposed. I fancy that Eliab had too much contempt for his young brother to envy him. He thought it ridiculous that a youth so given to music and piety and gentle pursuits should dream of encountering a giant. He derided the idea of his being equal to such a task and only feared, lest in a moment of foolish enthusiasm, he might throw his life away in the mad enterprise. And therefore Eliab somewhat superciliously, but still somewhat in the spirit natural to an elder brother who feels himself a sort of guardian to the younger members of the house, chided him and told him that only pride and curiosity had brought him there at all and that he had better have remained with his sheep in the wilderness.

Such a youth, he thought, was more fit among lambs than among warriors, and more likely to be in his place beneath a tree with his shepherd's pipe than in the midst of a battle. David met this charge in the very wisest way—he answered with a few soft words, and then turned away. He did not continue to argue, for in such a contest, to multiply words is to increase ill feelings and he who is silent first is the conqueror. Grandly did this young man restrain himself, though the provocation was very severe, and herein he won the honors of the man who restrains his spirit and greater than the soldier who takes a city. I admire David as he selects his five smooth stones from the brook, but I admire him quite as much when he so gently replies where others might have been angry—and then so wisely turns aside from a debate which could not have been to the profit of either party.

Next, he is brought before Saul and enters upon a contest with a king to whom he felt loyal respect, and with a soldier who had been a man of war from his youth up and had worked many famous deeds, one, therefore, to whom David looked up with not a little reverence. When king Saul said to him, “You are not able to fight with this Philistine, for you are but a youth and he a man of war from his youth,” it must have been somewhat difficult for the young hero to cope with the weighty judgment. And yet he did so, answering meekly, forcibly and in all respects well. Did you notice how David said to Saul, “Let no man's heart fail because of him.” He did not say, “Let not *your heart fail you*”—he was too much of a courtier for that—he had too much delicacy of mind to insinuate that a royal heart could fear.

When he proceeded to argue with the king it was in the most polite and deferential manners. He begins, “Your servant kept his father's sheep.” He calls himself a servant of the king and does not hesitate to admit that he is only a shepherd who had no flock of his own, but served under his father. There was nothing like assumption, but the very reverse. Yet while he used soft words, he brought forth hard arguments. He mentioned facts and these are always the best weap-

ons against carnal reasoning. Saul said, “You are not able to meet this Philistine.” But David replied, “Your servant slew both the lion and the bear.” He placed facts against mere opinions and won the day.

He did not quote Scripture to the king, for I suppose he knew Saul too well for that, and felt that he had not Grace enough to be swayed by the promises and examples of Holy Writ. But he brought facts before him, knowing well how to give a reason for the hope that was in him with meekness and fear. His arguments quite overcame the opposition of Saul, which would have dampened the enthusiasm of many. And so Saul not only commissioned him to go and fight the Philistine, saying, “Go, and the Lord be with you,” but he actually clothed him in his royal armor, which was of no small value and which, of course, would have increased the honors of the Philistine champion had David fallen before him.

Some little faith in David was kindled in Saul’s bosom and he was willing to trust his armor in his hands. Thus it is clear that David fought the battles with Saul as admirably as he afterwards conducted his duel with the giant—and he deserves no small honor for it. No, rather unto God be honor who while He taught His servant’s hands to war, and his fingers to fight, also taught his tongue to utter right words by which he put to silence those who would have abashed him! What was the meat of David’s argument? What were the five smooth stones which he threw at the head of carnal reasoning?

That shall be the subject of this morning’s discourse. We will consider the way in which he argued down all doubts and fears and, by the Spirit of God, was nerved to go forth to deeds of sacred daring in the name of the Most High, for the same conquering arguments may, perhaps, serve our turn also. Three things are before us in the text, *recollections, reasonings and results.*

I. First, RECOLLECTIONS. “*Your 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. Your servant slew both the lion and the bear.*” These were noteworthy facts which David had stored up in his memory. And he now mentions them, for they exactly answered his purpose. We ought not to be unmindful of the way by which the Lord our God has led us, for if we are, we shall lose much.

Some saints have very short memories. It has been well said that we write our benefits in dust and our injuries in marble! And it is equally true that we generally inscribe our afflictions upon brass, while the records of the deliverances of God are written in water. It ought not to be! If our memories were more tenacious of the merciful visitations of our God, our faith would often be strengthened in times of trial.

