

## PREFACE.

This story was prompted by a desire to make my church service in the evening intensely interesting. I said to myself, "How far would you go to hear yourself preach? Suppose you lived four or five blocks from a church, had a good room, an easy-chair, an interesting book; or a Sunday paper, and it was uncomfortable weather, and you felt a little tired and under no obligation to go to church because you were not a member—supposing all that, what would have to be the character of a Sunday evening service to draw you out of that chair and away from that book or paper out into a disagreeable night to walk four blocks to a church?"

Endeavoring to answer that question has created this story. I cannot claim any merit for its literary plot or its style. It has been written under great pressure, in the midst of many other duties and much other writing of a desultory character. But it has been written with a tear in the eye and a real prayer in the heart—"O Lord, my Master, giver of 'the Life more abundantly,' help me to reach men with this story, and may the end of it find very many souls nearer their Father God than they were at the beginning."

I have also been blessed in the course of my work on this series by the thought that a sermon is a flexible thing, capable of wider definition than is commonly given it in the work of the pulpit; and many methods of presenting truth have been suggested which I hope will be blessed in after years.

The story was read one chapter at a time to my Sunday evening congregation, beginning September 7th, and closing November 22nd, 1891.

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