

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

MEETING-HOUSE OF THE FIRST CHURCH,
DORCHESTER,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 1870,

BEING THE TWO HUNDRED AND FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FIRST ASSEMBLING OF THE CHURCH FOR DIVINE SERVICE
AFTER ITS LANDING IN AMERICA.

By NATHANIEL HALL,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

BOSTON:
EBENEZER CLAPP, NO. 7 SCHOOL STREET.
PRINTED BY DAVID CLAPP & SON.
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BOSTON, June 20, 1870.

Rev. NATHANIEL HALL.

Dear Sir:—

Having listened with great pleasure to your very interesting discourse of yesterday morning, upon the history of the First Church and Parish of Dorchester, may we ask of you the favor of a copy for publication?

DANIEL DENNY,
and many other Parishioners.

DORCHESTER, June, 1870.

MY DEAR FRIENDS :—

In sending you my Sermon, as you request, for publication—which in respect to your judgment I am happy to do—it may be proper for me to say, that I have retained some passages, which, to avoid a wearisome length, were omitted in the preaching; and also that, for the sake of a greater completeness, some things are added to the original manuscript.

Yours, with much regard,

NATHANIEL HALL.

To DANIEL DENNY and others.

SERMON.

1 Kings, viii. 57:

“GOD BE WITH US AS HE WAS WITH OUR FATHERS.”

I TAKE these words for a text this morning. not alone for their sentiment, but also as being borne upon the seal of the municipality of which our late town is now a part: “*Sicut Patribus Sit Deus Nobis.*” We reach, to-day, the two hundred and fortieth anniversary of the first assembling for divine service on these American shores of the founders of our church. As being the first anniversary of it occurring under this seal and the civic authority it represents, it seems fitting and well to make it an occasion for presenting some of the leading facts in the church’s history. Familiar enough to most of you, those who are rising to take our places may be profited by their rehearsal. Nor can any of us, I think, fail of being so; if it shall do no more than make dearer to us this church of our inheritance and our transmission. and truer our fidelity to it. For, it is no mean inheritance that has thus descended

to us ; it is no ordinary history whose records we unroll ; it is no ignoble root that bears us.

Looking back through two hundred and two score years, we see, met together in the outer air, evidently for some common and absorbing purpose, a company of one hundred and forty persons, men and women, and here and there children among them—gleams of human sunshine, relieving the solemn staidness that elsewhere rules. The spot is near this we are now occupying, though it cannot be precisely designated. It is a Sabbath morning, answering in date to this ; and they are gathered for worship. It is the beginning of the second week since their landing from the old-world shores. All is yet strange to them—save, may be, the sky ; and that, in its blue and cloudless splendor, seems another than they have known. Gloriously it sweeps above them, its golden light sifting down through the young Summer's swaying foliage upon their reverently bared and bending heads. And hark ! how grandly through those forest arches echoes the unwonted melody, following prayer and exhortation, of their uplifted psalm. Religious services are their delight. In no feeling of superstition, no mere constraint of obligation, do they resort to them, but because their hearts crave them, as refreshment and food. They did not wait till God should bring them to the stable land ; but all across the Atlantic's

breadth, amidst tossing billows and raging winds, they had stated services, and their floating craft became a Bethel. "We came by the good hand of the Lord through the deep comfortably," wrote Roger Clap, "having preaching or expounding of the word of God every day for ten weeks together, by our ministers."

They came a church ; formally organized, and its officers installed, at Plymouth, England, on the eve of their embarkation ; the only instance of the kind, it is said, in the planting of North America. So that, strictly, the earliest among the structures in the occupancy of our church was not that which has been named as such,—that of logs and thatch, rising in the wilderness, as it were its own spontaneous product—but rather, the good craft "Mary and John," that "great ship," as Roger Clap calls it, of four hundred tons, wherein our fathers came hither. *That* was the cradle of our church's infancy ; rocked by mighty billows, fanned by stormy gales, but overwatched by more than a maternal guardianship, until it laid its precious charge within the rude lap of these Western shores.

What contrasts to find with all that had been left!—the coiled houses, the cultured fields, the securities and comforts of a settled order, the countless material and social advantages attaching to the highest British civilization ; the grand and solemn churches,

dear to sentiment and heart by many a hallowed association—tablet and monument and cenotaph and tomb uttering within them silent eulogy of a buried Past, the garnered dust of saintly ancestors sleeping beneath and around them.