Now, what did David remember, for I want you to remember the same. He remembered, first, that whatever his present trial might be, *he had been tried before*—tried when he was but a young man peacefully employed in keeping his father’s flocks. A lion rushed upon his prey and he had to defend his sheep—that was no small trial for a young man—to have to meet a savage beast, strong, furious and probably ravenous with hunger. Yet the ordeal had not destroyed him and he felt sure that another of the same kind would not do so.

He had encountered that danger in the course of his duty, when he was in his proper place and engaged in his lawful calling. And he had thereby learned that the path of duty is not without its difficulties and perils. He was keeping his flock as he ought to be and yet a lion attacked him. And so you and I have met with trials which did not arise from sin, but, on the other hand, came to us because we conscientiously did the right thing and would not yield to temptation. We must not think that we are out of the right road when we meet with difficulties, for we must expect, through much tribulation, to inherit the kingdom of God. Severe afflictions and afflictions arising out of holy walking are not new things to us! Let us now remember our old encounters.

He remembered, too, that *he had been tried frequently.* He had not only been attacked by a lion, but also by a bear. He had been tried in different ways, for lions and bears do not fight exactly in the same manner, neither are they to be met with precisely the same tactics. David remembered that his trials had been of different sorts and that in each case the battle had been hard. It was no small matter to fight hand to hand with a lion, and no child’s play to rush single-handed upon a bear. We, also, in looking back, remember sharp encounters with foes of many kinds which were terrible battles to us at the time.

Brothers and Sisters, some of us who have been for years in the ways of the Lord can tell of shrewd brushes with the enemy. We can speak of wounds and ugly tears of which we wear the scars to this day. Many have been our adversaries, and furious—yet we have been upheld till now by Jesus, the Captain of our salvation! Why, then, should we fear concern-

ing the present fiery trial, as though some strange thing had happened to us? Is it a Philistine this time? Well, it was a lion before, and a bear on another occasion—it is only a little change of the same constant trial of our faith—therefore let us not shrink from the conflict.

Next, David remembered that *he had risked all in the prosecution of his duty*. He was set to take care of the sheep and the lambs and he did so. A lion had dared to leap into the fold and seize a lamb, and without a single thought of anything but the lamb and his own duty, the young shepherd rushed upon the monster with all the ardor of youth! And smiting him with his crook compelled him to drop his prey. He had put his own life in jeopardy for the poor defenseless lamb. Can you not remember, my Christian Brothers and Sisters, when you, also, took no thought as to what you should lose if you followed Christ and cared not if it cost you your very life? With earnest honesty you desired to learn what you ought to do and you did it, regardless of the cost.

You defied Reproach, slander, misrepresentation and unkindness, so long as you could but clear your conscience and honor your Lord. O blessed recklessness! Do you remember those early days when you could cheerfully have gone to prison and to death for Christ's sake? For Scriptural doctrines and ordinances you would willingly have suffered martyrdom! Perhaps some of you have, on more than one occasion, actually risked everything for the sake of integrity and for the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ, even as others have defied the utmost power of Satan and the most virulent hatred of men for the sake of the Lord God of Hosts. You have felt that you could sooner die than deny the Truth of God and sooner perish from off the face of the earth than to turn from the trust which the Lord had committed to you.

Look back upon your brave days, my Brothers and Sisters, not that you may be proud of what you did, but that you may be ashamed if you are afraid to do the same today! Blush if what you could do as a babe in Grace should appear too difficult for you in riper years! These remembrances have precious uses—they will lead us to bless God and humble ourselves in His Presence.

Next David remembered that *he had on that occasion gone alone to the fray*. The antagonist was a lion! A dozen men might have found themselves too few for the fight and David remembered that in that contest he was quite alone—he had not called in other shepherds to the rescue, but armed only with his crook, he had belabored the lion till the monster found it convenient to leave his prey and turn upon the young shepherd. David was ready for him, seized him by his beard, dashed his head upon the rocks and did not relinquish his grasp till the king of beasts lay dead at his feet. It was a grand incident, even had it stood alone, but a bear had supplied an equally memorable trophy.

