

JOSEPH ATTACKED BY THE ARCHERS NO. 17

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 1, 1855,
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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

*“The archers have sorely grieved him, shot at him and hated him: But his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel).”
Genesis 49:23, 24.*

It must have been a fine sight to see the hoary-headed Jacob sitting up in his bed while he bestowed his parting benediction upon his twelve sons. He had been noble in many instances during his life—at the sleeping place of Bethel, the brook of Jabbok and the halting of Peniel. He had been a glorious old man, one before whom we might bow down with reverence and truly say, “There were giants in those days.” But his closing scene was the best. I think if he ever stood out more illustrious than at any other time, if his head were at any one season more than another, encircled with a halo of glory, it was when he came to die! Like the sun at setting, he seemed then to be the greater in brilliance, tinging the clouds of his weakness with the glory of Grace within. Like good wine which runs clear to the very bottom, unalloyed by dregs, so did Jacob, till His dying hour, continue to sing of love, of mercy and of goodness, past and future. Like the swan, which (as old writers say) sings not all its life until it comes to die, so the old Patriarch remained silent as a songster for many years. But when he stretched himself on his last couch of rest, he stayed himself up in his bed, turned his burning eyes from one to another and although with a hoarse and faltering voice, he sang a sonnet upon each of his offspring such as earthly poets, uninspired, cannot attempt to imitate! Looking upon his son Reuben, a tear was in his eye, for he recollected Reuben’s sin. He passed over Simeon and Levi, giving some slight rebuke. Upon the others he sung a verse of praise as his eyes saw into the future history of the tribes. By-and-by his voice failed him and the good old man, with long drawn breath, with eyes pregnant with celestial fire and heart big with Heaven, lifted his voice to God and said, “I have waited for Your salvation, O God.” He rested a moment on his pillow and then, again, sitting up, recommenced the strain, passing briefly by the names of each. But oh, when he came to Joseph, his youngest son but one—when he looked on him—I picture that old man as the tears ran down his cheeks. There stood Joseph, with all his mother Rachel in his eyes—that dearly loved wife of his—there he stood, the boy for whom that mother had prayed with all the eagerness of an eastern wife. For a long 20 years she had tarried a barren woman and kept no house but then she was a joyful mother and she called her son “increase.” Oh, how she loved the boy! And for that mother’s sake, though she had been buried for some years and hidden under the cold sod, old Jacob loved him, too. But more than that, he loved him for his troubles. He was parted from him to be sold into Egypt. His father recollected Joseph’s trials in the round house and the dungeon and remembered his royal dignity as prince of Egypt. And now with a full burst of harmony—as if the music of Heaven had united with his own, as when the widened river meets the sea and the tide coming up does amalgamate with the stream that comes down and swells into a broad expanse—so did the glory of Heaven meet the rapture of his earthly feelings! Giving vent to his soul, he sung, “Joseph is a fruitful bough even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, shot at him and hated him: But his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel): Even by the God of your father, who shall help you; and by the Almighty, who shall bless you with blessings of Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: The blessings of your father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brothers” (Gen. 49:22-26). What a splendid stanza with which to close! He has only one more blessing to give. But surely this was the richest which he conferred on Joseph.

Joseph is dead, but the Lord has His Josephs now. There are still some who understand by experience—and that is the best kind of understanding—the meaning of this passage, “The archers have sorely grieved him, shot at him and hated him: But his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob.”

There are four things for us to consider this morning—first of all, *the cruel attack*—“the archers have sorely grieved him, shot at him and hated him.” Secondly, *the shielded warrior*—“but his bow abode in strength.” Thirdly, *his secret strength*—“the arms of his hands were made strong by the mighty power of the God of Jacob.” And fourthly, *the glorious parallel* drawn between Joseph and Christ—“from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.”

I. First, then, we commence with THE CRUEL ATTACK. “The archers have sorely grieved him.” Joseph’s enemies were archers. The original has it, “masters of the arrows,” that is, men who were well skilled in the use of the arrow. Though all weapons are alike approved by the warrior in his thirst for blood, there seems something more cowardly in the attack of the archer than in that of the swordsman. The swordsman plants himself near you, foot to foot, and lets you defend yourself and deal your blows against him. But the archer stands at a distance, hides himself in ambush and, without your knowing it, the arrow comes whizzing through the air and perhaps penetrates your heart. Just so are the enemies of God’s people. They very seldom come foot to foot with us. They will not show their faces before us. They hate the light, they love darkness. They dare not come and openly accuse us to our face, for then we could reply. But they shoot the bow from a distance, so that we cannot answer them. Cowardly and dastardly as they are, they forge their arrowheads and aim them, winged with Hell bird’s feathers, at the hearts of God’s people. The archers sorely grieved poor Joseph.