It was my privilege, three years ago this summer, to journey through a portion of their beautiful Dorsetshire, and to spend a Sunday in its borough-town, Dorchester, whence most of the founders of our church and town emigrated, and from which—for this and as being the home of Rev. John White, by whose efforts mainly the church was gathered preparatory to its embarkation—our town was named. It was a pilgrimage of duty and of love, which I went far out of my way, and gladly, to accomplish. That Sunday in old Dorchester was indeed a memorable one. There was a rare beauty in the day, and a charm from nature and the season was spread over everything; but above all and leading all was the charm and spell of an historic Past. Going abroad in the early morning into the yet silent and empty streets, and seeking first of all the churches, I was soon standing before one whose signatures of age left little need of the confirming word of a passer-by, that it was the “St. Peter’s” of my especial search. I gazed upon it—its hoary walls, its buttressed tower, its crumbling mouldings, its dilapidated images, the nameless wastings and decays which time had made

upon its massive substance—with a peculiar and inexpressible interest; not merely for what these in themselves suggested, but in the thought of its connection with my own dear church, three thousand miles away; in the thought that through those doorways and adown those foot-worn steps had passed some at least of those brave and godly men and women who constituted that transplanted vine. The doors were open, and I entered. The interior bore signs of a like ancientness, though less impressively as a whole, by reason of the modernizing freedoms which had here and there been taken—in no absence of a reverent taste, but simply to secure a reasonable comfort to its present occupants. Yet, impressively the Past was there; proclaiming itself in column and arch and roof, in statue and monument, in tableted wall and recumbent effigy, in pavement-floor inlaid with memorial slabs, their inscriptions trod near to illegibility by over-passing generations, and in many a detail more that met continually the eye. Under the porch-way, interred in 1648, are the remains of that Rev. John White, styled in his day the “Patriarch of Dorchester,” who—although he never came to the New England town bearing, and greatly for his sake, the name of that thus dignifying him—was, in an important sense, as I have said, the founder of the former, and the efficient agent in the trans-atlantic gathering of our church. “St. Peter’s”

was not, however, the church of which he was rector, but "Trinity," on the same street, partially rebuilt since his day. This also I visited, attending service in it—as likewise in St. Peter's—and in whose pleasant and quiet grave-yard close, with its green turf and ivy-covered walls, I passed—not lonesomely, though companioned by no visible presence—a musing half-hour. Let me say a word more, before passing on, of old Dorchester itself—a city in corporate capacity, with a population of about ten thousand. Its general aspect is pleasing and attractive; it has an air of thrift and comfort and refinement—as if the new life of the age had not avoided it in its flow, but had borne to it of its best; while the country close around—with its unbroken openness; its pastoral loveliness; its swelling downs of richest verdure, flecked by feeding flocks; its tokens and traces of times far prior to the Puritan, even of those of a Roman occupancy—commands a peculiar interest.

What contrasts, I was saying, these comers found with all they left! Amidst their local surroundings, the fact was more forcibly suggested and gained more adequate apprehension. For though, in many and important respects, these surroundings are other than they were, something can be judged from the present even of that distant past; and whatever else is changed, the natural pleasantness and charm are the same. They knew beforehand what those con-

trasts must be. They knew, at least, that they were coming to a wilderness. They knew that they were turning their backs, and forever, not only on many an outward advantage, but—far more to them—upon what sentiment and heart held dear;—the homes and haunts of childhood; scenes associated with the most sacred and tender of life's experiences; the graves of ancestor and cotemporary, above which they had kneeled in reverence or bent in tears; the institutions, which, however disposed to deprecate some of their practical bearings, they regarded, and justly, with patriotic pride. But they had counted the cost and were prepared to meet it. Had it not been so, had they been disappointed in what they found here, had the contrast shocked them by its unanticipated greatness, they would have returned—as they could have done. But they were not children; they were not fortune-seekers; they were not of those who think the end of existence is to escape as far as possible its roughnesses and ills, to eliminate its hardships and infelicities, and to have a good time of it generally; or, otherwise, to sweat one's life into an estate, for the benefit of unthankful heirs. They had an end in view which dwarfed ordinary ones into insignificance. They had deliberately fronted its conditions, and had those conditions been tenfold harder than they were, there had been no drawing back from it.

