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OVERCOMERS

By John B. Culpepper

Alternative Title:
The White Stone

Pickett Publishing Co.
Louisville, Kentucky

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01 -- THE WORLD WOULD BE BETTER FOR IT

If men cared less for wealth and fame,
And less for battlefields and glory,
If writ in human hearts a name
Seethed better than in song or story;
If men, instead of nursing pride,
Would learn to hate it and abhor it,
If more relied On love to guide
The world would be the better for it.

If men dealt less in stocks and lands,
And move in bonds and deeds fraternal,
If Love's work had more willing hands
To link the would with the supernal;
If men stored up Love's oil and wine
And on human hearts would pour it,
And on bruised human hearts would pour it,
If "yours" and "mine"
Would once combine,
The world would be the better for it.

If more would act the play of Life,
And fewer spoil it in rehearsal;
If Bigotry would sheathe its knife,
Till good became more universal;
If Custom; gray with ages grown,
Had fewer blind men to adore it;
If talent shone In Truth alone,
The world would be the better for it.

If men were wise in little things --
Affecting less in all their dealings;
If hearts had fewer rusted strings,
To isolate their kindred feelings;
If men, when Wrong beats down the Right,
Would strike together to restore it;
If Right made Might In every fight,
The world would be the better for it.

* * * * *

02 -- WHAT I LIVE FOR

I live for those who love me,
For these I know are true,
For the Heaven that smiles above me
And awaits my spirit too,
For all human ties that bind me,
For the bright hopes yet to find me,
And the good which I can do.

I live to learn their story
Who've battled for my sake:
The patriot crowned with glory,
The martyr at the stake,
Bards, prophets, heroes, sages --
The noble of all ages,
Whose deeds crowd history's pages
And Time's great volume make.

I live to hold communion
With all that is Divine,
To feel there is a union
'Twixt Nature's heart and mine,
To profit by affliction,
Reap truths from fields of fiction,
Grow wiser from conviction,
And fulfill God's grand design.

I live to hail that season
By gifted ones foretold,
When men shall live by reason,
And not alone for gold,
When, man to man united
And every wrong thing righted,
The whole world shall be lighted
As Eden was of Old.

I live for those who love me,
For those who know me true,
For the Heaven which smiles above me
And awaits my spirit too,
For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrong that needs resistance,
For the future in the distance,
And the good that I can do.

* * * * *

03 -- I SHALL NOT PASS AGAIN THIS WAY

The bread that bringeth strength I want to give;
The Water pure that bids the thirsty live.
I want to help the fainting, day by day.
I'm sure I shall not pass again this way.

I want to give the oil of joy for tears,
The faith to conquer crowding doubts and fears;
Beauty for ashes may I give away.
I'm sure I shall not pass again, this way.

I want to give good measure running o'er,
And into angry hearts I want to pour
The answer soft that turneth wrath away.
I'm sure I shall not pass again this way.

I want to give to others hope and faith;
I want to do all that the Master saith;
I want to do aright from day to day.
I'm sure I shall net pass again this way.

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04 -- OVERCOMERS, OR THE WHITE STONE

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Rev. 2:17.

I have read a verse from the most shunned, the most neglected, the most misunderstood, yet the most important part of God's holy book. It is called "The Apocalypse," which is the Greek word for Revelation. It is not the Apocrypha -- hidden, but the Apocalypse -- the revealment of Christ.

This book has been likened to a river. If the figure is apt, it is the longest, the largest and most life-giving of all rivers -- rising in the garden of a God-made Paradise, it flows, with increasing volume and significance, through the weed patches, into which the first pair were turned when they kept not their first estate, through the jungles into which Cain fled from the sight of his brother's crying blood, and the face of an angry God, on through the viper-infested morasses, created by the polygamous settlements of Lamach, through the Okefonoka loblollies of a world-wide defection, washing ashore only an Enoch, a Noah and family -- shooting, like a gulf stream, through the retributive flood, out across the Patriarchal Steppes, of the Mosaic meanderings, the prophetic pilgrimages, to the end of the "Father's dispensation," when John introduced the world to our incarnate God, out into this, the Holy Ghost dispensation, or

"Gentile" or "church age," and which will flow on, out through the Millennium, and lose itself in the Atlantic hallelujahs and the Pacific amens of a "New Heaven" and "a Near Earth."