Let us consider who are the archers who so cruelly shot at him. First, there were the archers of *envy*. Secondly, the archers of *temptation*. And thirdly, the archers of *slander*.

1. First, *Joseph had to endure the archers of ENVY*. When He was a boy, his father loved him. The youth was fair and beautiful. In person, he was to be admired. Moreover, he had a mind that was gigantic and an intellect that was lofty. But best of all in him dwelt the Spirit of the living God! He was one who talked with God. A youth of piety and prayerfulness, beloved of God, even more than he was of his earthly father. Oh, how his father loved him! In his fond affection, he made him a princely coat of many colors and treated him better than the others—a natural but foolish way of showing his fondness. Therefore, his brothers hated him. Full often did they jeer at the youthful Joseph when retired to his prayers. When he was with them at a distance from his father’s house, he was their drudge, their slave. The taunt, the jeer, did often wound his heart and the young child endured much secret sorrow. On an ill day, as it happened, he was with them at a distance from home and they thought to slay him. But upon the entreaty of Reuben, they put him into a pit, until, as Providence would have it, the Ishmaelites did pass that way. They then sold him for the price of a slave, stripped him of his coat and sent him away naked. They knew not and they cared not where, so long as he might be out of their way and no longer provoke their envy and their anger. Oh, the agonies he felt—parted from his father, losing his brothers. Without a friend he was dragged away by cruel man-sellers, chained upon a camel, it may be, with fetters upon his hands. Those who have borne the shackles and fetters, those who have felt that they were not free men, that they had not liberty, might tell how sorely the archers grieved him when they shot at him the arrows of their envy. He became a slave, sold from his country, dragged from all he loved. Farewell to home and all its pleasures—farewell to a father’s smiles and tender cares!

He must now be a slave and toil where the slaves’ taskmaster takes him. He must be exposed in the market, he must be stripped in the streets. He must be beaten, he must be scourged, he must be reduced from man to an animal, from the free man to the slave. Truly the archers sorely shot at him! And, my Brothers and Sisters, do you hope, if you are the Lord’s Josephs, that you shall escape envy? I tell you, no—that green-eyed monster, envy, lives in London as well as elsewhere and he creeps into God’s Church. Oh, it is hardest of all to be envied by one’s brothers and sisters. If the devil hates us, we can bear it. If the foe’s of God’s Truth speak ill of us, we buckle up our harness and say, “Away, away to the conflict.” But when the friends within the house slander us. When Brothers and Sisters who should uphold us turn into our foes—and when they try to tread down their younger Brothers and Sisters—then, Sirs, there is some meaning in the passage, “The archers have sorely grieved him, shot at him and hated him.” But blessed be God’s name, it is sweet to be informed that, “His bow abode in strength.” None of you can be the people of God without provoking envy. And the better you

are, the more you will be hated! The ripest fruit is most pecked by the birds and the blossoms that have been longest on the tree are the most easily blown down by the wind. But fear not. You have nothing to do with what man shall say of you. If God loves you, man will hate you. If God honors you, man will dishonor you. But remember, should you wear chains for Christ's sake, you will wear the chains of gold in Heaven! Should you have rings of burning iron round your waists, you will have your brow rimmed with gold in Glory—for blessed are you when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for Christ's name sake. For so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you. The first archers were the archers of envy.