What *was* their end? What sent them here? Why did they leave their pleasant homes, their cultured fields, their noble churches, their hallowed graves, their famed institutions of civility, learning, philanthropy, piety? So far as appears from original writings which have come down from them, it was to secure for themselves and theirs an unmolested freedom from the exactions of the established church, with regard to certain ceremonies pertaining to its worship, against which conscience uttered its protest; it was to secure a greater freedom from ecclesiastical exactions and dictations generally; and, with the more intelligent among them, if not in a measure with all—as the grand, all-comprehensive purpose—it was to found a State wherein God should be the recognized and supreme Sovereign, and His Word—the Bible—its one authoritative Statute-Book; to found, in other words, a Church which should not only dominate the State, but *be* the State—a Theocracy—a new Israel, whose God should be the Lord. They believed, and it was with them the profoundest of convictions, that they were putting thus into practical experiment the loftiest of human aims; and they were willing to subject themselves for the sake of it to whatever sacrifices it involved. Doubtless there were motives working together with the highest—less spiritual, less worthy. Strange had there not been. Impossible there should not have been.

Enough to know the shaping and controlling one—enough, at least, for our honoring regard. Their end in coming is stated, specifically enough for all but the exact historian, in the Preamble of the confederacy of the several colonies, held at Cambridge in 1643, and which runs thus :—“ Whereas, we all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and aim, namely, to advance the Kingdome of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the liberties of the Gospell in puritie, with peace.” &c. It was a *religious* end they sought ; it was a religious conviction that impelled them ; it was a religious fealty that bound them ; it was faith in the unseen, the spiritual, the immortal—in interests transcending the measurements of earth and time.

My remarks may seem to be taking a wider range than is called for in a sketch—which is all that was proposed—of our particular church. And yet, all that has been said of the purpose of the founders of New England generally, appertains especially to those among them, gathered into a church by the “ Patriarch of Dorchester,” and floated hither in the *Mary and John*. “ There came many godly families in that ship,” wrote Capt. Roger Clap :—“ sound and learned men ”—“ men leaving gallant situations ”—“ men of rank and influence ”—“ very precious men and women.”

I proceed with the narrative of the leading historic

incidents in the external fortunes of our church, from that 17th day of June, 1630, when, as already related, it came together, roofed only by the sky, for its first Sabbath worship after its landing. Its first Meeting-House—located near the corner of Cottage and Pleasant Streets—was not built until the autumn of the following year. What accommodations it had for its meetings until that time does not appear. The testimony is—and it accounts sufficiently for the delay in providing a House of Worship—that it was a year of great destitution with them; that even the last loaf failed, and their sole dependence was upon the casual and chance supplies of sea-shore and forest. And yet, it was with the pressure of want still upon them that that first House arose. It was a very rude structure, of logs and thatch, surrounded with pallisadoes for defence from the Indians. Very rude and lowly; but—there needs no record to assure us—very dear to those who gathered in it; symbol to them, as it was, of that Presence that had attended them over the waste of waters, and was with them still. There was no beauty in the *structure*, but the “Beauty of Holiness” God saw *within* it.

The church soon began to receive accessions by arrivals from England. But in 1635 it suffered important reduction—about sixty of its members, mainly induced thereto by the great influx of immigration, removing to Windsor, Conn., and taking with them

one of its pastors, Mr. Warham. This has been sometimes spoken of as a removal of the *church*. I know not with what justification, unless the fact that the leaving-portion took with them the records be regarded as such. But its records are not the church. The branches are not the root. The church remained, and renewed itself—and is here.

In 1646, after fifteen years of occupancy, the first Meeting-House gave place to a larger; built in the same locality, but afterwards removed to the hill—thence called, as since and still, “Meeting-House Hill.” This was in 1670; so that for just two hundred years our church has had its worshipping home on this hill. The House removed hither—posited a little west of this—was succeeded, seven years after, by another; which, though larger and better than its predecessor, has its dimensions and finish indicated in the fact that its cost was but £200. It had, however, the unprecedented ornament, terminating its pyramidal roof, of a cupola; in which swung the unwonted luxury of a bell—the latter an importation, of course, from “home,” and imparting to imagination, as the once familiar sounds first broke the stillness of the Sabbath morning, how much of home itself! In 1743, a new House, of far exceeding size and cost, arose, near the same spot; and this—remembered by some of you—gave place, in 1816, to the one we now occupy:—this House of our love,