This book is important, in the sense that it is the revelation of Christ, it contains most of His sayings, is His last letter to His church, being a revelation of His relation to the churches; His judgment of them; His relation to the glorified church; the marshaling of them for the Judgment of the world; His relation to Heaven and earth, during the opening of the seals, the prophesying of the witnesses and the fall of Babylon; His personal leadership in the great battle of God Almighty; the establishment of His personal reign, the investiture of the saints with their future sovereignties; His relation to the final acts of judgment, the overthrow of death, and the introduction of the final estate of a perfected redemption.

These letters were given of God, sent by Christ, delivered by an angel, recorded by John, to whom they were dictated thirty-seven years after all of his colleagues were in the grave, and by whom they were sent forward to tie several pastors of the churches named therein.

"This book had its origin in the Covenant gift of God to Jesus, as the reward of His humiliation." A gift which the great God thinks a befitting honor and compensation to Christ, for all His great deeds of love and condescension; a thing which the blessed Lord in Heaven esteemed of sufficient moment to be made known by a special embassy, which holy angels considered it an honor to be permitted to signify, and which the tenderness of the disciple of love so conscientiously recorded for the comfort and admonition of the people of God in every age, certainly is not a thing of trifling significance. If we are interested in the story of the manger and the cross; if we can draw strength for our prayers and hopes, by invoking Christ, by the mystery of His incarnation, fasting, temptation, agony and bloody sweat; if we can find it such a precious treasure to our souls to come into undoubting sympathy with the scenes of His humiliation and grief; what should be our appreciation of this book, which treats of the fruits of those sufferings, and tells only of that wronged Savior's glory and triumphs, and shows us our Lord enthroned in majesty, riding prosperously, and scattering to His ransomed ones the crowns and regencies of empire which shall never perish, and celestial blessednesses without number and above all thought!"

He says: "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." Rev. 1:1-3.

As has been said, the more we learn, and know of Christ, the better it will be for us, if the spirit of faith and obedience be in our hearts. This book is pre-eminently the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It sets out our blessed Lord, and draws away the veil which hangs between us and Him, and lifts us up into the sublimest things of heaven. No other book shows us the practical workings of the incarnation, with its glorious and eternal results, as this does. No other book tells us exactly what the condition of the worm will be, when our Lord returns; how He will reward His long waiting saints; what it will mean to have been luke-warm; only through this book, can we foresee what will be the difference between those who love and serve Him, and those who do not. No other book so plainly sets forth the church, her duties, short comings, her status, at His return, and the great tribulation through which most of her members must pass; the vain efforts of the devil, the double resurrection, the marvelous victory of the saints over every foe and their

ecstatic enthronement with Jesus throughout the eternal eons. If I had to characterize this packet of letters in one Eschatological sentence, I would say, "Behold He Cometh."

Jesus -- this same Jesus, will come again, and "in like manner." He is away, on business, indispensable business, related to His marriage. He is looking forward to "keeping house." He is preparing a home for His bride. The prophets tell us, Jesus said He must go and come, the angels understood it, all the ancients, for hundreds of years taught it and shouted about it, the preachers and laymen who have been conspicuous for a rich experience, or active propagandism, have, with marvelous unanimity, looked on this book as setting forth the great, the comforting, the stirring, the alarming doctrine of the near return of Jesus, our Lord. I commend this book to you. Read it, pray over it, memorize it, cry over it, shout through it. Let it pillow your head by night, and pillar the superstructure of each day. May it shine upon you, at your best, from meridian splendors; may your evening oblations be touched by its slanting rays; may your setting sun be gorgeous in its added light and when you come to "sunset and evening star," and that "clear call for you," through this volume, may there be "light at evening time," and through this revelation may you "push ahead with a conqueror's tread," knowing He has "rolled the sea away." When you are dying, through this volume may you relegate all things to "the restitution of all things," through His blessed coming again. Pontoon little old Jordan, walk over and wait till He commissions you to form a part of the beautiful and glorious cloud in which He will come again, for us who stay behind, who are looking up and praying, "Even so -- come quickly Lord Jesus." I felt drawn out to make this long prelude to a short sermon. Let me read my great text again:

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Rev. 2:17.

All existence is a struggle. Down to the smallest particle of matter, everything sails under a black flag, seeming to say, "Conquer me, assimilate me, use me, or I will do just that for you." "Overcome, or be overcome," is written on every portal you may chance to look through. The little grain of wheat seems to understand this, and day and night feels its way, with every rootlet, towards moisture, while boring its way upward towards air and light. The little vine seems to know this and so, shelters itself by the great tree, and modestly clings and climbs, until strong enough to imbibe, hug and smother. The bee moth seems to understand it, so approaches its victims from behind a web.

