

The Sun Do Move

John Jasper

In presenting John Jasper's celebrated sermon on "De Sun Do Move", I beg to introduce it with several explanatory words. It includes an extended discussion, after his peculiar fashion, of the text, "The Lord God is a man of war; the Lord is His name." Much that he said in that part of his sermon is omitted, only so much being retained as indicates his view of the rotation of the sun. It was really when he came into this part of his sermon that he showed to such great advantage, even though so manifestly in error as to the position which he tried so manfully to antagonize. It was of that combative type of public speech which always put him before the people at his best. I never heard this sermon but once, but I have been amply aided in reproducing it by an elaborate and altogether friendly report of the sermon published at the time by *The Richmond Dispatch*. Jasper opened his discourse with a tender reminiscence and quite an ingenious exordium.

"Low me ter say," he spoke with an outward composure which revealed an inward but mastered swell of emotion, "dat when I wuz a young man and a slave, I knowed nuthin' wuth talkin' 'bout consarnin' books. Dey wuz sealed mysteries ter me, but I tell yer I longed ter break de seal. I thusted fer de bread uv learnin'. When I seen books I ached ter git in ter um, fur I knowed dat dey had de stuff fer me, an' I wanted ter taste dere contents, but most of de time dey wuz bar'd aginst me.

"By de mursy of de Lord a thing happened. I got er room-feller-he wuz a slave, too, an' he had learn'd ter read. In de dead uv de night he giv me lessons outen de New York Spellin' Book. It wuz hard pullin', I tell yer; harder on him, fur he know'd jes' a leetle, an' it made him sweat ter try ter beat sumthin' inter my hard haid. It wuz wuss wid me. Up de hill ev'ry step, but when I got de light uv de less'n into my noodle I farly shouted, but I

kno'd I wuz not a scholur. De consequens wuz I crep 'long mighty tejus, gittin' a crum here an' dar untel I cud read de Bible by skippin' de long words, tolerable well. Dat wuz de start uv my eddicashun-dat is, wat little I got. I mek menshun uv dat young man. De years hev fled erway sense den, but I ain't furgot my teachur, an' nevir shall. I thank mer Lord fur him, an' I carries his mem'ry in my heart.

"'Bout seben months after my gittin' ter readin', Gord converted my soul, an' I reckon 'bout de fust an' main thing dat I begged de Lord ter give me wuz de power ter und'stan' His Word. I ain' braggin', an' I hates self-praise, but I boun' ter speak de thankful word. I b'lieves in mer heart dat mer pra'r ter und'- stand de Scripshur wuz heard. Sence dat time I ain't keer'd 'bout nuthin' 'cept ter study an' preach de Word uv God.

"Not, my bruthrin, dat I'z de fool ter think I knows it all. Oh, mer Father, no! Fur frum it. I don' hardly und'stan myse'f, nor ha'f uv de things roun' me, an' dar is milyuns uv things in de Bible too deep fur Jasper, an'sum uv'em too deep fur ev'rybody. I doan't cerry de keys ter de Lord's closet, an' He ain' tell me ter peep in, an' ef I did I'm so stupid I wouldn't know it when I see it. No, frens, I knows my place at de feet uv my Marster, an' dar I stays.

"But I kin read de Bible and git de things whar lay on de top uv de soil. Out'n de Bible I knows nuthin' extry 'bout de sun. I sees 'is courses as he rides up dar so gran' an' mighty in de sky, but dar is heaps 'bout dat flamin' orb dat is too much fer me. I know dat de sun shines powerfly an' po's down its light in floods, an' yet dat is nuthin' compared wid de light dat flashes in my min' f rum de pages of Gord's book. But you knows all dat. I knows dat de sun burns oh, how it did burn in dem July days. I tell yer he cooked de skin on my back many er day when I wuz hoein' in de corn fiel'. But you knows all dat, an' yet dat is nuthin' der to de divine fire dat burns in der souls uv Gord's chil'n. Can't yer feel it, bruthrin?