Some of us may well recall hours in our past lives when we were all alone and, as we went forth to serve the Lord Jesus, our enterprise was regarded as Utopian and spoken of as sure to end in failure. Many a good man has gone forth for Christ's sake even *worse* than alone, for those who should have aided have done their best to criticize and prophesy disaster. But men whom God ordains to honor have shut their ears to critics and pushed on till they have reached success. And *then* everybody has said, "We always thought so," and not a few have even claimed to have been ardent admirers all along!

Brother, do you remember when everyone said you were foolhardy and self-sufficient, and regarded your course as absurd and sure to come to an end? Remember when they said six months were to see the end of your career which was a mere bubble and would soon collapse? Ah, those were brave times when the Lord was with you and man's opinion weighed but lightly! It may be that your relatives turned their backs upon you and no man would give you a good word. And yet, in the name of the Lord God of Hosts, you did the right and dared all results! And you have had no cause to regret it, but overflowing reasons to bless God that He strengthened you to "dare to be a Daniel and dare to stand alone."

Look back at that courageous hour, and now that you are surrounded by a goodly company of friends, think whether you have as simple a trust in God, now, as you manifested then. If you judge that you have, prove by your actions that you can still dare to go forward under difficulties, unshackled by dependence on an arm of flesh. The discipline of desertion ought not to have been lost upon you—you ought to be all the stronger for having been compelled to walk alone. The friendship of your fellows has been a loss rather than a gain if you cannot now wage single-handed battle as you did in former times. Have you now become slavishly dependent on an arm of flesh? If so, chide yourself by the memories of braver days!

David also remembered that on that occasion, when he smote the lion and the bear, *he had nothing visible to rely upon, but simply trusted his God*. He had in his hand no sharp weapon of iron with which to smite the wild beast to the heart. Careless as to weapons, he thought only of his God and rushed on the foe. He was as yet a young man, his muscles were not set and strong, neither did he seem fit for such a venturesome deed! But his God was almighty and, reliant upon the Omnipotence of God, he thought nothing of his youth, but flung himself into the fray. What more in the way of help did he need, since God was with him? Oh, Brothers and Sisters, there were times, with some of us, when we commenced our work when our sole reliance was the unseen Lord!

We were cast upon the invisible power of God and if that could fail us we must fail. Our attempts were such as carnal reason could not justify, such indeed as only Divine interposition could carry through! We were right enough if the Divine power could be calculated on, but apart from that, we were near insane! Glory be to God, He has been as good as His word! Our faith has been justified by results and unbelief has been struck dumb. The Lord taught us to rest in Him from our youth up and to declare His wondrous works! And now that we have tried and proved His faithfulness, we dare not hide these things from the generation following. Our witness must be borne even though we should be charged with boasting! “My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.”

But can it be true that now we have begun to coolly calculate *means* and to rely upon methods and plans, whereas once we looked to God, alone? Do we now trust in this friend and rely on that, and distrust the Lord if friends are few? Shame upon us if we do, for this is to leave the way of victory for the path of defeat, to come down from the heroic track to the common highway of carnal reasoning and so to fall into care, fretfulness, weakness and dishonor! Happy is the man who trusts in the Lord, alone, by unshattering faith! He shall go from strength to strength, but he who chooses to walk by sight shall utterly decay.

David remembered, also, that *the tactics which he adopted on that occasion were natural, artless and vigorous*. All that he did was just smite the lion and the bear with his staff, or whatever came first to hand, and then to fight as nature and the occasion suggested. He did what his courage prompted, without waiting to consult a committee of lion-slayers and bear-trappers. His whole art was *faith!* This was his science and his skill. He consulted not with flesh and blood. He followed no precedents, imitated no noted hunters and encumbered himself with no rules. He did his best as his faith in God directed him. He threw his whole soul into the conflict and fought vigorously, for his faith did not make him sit still and expect the lion to die in a fit, or the bear to become insensible.