Over come the poison in your child's putrid throat or you will tearfully and helplessly sit while death does his gruesome work. Conquer that abscessed tooth, or submit to blood poisoning. Overcome the playground, or submit to being an ignoramus in after life. Overcome that fishhook and bait-ground, or the grass will overrun your crop. Overcome that fox horn and the music of the sporting pack in the spring, or expect a cold hearth, bare table, ragged children, and a scolding wife next winter. Resist the fawning flattery of that young man, or prepare to drink the dregs of the bitterest cup, unloved and unrespected. Sin has its conception in the will it is born in an act. Sin, presented in what is called a temptation, is not sin to you, because you have not taken position. If your soul recoils and your will cries, No, you are an Overcomer. If you harbor the suggestion, the overt act is only awaiting opportunity. You are a sinner -- you

have been overcome. Nearly all, if not all sin begins in an illusion. Assume the right attitude towards it, and you are an overcomer, and the illusion vanishes. Let it take position, the delusion sets in, and you are overcome. Am I plain? Do you understand, me? Illustrations often accomplish more than arguments; facts exceed philosophy.

In the fall of '98, in Norman, Indian Territory, a young woman went to the altar, and at nine o'clock, went into what is called a trance, She seemed to be in great soul agony -- then became so still that many thought she was dead. This spell of apparent death (warmth excepted) lasted till nine o'clock next day. We expected to, hear a beautiful story of salvation, but instead, she was angry; said she heard the songs all night and knew all that was said and done, but could not move or speak. She then said: "You all don't know me. I have two living husbands, but don't live with either one. I was nearly dead with fear last night. I know God was after me, but I WILL NOT YIELD."

The next night as soon as I announced my text, she seemed to divine what was coming, and left; the tabernacle and town. She was overcome.

Last year in New Decatur, Ala., a young man walked into the railroad shops, threw down sack of tools, and asked for his "time." "What's up?" "O, I was at the gospel tent last night, heard Mr. Culpepper on common honesty. He convinced me that if I hope for Heaven, I must get right down here. I told God at the altar that if He would pardon me, I'd bring back these stolen tools. He saved my soul, and here is your stuffy. This man overcame.

I preached to "Men only" in Waycross, Ga. A drummer sat in the audience. It was a time of great power. At the conclusion I gave the lecture, then in pamphlet, to all who desired a copy for self or friend, at the same time giving them a chance to drop into the hat any amount to help me scatter it. This convicted drummer started forward, saying I will give a quarter and get a copy. Pushing down, he got a dollar, said to himself, "that lecture has done me more than a dollar's worth, so I'll put it in." Getting near the platform he glanced down to find that it was a twenty dollar gold piece he held. He said, "that talk has done me more good than this twenty dollars worth of good, so in it goes." Like a conqueror, he had risen from a quarter to twenty dollars. Leaving the church, he went to his room to pray. God powerfully saved him. A little later he took his family to Oxford, Ga., entered school for two years and is now a preacher in the South Georgia Conference. HE IS AN OVERCOMER.

I preached in Buena Vista, Ga., on the higher life. The pastor, my friend, arose and said, "Brethren, when I was on the Harris circuit, in the early spring, God marvelously blessed my soul, after I had surrendered all. My circuit was in a revival blaze, as well as myself, until my meetings were all held. In the autumn I broke with God, and he turned me out on SHORT COMMONS. In the spring I put all back on the altar, and again the fires swept my soul and my circuit. But I again broke with God, and again He reduced me to very SHORT GRAZING. I want to tell you where I broke with God. It was at the will point, both times. I want to tell you where my will broke. It was at the TOBACCO point, each time. I have felt that my ministry has been powerless, and largely barren among you. Now God being my helper, I will never use tobacco again." But he did. Thus my friend was overcome.

The overcomer's reward. -- "I will give to eat of the hidden manna." This was food given the Hebrews while in the wilderness. It was supernatural food, or food divinely given, but humanly gathered. It was emergency food. Besides giving sustenance to millions, it was a constant reminder of God's presence and their obligations. It enforced what God said in regard to industry, economy, rendering help to the needy, and the sanctity of the Sabbath.

From this downpour of food, they could easily augur God's presence, love and His ability to succor them at all times. This manna was secret, hidden, or mysterious in its nature, its effects on the system, the various ways in which it could be served, its regular appearance, and its periodic non-appearance. It stood to them, as it does to us, for our Father's great love and provision and may even be considered a type and promise of the giving of Jesus, as the great remedy for all want.