2. But a worse trial than this was to overtake him. *The archers of TEMPTATION* shot at him. Here I know not how to express myself. I would that someone more qualified to speak were here, that he might tell you the tale of Joseph's trial and Joseph's triumph. Sold to a master who soon discovered his value, Joseph was made the bailiff of the house and the manager of the household. His wanton mistress fixed her adulterous love on him and he, being continually in her presence, was perpetually, day by day, solicited by her to evil deeds. Constantly did he refuse still enduring a martyrdom at the slow fire of her enticements. On one eventful day she grasped him, seeking to compel him to crime. But he, like a true hero, as he was, said to her, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Like a wise warrior, he knew that in such a case fleeing was the better part of valor. He heard a voice in his ears, "Fly, Joseph, fly! There remains no way of victory but flight." And out he fled, leaving his garment with his adulterous mistress. Oh, I say in all the annals of heroism there is not one that shall surpass this! You know it is *opportunity* that makes a man a criminal and he had abundant opportunity. But *importunity* will drive most men astray. To be haunted day after day by solicitations of the softest kind—to be tempted hour by hour—oh, it needs a strength super angelic, a might more than human, a strength which only God can grant for a young man thus to cleanse his way and take heed thereto according to God's Word! He might have reasoned within himself, "Should I submit and yield, there lies before me a life of ease and pleasure. I shall be exalted, I shall be rich. She shall prevail over her husband to cover me with honors. But should I still adhere to my integrity, I shall be cast into prison, I shall be thrown into the dungeon. There awaits me nothing but shame and disgrace." Oh, there was a power indeed within that heart of his! There was an inconceivable might which made him turn away with unutterable disgust, with fear and trembling, while he said, "How can I? How can I—God's Joseph—how can I—other men might, but how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Truly the archers sorely grieved him and shot at him. But his bow abode in strength.

3. Then another host of archers assailed Him—*these were the archers of MALICIOUS SLANDER*. Seeing that he would not yield to temptation, his mistress falsely accused him to her husband and his lord, believing the voice of his wife, cast him into prison. It was a marvelous Providence that he did not put him to death, for Potiphar, his master, was the chief of the executioners! He had only to call in a soldier who would have cut him in pieces on the spot. But he cast him into prison. There was poor Joseph. His character ruined in the eyes of man and very likely looked upon with scorn even in the prison. Base criminals went away from him as if they thought him viler than themselves, as if they were angels in comparison with him! Oh, it is no easy thing to feel your character gone, to think that you are slandered, that things are said of you that are untrue. Many a man's heart has been broken by this, when nothing else could make him yield. The archers sorely grieved him when he was so maligned—so slandered. O child of God, do you expect to escape these archers? Will you never be slandered? Shall you never be slandered? It is the lot of God's servants, in proportion to their zeal, to be evilly spoken of!

Remember the noble Whitefield, how he stood and was the butt of all the jeers and scoffs of half an age, while his only answer was a blameless life?—

*"And he who forged and he who threw the dart,
Had each a brother's interest in his heart."*

They reviled him and imputed to him crimes that Sodom never knew. So shall it be always with those who preach God's Truth—and all the followers of Christ—they must all expect it. But blessed be God, they have not said worse things of us than they said of our Master. What have they laid to our charge? They may have said, "He is a drunk and a winebibber." But they have not said "He has a devil." They have accused us of being mad—so was it said of Paul. Oh, holy infatuation, heavenly furor, would that we could bite others until they had the same madness! We think if to go to Heaven is mad we will not choose to be wise. We see no wisdom in preferring Hell. We can see no great prudence in despising and

hating God's Truth. If to serve God is vile, we purpose to be still viler. Ah, Friends, some now present know this verse by heart, "The archers have sorely grieved him, shot at him and hated him." Expect it—do not think it a strange thing—all God's people must have it. There are no royal roads to Heaven—they are paths of trial and trouble—the archers will shoot at you as long as you are on this side the flood!

II. We have seen these archers shoot their flights of arrows. We will now go up the hill a little, behind a rock, to look at the SHIELDED WARRIOR and see how his courage is while the archers have sorely grieved him. What is he doing? "His bow abides in strength." Let us picture God's favorite. The archers are down below. There is a parapet of rock before him. Now and then he looks over it to see what the archers are about, but generally he keeps behind. In heavenly security he is set upon a rock, careless of all below. Let us follow the track of the wild goat. And behold the warrior in his fastness.