"But 'bout de courses uv de sun, I have got dat. I hev dun rang'd thru de whole blessed book an' scode down de las' thing de Bible has ter say 'bout de move- ments uv de sun. I got all dat pat an' safe. An' lemme say dat if I doan't giv it ter you straight, if I gits one word crooked or wrong, you jes' holler out 'Hol' on dar, Jasper, yer ain't got dat straight, 'an' I'll beg pardon. If I doan't tell de truf, march up on dese steps here an' tell me I'z a liar, an' I'll take it. I fears I do lie sometimes-I'm so sinful, I find it hard ter do right; but my Gord doan't lie an' He ain' put no lie in de Book uv eternal truf, an' if I giv you wat de Bible say, den I boun' ter tell de truf.

"I got ter take yer all dis afternoon on er skershun ter a great bat'l fiel'. Mos' folks like ter see fights- some is mighty fon' er gittin' inter fights, an' some is mighty quick ter run down de back alley when dar is a bat'l goin' on, fer de right. Dis time I'll 'scort yer ter a scene whar you shall witness a curus bat'l. It tuk place soon arter Isrel got in de Promus Lan'. Yer 'member, de people uv Gibyun mak frens wid Gord's people when dey fust entered Canum an' dey wuz monsus smart ter do it. But, jes' de same, it got 'em in ter an orful fuss. De cities roun' 'bout dar flar'd up at dat, an' dey all jined dere forces and say dey gwine ter mop de Gibyun people orf uv de groun', an' dey bunched all dar armies tergedder an' went up fer ter do it. Wen dey kum up so bol' an' brave de Giby'nites wuz skeer'd out'n dere senses, an' dey saunt word ter Joshwer dat dey wuz in troubl' an' he mus' run up dar an' git 'em out. Joshwer had de heart uv a lion an' he wuz up dar d'reckly. Dey had an orful fight, sharp an' bitter, but yer might know dat Ginr'l Joshwer wuz not up dar ter git whip't He prayed an' he fought, an' de hours got erway too peart fer him, an' so he ask'd de Lord ter issure a speshul ordur dat de sun hol' up erwhile an' dat de moon furnish plenty uv moonshine down on de lowes' part uv de fightin' groun's. As a fac', Joshwer wuz so drunk wid de bat'l, so thirsty fer de blood uv de en'mies uv de Lord, an' so wild wid de vict'ry dat he tell de sun ter stan' still tel he cud finish his job. Wat did de sun do? Did he glar down in fi'ry wrath an' say, 'What you talkin'bout my stoppin' for, Joshwer; I ain't navur startid yit. Bin here all de

time, an' it wud smash up ev'rything if I wuz ter start?' Naw, he ain' say dat. But wat de Bible say? Dat's wat I ax ter know. It say dat it wuz at de voice uv Joshwer dat it stopped. I don' say it stopt; tain't fer Jasper ter say dat, but de Bible, de Book uv Gord, say so. But I say dis; nuthin' kin stop untel it hez fust startid. So I knows wat I'm talkin' 'bout. De sun wuz travlin' long dar thru de sky wen de order come. He hitched his red ponies and made quite a call on de lan' uv Gibyun. He purch up dar in de skies jes' as frenly as a naibur whar comes ter borrar sumthin', an' he stan' up dar an' he look lak he enjoyed de way Joshwer waxes dem wicked armies. An' de moon, - she wait down in de low groun's dar, an' pours out her light and look jes' as ca'm an' happy as if she wuz waitin' fer her 'scort. Dey nevr budg'd, neither uv 'em, long as de Lord's army needed er light to kerry on de bat'l.

"I doan't read when it wuz dat Joshwer hitch up an' drove on, but I 'spose it wuz when de Lord tol' him ter go. Ennybody knows dat de sun didn' stay dar all de time. It stopt fur bizniz, an' went on when it got thru. Dis is 'bout all dat I has ter do wid dis perticl'r case. I dun show'd yer dat dis part uv de Lord's word teaches yer dat de sun stopt, which show dat he wuz movin' befo' dat, an' dat he went on art'rwuds. I toll yer dat I wud prove dis an' I's dun it, an' I derfies ennybody to say dat my p'int ain't made.