A memorial pot of this food was hidden away in the ark, where for centuries it was accessible only to the reverent and worshipful. If you will spiritualize this hidden manna, and remember the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him-that to him that overcometh, God has an extraordinary secret revelation, secret communings, secret walks, a secret Bible, and tender love, the sweet indwelling of the divine Spirit, if you will do this I may pass to the next beautiful figure, with a single observation. I have stood and seen God spread a table for me in the presence of mine enemies.

I have felt a lofty, holy solitude, as I communed with God in the midst of the gaiety or greed of society. I have been fully conscious of God's plans for me and dealings with me, in the strong whirl of temporal perplexities. I need not enumerate. God's true children know of His hidden manna. Others will not understand, or appreciate.

The Overcomer's greater rewards. "And I will give him a white stone," etc. Much of the "mystery" of God's book owes its existence to our ignorance of the people and customs of other days. Take the Scripture concerning the "fountain opened to the house of King David, for sin and uncleanness." It means something when we know that from one to many fountains were hewn in the rock, just outside the ancient city walls. They were filled by secret inlets, during the rainy season, or from a near-by stream, then perfectly sealed. Their mouth was contiguous to some part of the walls. During a siege, water would run low within the gates. The peoples would cry to the king. For want of water to bathe their persons and wash their clothing, disease would ensue. For want of drinking water they must famish. Then the order would come to tap one of the secret fountains. Sometimes the king alone knew their whereabouts, and their number. As the siege held doggedly on the cry for water would again rise, and the newly tapped fountain caused an uproarious shout to ascend from the beleaguered multitudes, and the king seemed as God to the loyal hosts.

A knowledge of this contrivance and custom has simplified that scripture to many of you, and already you are thinking of numerous times in which the fresh, thirst-slaking mind, conscience, and soul-cleansing waters burst forth from the hidden rock, and rushed right under the walls of your tent.

"And I will give him a white stone." This introduces us to a very ancient custom. The Judge is on the bench, the prisoner in the dock. The evidence is in and the Judge .or Judges deliberate. If the helpless prisoner is voted innocent, with severe majesty, the Judge takes a "white stone," of an oval shape, cleaves it in twain writes the name of the pardoned man and the presiding judge, with the additional word "Pardoned" and the date thereof, gives it to the grateful prisoner, with congratulations.

The other half, containing the same words, is placed in what might be called the court house archives, to which the prisoner or his friends have access at any time, for ratification, should his liberty be challenged.

If the prisoner was found guilty, a BLACK STONE was used, with the words "Death by _____." or "Imprisonment," "whipping" -- in short the penalty for the crime. How different must have been the feelings of the man who was handed the stone of condemnation.

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05 -- THE TESERA OR STONE OF MANUMISSION

This was used when a slave had served faithfully for years and possibly risked his life for that of his master or family, and in consequence the "chattel" is to have his freedom, and become for the first time a real citizen. The joy was none the less real because it burst from the lips of the humble wife and wondering children in the cabin. How profound must be the peace which billows the first night over the soul of the liberated slave. Read the 126th Psalm in connection with the edict of Cyrus and the overflowing gladness of the liberated Hebrew captives. With what scrupulous care the family must have guarded these symbols of pardon and freedom.

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06 -- THE STONE OF KNIGHTHOOD

A man risked his life for the honor of a woman, or in defense of a child, or risked seemingly certain death, to save his country's flag from dishonor -- this man was called before the nobles and "knighted." Again the "white stone" was divided, "valor" written, and the man who thought to lose his life, step's into greatness.

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07 -- THE TESERA HOSPITALES

You and I have been neighbors. I use this word, as a Southerner, as a Georgian, and as country man for the past half century. What we would have called hospitality then, is largely unknown now. For instance, when time came to cut and burn the trees which had blown down through the winter, the neighbors came in and helped us "get ready for the plow." In return we went and helped them. When wheat came, we helped each other round, "swapping work," so as to make it to the advantage of all. If a house was to be raised, the neighbors came to the "house

