

ASTRAY BUT RECOVERED

DR. TALMAGE PREACHES ON THE NECESSITY OF A REDEEMER.

Beauty, Pains and Comfort Found in the Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah—How and Why Men and Sheep Go Astray. Whosoever Will, Let Him Come.

BROOKLYN, June 28.—Dr. Talmage's sermon today is of so decidedly evangelical a character as to prove conclusively that while so many eminent preachers of the day are drifting away from the old-fashioned Gospel he remains firm in the paths of orthodoxy. His subject is "Astray, but Recovered," and his text, Isaiah liii, 6: "All we like sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Within ninety years at the longest all who hear or read this sermon will be in eternity. During the next fifty years you will nearly all be gone. The next ten years will cut a wide swath among the people. The year 1891 will be the finality. Such considerations make this occasion absorbing and momentous. The first half of my text is an indictment, "All we like sheep have gone astray." Some one says, "Can you not drop the first word? That is too general; that sweeps too great a circle." Some man rises in the audience and he looks over on the opposite side of the house, and he says, "There is a blasphemer, and I understand how he has gone astray. And there in another part of the house is a defrauder, and he has gone astray. And there is an impure person, and he has gone astray."

Sit down, my brother, and look at home. My text takes us all in. It starts behind the pulpit, sweeps the circuit of the room and comes back to the pulpit where it stood, when it says: "All we like sheep have gone astray." I can very easily understand why Martin Luther threw up his hands after he had found the Bible and cried out, "Oh! my sins, my sins," and why the publican, according to the custom to this day in the east, when they have any great grief, began to beat himself and cry as he smote upon his breast, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

ILLUSTRATION FROM THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE. I was, like many of you, brought up in the country, and I know some of the habits of sheep and how they get astray, and what my text means when it says, "All we like sheep have gone astray." Sheep get astray in two ways, either by trying to get into other pastures, or from being scared by the dogs. In the former way some of us got astray. We thought the religion of Jesus Christ short commons. We thought there was better pasturage somewhere else. We thought if we could only lie down on the banks of distant streams or under great oaks on the other side of some hill we might be better fed.

We wanted other pasturage than that which God through Jesus Christ gave our soul, and we wandered on and we wanted bread and we found garbage. The further we wandered, instead of finding rich pasturage, we found blasted heath and sharper rocks and more stinging nettles. No pasture. How was it in the worldly groups when you lost your child? Did they come around and console you very much? Did not the plain Christian man who came into your house and sat up with your darling child give you more comfort than all worldly associations? Did all the convivial songs you ever heard comfort you in that day of bereavement so much as the song they sang to you, perhaps the very song that was sung by your little child the last Sabbath afternoon of her life?

There is a happy land, far, far away. Where saints immortal reign, bright, bright as day. Did your business associates in that day of darkness and trouble give you any especial condolence? Business exasperated you, business wore you out, business left you limp as a rag, business made you mad. You got dollars, but you got no peace. God have mercy on the man who has nothing but business to comfort him. The world afforded you no luxurious pasturage. A famous English actor stood on the stage impersonating, and thunders of applause came down from the galleries, and many thought it was the proudest moment of all his life; but there was a man asleep just in front of him, and the fact that that man was indifferent and somnolent spoiled all the occasion for him, and he cried, "Wake up! wake up!"

So one little annoyance in life has been more pervading to your mind than all the brilliant congratulations and successes. Poor pasturage for your soul you found in this world. The world has cheated you, the world has belied you, the world has misinterpreted you, the world has persecuted you. It never comforted you. Oh! this world is a good rack from which a horse may pick his hay; it is a good trough from which the swine may crunch their mess; but it gives but little food to a soul blood-bought and immortal.

What is a soul? It is a hope high as the throne of God. What is a man? You say, "It is only a man." It is only a man gone overboard in business life. What is a man? The battle ground of three worlds, with his hands taking hold of destinies of light or darkness. A man! No line can measure him. No limit can bound him. The archangel before the throne cannot outlive him. The stars shall die, but he will watch their extinguishing. The world will burn, but he will go on in the millennium. Endless ages will march on, he will watch the procession. A man! The masterpiece of God Almighty. Yet you say, "It is only a man." Can a nature like that be fed on husks of the wilderness?

most to kill you. I know it. I cannot understand how the boat could live one hour in this chopped sea. But I do not know by what process you got astray; some in one way, and some in another, and if you could really see the position some of you occupy before God this morning, your soul would burst into an agony of tears and you would pelt the heavens with the cry, "God have mercy! Sinal's batteries have been unlimbered above your soul, and at times you have heard it thunder: "The wages of sin is death." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

When Sebastopol was being bombarded two Russian frigates burned all night in the harbor throwing a glare upon the trembling fortress, and some of you are standing in the night of your soul's trouble. The cannonade and the conflagration, the multiplication of your sorrows and troubles I think must make the wings of God's hovering angels shiver to the tip. But the last part of my text opens a door wide enough to let us all out and to let all heaven in. Sound it on the organ with all the stops out. Thrum it on the harp with all the strings atune. With all the melody possible let the heavens sound it to the earth and let the earth tell it to the heavens. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." I am glad that the prophet did not stop to explain whom he meant by "him." Him of the manner, him of the bloody sweat, him of the crucifixion agony. "On him the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all."

