

FIGHT YOUR OWN BATTLES

This you must do, for there is no one else to do it for you. When your enemies compass you about like bees, when they are more than the hairs of your head, you will find few men who will stand as your defenders. When you are lied about, abused and set at naught, good men will stand aloof and see how it will go with you. If you go down they will let you go, without protest or defense. If you survive the storm, surmount the wave, fight the battle, and defeat the foe, years afterwards your friends will be glad to let you understand how kindly they have always felt for you, and how glad they are that all things have come out right. But you must not anticipate this decision. You are on trial, and they will not pronounce blindly or in advance, on the merits of the case, nor will they regard you as innocent till you are proved not to be guilty. More likely they will not even insist that your trial shall be fair. In the day of adversity, sorrow, or dishonor, some rare spirits will search you out and give you the sympathy and help that you sorely need. Let them come and welcome them with thanks, and remember them when the day of trial is past; but do not go far to seek them, or you will find your friends far fewer then, than in the days of your prosperity.

You must not expect too much of poor humanity, nor blame men too severely. They cannot read your heart. They may have listened to lies, and slanders, invented by bad men, and repeated by good men, until they are perplexed, undecided, and know not what to do. Let them alone. The more you talk to them, the more they suspect your motives; the more you plead, the less they are disposed to help. Go to God in your troubles, and seek his almighty aid, promised in your time of need. He knows you altogether. With him there need be no explanation, and there can be no deception. If you can wash your hands in innocence, you can compass his altar, and receive his blessing, and He can carry you through. The devil cannot kill a man whom God undertakes to keep alive. All the liars in the universe cannot prove that gold is brass. All the slanderers in creation cannot make an honest man a rogue. If men call you a liar, keep telling them the truth. If they repeat the charge, still repeat your faithful testimony. Stand for God and God will stand for you, and by and by the change will come. Missing friends will come back. The Lord will open more doors than Satan can close; and He will set before you open doors that no man can shut; and all the reproaches and sorrows borne for the name and sake of Christ will turn to joy and blessing, if we faithfully follow him, and commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.—*H. L. Hastings.*

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