bearing so well its more than half-century age that the time seems very far when need, or—may I not add?—*désire*, shall call for its successor; holding a place, as it does—with the improvements it has from time to time undergone—among the most desirable of the church-edifices of our vicinity; combining a Puritanic simplicity with a chastened ornamentation; representing—as rightly it should—the “Meeting-House” of the Fathers, rather than the “Churches” from which they fled, the Protestantism they were faithful to, rather than the Mediævalism they repudiated; standing apart—none too widely—from those architectural anachronisms—out of place alike in New England and the century—whose pretentiousness, in view of the old-world structures of which they are the incongruous diminutives, is even more endurable than the discordancy of their aspects with the bright and cheering Faith which Christianity is to us.

Of those who have ministered in these successive structures I would briefly speak. The earlier of them, especially—as reliable records witness—were men of more than ordinary gifts and learning, measured by the clerical standard of their day—a standard much higher, we have reason to believe, than that of later times and of our own; while the term “godly,” applied to them, though having primary reference to the nature of their function, found highest justification in the devoutness that exercised

it. The line begins with Maverick and Warham. They had dared, in a loyalty to conscience, to break from the established church, and had formed and ministered to a non-conforming congregation in Plymouth, before being ordained over the hither-coming church. Warham followed the portion of the church that removed to Connecticut: Maverick soon ended his then lengthened days here. Then came Richard Mather. Suspended from the exercise of his ministerial functions for his Puritanical principles, he sought field for their renewal here; bearing hither a high repute for learning and ability. He was at once solicited by several churches to settle with them, and decided, by advice of Mr. Cotton and other leading ministers of the Colony, for this; continuing its minister thirty-three years, until his death. His ministry is described as eminently successful; his influence was great and wide; his fame and praise in all the churches. For a time associated with him was Jonathan Burr; also silenced for non-conformity, and bearing with him a repute for learning and piety. He died, after a ministry of less than three years, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. Testimonies have reached us to the remarkable loveliness of his character and the pathetic eloquence of his speech; and the picture which through these I bear of him has always drawn me to him, as to no other of my predecessors. In 1649, John Wilson, Jr., was ordained as "coadjutor"

with Mr. Mather ; but after two years withdrew, and exercised a long ministry in Medfield. The next in the line of ministers was Josiah Flint, a graduate of our own Harvard. He was ordained in 1671, and had a ministry of nine years, ended by his death. His life and labors have scant, but honoring, memorials ; and his epitaph, in the old burial-ground, speaks of him as “the good scholar and earnest preacher and devoted pastor.” He was succeeded, in 1682, by John Danforth, whose ministry, of forty-eight years—the testimony is—“was in great fidelity, and in the exercise of superior talents and graces.” Jonathan Bowman followed ; ordained as colleague of Mr. Danforth, and continuing his pastoral relations for forty years ; when, unpleasant differences arising between him and some of his parishioners, an ecclesiastical council advised a separation. “He was a man,” says a cotemporary, “of austere deportment, but of inflexible integrity, and was venerated by the most eminent of his cotemporaries for his talents and piety.” In 1774 Moses Everett was ordained, preaching with great acceptance, until 1793, “when,” says an obituary notice of him, “the declining state of his health compelled him to relinquish an office he was too feeble to fulfil and too conscientious to neglect.” He was an active and interested member of the church after he ceased to be its minister, and did honorable and honored service in several distinguish-

ed civil capacities. Directly following the ministry of Mr. Everett was that of Thaddeus Mason Harris, continuing forty-three years. Many among you were the personal witnesses of his ministry and sharers of its blessings. *They*, surely, need no reminding from me of what he was. But there are others of you—too young, or too late in joining us, to have known him—for whose sakes I am glad to speak of him, though it must be so inadequately:—of his purity and refinement of mind; his scholarly acquisitions, gained by a life of reading and research; his humble conscientiousness; his gentle and guileless and child-like spirit; his quick and flowing sympathies, giving tear for tear; his exquisite sensibilities, not seldom overmastering him—responsive to each passing appeal, as to straying breezes an Æolian harp—shrinking from the slightest look of unkindness, and brightening in the tokens of an appreciative friendliness, as blossoms in the sun. May Heaven have given thee, my father, as I doubt not it has, a ministry more congenial than earth's! I was ordained, as colleague with Dr. Harris, in 1835. But his official connection with the parish was soon, at his request—hastened by failing health and removal from the town—entirely severed; leaving unsevered, to the last, the tie of a mutual and affectionate regard.

