

shall become as the chaff of the summer threshing floor and be swept utterly away, make Him the foundation upon which you build, and when the rain sweeps away every refuge of lies, you will be safe, builded upon the rock of ages."

(b) Adjusting myself to the changeless Christ, He is changelessly mine.

---

FEB. 12-18.—OF CONQUERING DISCOURAGEMENTS.—Heb. xii. 12.

Hands which hang down—that is the gesture of discouragement. Gesture is visible speech; it is the forthtelling by attitude of the soul's mood, just as language is the forthtelling of the soul's mood by cadence and by words. Gesture addresses itself to the eye. Articulate speech addresses itself to the ear. Both tell the thoughts, feelings, purposes of the inner spirit. Here in our Scripture the reason why the hands take the gesture of discouragement is because the inner soul is fallen into the mood of discouragement.

The mood of discouragement, the instinctive gesture of which is hands which hang down, who of us does not, now and then at least, fall deeply and even very sadly into it?

Consider, first, why discouragement sometimes is.

1. *Consider some of the ways in which we may set ourselves to master it.*

*Why discouragement sometimes is.*

(a) Ill health is a very frequent reason for a discouraged mood. However we may dislike to make the confession, it is a fact we cannot blink that the state of the body has a very real sovereignty over the state of the soul. The hungry Elijah was the discouraged Elijah.

(b) Necessary reaction from a great strain is a frequent reason for discouragement. Elijah stands forth as almost the bravest man in the Old Testament, but the strain of the contest with the priests of Baal was too much even for Elijah, and his bravery sank into the weakness of despair, as, under the juniper-tree, having fled into the wilderness,

he cries out, "It is enough now, O Lord, let me die!"

(c) The slighter disappointments of life in most real way shadow the spirits. There are days when the sky wears a steadily disappointing gray, and when an east wind of discouragement blows steadily through all its hours.

(d) The haunting fear that in some great matter which vitally affects us we have made mistake is a frequent cause of discouragement. When, years since, I rode along the flanks of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, on my way to the Yosemite Valley, I came to a place where the trail forked. One arm of it led to Coulterville, the other to the wonderful valley. There was no sign-board, and if one had been without a guide he must decide as best he could. So we often, in life, stand at such place where the trails fork, and find there neither finger-post nor guide. We decide because we must, and take this trail instead of that, and then the fear that we have really taken the trail for Coulterville, when we meant Yosemite, shadows and discourages.

(e) Hostile circumstances are causes of discouragement. Sometimes one seems to be environed with them, like a man lost amid the mountains with apparently unscalable precipices rising on every side of him.

(f) A frequent cause of spiritual discouragement is allowed sin. We talk about the hiding of God's face from us. Oftener we have ourselves hidden ourselves from God by doing what we know He cannot smile on.

2. *Some of the ways in which we may triumph over this so common mood of discouragement.*

And we must triumph over discouragement. If we do not triumph over it it will triumph over us. And no man can be well or do well who is in the perpetual gloom of a shadowed heart. "It is safe to say that no great enterprise was ever yet inaugurated, sustained, or completed in any other spirit than that of hope. The Suez Canal was not built, nor the ocean cable laid, nor the great