He seemed to say to himself, “Now, David, if anything is to be done, you must be all here and every muscle you have must be put to the strain. You have a lion to fight with, therefore stir up your strength and while you rely upon God, alone, take care to play the man this day for your father’s flock.” Courage supplied coolness. And energy, backed up by confidence, won the day. Do you remember, my Brother, when in your own way you did the same? You were reliant upon God but not idle. You put your whole force of soul and energy into your Master’s service, as if it all rested on you and yet, you depended wholly on Him and you succeeded! How is it with you now? Do you now take things easily? Do you wonder that you do not succeed? If you are growing cold and careless. If you are getting sleepy and dull, rebuke your soul and use your past experience as a whip with which to flog yourself into energy! Let it never be said that he who woke himself up to fight a lion now falls asleep in the presence of a Philistine!

David remembered *that by confidence in God his energetic fighting gained the victory*—the lion was killed and the bear was killed, too. And cannot you remember, Brothers and Sisters, what victories God gave you? When you were little in Israel and despised, yet His hand was upon you! And when few would bid you God speed, yet the Jehovah of Hosts encouraged your heart! And when you were feeble and but a youth, the Lord Jesus helped you to do exploits for Him in your own way. Remember this, and be of good courage this morning in the conflict which now lies before you. David talked of his former deeds somewhat reluctantly. I do not know that he had ever spoken of them before. He did so on this occasion with the sole motive of glorifying God and that he might be allowed to repeat them.

He ravished for permission from Saul to confront the Philistine champion and bring yet greater glory to God! Brethren, whenever you talk of what God enabled you to do, mind you lay the stress upon God’s *enabling*, and not upon your own doings. And when you rehearse the story of your early days, let it not be as a reason why you should now be exonerated from service and be allowed to retire upon your laurels, but as an argument why you should now be allowed

the most arduous and dangerous post in the battle! Let the past be a stepping stone to something higher—an incentive to nobler enterprise.

On, on you soldiers of the Cross! In God's name eclipse your former selves! As Grace enabled you to pile the carcass of the bear upon the corpse of the lion, so now resolve that the Philistine shall increase the heap and his head shall crown the whole, to the honor and glory of the God of Israel! So much for remembrances. I pity the man who has none of them and I pity, yet more, the man who, having them, is now afraid to risk all for his Lord!

II. Now for REASONING. David used an argument in which no flaw can be found. He said, "The case of this Philistine is a parallel one to that of the lion. If I act in the same manner, by faith in God, with this giant as I did with the lion, God is the same and, therefore, the result will be the same." That seems to me to be very good reasoning and I bid you adopt it. Such-and-such was my past difficulty and my present trouble is of the same order. In that past trial I rested upon God and acted in a right way—and He delivered me. Therefore, if I trust in God, still, and do as before, He is the same as ever—and I shall triumph again!

Let us now consider the case and we shall see that it really was parallel. There was the flock, defenseless. Here is Israel, God's flock, defenseless, too, with no one to take up its cause. In all the camp there was not one single man who dared take up the giant challenge. David was a shepherd and, therefore, as a shepherd, bound to defend his flock. And in the present instance he remembered, I doubt not, that Samuel had anointed him to be king over Israel and he felt that some of the responsibility of the anointing rested upon him even then. And if no other man would play the shepherd, the anointed son of Jesse must do it!

And so it looked to him like a parallel case—Israel the flock and he the shepherd who must defend it. He was alone that day when he smote the lion and so he was this day when he was to confront his enormous foe. Of course it was one of the conditions of a duel that the Israelite champion should go forth, alone, and besides that, there was no one in all the camp who was likely to wish to accompany him upon such an errand. So, now that he was all alone, the case was the more truly parallel! As for that Philistine, he felt that in him he had an antagonist of the old sort. It was brute force before. It was brute force now.

It might take the shape of a lion or a bear or a Philistine, but David considered that it was only so much flesh and bone and muscle—so much brag or roar, tooth or spear. He considered the Philistine to be only a wild animal of another shape because he was not in Covenant with God, and dared to put himself in opposition to the Most High! My Brothers and Sisters, a man who has God for a friend is higher than an angel, but a man who is God's enemy is no better than a beast! Reckon him so and your fears of him will vanish! Goliath was mighty, but so was the lion. He was cunning, but so was the bear. The case was only a repetition of the former combat.

