

## HOW PERSIMMONS GOT HIS DIVIDEND.

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## I.

PERSIMMONS was a member of the church on one of my circuits. It makes no difference where or when; indeed, his real name was Smith, but I call him Persimmons, so that nobody can guess who he was, or where he lived, and in telling the story I shall misplace some events, and instead of what occurred at one time and place, I shall supply a similar circumstance from another period and locality, for I don't want any one to go to him or any of his family and say that I have told on him.

Now, this necessary explanation off my hands, I must say that Persimmons was a very valuable and useful member of the church. He served in the capacity of trustee and steward, and he had no superior in that region in either of these important offices. He was wealthy and prosperous, and supported every department of the church's work with reasonable liberality. Indeed, considering what men's ideas of duty in this respect generally are, and comparing himself with others, Persimmons thought himself really munificent. I thought his example worthy of imitation, because, in addition to giving money, he attended class-meeting, and was thoroughly respectable and reputable—a sort of pillar in the church and in the community as well.

We built a new church in the village, and our faith led us to plan great things. No denomination in all the country round about had a church worth from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars, yet our new church was to cost as much as this. And Persimmons led off the subscription list with a cheerful thousand dollars.

Now, I don't blame him if, like most people who find themselves in a majority, or do a handsome thing in a minority, he felt a little exaltation from self-righteousness as he thought of his liberal promise, and the inevitable surprise and admiration sure to be expressed by those of less influence and importance than himself. It was only human that he should feel so.

And he was not wholly to blame when he entered on the debtor side of his heart's ledger a very indefinite claim against God. Why should he not regard the Lord as in his debt? And, seeing, as every one knows, God never strikes an exact balance when He pays a debt, but, regardless of all accounts, He just pours out bountifully and without stint, as though He can never give