



The  
William Booth  
Collection

GO FORWARD

The Christian Mission Magazine  
March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1870

Dear Brethren and sisters, a temporary affliction from which, as we write these lines, we are, through mercy, slowly recovering, has prevented the preparation of one or two papers for this month's Magazine. These we must postpone to our next number, but in the meantime we feel impelled to greet our fellow labourers in Christian Mission work with a fraternal word of encouragement, and to say unto them *Brethren go forward.*

We know something of the discouragements with which you have to contend in your homes, at your workshops, and even among your brethren. We know a little of the difficulties and disheartening disappointments constantly met with in the work itself, arising sometimes out of the very success you meet with. But not withstanding these things, when brethren are cold, and the sons of Belial mock, and devils rage, and the poor flesh shrinks, there is but one alternative, *you must go forward.*

Nothing is to be gained by going back; there is nothing behind worth looking after. To sit down where you are, is to leave souls to perish, even though you should escape yourself, while, on the other hand, by enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and pushing onward through all the opposing foes that beset your path, you will ensure victory both in time and in eternity.

Do you want encouragements for the service of God in the face of difficulties; the world is full of them. Look at those recorded in the pages of the Bible.

See Moses at the brink of the Red Sea, Pharaoh red hot with rage, with his blood-thirsty legions pressing on behind, the impassable hills on either hand, and the Red Sea rolling its leaden sullen waves in front. What can he do with those few feeble emancipated slaves? I'll tell you what he might have done, what he would have done, had he acted as thousands do in the face of difficulty; he might have sat down in the bitterness, and given up in despair, and wailed out with the crowd of craven spirits around, "It was of no use," he should never see the promised Canaan, and he had better never have started to serve God, or to guide his people, than to have such



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troubles as these at the very onset of the work. Or he might have gone crouching to the feet of the royal faithless Pharaoh, and have led for him the fugitives back again to hopeless, cheerless slavery. But he did neither. True, he had no long array of armed and disciplined fighting men able to meet the warriors, who, foaming with haste, were in hot pursuit, but he had God, and he waited at His feet and listened to His voice, and fearlessly obeyed His command, and *went forward*. We all know the glorious result, how that he and the crowd who followed him, in so doing, obtained deliverance and victory.

Look at the Hebrew worthies. Remember that they were only three in number, young in years, and with like passions with yourselves. See them as they stand before the furious Nebuchadnezzar, and find that he is in grim earnest with his fiery furnace, and that his past partiality for them on which they might perchance have presumed, instead of securing for them immunity, has only irritated him the more with their defiant treatment of his idolatrous decree. Look at them as they listen to the cruel order that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be. How do they act? Do they shrink now it has come to this fiery test? This is sharp work for flesh and blood; they are only young, and they have friends and prospects, and the love of life as strong in them as any of us. Do they shrink now it has come to this terrible ordeal? Draw nearer. Observe them closely. No! Thanks to God they are unmoved. They looked at the smoke as it was belched forth from what they expected would be their fiery tomb, and then into the savage eye of the raging monarch, and then they told him in a grandly quiet way, that they could burn but they would not bow. O Glory be to Him who preserved these lads. For your encouragement and mine *they went forwards*, to walk unharmed the fiery wave, with the Son of God for their companion, and came forth with the monarch, and all the attendant multitude, lauding their action, and owning the God whom they served.

Look at Stephen how he went forward and won the crown of martyrdom – that brightest and most glorious crown in all probability which can encircle the brow of a created being; and look at numbers more who have held on in the dark and cloudy day, and so have been brought through with credit to the glorious cause they have espoused, and with honour to the royal master they have served, and with ever brightening reward to themselves throughout eternity.



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Suppose they had gratified the world and flinched, as the devil and the flesh tempts you to do in the hour of extremity, instead of going on to prove it the grand and triumphant hour of God's opportunity, they would have covered themselves with everlasting disgrace, and gone back to defeat and destruction.

Brethren, you must not flinch. There is a Canaan of usefulness, holiness, and happiness before you, even here on this earth; but you must go through a wilderness of difficulty to reach it. But you must not be discouraged by the way. Discouragement with Israel, you will remember, soon bred rebellion, and rebellion quickly brought terrible punishment. Therefore, keep your head and heart up, and gird up your loins, and call afresh on God for a new supply of heavenly oil to keep the fire of Divine courage burning in your soul, and in the name of your God hold aloft your drooping banner, and *go forwards*.

A little longer, and deliverance will come. Perhaps a *very little* time. You often sing –

Know the darkest hour of night  
Is before the morning light.

You have often proved it, and shall do so again.

The prize you aim at is worth a long and protracted struggle. This kingdom of Heaven on which you have set your heart not only suffereth violence, but is worthy of it. The inward righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and the outward honours and emoluments of this heavenly kingdom are worth dying for. All that you can give in exchange, even though you were called literally to forsake all, and throw your life-blood into the bargain, is but as dross compared with the eternal treasure you gain. Thousands have esteemed the reproach of Christ greater treasure than all the riches of the world, and have travelled on through rivers of tears and seas of blood, and **then** as they wave the palm of victory before the throne, they feel how utterly insignificant is what they have suffered compared with what they have gained, and had they the opportunity they would fly from Heaven to die ten thousand deaths in so glorious a cause and for so blessed a master.



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But, o dear friends, encourage yourselves most in God. He is not a hard master. You are not forgotten. He sees and knows all. The General's eye is oftenest in the direction of that regiment most pressed and hemmed in by the enemy. The merchant's thoughts are mostly with the ship that he knows is on the most dangerous coast or contending with the heaviest gales. The father's heart goes out most tenderly after the child called to battle with most frequent and trying sorrows; and your Heavenly Father's heart goes out most anxiously with you in the time of trial and difficulty.

Hold on, and He will appear in your behalf and for your deliverance. How and when leave to His good pleasure. Of the fact you may be as certain as of your existence. He that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Then, my brethren, *go forwards*. Be sure of your track. Often take your soundings. Mind that you are in a right course. Difficulties sometimes intimate that you are going wrong. Read the word and watch and pray, and consider your ways, and then, if convinced that your conduct is pleasing to God, stand to it, though earth and hell should combine to move you. The devil will whisper all sorts of foolish things in your ear about nobody being tried as you are; about your being peculiarly constituted, etc. But heed him not; or only to tell him in reply that the greater the difficulties, and the more unfavourable your temper and temperament, the more call for the exercise of Divine power, and the more glory will accrue to your heavenly deliverer. If God be for you it matters not who oppose. And with Deity in the van and in the rear, and on either flank, your onward march shall be one of continued victory, and its termination glory, immortality, and eternal life.

Go on! Go on! Thy Mater's ear and constant eye  
Observe each groan, each struggling tear;  
He, midst the shadows dark and drear is standing by – Go on

Go on! Go on! Thy onward way leads up to light.  
The morning now begins to grey;  
Anon the cheering beams of day  
Shall chase the night – Go on