

Our next glimpse of Elisha is in connection with an act of judgment upon the children of Bethel. As he was going up to Bethel "there came forth little children out of the city"—"young men" is the expression of the original,—“and mocked him, and said, Go up, thou bald head.” Baldness, in the East, was regarded as a reproach. “Thou bald head” was uttered by the young men as expressive of ridicule and contempt. The challenge to “go up” referred to Elijah’s ascent to heaven, and was meant to express their denial and ridicule of the miracle. The fate of these young men is sneeringly called by many, “Old Testament vengeance.” They forget that the vindication of God’s authority is the same in all ages. The New Testament only repeats the Old in its assertion, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord,” and reason unites with revelation in asserting the supremacy of law and justice. Some people seem to think that a godly man must endure every species of injustice without uttering a word of protest. Not so did Paul think when asserting his *rights* as a Roman citizen at Philippi. After enduring many stripes, and the stocks in the inner prison, the magistrates at last let them go. But Paul said, “They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come and fetch us out.” And the magistrates came and brought them out. So let us have a masculine Christianity to confront oppression and wrong wherever found, provided we do it decently and in order.

Passing on from Bethel, Elisha returned to Samaria, where his presence was soon eagerly sought by royalty, to give advice as to how the revolt of Moab against Israel could be quelled. Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the King of Edom united against Moab, but, in danger of perishing for lack of water, in their distress they applied to the prophet of the Lord. Instead of directing them in the use of spear and bow, he orders the employment of the pickaxe and mattock. Soon the valley is full of ditches. From the mountain-sides the torrents rush and fill the ditches. In the morning God’s sky is reflected on the water, and in the distance it glows like blood. The leaders of Moab think they understand it all. The alliance between