First, we notice that he has a bow, himself, for we read that, "*his bow* abode in strength." He could have retaliated if he pleased, but he was very quiet and would not combat with them. Had he pleased, he might have drawn his bow with all his strength and sent his weapon to their hearts with far greater precision than they had ever done to him. But mark the warrior's quietness! There he rests, stretching his mighty limbs—his bow abode in strength. He seemed to say, "Rage on, yes, let your arrows spend themselves, empty your quivers on me, let your bowstrings be worn out and let the wood be broken with its constant bending—here am I, stretching myself in safe repose. "My bow abides in strength. I have other work to do besides shooting at you. My arrows are against yon foes of God, the enemies of the Most High. I cannot waste an arrow on such pitiful sparrows as you are. You are birds beneath my noble shot. I would not waste an arrow on you." Thus he remains behind the rock and despises them all. His bow abides in strength. Mark well *his quietness*. His bow "abides." It is not rattling, it is not always moving, but it abides, it is quite still. He takes no notice of the attack. The archers sorely grieved Joseph but his bow was not turned against them—it abode in strength. He turned not his bow on them. He rested while they raged. Does the moon stay herself to lecture every dog that barks at her? Does the lion turn aside to rend each cur that barks at him? Do the stars cease to shine because the nightingales reprove them for their dimness? Does the sun stop in its course because of the officious cloud which veils it? Or does the river stay because the willow dips its leaves into its waters? Ah, no! God's universe moves on and if men will oppose it, it heeds them not. It is as God has made it. It is working together for good and it shall not be stayed by the censure, nor moved on by the praise of man. Let your bows, my Brothers and Sisters, abide. Do not be in a hurry to set yourselves right. God will take care of you. Leave yourselves alone. Only be very valiant for the Lord God of Israel—be steadfast in the Truth of Jesus and your bow shall abide.

But we must not forget the next word. "His bow abode IN STRENGTH." Though his bow was quiet, it was not because it was broken. Joseph's bow was like that of William the Conqueror—no man could bend it but Joseph, himself. It abode "in strength." I see the warrior bending his bow—how with his mighty arms he pulls it down and draws the string to make it ready. His bow abode in strength. It did not snap, it did not start aside. His chastity was his bow and he did not lose that—his faith was his bow and that did not yield, it did not break. His courage was his bow and that did not fail him. His character, his honesty was his bow. Nor did he cast it away. Some men are so very particular about reputation. They think, "surely, surely, surely they shall lose their characters." Well, well, if we do not lose them through our own fault, we never need care about anybody else! You know there is not a man that stands at all prominent but what any fool in the world can set afloat some bad tale against him. It is a great deal easier to set a story afloat than to stop it. If you want truth to go round the world you must hire an express train to pull it. But if you want a lie to go round the world, it will fly. It is as light as a feather and a breath will carry it! It is well said in the old proverb, "A lie will go round the world while truth is pulling its boots on." Nevertheless, it does not injure us. For if light as a feather it travels so fast, its effect is just about as tremendous as the effect of down when it is blown against the walls of a castle—it produces no damage whatever, on account of its lightness and littleness! Fear not, Christian! Let slander fly, let envy send forth its forked tongue, let it hiss at you—your bow shall abide in strength! Oh, shielded warrior, remain quiet, fear no ill. But, like the eagle in its lofty nest, look down upon the fowlers in the plain—turn your bold eyes upon them and say—"Shoot you may, but your shots will not reach half way to the pinnacle where I stand. Waste your powder upon me if you will. I am beyond your reach." Then clap your wings, mount to Heaven and there laugh them to scorn, for you have made your refuge God—and shall find a most secure abode!

III. The third thing in our text is the SECRET STRENGTH. “The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.” First, notice concerning his strength, that it was *real* strength. It says, “the arms of his hands,” not his hands only. You know some people can do a great deal with their hands, but then it is often fictitious power—there is no might in the arm—there are no muscles. But of Joseph it is said, “the *arms* of his hands were made strong.” It was real potency, true muscle, real sinew, real nerve. It was not simply slight of hand—the power of moving his fingers very swiftly—but the *arms* of his hands were made strong. Now, that strength which God gives to His Josephs, is real strength. It is not a boasted valor, a fiction, a thing of which men talk, an airy dream, an insubstantial unreality, but it is real strength. I would not like to have a combat with one of God’s Josephs. I should think their blows very heavy. I fear a Christian’s strokes more than any other man’s, for he has bone and sinew and smites hard. Let the foes of the Church expect a hard struggle if they attack an heir of life. Mightier than giants are men of the race of Heaven! Should they once arouse themselves to battle, they could laugh at the spear and the coat of mail. But they are a patient generation, enduring ills without resenting them, suffering scorn without reviling the scoffer. Their triumph is to come when their enemies shall receive the vengeance due. Then shall it be seen by an assembled world that the “little flock” were men of high estate and the “offscouring of all things” were verily men of real strength and dignity!

