

America's Gain.

One event has happened which I mentioned in a former article that calls for a few further comments—I mean the retirement from public life of the Rev. Dr. Talmage, which is regarded by most intelligent persons as a gain to America. The people here will have one less perverter of the truth, one less misdirector of the human mind, one less vulgar exponent of orthodox Christianity.

It is usual for fanatical orthodox believers to dabble with subjects upon which they are least informed. This was so with Dr. Talmage when he delivered what was termed "a profound and scientific discourse upon the Flood." Of course the ark was made a peg upon which to hang a great deal of nonsensical talk about saints and sinners and the way of salvation, all of which may be passed over on this occasion. The point which does concern us is the following passage:

"We do not need the Bible to prove the Deluge. The geologist's hammer announces it. Sea shells and marine formations on the top of some of the highest mountains of the earth prove that at some time the waters washed over the tops of the Alps and the Andes. In what way the catastrophe came we know not; whether by the stroke of a comet, or by flashes of lightning, changing the air into water, or by a stroke of the hand of God, like the stroke of the axe between the horns of the ox, the earth staggered. To meet the catastrophe, God ordered a great ship to be built. It was to be without prow, for it was to sail to no shore. It was to be without helm, for no human hand should guide it. It was a vast structure, probably as large as two or three Cunard steamers. It was the Great Eastern of olden time."

As large as two or three Cunard steamers? Why, all the Cunard fleet, the White Star, American and all the other fleets put together could not carry a quarter of the freight which that ancient vessel is said to have contained, "without prow" and "without helm." And yet Dr. Talmage ought to have known that the size of the ark was not equal to two or three Cunard steamers. It was about five hundred feet in length, ninety feet in breadth and less than fifty feet high. It was certainly without prow or rudder, and it was also without some other things, the absence of which must have made it a very inconvenient vessel in which to sail. It had one door in the side and one window in some part or other, but as there were three stories, it is difficult to imagine how those who resided in it for so long a time could obtain either ventilation or light. But did Dr.

Talmage really believe that this story of the Flood and the Ark is anything more than a mythological fable? If so, his intelligence must be even of a lower order than we estimated.

But the "geologist's hammer," he says, has proved the deluge apart from the Bible. Now, it is really too bad that a public man should thus attempt to mislead and hoodwink those who place themselves under his teaching and look up to him for instruction. Dr. Talmage should have known that not only has geology not announced a universal deluge, but it has proved the contrary by demonstrating the utter impossibility that such an event ever happened during the existence of man upon the earth. Can any name be mentioned of any geologist of any note who believes in the fabled universal flood? If there be any, we have not heard of them. Their names certainly are not Lyell, Murchison, Mantell, Page, Geikie, Ramsey or even Hugh Miller, the last-named of whom tried very hard to reconcile geology and Genesis. There are, we are told, "sea shells and marine formations on the top of some of the highest mountains." This may be true, but it does not prove Dr. Talmage's conclusion. The flood was not caused by sea water, but by rain; and how a heavy fall of fresh water could cause a deposit of sea shells and marine animals will require all the ingenuity of a theologian to explain. Besides, the merest tyro in geology knows that these deposits point to a time long anterior to the existence of man upon the earth, and that at no period were all the high mountains under water. No doubt every spot of dry land on the earth has been, not once, but many times, under the waters of the great ocean, but certainly no such total submergence of all the land at once, as is described in Genesis, ever occurred. This geology has demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt. Besides, why should these water animals have perished and left their remains on the tops of the mountains in consequence of an increase in quantity of the very element in which they lived? Why, these are the very organisms that would have been preserved. It is the land animals that would have perished, and for their remains we look in vain in the localities and under the circumstances named. It is fortunate, however, to know that men of intelligence no longer believe this story, and that such a man as Dr. Talmage, who held the sway over thousands of uninformed persons, and who has for years perpetuated this gigantic fable, has retired from his work of delusion. His retirement, therefore, as I have already said, is a distinct gain to the intellectual power of America.—[Charles Watts in Freethinker.

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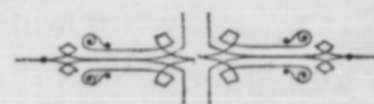
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