And as God was not with the lion, nor with the bear, so David felt that God was not with Goliath and could not be, for he was the enemy of God's Israel. And as God had been with him when fighting the wild beasts, so he felt that God was with him now. It looked to him as if he had already twice gone through a rehearsal of all this when he was in the wilderness, alone, and therefore he could the more easily go through it now. Perhaps there flashed in his mind the case of Samson, who learned to slay the Philistines by rending a lion when he was alone in the vineyard. So David felt, "I have killed my lion like Samson and now, like Samson, I go to fight this Philistine, or a thousand like he, if need be, in the name of the Lord of Hosts."

The whole argument is this—in the one case, by such tactics we have been successful, trusting in God—and, therefore, in a similar case we have only to do the same and we shall realize the same victory! Brothers and Sisters, here is a fault with most of us, that when we look back upon past deliverances we do not draw this parallel, but on the contrary, the temptation haunts us to think that our present trial is clearly a new case! For instance, David might have said, "When I slew that lion I was younger than I am now and I had more courage and vivacity, but those shrewd brushes have strained me somewhat and I had better be more prudent."

Just as you and I say, sometimes, "Ah, what I did was done when I was a young man, I cannot do the same *now*. That trouble which I bore so patiently, by God's Grace, was in other times. But this affliction has come upon me when I am less able to endure it, for I have not the elasticity of spirit which once I had, nor the vigor I formerly possessed." When we want to escape from some arduous work, we do it by trying to show that we are not under the same obligations as in former days. We know in our conscience that if we did great things when we were young we ought to do greater things

now that we are older, wiser, more experienced and more trained in war—but we try to argue our conscience into silence.

If the Lord helped us to bear with patience, or to labor with zeal after all the experience we have had, that patience and zeal should now be easier to us than before. Alas, we do not argue so, but to our shame we excuse ourselves and live ingloriously. I know a man who, today, says, “Yes. What we did in years gone by, we did in our heroic age, but we are not so enthusiastic now.” And why not? We are so apt to magnify our former selves and think of our early deeds as of something to be wondered at but not to be attempted now! We are *fools* for they were little enough in all conscience and ought to be outdone!

Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, this resting on our oars will not do! We are drifting down with the tide. David did not say, “I slew a lion and a bear so I have had my turn at such bouts. Let somebody else go and fight that Philistine!” Yet we have heard people say, “When I was a young man I taught in the Sunday school. I used to go out preaching in the villages and so on.” Oh, Brother, and why not do it *now*? I think you ought to be doing *more* instead of less! As God gives you more knowledge, more experience and more Grace, surely your labors for Him ought to be more abundant than they used to be, but, alas, you do not look on it as a parallel case, and so make excuses for yourself.

Too often in our spiritual work we fix our mind upon the *differences* rather than upon the similarities. For instance, David might have said, “I would not mind another lion. I can manage lions. I would not be afraid of half-a-dozen more bears, I am used to bears. But this Philistine is a new sort of monster.” No, David saw it was the same thing, after all, a little different in shape but the same brute force—and so he went at it with courage. But we say, “Alas, there is a great difference! Our present trials have an unusual bitterness in them.” “I,” cries the widow, “I lost my husband and God helped and my son has been a stay to me. But now *he*, too, is gone, and I have no other son, and no one to fall back upon.”

She points out the difference, though the trouble is virtually the same! Would it not be far better if she pleaded the same promise and believed in the Lord as she did before? One man will say, “Ah, yes, I did, on such an occasion, run all risks for God. But, you see, there is a difference here.” I know there is, my dear Brother, there is a little difference and if you fix your eyes on *that*, you will drill yourself into unbelief! But difference or no difference, where duty calls or if you should be called to bear such an affliction as never befell mortal man, before, yet remember God’s arm is not shortened that He cannot deliver His servants! You have but to commit yourself to Him and out of the sevenfold adversity you shall come forth a sevenfold conqueror!

We are very apt, too, to look back upon the past and say, “I know that there are some grand things the Lord did for me and my venture for His sake turned out well, but I do not know what I should have done if a happy circumstance had not occurred to help me just in the nick of time.” We dare to attribute our deliverance to some very “happy accident”! It is very base of us to do so, for it was *the Lord* who helped us from first to last—the happy occurrence was a mere second cause! And cannot God give us another “happy accident,” if necessary, in this present trouble? “Alas,” our unbelief says, “there was a circumstance in that case which really did alter it, and I cannot expect anything like that to occur now.” Oh, how wrong this is of us! How we lose the force of that blessed reasoning from parallels which might have supplied us with courage! God grant we may break loose from this net!