Even though the world perceive it not, the favored Joseph has real strength, not in his hands only, but in his arms—real might, real power. O you foes of God, you think God’s people are despicable and powerless, but know that they have true strength from the Omnipotence of their Father, a might substantial and Divine! Your own shall melt away and droop and die, like the snow upon the low mountain’s top, when the sun shines upon it, it melts into water. But our vigor shall abide like the snow on the summit of the Alps, undiminished for ages. It is real strength!

Then observe that the strength of God’s Joseph is *Divine strength*. His arms were made strong by God. Why does one of God’s ministers preach the Gospel powerfully? Because God gives him assistance. Why does Joseph stand against temptation? Because God gives him aid. The strength of a Christian is Divine strength! My Brothers and Sisters, I am more and more persuaded every day that the sinner has no power in himself except that which is given him from above. I know that if I were to stand with my foot upon the golden threshold of Heaven’s portal, if I could put this thumb upon the latch—I could not open that door, after having gone so far towards Heaven—unless I still had supernatural power communicated to me in that moment!

If I had a stone to lift, to work my own salvation—without God’s help to do that, I must be lost—even though it were so little. There is nothing that we can do without the power of God. All true strength is Divine. As the light comes from the sun, as the shower from Heaven, so does spiritual strength come from the Father of lights, with whom there is neither variableness nor shadow of a turning. Again—I would have you notice in the text in what a *blessedly familiar way* God gives this strength to Joseph. It says, “the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.” Thus it represents God as putting His hands on Joseph’s hands—placing His arms on Joseph’s arms. In old times, when every boy had to be trained up to archery, if his father were worth so many pounds a year, you might see the father putting his hands on his boy’s hands and pulling the bow for him, saying, “there, my son, in this manner draw the bow.” So the text represents God as putting His hand on the hand of Joseph and laying His broad arm along the arm of His chosen child that he might be made strong. Like as a father teaches his children, so the Lord teaches them that fear Him. He puts His arms upon them. As Elijah laid with his mouth upon the child’s mouth, with his hand upon the child’s hand, with his foot upon the child’s foot, so does God put His mouth to His children’s mouth, His hand on His minister’s hand, His foot to His people’s foot—and so He makes us strong. Marvelous condescension! You stars of glory, have you ever witnessed such stoops of love? God Almighty, Eternal, Omnipotent, stoops from His Throne and lays His hand upon the child’s hand, stretching His arm upon the arm of Joseph, that he may be made strong!

One more thought and I have done. This strength was *Covenant strength*, for it is said, “The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty *God of Jacob*.” Now, wherever you read of the God of Jacob in the Bible, you may know that that respects God’s Covenant with Jacob. Ah, I love to talk about God’s Everlasting Covenant. Some of the Arminians cannot bear it, but I love a Covenant salvation—a Covenant not made with my fathers, not between me and God—but between Christ and God! Christ made the Covenant to pay a price and God made the Covenant that He should have the people. Christ has paid the price and ratified the Covenant and I am quite sure that God will fulfill His part of it, by giving every elect vessel of mercy into the hands of Jesus. But, Beloved, all the power, all the Grace, all the

blessings, all the mercies, all the comforts, all the things we have, we have through the Covenant! If there were no Covenant—if we could tear the Everlasting Charter up—if the king of Hell could cut it with his knife, as the king of Israel did the roll of Baruch, then we should fail, indeed—for we have no strength except that which is promised in the Covenant. Covenant mercies, Covenant Grace, Covenant promises, Covenant blessings, Covenant help, Covenant everything—the Christian must receive if he would enter into Heaven!

Now, Christian, the archers have sorely grieved *you*, shot at *you* and wounded *you*. But your bow abides in strength and the arms of your hands are made strong. And do you know, O Believer, that you are like your Master in this?