For two centuries, lacking a score, the First Parish was the sole one of the town, and the town territo-

rially far larger than we have known it—no less than five towns being now embraced in its original limits. Most of the parishes that have grown up around it were formed by outflowings from its fulness, and demand, therefore, a passing notice in this historic sketch. The Second Church was organized in 1808. Its original members were almost wholly, I believe, from this; and went from it simply because the old home had no room for them—in a spirit of fellowship and good-will. And although that spirit—at least of fellowship—did not continue, good-will, I trust, did and does. I am sure I represent justly the older church in saying, that it cherishes none but the kindest feelings—shame to it if it did not!—towards the younger, and bids it, in the fellowship of a common Gospel, “God-speed.” In 1813, the Third Congregational Society was organized. Though directly an offset from the Second Church—owing to dissatisfaction connected with its administration—yet, composed, as it was, from among those who had so recently gone from the First, it was more strictly an offset from that. In 1819, the Hawes Place Church, located on territory afterwards taken into Boston, was organized; having for its leading members those who had been connected with the First Church. In 1848, the church at Harrison Square, bearing the corporate name of the “Third Unitarian Society,” was gathered, in some part from this; and

lastly, in 1859, the "Church of the Unity," at Newport—towards which the First Church expressed its maternal regard by the gift of a communion service, and by removing its debt. All these are in a sense our church's offspring. And yet the parent suffers no decline; and the new generations, as they come forward to salute her, almost forget how old she is, in the flush of youth she bears, and well might lose their reverence in their love. An incident in the early history of our church claims mention in this connection. In 1695, during the ministry of Mr. Danforth, a church was organized, under the auspices, and composed in part of members, of this church, in view to a settlement in South Carolina. A southern writer, sketching the after-history of the movement, says:—"The Macedonian cry of the pious in Carolina was heard in New England, and the religious sentiment of the Dorchester settlers was awakened. They had planted the first church in Connecticut, and now they were ready to gather another to send to the far distant South." It was purely a missionary enterprise—the earliest one from New England—and as such, apart from its connection with the history of our church, deserves notice. It was an enterprise singularly correspondent, in its inception and circumstances and inspiring spirit, to that of which, sixty-five years before, Plymouth, England, was the scene, and the planting of Dor-

chester, New England, the result. The church—like that—was formally organized on the eve of its departure, and its pastor ordained; Mr. Danforth preaching the sermon, amidst many touching and pious demonstrations on the part of those it left. The passage, so small a matter now, was only less formidable then than that from continent to continent. And it took them to a literal wilderness. “Landing on the shores of Carolina, they threaded their way to the Ashley river, and in the midst of an unbroken forest fixed their habitation—calling their new home, Dorchester; building a Meeting-House, and growing into a prosperous community.” Fifty-two years afterward, by reason of the increase of settlers and in part the unhealthiness of the locality, their descendants—over eight hundred in number—removed to Midway, Georgia, where the church still exists—retaining not only its original congregational order, but also, according to reliable testimony, the features, morally—itsself and the community around—which betoken a Puritan lineage.

Our church has fallen—so some would express it—from the doctrinal basis of its founders. We would choose to say, rather, has risen. But it is of slightest moment by what term is designated a change whereto conviction led, and wherein conviction has more and more confirmed. To have fallen—if that must be the term—from the dogmas of the fathers