raising" These were sometimes tenant houses, sometimes dwellings -- always built of logs. If a cow wandered off in the spring and, trying to find a little something green to eat, reached too far and fell into a bog, any number of the neighbors would come and help her out and home. Out in the country, we raised and fattened our meat. When "hog killing" came, we swapped work, till the pink was all housed. Mark you, not a cent did all of this cost, in money. We just laughed, raced in our work, cracked jokes harder than hickory nuts, argued politics till you would have thought we were growing an acre of Calhouns or Henry Clays, discussed over all the ground lying between Calvin and Arminius, sang cornfield and log rolling songs till the air was vibrant with joy. At each farm house, one night was set apart for "shucking" corn. All the neighbors came, shucked and sang "cornfield songs" till the pile was finished, then its owner was shouldered and carried by two or four around the pile, around the house, then in and seated at the head of his own table -- a table around which fifteen to forty hungry men gathered. Their women folks had come too, in the main, and they had been busy fixing supper, at the same time retailing gossip for an area of ten or twenty miles -- all, all, in a great big good humor.

Tell you another thing, I never knew my father to kill a pig out of season, but what he sent third or half to the different neighbors. We called it a "fresh mess." Killing a beef, weighing 40 to 100 to the quarter, at least one-fourth would be "fresh messed" cut to the neighbors.

I knew it, because I was the "Johnny boy" who made these several trips, till the neighbors were "remembered." Tell you another thing. When we met on Sundays at church, every one who did not live near, and who was known to have company, was asked home with some one. It was none of your "for manners' sake" invite. We fixed at our house for company, expected it and got it, too. Talking about neighbors. Not twenty people in this audience ever saw one. If liberality and hospitality were measured with a belt, some of those men would be a mile round in the waist, compared with you. Once or twice a week we went over some where and "set till bed time." Then they returned it. The children played "Puss in the corner," "Blind man's buff," "Who has the thimble," etc. If corn gave out before harvest, we just stepped over to a neighbor's and borrowed "a milling or two," till ours got ripe. We didn't buy corn from each other -- didn't have to. If a neighbor got sick, and his "crop got in the grass," the word would be "passed round," and some morning, five or six plows and as many hoes would go into his field, each with his dinner bucket. Never thought of letting that tired woman fix dinner for us, but bless your life, when we went by to ask how he was, we told him he had "the cleanest crop in the district." I have seen a tear of "thank ye boys," trickle down through his stubble beard; "I hope I can give you fellows a lift some day." He need not have said that, for we knew he had done just such things many times. We met just as regular to roll a widow's logs, cut her wheat or kill her hogs, as if she could come and pay back. Half the time, if one wanted a plow, or wagon, and a neighbor was not using his the article was appropriated, without a word of warning.

You call your neighbor the family who lives next door in your crowded cities and compressed lots. Maybe you could stand on your piazza and tell the color of your neighbor's eyes, but you have "newer met," and you don't know each other's names, and don't want to. If you were asked over to help nurse a dying child, you would report, "Nothing doing -- out of my line." If he wants help, he must send off and get a three to five dollar a day "trained nurse." Of all the modern fizzles, it's this "trained nurse" business, taken as a whole. The bulk of them neither know nor care, much more than three dollars a day, whether or not you die and go to old Scratch.

These little professional sissies, coming out to fight death away from my dying baby, or nurse my wife back to life! I have known twenty-five in one community who knew more about nursing folks than an acre of them. Possibly sister and mother with six to sixteen children, could do their own cooking and washing, and among them, nurse a dozen cases of fever, manage never to leave the patient alone for one minute, nurse back to life seventy-five per cent more than your little nose-glass, wasp-waisted "trained nurses" and if you mentioned pay they would not have understood you, and when they did they would have considered it a gross insult. Now, I know most of you never saw a neighbor, and would be too selfish to live by one whose hospitality gushes and leaps like the mountain torrents, splashing over the rocks, laughing as it leaps to lave the thirsty roots forty feet below.

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08 -- THE STONE OF HOSPITALITY

You and I have been such good neighbors as I have been talking about. We are going to separate till the wild wide ocean rolls between us. The grief at such times is real and deep. The families sit long together on the last night. The children in your yard or mine, have mixed tears with their sport. With tremulous voice we have read God's holy Word, sung, and tried to sob out our prayers for each other's welfare. One of us takes the Tesera hospitality, divides it, and I keep the half with your name -- you take the half with my name. We separate, to meet no more in this world. But we don't forget. Per contra, we speak in great tenderness of the good traits and deeds of each absent one. If there were any faults we have forgotten them. Two whole generations have been gathered to the fathers. Strangers come from beyond the sea. They make inquiry for such a name. That name is on a stone in their sacred family archives. Search is made, and the other half of that stone is found, with the name on it which has just crossed the ocean. That is introduction enough. The families rush into the embrace of each other's hospitality. Why! Our fathers and mother's were friends. AH me! A friend meant something. To lose one was to lose part of yourself. To gain one was to add to your real wealth. When we boarded in college in Oxford, Miss., Bro. McIntosh being president, our son Burke, with his little family was stopping then with us. Their little Oscar, a babe, growing ill, the doctor pronounced it a violent case of diphtheria, and looked at Sister McIntosh in a panicky way, saying, "They must leave here at once." "No, they, will not do any such thing," said our friend. The weather was bad, no train till that night. "They will stay right here till the weather is ____" "But your school ____" "I will manage that." And she did too. That is what you call an emergency friend. Could you he such an one? Have you such an one? Did you ever see one?