IV. That is our fourth point—A GLORIOUS PARALLEL. “From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.” Jesus Christ was treated just the same. The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, passed through similar trials. He was shot at by the archers. He was grieved and wounded, but His bow abode in strength. His arms were made strong by the God of Jacob and now every blessing rests “upon the crown of the head of Him who was separate from His brethren.” I shall not detain you long, but I have a few things to tell you—first about Christ as the Shepherd and then about Christ the Stone. Christ came into the world as a Shepherd. As soon as He made His appearance, the Scribes and Pharisees said, “Ah, we have been the shepherds until this hour—now we shall be driven from our honors, we shall lose all our dignity and our authority.” Consequently they always shot at Him. As for the people, they were a fickle herd. I believe that many of them respected and admired Christ, though, doubtless, the vast majority hated Him. But wherever He went, He was a popular Preacher, the multitude always thronged Him and crowded round Him, crying, “Hosanna.” I think, if you had walked up to the top of that hill of Calvary and asked one of those men who cried out, “Crucify Him, crucify Him,” “What do you say that for? Is He a bad Man?” “No,” he would have said, “He went about doing good.” “Then why do you say, crucify Him?” “Because Rabbi Simeon gave me a shekel to help the clamor.” So the multitude were much won by the money and influence of the priests. But they were glad to hear Christ after all. It was the shepherds that hated Him, because He took away their traffic, because He turned the buyers and sellers out of the temple, diminished their dignity and ignored their pretensions. Therefore, they could not endure Him. But the Shepherd of Israel mounted higher and higher. He gathered His sheep, carried the lambs in His bosom. And He now stands acknowledged as the great Shepherd of the sheep who shall gather them into one flock and lead them to Heaven. Rowland Hill tells a curious tale in his “Village Dialogues,” about a certain Mr. Tiplash, a very fine intellectual preacher, who, in one of his flights of oratory, said, “O Virtue, you are so fair and lovely, if you were to come down upon earth, all men would love you.” He went on with a few more pretty, beautiful things. Mr. Blunt, an honest preacher, who was in the neighborhood, was asked to preach in the afternoon and he supplemented the worthy gentleman’s remarks, by saying, “O Virtue, You *did* come on earth, in all Your purity and loveliness, but, instead of being beloved and admired, the archers sorely shot at You and grieved You. They took You, Virtue, and hung Your quivering limbs upon a Cross. When You did hang there dying they hissed at You, they mocked You, they scorned You. When You did ask for water they gave You vinegar to drink, mingled with gall. Yes, when You died You had a tomb from charity and that tomb, sealed by enmity and hatred.” The Shepherd of Israel was despised. Incarnate Virtue was hated and abhorred. Therefore, fear not Christians, take courage, for if Your Master passed through it, surely you must!

To conclude—the text calls Christ the Stone of Israel. I have heard a story—I cannot tell whether it is true or not—out of some of the Jewish rabbis. It is a tale concerning the text, “The stone which the builders refused, the same is become the headstone of the corner.” It is said that when Solomon’s Temple was being built, all the stones were brought from the quarry ready cut and fashioned. And there were marked on all the blocks the places where they were to be put. Among the stones was a very curious one. It seemed of no describable shape, it appeared unfit for any portion of the building. They tried it at this wall, but it would not fit. They tried it in another, but it could not be accommodated. So, vexed and angry, they threw it away. The Temple was so many years building that this stone became covered with moss and grass grew around it. Everybody passing by laughed at the stone. They said Solomon was wise and doubtless all the other stones were right. But as for that block, they might as well send it back to the quarry, for they were quite sure it was meant for nothing. Year after year rolled on and the poor stone was still despised, the builders constantly refused it. The eventful day came when the temple was to be finished and opened and the multitude was assembled to see the grand sight. The builders said, “where is the top stone? Where is the pinnacle?” They little thought where the crowning marble was, until someone said, “Perhaps that stone which the builders refused is meant to be the top stone.” They then took it

and hoisted it to the top of the Temple. And as it reached the summit, they found it well adapted to the place. Loud halleluiah made the sky ring as the stone which the builders refused thus became the headstone of the corner!

So is it with Christ Jesus. The builders cast Him away. He was a plebeian. He was of poor extraction. He was a Man acquainted with sinners who walked in poverty and meanness—hence the worldly-wise despised Him. But when God shall gather together, in one, all things that are in Heaven and that are in earth, then Christ shall be the glorious consummation of all things—

*“Christ reigns in Heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”*

He shall be exalted. He shall be honored. His name shall endure as long as the sun and all nations shall be blessed in Him. Yes, all generations shall call Him blessed!

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