CHRIST COMES TO THE FALLEN. "Oh," says some man, "that is not generous, that is not fair; let every man carry his own burden and pay his own debts." That sounds reasonable. If I have an obligation and I have the means to meet it, and I come to you and ask you to settle that obligation, you rightly say, "Pay your own debts." If you and I walking down the street, both hale, hearty and well, I ask you to carry me, you say, and say rightly, "Walk on your own feet!" But suppose you and I were in a regiment and I was wounded in the battle and I fell unconscious as your feet with gunshot fractures and dislocations, what would you do? You would call to your comrades saying, "Come and help, this man is helpless; bring the ambulance; let us take him to the hospital," and I would be a dead lift in your arms, and you would lift me from the ground where I had fallen and put me in the ambulance and take me to the hospital and have all kindness shown me. Would there be anything mean in your doing that? Would there be anything meaning in my accepting that kindness? Oh, no. You would be mean not to do it. That is what Christ does.

If we could pay our debts then it would be better to go up and pay them, saying, "Here, Lord, here is my obligation; here are the means with which I mean to settle that obligation; now give me a receipt; cross it all out; the debt is paid. But the fact is we have fallen in the battle, we have gone down under the hot fire of our transgressions, we have been wounded by the sabers of sin, we are helpless, we are undone. Christ comes. The loud clang heard in the sky on that Christmas night was only the bell, the resounding bell, of the ambulance. Clear the way for the Son of God. He comes down to bind up our wounds, and to scatter the darkness, and to save the lost. Clear the way for the Son of God.

Christ comes down to see us, and we are a dead lift. He does not lift us with the tips of his fingers. He does not lift us with one arm. He comes down upon his knees, and then with a dead lift he raises us to honor and glory and immortality. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Why, then, will no man carry his sins? You cannot carry successfully the smallest sin you ever committed. You might as well put the Apennines on one shoulder and the Alps on the other. How much less can you carry all the sins of your lifetime! Christ comes and looks down in your face and says: "I have come through all the lacerations of these days and through all the tempests of these nights. I have come to bear your burdens, and to pardon your sins, and to pay your debts. Put them on my shoulder; put them on my heart." "On him the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all."

NO REST FOR THE WICKED. Sin has almost pestered the life out of some of you. At times it has made you cross and unreasonable, and it has spoiled the brightness of your days and the peace of your nights. There are men who have been ridden of sin. The world gives them no solace. Gossamer and volatile the world, while eternity, as they look forward to it, is black as midnight. They writhe under the stings of a conscience which proposes to give no rest here and no rest hereafter; and yet they do not repent, they do not pray, they do not weep. They do not realize that just the position they occupy is the position occupied by scores, hundreds and thousands of men who never found any hope.

If this meeting should be thrown open and the people who are here could give their testimony, what thrilling experiences we should hear on all sides! There is a man in the gallery who would say: "I had brilliant surroundings, I had the best education that one of the best collegiate institutions of this country could give, and I observed all the moralities of life, and I was self righteous, and I thought I was all right before God as I am all right before men; but the Holy Spirit came to me one day and said, 'You are a sinner;' the Holy Spirit persuaded me of the fact. While I had escaped the sins against the law of the land I had really committed the worst sin a man ever commits—the driving back of the Son of God from my heart's affections. And I saw that my hands were red with the blood of the Son of God, and I began to pray, and peace came to my heart, and I know by experience that what you say this morning is true, 'On him the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all.'"

Yonder is a man who would say: "I was the worst drunkard in New York; I went from bad to worse; I destroyed myself, I destroyed my home; my children covered when I entered the house; when they put up their lips to be kissed I struck them; when my wife protested against the maltreatment, I kicked her into the street. I know all the torments and all the terrors of the devil's woe. I went on further and further from God until one day I got a letter saying: 'MY DEAR HUSBAND—I have tried every way, done everything, and prayed earnestly and fervently for your reformation, but it seems of no avail. Since our little Henry died, with the exception of those few happy weeks when you remained sober, my life has been one of sorrow. Many of the nights I have sat by the window, with my face bathed in tears, watching for your coming. I am broken hearted, I am sick. Mother and father have been here frequently and begged me to come home, but my love for you and my hope for brighter days have always made me refuse them. That hope seems now beyond realization. I have returned to the land of the living and I have been here for some time. It is hard and I battled long before doing it. May God

bles and preserve you, and take from you that accursed appetite and hasten the day when we shall be again living happily together. This will be my daily prayer, knowing that he has said, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' From your loving wife, MARY."

"And so I wandered on and wandered on," says that man, "until one night I passed a Methodist meeting house, and I said to myself, 'I'll go in and see what they are doing,' and I got to the door, and they were singing: 'All may come, whoever will. This man receives poor sinners still. And I dropped right there where I was and I said, 'God have mercy,' and he had mercy on me. My home is restored, my wife sings all day long during work, my children come out a long way to greet me home, and my household is a little heaven. I will tell you what did all this for me. It was the truth that this day you proclaim, 'On him the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all.'"