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09 -- THE STONE OF PROSELYTISM OR ADOPTION

When one adopted a new country or a new religion, again the stone was used, and by it the sacred record was kept.

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10 -- CRAFTSMAN'S STONE

There was likely to glow up an intimacy and a love between those who wrought together at the beach or forge. The stone, divided and shared, was often of great future value, for obvious rea-

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11 -- THE VICTOR'S STONE

These various stones were of different sizes and shades of color. This was used when the conquering general returned, driving captured slaves, vanquished armies, bearing great spoils, of war. A reception awaits him in the public square, whither he directs his march. The nobility are all there, with all the grateful people. Speeches are made, banners are waved, the cannons boom, the prisoners and slaves are paraded, the spoils are exhibited. Then the mayor or perchance the king, with appropriate ceremony, divides the stone, inscribes the king's and country's approval, bequeaths one half to him and his heirs, while the other is filed away, just as we do state papers today.

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12 -- THE STONE OF SOCIAL KIND OF OFFICIAL CASTE

As the name carries the import of this peculiar stone, I will not dwell upon it now, though much might be said.

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13 -- THE STONE OF PERSONAL AND SPECIAL FRIENDSHIP

This is said to be rare and rarely beautiful. It was small and when halved, just large enough to bear the name of your tried friend. It was carried in the pocket, or worn as a charm. It was counted a distinction to have one such. This friend had been tried in some hot furnace and had proved his mettle, He would count it a joy to die for you or yours. Your estate and good name were safe where he was. Such were Damon and Pithias. Such were Joseph and Nicodemus. A tried, personal friend. Have you one such?

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14 -- THE STONE OF VOLUNTARY ENSLAVEMENT

You have read of the man, who, so anxious to reach the Guinea Negroes, sold himself among them, that they might know that he had a fellow feeling. You have read of the man, who, to reach the souls of the lepers, begged until he got their consent to shut himself out from all the world he loved, and in with them. You read but yesterday of the high born Hawaiian, who lived

with his girl wife, until leprosy appeared, then went to exile camp; of how she clung to him and begged to go. This was denied. She pined for her husband, then disguised herself and claimed to have leprosy. The experts refused to call it by that loathsome name. She then confessed, fell down and told them she would die if she could not get to her husband. They let her in. This touches us. But simpler and more mysterious is that man's conduct, whose pure love for the man he knew and had served, prompted him to give himself into perpetual and irretrievable servitude. In this case, the servant divided the stone and wrote, for the first time the names respectively of master and slave. Handing it to the adopted master, he dropped to the level of a chattel.

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15 -- THE ENGAGEMENT STONE

[While I do not believe in wedding jewelry, I have elected to leave this text in the digital edition of this booklet. The figure presented in the engagement stone here may suggest that the writer felt that engagement and wedding jewelry was acceptable and precious. I personally believe that the Bond of Holy Matrimony is spiritually beautiful, and does not need the outward enhancements and adornments of engagement and wedding jewelry. -- DVM]

This was the most delicately grained and the most beautiful of them all. When, after the enchanting siege, called wooing, in which all the world is interested, and always wants to take a hand, when the coy heart of the beautiful girl is captured, to make it all both sure and sacred, he takes the lovely little wedding stone, of every choice color; this he severs, writes his name, and family coat of arms, and gives to her. She does likewise with the other half, and gives to him. He wears his as a charm, most sacred, she hers, at her throat or as a locket. This means: We two are but one, and await our coming together for full happiness. This is Christ's figure of His and the holy church's relations. Who is not thrilled by the thought that I am HIS -- I wear the locket, I await the coming of my beloved!