is not necessarily to have fallen from the truth as it is in Jesus. They were fallible—as also are we. But we repair to the same Fountain; we listen to the same Oracle. The Bible is *our* Statute-Book, too; though with freer and bolder mind we demand its sense, regarding less the letter than the spirit. Nor, in departing from the doctrinal position of our fathers, do we acknowledge, or feel, by that fact alone, that we have departed from *them*. Not, surely, so long as we are seekers after truth, and allegiant to what we see as such. “I am verily persuaded,” said Robinson, “that the Lord has more truth yet to break forth from his holy word.” To us it *has* broken; and *that* were the departure from the fathers to be deplored which should refuse to follow it. And we are unjust to them, if we suppose the noble Leyden pastor to be alone in the broadness which thus uttered itself. The church-covenants they framed declare plainly the contrary. They were not creeds, in any limiting sense. They committed the assenters to them simply to what the Bible did, or might, teach them. “So far as we do already know or shall further understand, out of God’s holy word,” are the terms in which our own church-members promised fidelity, under its covenant of 1636. The freedom-giving qualification was, I believe, almost universal.—And, after all, we are with them—those men of the Past—by agreements in belief, rather than from them

by differences. Apart from the metaphysics of theology, are the truths of religion. In these we are at one with them. And these it was,—the great, vital, uncontroverted truths of Christ's Christianity, which made them the heroes of Faith they were; followers, for Righteousness and Humanity's sake, of a self-denying Lord. It was, probably, during the early part of the ministry of my immediate predecessor, that the line began to be drawn, with a recognized distinctness, between the Congregational churches of the vicinity; separating those which had till then been in fellowship, and placing this among the number in avowed dissent from the creed of the Puritans. It is a fact of much interest, whatever significance may be given it, that the earliest-founded churches of New England were among the earliest in such dissent. To speak with exactness,—thirty-one of the churches founded within the first half-century from the arrival of the "Mayflower," were, and are, among those styled "Liberal," as distinguished from the so-called "Orthodox."

I have thus given, as best I could, a sketch of our church's history. I have wished at some time to do it—as a duty which I owed the church, and the Providence that has allied for a time my history with its own; and it seemed fitting and well that I should do it now. For although the two hundred and fortieth

anniversary of an event is not among those which especially demand or suggest historic retrospect, the tenth year onward from this—which will bring such—I cannot look to see.

And now, let me ask you to ponder with me, before we part, that sentiment of Hebrew piety—sentiment of the devout heart, in all ages, under all religions, looking back on a Providentially-guided ancestry; brought to us now in new relations, invested with a new interest, as inscribed on the seal of that civic authority under which our church and our homes are henceforth to be:—“God be with us as he was with our fathers.” Let it not be with us a sentiment only, barren and dead, but a living and a life-imparting force, a prayer that God can answer with holiest blessing. And let us know and feel that He can so answer it only as we put heart and life into it; that He will be with us as He was with our fathers—Leader, Deliverer, Guardian, Friend—only as we make their spirit ours,—the spirit of a self-consecrating fidelity; only as we pursue worthy ends, cherish unselfish dispositions, live for immortal principles, “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Such, emphatically, was *their* seeking. God’s Kingdom was first, and all else secondary. And so was God with them, in a fulfilment—how better than literal!—of His promise. “All needed things,” as inventoried by the worldly-minded,

they had not ; but they had inward satisfactions, enjoyments, benedictions, hopes—"meat which the world knows not of." Yes ; and successes, triumphs, though they saw them but in part ; successes, triumphs, which, as the world has seen them—or, may be, themselves have, from ascended heights—there was no prophet among them bold enough to predict. Our fathers trusted in God, and it was a practical trust ; it went forth in deeds. God was a reality to them—none greater. He was a presence—none so near : present to them in conscience, present to them in the Bible. What through these He told them, unquestioningly, unfalteringly, they did. They may have had in some respects an unenlightened conscience : they may have regarded too reverently the mere letter of the Bible : they may have been—they were—narrow, intolerant, stern. But we are to be careful, if we would do them no injustice, how we let these things affect our moral estimate of them. They are to be judged by their own times, and their own circumstances. They were true to their light. They were faithful to their convictions. Fidelity—allegiance of heart and life to the supreme law and the Sovereign Law-giver,—*this* was their grand peculiarity. *So was God with them.* So will He be—so must He be, by the eternal necessity of His nature—with all—every individual, every church, every people—that in like manner are with Him.

They shall prosper : they shall triumph. His cause, through them, shall : and *that* is prosperity, *that* is triumph—the highest, the noblest. He may lead them through sea and wilderness—through hardship, privation, strait. What matter ! They near a Promised Land. It is sure for their descendants, if not for them. Nay, for *them* it is :—theirs, by more than faith and trust and hope ; by the attesting presence and approval and acceptance of a covenant God.





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