Possibly our coward heart suggests “Perhaps, after all, this deed of courage may not be quite my calling and I had better not attempt it.” David might have said, “I am a shepherd and I can fight with lions, but I was never trained to war, and therefore I had better let this Philistine alone.” He might, also, have discovered that he was better adapted for protecting sheep than for becoming the champion of a nation. We must guard against the use of this plausible pretext, for pretext it is. Brethren, if we have achieved success by the power of God, let us not dote upon some supposed adaptation, but stand prepared to be used of the Lord in any other way which He may choose!

Adaptation is unknown till the event proves it—and our Lord is a far better judge of that than we are! If you see before you a work by means of which you can glorify God and bless the Church, do not hesitate, but enter upon it in reliance upon your God! Do not stand stuttering and stammering and talking about qualifications and so on, but what your hand finds to do, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus who has bought you with His blood! Prove your qualifications by bringing Goliath’s head back with you and no further questions will be asked by anyone—or by yourself!

So, too, sometimes we frame an excuse out of the opinions of others. We are apt to feel that we really must consider what other people say. Our good brother Eliab may be a little crusty in temper, but still, he *is* a man of a good deal of prudence and experience. And he tells us to be quiet and let these things alone and, perhaps, we had better do so. And there is Saul. Well, he *is* a man of great acquaintance with such matters! He judges that we had better decline the task and, therefore, upon the whole we had better exhibit that prudence which is the better part of valor and not rush upon certain danger and probable destruction.

This seeking advice and following cowardly counsel is all too common! We know that some strenuous effort is needed and it is in our power, but we desire ease and, therefore, we employ other men to weave excuses for us. It would be more honest to say outright that we do not want to do any more. Were we more full of love to Jesus, this unworthy device would be scorned by us and in sacred manliness of mind we would scorn the counsel which tends to cowardice. Others cannot bear our responsibility—we must, each one, give an account of himself to God—why, then, yield to the judgment of men?

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, fling this folly to the winds! Obey the dictates of the Holy Spirit and close your ears to the advice of unbelief! Men or women consecrated to God, if the Lord impels you to do anything for Him, do not ask *me*, do not ask my fellow Church officers, but go and do it! If God has helped you in the past, draw a parallel and argue from it that He will help you in the present. Go, and the Lord go with you! Do not fall prey to that wicked unbelief which would rob you of your strength!

III. The last thing is RESULTS. The results were, first, that David felt he would, as he did before, *rely upon God alone*. Come to the same resolution, Brothers and Sisters! God, alone is the source of power! He alone can render real aid! Let us then rest in Him, even if no other help appears. Is not the Lord, alone, enough? That arm which you cannot see will never be palsied. Its sinews will never crack, but all the arms of mortals upon which you so much love to lean must, one day, turn to dust in the tomb. And while they live, they are but weakness itself. Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength. David had found wisdom's self when he said, "My soul waits only upon God, for my expectation is from Him."

David resolved, again, *to run all risks once more*, as he had done before. As he had ventured himself against the lion, so would he put his life in His hands and engage the Philistine. Come wounds and maiming! Come piercing spear or cutting sword! Come death, itself! Amid the taunts and exultations of his giant foe, he would still dare everything for Israel's sake and for God's sake! Soldiers of the Cross, if you feel that you can do this, be not slow to put it into practice! Throw yourselves wholly into the Lord's service! Consecrate yourselves and your substance to the grand end of glorifying Christ, fighting against error and plucking souls from destruction!

David's next step was *to put himself into the same condition as on former occasions*, by divesting himself of everything that hampered him. He had fought the lion with nature's weapons and so would he meet the Philistine. Off went that glittering royal helmet which, no doubt, made his head ache with its weight! Off went the cumbersome armor in which he found it very hard to move! In such a metallic prison he did not feel like David a bit and, therefore, he put all aside and wore only his shepherd's frock! As for that magnificent sword which he had just strapped by his side, he felt that it would be more ornament than use—and so he laid it aside with the rest of the trappings. He put on his pouch and took nothing with him but his sling and stones.