I have dwelt somewhat at length on these stones, their use and striking significance. The Christians in my audience, have, doubtless, seen their precious Savior, as we have studied this great question of rewards. Jesus said He would send the Spirit to us. In Him the stone of Pardon has been so glorious, that words fail to express our wonder or joy. When poor condemned criminals, with not the faintest hope, the Judge gave us the stone of forgiveness, and had our name, even ours, recorded among the redeemed!

Do you remember when you first drew the breath of freedom? Freedom from the curse of the law? Frown its penalties? From the galling dominion of sin? It did not end here, but the witness to your adoption into the holy family of heaven came to your astonished soul.

You have never resisted the devil, but what Christ gave you, at once, the VICTOR'S STONE. You have never given a cup of cold water, but He called it great, and called you to reward. Is it not glorious?

Then Jesus has divided to each of you, His disciples the stone of special, PERSONAL KINDNESS. Who has not felt, at some time, that surely Jesus must be more to me than any one else? He may love others; I know He loves me.

But have you seriously thought of the approaching day of final reward? Before that all other days, all other rewards pale. What must it mean to the unsaved when the bodes are opened, the Judge seated, the witnesses render the facts, the verdict is made up, and before all angels and all worlds, the Son of God cleaves the "BLACK STONE," and bands it to that man who was once soundly converted and called to preach, but loved the riches, or honors, or pleasures of this present world. Poor fool! Who envies him now, or who wants his place of doom? He might have received the "white stone," while thousands of his converts gathered about him with ringing shouts. Look at him! "Whom none can love, none can thank -- Creation's blot, creation's blank." Look at that poor, pale, cowering young woman. She once attended Sunday school. She had a good father and mother. She passed through many seasons of grace. But the dance, a pack of cards, explain her ruin. She must receive the black stone. Do you see that young woman, an by her side, likewise great agony of spirit? Why? Somebody told her she was pretty when she was very young, and she became addicted to dress and the mirror, until all seriousness died within her. Poor thing! She is sober enough now. Her loved ones are ready to receive the "white stone." She must take the "black" one.

Look at that pallor-stricken man, in middle life. He became enamored of office, and forgot his God. desecrated the Sabbath, bribed and fawned for official position. Poor, shriveled politician! All that is left him is the "Black Stone." Look once more. See that man with the profile of a Rockefeller. He could force the markets up or down, and grow richer each time. He could command congressman, and dictate to legislatures, and make judges tremble. He could give one hundred thousand dollars to some charitable institution today, and reimburse himself tomorrow from the scant earnings of the poor. How poor he must feel today! How abandoned he looks! How all shun him! He sees it not. His eyes are on the Judge who now casts a burning gaze on him and gives him his reward -- the "Black Stone." Ah! The significance of that "black stone." It points backward to a black record. It points unerringly to a black conscience, to a blackened soul, and a black despair. It points to a future of night which has no dawn, only blackened vaults unlit by a star of hope. It points the poor victim to a woe, the depths of which no angel's pinion can fathom, and whose insufferable agony not even the arch-fiend of rayless night can describe after a midnight millennium of time in which to coin words most expressive of the woes of the victim of the Black Stone.

How may we be saved from such a doom? This same majestic and divine Judge has told us: "To him that overcometh,"

There is a time when the conflagration is only a spark, and can easily be extinguished. There is a time when the roaring, forest-felling, field-burying, house-bearing, uncrossable river is a branch, and may be stopped. There is a time when those dirk-hiding, pistol-toting, murderous passions are only puffs of anger which may be calmed by thought. There is a time when the word NO will save a girl from the life of a harlot. NO, will prevent a drunkard's career. There is a time in the life of every being, when YES to Jesus will make possible a "white stone" experience, a "white stone" death-bed, a "white stone" judgment, and a veritable "white stone" heaven.

I conclude with a remarkable historical fact. A vessel from the Indies came into port. One Sabbath night, the wife of the captain of the vessel heard a sermon and returned to their ship. Early one morning, two years later, this same minister was called to see a sick woman, aboard a vessel which had just dropped anchor. He found her dying in her cabin. She told him of hearing him preach a sermon from the text, "My grace is sufficient for thee." She wondered then how His grace could be sufficient to convert her soul and help her to be a Christian on the high seas, but she had verified God's word, a thousand miles from land, in experiencing pardoning love. When she saw death approaching she found the need of grace to leave her husband, but had gained the victory that morning, after sending for him. Just here her husband came weeping into the room, kneeling by his wife's cot, and exclaimed, "O my wife; I have the victory! You may go -- I will soon join you."