"I toll yer in de fust part uv dis discose dat de Lord Gord is a man uv war. I 'spec by now yer begin ter see it is so. Doan't yer admit it? When de Lord cum ter see Joshwer in de day uv his feers an' warfare an' actu'ly mek de sun stop stone still in de heavuns, so de fight kin rage on tel all de foes is slain, yer bleeged ter und'stan' dat de Gord uv peace is also de man uv war. He kin use bofe peace an' war ter hep de richus, an' ter scatter de host uv de ailyuns. A man talked ter me las' week 'bout de laws uv nature, an' he say dey carn't possibly be upsot, an' I had ter laugh right in his face. As if de laws uv ennythin' wuz greater dan my Gord who is de lawgiver fer ev'rything. My Lord is great; He rules in de heavuns, in de earth, an' doun und'r de groun'. He is great, an' greatly ter be praised. Let all de people bow doun an' wurship befo' Himl.

"But let us git erlong, for dar is quite a big lot mo' comin' on. Let us take nex' de case of Hezekier. He wuz one of dem kings of Juder-er mighty sorry lot I mus I say dem kings wuz, fur de mos' part. I inclines ter think Hezekier wuz 'bout de highes' in de gin'ral avrig, an' he war no mighty man hisse'f. Well, Heze- kier he got sick. I dar say dat a king when he gits his crown an' fin'ry off, an' when he is posterated wid mortal sickness, he gits 'bout es commun lookin' an' grunts an' rolls, an' is 'bout es skeery as de res' of us po' mortals. We know dat Hezekier wuz in er low state uv min'; full uv fears, an' in a tur'ble trub'le. De fac' is, de Lord strip him uv all his glory an' landed him in de dust. He tol' him dat his hour had come, an' dat he had bettur squar up his affaars, fur death wuz at de do'. Den it wuz dat de king fell low befo' Gord; he turned his face ter de wall; he cry, he moan, he beg'd de Lord not ter take him out'n de worl' yit. Oh, how good is our Gord! De cry uv de king moved his heart, an, 'he tell, him he gwine ter give him anudder show. Tain't only de kings dat de Lord hears' De cry uv de pris'nur, de wail uv de bondsman, de tears uv de dyin' robber, de prars uv de backslider, de sobs uv de womun dat wuz a sinner, mighty apt to tech de heart uv de Lord. It look lik it's hard fer de sinner ter git so fur orf or so fur down in de pit dat his cry can't reach de yere uv de mussiful Saviour.

"But de Lord do evun better den dis fur Hezekier- He tell him He gwine ter give him a sign by which he'd know dat what He sed wuz cummin' ter pars. I ain't erquainted wid dem sun diuls dat de Lord toll Hezckier 'bout, but ennybody dat hes got a grain uv sense knows dat dcy wuz de clocks uv dem ole times an' dey marked de travuls uv de sun by dem diuls. When, darfo' Gord tol' de king dat He wud mek de shadder go backwud, it mus' hev bin jes' lak puttin' de han's uv de clock back, but, mark yer, Izaer 'spressly say dat de sun return'd ten dergrees. Thar yer are! Ain't dat de movement uv de sun? Bless my soul. Hezekier's case beat Joshwer. Joshwer stop de sun, but heer de Lord mek de sun walk back ten dergrees; an' yet dey say dat de sun stan' stone still an' nevr move er peg. It look ter me he move roun' mighty brisk an' is ready ter go ennyway dat de Lord ordurs him ter go. I wonder if

enny uv dem furloserfers is roun' here dis arternoon. I'd lik ter take a squar' look at one uv dem an' ax him to 'splain dis mattur. He carn't do it, my bruthr'n. He knows a heap 'bout books, maps, figgers an' long distunces, but I derfy him ter take up Heze- kier's case an' 'splain it orf. He carn't do it. De Word uv de Lord is my defense an' bulwurk, an' I fears not what men can say nor do; my Gord gives me de vict'ry.