This was the old style and he did well to keep to it, for the Lord saves not with sword and spear! We are all too apt to get into a fine harness and tie ourselves up with rules and methods. The art of getting rid of all baggage is a noble one, but few have learned it. Look at our Churches! Look at the Church at large—is there not enough red tape about to strangle a nation? Have we not committees enough to sink a ship with their weight? As for patrons, presidents, vice-presidents and secretaries, had not Christianity been Divine it could not have lived under the load of these personages who sit on her bosom! The roundabouts are worrying straightforward action out of the world. We are organized into strait waistcoats! The vessel of the Church has such an awful lot of top-hammer that I wonder how she can be navigated at all! And if a tempest were to come on she would have to cut herself free from nearly all of it.

When shall we get at the work? If there should ever come a day when Brothers will go forth preaching the Gospel, simply resting in faith upon the Lord alone, I, for one, expect to see grand results! But at present, Saul's armor is everywhere! When we get rid of formality in preaching, we shall see great results! But the Churches are locked up in irons

which they call armor. Why, dear me, if we are to have a special service, one Brother must have it conducted in the Moody method and another can only have Sankey hymns! Who, then, are we that we must follow others? Do not talk to us about innovations and all that—away with your rubbish!

Let us serve God with all our hearts and preach Jesus Christ to sinners with our whole souls—the *mode* is of no consequence! To preach down priestcraft and error, and do it in the simplest possible manner—by preaching up Christ—is the way of wisdom! We must preach, not after the manner of doctors of divinity, but after the manner of those unlearned and ignorant men in the olden time who had been with Jesus and learned of Him! Brothers, some of you have too much armor on! Take it off! Be simple, be natural, be artless, be plain-spoken, be trustful in the living God and you will succeed! Less of the artificer's brass and more of Heaven-anointed manhood is needed! More sanctified naturalness and less of studied artificialness! O Lord, send us this, for Christ's sake. Amen.

The ultimate result was that the young champion came back with Goliath's head in his hand! And equally sure triumphs await every one of you if you rely on the Lord and act in simple earnestness. If for Christ, my Sister, you will go forward in His work, resting upon Him, you shall see souls converted by your instrumentality. If, my Brother, you will but venture everything for Christ's glory and depend, alone, on Him, what men call fanaticism shall be considered by God to be only sacred consecration and He will send you the reward which He always gives to a full, thorough, simple, unselfish faith in Himself.

If the result of my preaching this sermon should be to stir up half a dozen workers to some venturesome zeal for God, I shall greatly rejoice. I remember when I commenced this work in London, God being with me, I said if He would only give me half a dozen good men and women, a work would be done, but that if I had half a dozen *thousand* sleepy people nothing would be accomplished. At this time I am always afraid of our falling into a lethargic condition. This Church numbers nearly 5,000 members, but if you are only 5,000 cowards, the battle will bring no glory to God! If we have one David among us, that one hero will do wonders! But think what an army would be if all the soldiers were Davids—it would be an ill case with the Philistines, then!

Oh that we were all Davids! That the weakest among us were as David and David, himself, were better than he is, and became like an angel of the Lord! God's Holy Spirit is equal to the doing of this and why should He not do it? Let us call to Him for help and that help will come! I must just say this word to some here present who lament that there is nothing in this sermon for them. Unconverted persons, you cannot draw any argument from your past experience, for you have none of a right kind. But you may draw comfort, and I pray you do, from another view of this story.

Jesus Christ, the true David, has plucked some of us like lambs from between the jaws of the devil. Many of us were carried captive by sin. Transgression had so encompassed us about that we were unable to escape. But our great Lord delivered us! Sinner, why can He not deliver *you*? If you cannot fight the lion of the pit, HE can! Do you ask me, What are you to do? Well, call for His help as loudly as you can. If you are like a lamb, bleat to Him, and the bleating of the lamb will attract the shepherd's ear. Cry mightily unto the Lord for salvation and trust, alone, in the Lord Jesus! He will save you! If you were between the jaws of Hell, yet, if you believed in Him, He would surely pluck you out of destruction. God grant you may find it so, for Christ's sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Samuel 17:23-51.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—73, 674, 681.

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