Being introduced to the preacher, he said: "O, sir, you are the man who led my wife to Jesus, and through her, I have found him. How happy we have been. This ship has been a sanctuary ever since, until I found she must leave me. We have been to God for the grace of a short separation, and I feel that we have it." After prayer the minister passed out and found an old "Jack Tar" crying as if his heart would burst asunder. On asking the trouble the sailor exclaimed: "O, sir, that dying woman in there went ashore two years ago and came back full of strange talk. One day she began to shout when we were in mid ocean, saying her soul was saved. Not long after that her husband experienced the same great grace, as they called it. How changed and happy they were. We all felt it. I could not read, but do you know, sir, she taught me, and many be the times we have read this old book together. One Sunday morning my soul was made happy, in the loss of a great heart load, which I had felt ever since she heard you preach and became so different. What blessed days I have had for four months, till she tuck sick. Only just afore you came, she called me in and had me kneel while she put her hand on my old head and asked God to give me grace to give her up. I reckon I must, for I don't feel as if it is right to keep her oat of heaven a day longer."

The grateful minister walked the gang plank, leaving the group of sad but triumphant overcomers aboard the vessel, also on board "the Old Ship Zion, which has landed many a thousand and can land as "many more." They, no doubt, are all now in the home of the White Stone Overcomers.

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16 -- COURAGE

I sing the hymn of the conquered who fell in the battle of life --
The hymn of the wounded, the beaten, who died, o'erwhelmed in the strife;
Not the jubilant song of the victors, for whom the resounding acclaim
Of nations was lifted in chorus, whose brows wore the chaplet of fame,
But the hymn of the low and the humble, the weary, the broken in heart,
Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent and desperate part;
Whose youth bore no flower on its branches, whose hope burped in ashes away;
From whose hands slipped the prize they had grasped at, who stood at the dying of day

With the wreck of their life all around them -- unpitied, unheeded, alone--
With death swooping down o'er their failure and all but their faith overthrown.
While the voice of the world shouts its chorus, its paean for those who have won;

While the trumpet is sounding triumphant, and high to the breeze and the sun
Gay banners are waving, hands clapping, and hurrying feet,
Thronging after the laurel-crowned victors, I stand on the field of defeat,
In the shadow, 'mongst those who are fallen, and wounded and dying, and there
Chant a requiem low, place my hand on their pain-knotted brows, breathe a prayer,
Hold the hand that is helpless and whisper "They only the victory win
Who have fought the good fight and have vanquished the demon that tempts us within;
Who have held to their faith unswayed by the prize that the world holds on high;
Who have dared for a right cause to suffer, resist, fight -- if need be, to die."

Speak, history! Who are life's victors? Unroll thy long annals and say
Are they those whom the world called victors, who won the success of a day?
The martyrs of Nero? The Spartans who fell at Thermopylae's tryst,
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates? Pilate or Christ?

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17 -- NERVE THY SPIRIT

Yet nerve thy spirit to the proof,
And blench not at thy chosen lot.
The timid good may stand aloof,
The sage may frown; yet faint thou not,
Nor heed the shaft too surely cast,
The foul and hissing bolt of scorn;
For with thy side shall dwell, at last,
The victory of endurance born.
Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among her worshippers.

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18 -- THE TAPESTRY WEAVERS

Let us take to our hearts a lesson--
No braver lesson can be--
From the ways of tapestry weavers,
On the other side of the sea.

Above their beads the pattern hangs;

They study it with care.
The while their fingers deftly move
Their eyes are fastened there.

They tell this curious thing besides
Of the patient, plodding weaver:
Re works on the wrong side evermore;
He works for the right side ever.

It is only when the weaving stops,
And the web is loosed and turned,
That he sees his real handiwork,
That his marvelous skill is learned.

Oh, the sight of its delicate beauty!
How it pays him for all its cost!
For rarer, daintier work than his
Was newer done by the frost.

Then the master giveth him golden hire,
And giveth him praise as well;
And how happy the heart of the weaver is
No tongue but his own can tell.

The years of a man are the looms of God,
Let down from the place of the Sun,
Wherein we are weaving ever,
Till the mystic web is done.

Weaving blindly, but weaving surely,
Each for himself his fate,
We may not know how the right side looks;
We can only weave and wait.

But looking above for the pattern,
No weaver hath need to fear.
Only let him look clear into Heaven;
The perfect Pattern is there.

If he keeps the face of the Savior
Always and ever in sight,
His toil shall be sweeter than honey;
His weaving is sure to be right.

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THE END