

The first element in the safety of Israel was the movement of the angel of the cloud from their front to their rear. This intensified the darkness of the night for Pharaoh's army, while it flooded the camp of Israel with a glory of light that turned the night into day. So in the pilgrimage of life the night of perplexity or adversity is filled with the light of the Holy Spirit for all believers who rejoice in the presence of the Comforter. Protected by the cloud, the people had leisure and peace of mind to stand still and see the salvation of God. They could not make the pathway through the sea. That had to be provided by God, and in God's time it was provided. The faith that stands still in expectation is the temper of confidence and repose which gives strength to the believer for every crisis, whether it be in the individual life, in the church or in the state. After the standing still comes the going forward. Faith is incomplete until it has energized itself into obedience. Unhesitatingly and calmly, the children of Israel went at the appointed time into the midst of the sea, and found it to be a road of dry ground. Their prompt obedience led to their safety. So is it ever with the man or the race not disobedience unto the heavenly vision. "Faith plants its footsteps on the seeming void, and finds the rock beneath."

The destruction of the hosts of Pharaoh began with their presumption. They dared to walk where Israel had gone, forgetful of the warnings of the past. The courage of the unbeliever is the bravado of presumption. It prompted the guest at the marriage supper to clothe himself, and led to his being cast into outer darkness. Presumption inevitably paves the way for panic. The sand that was hard to the feet of Israel began to soften, so that the heavy wheels of the chariots of Pharaoh sank down, the horses plunged, and the soldiers were filled with fear and the horror of impending calamity. At last the bonds of discipline were broken, and the march forward ended in a disorderly tumult. Then struck the hour for the paralysis of the power of the enemies of God. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Fighting against the Almighty is as hopeless folly as the turning of the worm against the iron heel that would crush it.

The teacher ought to point out to his scholars the historical parallel between the passage of the Red Sea and the overthrow of the Spanish Armada. Both were escapes from the tyranny of Egypt, and both were marvellous interpositions of God on behalf of right against might. So the truth may fasten itself in young hearts that deliverance from danger will come to all who walk in the path of duty. The spiritual significance of the incident ought not to be neglected. Christians are pilgrims who have left Egypt behind and entered into the desert. They must also have an experience corresponding to the passage through the Red Sea, in which they will be baptized "in the cloud and in the sea," and by means of which old sins will be slain as completely as the Egyptians, so that they shall rise up no more in condemnation.