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## "TAKE YE AWAY THE STONE."

The time and the place where these words were uttered by Him who spake as never man spake, are well known to every reader of the Evangelic narrative. Soon as our eye falls upon these words, or our ear catches their spoken sound, we are borne back on the pinions of imagination, through the eighteen centuries which have since rolled round, and find ourselves standing in one of "God's acres" in the storied land of Palestine. Bethany—quaint, old, olive-bowered Bethany—the town, as amiable John tells, of Mary and her sister Martha, with whom erewhile lived Lazarus—at no great distance appears to our view. Around us start up a group of sad-faced mourners rending the air with the condolatory wailings by which they endeavour to comfort the sorrowing Mary and Martha whose brother has recently been interred in this cemetery.

One you observe there—greatest of all the company—towards whom the eyes of all are now directed. *That* is the Saviour, present by special invitation—an intimate Friend of the disconsolate sisters. He is now approaching to the resting-place of the mortal remains of their beloved brother. Behold him there—the God-man—as the hot tears course adown his sinless cheeks, and thank God from your inmost soul that He can and will sympathize with his people in their perplexities, as well as deplore and alleviate the melancholy consequences which have resulted from the death-causing sin of our representative, apostate progenitor.

Meanwhile list to the command—"Take ye away the stone"—as addressed by Him

to the on-looking multitude. He is about to perform a stupendous miracle—to call back the soul of Lazarus from the spirit-land—to arrest the process of putrefaction that is rapidly going on in his lifeless body—so that by re-uniting those component elements of his being which death had severed he may re-constitute a living Lazarus for the comfort of grieving relatives, and for the edification of His people in all subsequent ages. No absolute necessity has He of the assistance of those who gather around Him and even if He had, what could they do to re-animate a lifeless clay tenement? They might fill the vault with their wails and besprinkle the dead with their tears; but both alike would be unheeded by the sleeper, fast locked in the cold embrace of death. Some thing, however, there is which they can do—and that they must do, as directed by the Saviour, ere he "Back to its mansions call the fleeting breath." They must roll away the stone, which in accordance with Oriental custom, has been placed at the entrance to the tomb in which repose "all that could die" of much-loved Lazarus. Readily they perform the prescribed services; and then—as the inspired historian informs us—the great miracle-worker, having first thanked his heavenly Father for affording this opportunity of exhibiting a proof of his Divinity, evoked to life the dead man, by sounding in his ear the life-imparting words, "Lazarus, come forth."

Now Paul tells us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and that it is profitable for various purposes which he enumerates that "the man of God may be