"Low me, my frens, ter put myself squar 'bout dis movement uv de sun. It ain't no bizniss uv mine wed- der de sun move or stan' still, or wedder it stop or go back or rise or set. All dat is out er my han's 'tirely, an' I got nuthin' ter say. I got no the-o-ry on de subjik. All I ax is dat we will take wat de Lord say 'bout it an' let His will be dun 'bout ev'rything. Wat dat will is I karn't know 'cept He whisper inter my soul or write it in a book. Here's de Book. Dis is 'nough fer me, and wid it ter pilut me, I karn't git fur erstray.

"But I ain't dun wid yer yit. As de song says, dere's mo' ter foller. I envite yer ter heer de fust vers in de sev'nth chaptur uv de book uv Reverlashuns. What do John, und'r de pow'r uv de Spirit, say? He say he saw fo' anguls standin' on de fo' corners uv de earth, holdin' de fo' win's uv de earth, an' so fo'th. 'Low me ter ax ef de earth is roun', whar do it keep its comers? Er flat, squar thing has corners, but tell me where is de cornur uv er appul, ur a marbul, ur a cannun ball, ur a silver dollar. Ef dar is enny one uv dem furloserfers whar's been takin' so many cracks at my ole haid 'bout here, he is korjully envited ter step for'd an' squar up dis vexin' bizniss. I here tell you dat yer karn't squar a circul, but it looks lak dese great scolurs dun learn how ter circul de squar. Ef dey kin do it, let 'em step ter de front an' do de trick. But, mer brutherin, in my po' judgmint, dey karn't do it; tain't in 'em ter do it. Dey is on de wrong side of de Bible; dat's on de outside uv de Bible, an' dar's whar de trubbul comes in wid 'em. Dey dun got out uv de bres'wuks uv de truf, an' ez long ez dey stay dar de light uv de Lord will not shine on der path. I ain't keer'n so much 'bout de sun, tho' it's mighty kunveenyunt ter hav it, but my trus' is in de Word uv de Lord. Long

ez my feet is flat on de solid rock, no man kin move me. I'se gittin' my orders f'um de Gord of my salvashun.

"Tother day er man wid er hi coller and side whisk'rs cum ter my house. He was one nice North'rn gemman wat think a heap of us col'rd people in de Souf. Da ar luvly folks and I honours 'em very much. He seem from de start kinder strictly an' cross wid me, and arter while, he brake out furi'us and frettid, an' he say: "Erlow me Mister Jasper ter gib you sum plain advise. Dis nonsans 'bout de sun movin' whar you ar gettin' is disgracin' yer race all ober de kuntry, an' as a fren of yer peopul, I cum ter say it's got ter stop.' Ha! Ha! Ha I Mars' Sam Hargrove nuvur hardly smash me dat way. It was equl to one ov dem ole overseurs way bac yondur. I tel him dat ef he'll sho me I'se wrong, I giv it all up.

"My! My! Ha! Ha! He sail in on me an' such er storm about science, nu 'scuv'ries, an' de Lord only knos wat all, I ner hur befo', an' den he tel me my race is ergin me an' po ole Jasper mus shet up 'is fule mouf.

"Wen he got thru-it look lak he nuvur wud-I tel him John Jasper ain' set up to be no scholur, an' doant kno de ferlosophiz, an' ain' tryin' ter hurt his peopul, but is wurkin' day an' night ter lif 'em up, but his foot is on de rock uv eternal truff. Dar he stan' and dar he is goin' ter stan' til Gabrul soun's de judgment note. So er say to de gemman wat scol'd me up so dat I hur him -mek his remarks, but I ain' hur whar he get his Scriptu' from, an, dat 'tween him an' de wurd of de Lord I tek my stan' by de Word of Gord ebery time. Jasper ain' mad: he ain' fightin' nobody; he ain' bin 'pinted janitur to run de sun: he nothin' but de servunt of Gord and a luvver of de Everlasting Word. What I keer about de sun? De day comes on wen de sun will be called frum his race-trac, and his light squincked out foruvur; de moon shall turn ter blood, and this yearth be konsoomed wid fier. Let um go; dat wont skeer me nor trubble Gord's erlect'd peopul, for de word uv de Lord shell aindu furivur, an' on dat Solid Rock we stan' an' shall not be muved.

