

## HINDRANCES OVERCOME.

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*For the Review.*

There are few things in life of more real use to us, and for which we ought to be thankful, than hindrances and obstacles. How often is it that having a good time, as we call it, is in reality having a very hard time? Sliding down is much easier than climbing up, but it is not nearly so healthy, and it will never take you to the summit. It requires energy and effort to resist hindrances and overcome obstacles, and energy and effort develop muscles and strengthen habits. If a young man has to work hard for a living he will succeed far better than if he were born with a silver spoon in his mouth. Thus honest poverty is often a blessing in disguise. Read Longfellow's "Village Blacksmith" and learn the lesson this exquisite poem teaches.

"Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,  
For the lesson thou hast taught!  
Thus at the flaming forge of life  
Our fortunes must be wrought;  
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped  
Each burning deed and word."

Dr. Stephens tells us how Edward A. Freeman, the historian, was sadly disappointed when a young man because he lost a certain prize. The subject for which the prize was offered was "The effect of the Conquest of England by the Normans." Freeman worked hard and wrote the longest essay sent in, but he failed to secure the prize. Forty-six years afterward Mr. Freeman said—"The Norman Conquest was a subject I had been thinking about ever since I could think at all. I wrote for the prize. I had the good luck not to get it. Had I got it, I might have been tempted to think that I knew all about the matter. As it was, I went on and learned something about it."

"And thus," adds his biographer, "we are in some sense indebted to his rejected essay for Freeman's great 'History of the Norman Conquest.' The young writer lost the prize; but the world gained through that loss an enduring work."

The lives of most great men are filled with inspiring failures. At the beginning of the war in the United States Grant was one of the most disappointed of men because he failed to get his military appointment from the governor of Illinois. Benjamin Disraeli made a great failure the first time he attempted to address the House of Commons. Napoleon, when a young lieutenant in the French army, failed miserably in Corsica, and had made up his mind to desert. Gordon's early life shows many failures, and yet he rose to be one of Britain's greatest generals. William, Prince of Orange, learned more from his failures than other soldiers from their victories, and in the school of experience he became the greatest general in Europe. Hindrances to the wise and prudent are such encumbrances as wings are to the bird that by which they rise to a higher eminence. To the aspiring climber hindrances are like the steps of a stairway—obstacles in his path. Yes, but such obstacles which, if used aright, will carry him who so uses them higher up.

The failures that lie scattered all along life's long pathway  
Should be stepping stones to lead us to a brighter, grander day.  
Disaster to retrieve, a crown to win amid the strife,  
Should be the Christian's watchword in the battlefield of life.

## WAITING ON GOD FOR HIS COUNSEL.

(ANDREW MURRAY.)

"They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel" (Psalm cvi. 13). This is said of the sin of God's people in the wilderness. He had wonderfully redeemed them, and was prepared as wonderfully to supply their every need. But when the time of need came "they waited not for his counsel." They thought not that the Almighty God was their Leader and Provider; they asked not what His plan might be. They simply thought the thoughts of their own hearts, and tempted and provoked God by their unbelief.

"They waited not for his counsel." How this has been the sin of God's people in all ages! In the land of Canaan, in the days of Joshua, the only three failures of which we read were owing to this one sin. In going up against Ai, in making a covenant with the Gibeonites, in settling down without going up to possess the whole land, "they waited not for his counsel." And so even the advanced believer is in danger from this most subtle of all temptations—taking God's Word and thinking his own thoughts of them, and not waiting for

His counsel. Let us take warning and see what Israel teaches us. . . . Our whole relation to God is ruled in this, that His will is to be done in us and by us as it is in heaven. He has promised to make known His will to us by His Spirit, the Guide into all truth. And our position is to be that of waiting for His counsel as the only guide of our thoughts and actions. In our church worship, in our prayer-meetings, in our conventions, in all our gatherings as managers, directors, committees, or helpers in any part of the work for God, our first object ought ever to be to ascertain the mind of God. God always works according to the counsel of His will; the more that counsel of His will is sought and found and honored, the more surely and mightily will God do His work for us and through us. . . .

"It was when God had given the water out of the rock that they did not trust Him for bread. It was when God had given Jerico into his hands that Joshua thought the victory over Ai was sure, and waited not for counsel from God. And so, while we think that we know and trust the power of God for what we may expect, we may be hindering Him by not giving time and not definitely cultivating the habit of waiting for His counsel."

A minister has no more solemn duty than teaching people to wait upon God. Why was it that in the house of Cornelius, when "Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell upon all that heard him?" They had said, "We are here before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

We may come together to give and to listen to the most earnest exposition of God's truth with little spiritual profit if there be not the waiting for God's counsel.

And so in all our gatherings we need to believe in the Holy Spirit as the Guide and Teacher of God's saints when they wait to be led by Him into the things which God hath prepared, and which the heart cannot conceive.

More still of soul to realize God's presence; more consciousness of ignorance of what God's great plans may be; more faith in the certainty that God has greater things to show us, that He Himself will be revealed in new glory—these must be the marks of the assemblies of God's saints if they would avoid the reproach, "They waited not for his counsel." "My soul, wait thou only upon God!"

## THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT.

There is no life, however fortunate and happy, which does not sometimes know the need of comfort; that is, of course, not of being made comfortable, snug, easy and prosperous, but of being comforted, raised up from depression and cheered. Sorrow in some form is inevitable and it calls for comfort. One of the tenderest, sweetest of his manifestations is that in which the Almighty reveals himself as the God of all comfort.

Some have no other comforter. They live lonely lives, either from choice or necessity, without true sympathy and often almost or quite with society. Yet sometimes among the most sensitive people there are those who are keenly conscious of the need of being comforted in their times of distress. What would they do if they had not their Heavenly Father to comfort them?

Moreover, human comfort often is quite inadequate. It is a blessing and we prize it. It goes far toward sustaining and invigorating us. But it cannot do all which we need. At the best it is but superficial. It is sincere, abiding, soothing, even inspiring, but rarely if ever does it reach the lowest depths of our gravest distresses. We cannot understand one another sufficiently to comfort each other thoroughly. Only the all-knowing Father, who Himself is the author of our being, can do this.

He certainly uses human friendship and sympathy as means of comfort. But he comes to us by His Spirit in a more effectual manner. He takes possession of our souls. He floods our inmost being with the consciousness of His loving presence. He makes us strong and glad at once. He gives us a broader outlook and fixes our attention upon the great underlying principles of eternal truth, which endure whatever else may fail. He aids us to look at events and at our own selves more from His divine point of view. Thus looking, we see better how all things work for good to them that love Him, and we are comforted.—*Congregationalist*.