"Is I got yer satisfied yit? Has I prooven my p'int? Oh, ye whose hearts is full uv unberlief! Is yer still hol' in' out? I reckon de reason yer say de sun don' move is 'cause yer are so hard ter move yerse'f. You is a reel triul ter me, but, nevr min'; I ain't gi'n yer up yit, an' nevr will. Truf is mighty; it kin break de heart uv stone, an' I mus' fire anudder arrur uv truf out'n de quivur uv de Lord. If yer haz er copy uv God's Word 'bout yer pussun, please tu'n ter dat miner profit, Malerki, wat writ der las' book in der ole Bible, an' look at chaptur de fust, vurs 'leben; what do it say? I bet'r read it, fur I got er noshun yer critics doan't kerry enny Bible in thar pockits ev'ry day in de week. Here is wat it says: 'Fur from de risin' uv de sun evun unter de goin' doun uv de same My name shall be great 'mong de Gentiles.... My name shall be great'mong de heathun, sez de Lord uv hosts.' How do dat suit yer? It look lak dat ort ter fix it. Dis time it is de Lord uv hosts Hisse'f dat is doin' de talkin, an' He is talkin' on er wonderful an' glorious subjik. He is tellin' uv de spredin' uv His Gorspel, uv de kummin' uv His larst vict'ry ovur de Gentilcs, an' de world-wide glories dat at de las' He is ter git. Oh, my b'ruddrin, wat er time dat will be. My soul teks wing es I erticipate wid joy dat merlenium day! De glories as dey shine befo' my eyes blin's me, an' I furgits de sun an' moon an' stars. I jes' 'members dat 'long bout dose las' days dat de sun an' moon will go out uv bizniss, fur dey won' be needed no mo'. Den will King Jesus come back ter see His people, an' He will be de suffishunt light uv de wurl'. Joshwer's bat'ls will be ovur. Hezckier woan't need no sun diul, an' de sun an' moon will fade out befo' de glorius splendors uv de New Jerrusalem.

"But wat der mattur wid Jasper? I mos' furgit my bizniss, an' most gon' ter shoutin' ovur de far away glories uv de secun' cummin' uv my Lord. I beg par- dun, an' will try ter git back ter my subjik. I hev ter do as de sun in Hezekier's case-fall back er few der- grees. In dat part uv de Word dat I gin yer frum Malerki-dat de Lord Hisse'f spoke-He klars dat His glory is gwine ter spred. Spred? Whar? Frum de risin' uv de sun ter de goin' down uv de same. Wat? Doan't say dat, duz it? Dats edzakly wat it sez. Ain't dat cleer

'nuff fer yer? De Lord pity dese doubt'n' Tommusses. Here is 'nuff ter settul it all an' kure de wuss cases. Walk up yere, wise folks, an' git yer med'sin. Whar is dem high collar'd furloserfurs now? Wat dey skulkin' roun' in de brush fer? Why doan't yer git out in der broad arternoon light, an' fight fer yer cullurs? Ah, I un'stans it; yer got no answer. De Bible is agin yer, an' in yer konshunes yer are convicted.

"But I hears yer back dar. Wat yer wisprin' 'bout? I know; yer say yer sont me sum papurs an' I nevir answer dem. Ha, ha, ha! I got 'em. De differkulty 'bout dem papurs yer sont me is dat dey did not answer me. Dey nevir menshun de Bible one time. Yer think so much uv yoursef's an' so little uv de Lord Gord an' thinks wat yer say is so smart dat yer karn't even speak uv de Word uv de Lord. When yer ax me ter stop believin' in de Lord's Word an' ter pin my faith ter yo words, I ain't er gwine ter do it. I take my stan' by de Bible an' res' my case on wat it says. I take wat de Lord says 'bout my sins, 'bout my Saviour, 'bout life, 'bout death, 'bout de wurl' ter come, an' I take wat de Lord say 'bout de sun an' moon, an' I cares little wat de haters of mer Gord chooses ter say. Think dat I will fursake de Bible? It is my only Book, my hope, de arnel uv my soul's surplies, an' I wants nuthin' else.

"But I got ernudder wurd fur yer yit. I done wuk ovur dem papurs dat yer sont me widout date an' wid- out yer name. Yer deals in figgurs an' thinks yer are biggur dan de arkanjuls. Lemme see wat yer dun say. Yer set yerse'f up ter tell me how fur it is frum here ter de sun. Yer think yer got it down ter er nice p'int. Yer say it is 3,339,002 miles frum de earth ter de sun. Dat's wat yer say. Nudder one say dat de distuns is 12,000,000; nudder got it ter 27,000,000. I hers dat de great Isuk Nutun wuk't it up ter 28,000,000, an' later on de furloserfurs gin ernudder rippin' raze to 50,000,- 000. De las' one gits it bigger dan all de yuthers, up to 90,000,000. Doan't enny uv 'em ergree edzakly an' so dey runs a guess game, an' de las' guess is always de bigges'. Now, wen dese guessers kin hav a kunvenshun in Richmun' an' all

ergree 'pun de same thing, I'd be glad ter hear frum yer ag'in, an' I duz hope dat by dat time yer won't be ershamed uv yer name.

"Heeps uv railroads hes bin built sense I saw de fust one wen I wuz fifteen yeers ole, but I ain't hear tell uv er railroad built yit ter de sun. I doan' see why ef dey kin meshur de distuns ter de sun, dey might not git up er railroad er a telurgraf an' enabul us ter fin' sumthin' else 'bout it den merely how fur orf de sun is. Dey tell me dat a kannun ball cu'd mek de trip ter de sun in twelve years. Why doan' dey send it? It might be rig'd up wid quarturs fur a few furloserfurs on de inside an' fixed up fur er kumfurterble ride. Dey wud need twelve years' rashuns an' a heep uv changes uv ramint-mighty thick clo'es wen dey start and mighty thin uns wen dey git dar.

"Oh, mer bruthrin, dese things mek yer laugh, an' I doan' blem yer fer laughin', 'cept it's always sad ter laugh at der follies uv fools. If we cu'd laugh'em out'n kount'nens, we might well laugh day an' night. Wat cuts inter my soul is, dat all dese men seem ter me dat dey is hittin' at de Bible. Dats wat sturs my soul an' fills me wid richus wrath. Leetle keers I wat dey says 'bout de sun, purvided dey let de Word uv de Lord erlone. But nevr min'. Let de heethun rage an' de people 'madgin er vain thing. Our King shall break lem in pieces an' dash 'em down. But blessed be de name uv our Gord, de Word uv de Lord indurith furivur. Stars may fall, moons may turn ter blood, an' de sun set ter rise no mo', but Thy kingdom, oh, Lord, is frum evurlastin' ter evurlastin'.

"But I has er word dis afternoon fer my own brutherin. Dey is de people fer whose souls I got ter watch-fur dem I got ter stan' an' report at de last- dey is my sheep an' I'se der she'pherd, an' my soul is knit ter dem forever. 'Tain fer me ter be troublin' yer wid desc questions erbout dem heb'nly bodies. Our eyes goes far beyon' de smaller stars; our home is clean outer sight uv dem twinklin' orbs; de chariot dat will cum ter take us to our Father's mansion will sweep out by dem flickerin' lights an' never halt till it brings us in clar view uv de throne uv dc Lamb. Doan't hitch yer hopes to no

sun nor stars; yer home is got Jesus fer its light, an' yer hopes mus' trabel up dat way. I preach dis sermon jest fer ter settle de min's uv my few brutherin, an' repeats it 'cause kin' frens wish ter hear it, an' I hopes it will do honour ter de Lord's Word. But nuthin' short of de purly gates can satisfy me, an' I charge, my people, fix yer feet on de solid Rock, yer hearts on Calv'ry, an' yer eyes on de throne uv de Lamb. Dese strifes an' griefs'll soon git ober; we shall see de King in His glory an' be at ease. Go on, go on, ye ransom uv de Lord; shout His praises as yer go, an' I shall meet yer in de city uv de New Jeruserlum, whar we shan't need the light uv de sun, fer de Lam' uv de Lord is de light uv de saints."