THE DRUNKARD AND THE OUTCAST. Yonder is a woman who would say: "I wandered off from my father's house; I heard the storm that pelts on a lost soul; my feet were blistered on the hot rocks. I went on and on, thinking that no one cared for my soul, when one night Jesus met me and he said: 'Poor thing, go home! your father is waiting for you. Your mother is waiting for you. Go home, poor thing!' And, sir, I was too weak to pray, and I was too weak to repent, but I just cried out; I sobbed out my sins and my sorrows on the shoulders of him of whom it is said, 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'"

"There is a young man who would say: 'I had a Christian bringing me up from the country to city life; I started well; I had a good position, a good commercial position, but one night at the theater I met some young men who did me no good. They dragged me all through the sewers of iniquity, and I lost my morals and I lost my position, and I was shabby and wretched. I was going down the street, thinking that no one cared for me, when a young man tapped me on the shoulder and said, 'George, come with me and I will do you good.' I looked at him to see whether he was joking or not. I saw he was in earnest and I said, 'What do you mean, sir?' 'Well,' he replied, 'I mean if you will come to the meeting tonight I will be very glad to introduce you. I will meet you at the door. Will you come?' Said I, 'I will.'"

"I went to the place where I was trying. I fixed myself up as well as I could. I buttoned my coat over a ragged vest and went to the door of the church, and the young man met me and we went in; and as I went in I heard an old man praying, and he looked so much like my father I sobbed right out, and they were all around so kind and sympathetic that I just gave my heart to God, and I know this morning that what you say is true; I believe it in my own experience. 'On him the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all.'"

"Oh, my brother, without stopping to look as to whether your hand trembles or not, without stopping to look whether your head is bowed with sin or not, put it in my hand, let me give you my warm, brotherly, Christian grip, and invite you right up to the heart, to the compassion, to the sympathy, to the pardon of him on whom the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all. Throw away your sins. Carry them no longer. I proclaim emancipation this morning to all who are bound, pardon for all sin, and eternal life for all the dead. Some one comes here this morning, and I stand aside. He comes up the steps. He comes to this place. I must stand aside. Taking that place he spreads abroad his hands, and they were nailed. You see his feet, they were bruised. He pulls aside the robe and shows you his wounded heart. I say, 'Art thou weary?' 'Yes,' he says, 'weary with the world's woe.' 'I say, 'Whence comest thou?' He says, 'I come from Calvary.' 'I say, 'Who comes with thee?' He says, 'No one; I have trodden the winepress alone!' I say, 'Why comest thou here?' 'Oh,' he says, 'I came here to carry all the sins and sorrows of the people.'"

And he kneels and he says, "Put on my shoulders all the sorrows and all the sins. And, conscious of my own sins first, I take them and put them on the shoulders of the Son of God. I say, 'Gather up the sins of the Church of Christ—I gather up all their sins and put them on Christ's shoulders, and I say, 'Canst thou bear a more?' He says, 'Yes, more.' Then I gather up all the sins of a hundred people in this house, and I put them on the shoulders of Christ, and I say, 'Canst thou bear a more?' He says, 'Yes, more.' And I gather up all the sins of this assembly, and I put them on the shoulders of the Son of God and I say, 'Canst thou bear them?' 'Yes,' he says, 'more!'"

HE HATH BORNE OUR TRANSGRESSIONS. But he is departing. Clear the way for him, the Son of God. Open the door and let him pass out. He is carrying our sins and bearing them away. We shall never see them again. He throws them down into the abyss, and you hear the long reverberating echo of their fall. "On him the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all." Will you let him take away your sins today? Or do you say, "I will take charge of them myself. I will fight my own battles. I will risk eternity on my own account." A clergyman said in his pulpit one Sabbath, "Before next Saturday night one of this audience will have passed out of life." A gentleman said to another seated next to him: "I don't believe it; I mean to watch, and if it doesn't come true by next Saturday night I shall tell that clergyman his falsehood." The man seated next to him said, "Perhaps it will be yourself." "Oh, no," the other replied; "I shall live to be an old man." That night he breathed his last.

Today the Saviour calls. All may come. God never pushes a man off. God never destroys anybody. The man jumps off. It is suicide—suicide—the man jumps off. Yonder is a man who would say: "I was the worst drunkard in New York; I went from bad to worse; I destroyed myself, I destroyed my home; my children covered when I entered the house; when they put up their lips to be kissed I struck them; when my wife protested against the maltreatment, I kicked her into the street. I know all the torments and all the terrors of the devil's woe. I went on further and further from God until one day I got a letter saying: 'MY DEAR HUSBAND—I have tried every way, done everything, and prayed earnestly and fervently for your reformation, but it seems of no avail. Since our little Henry died, with the exception of those few happy weeks when you remained sober, my life has been one of sorrow. Many of the nights I have sat by the window, with my face bathed in tears, watching for your coming. I am broken hearted, I am sick. Mother and father have been here frequently and begged me to come home, but my love for you and my hope for brighter days have always made me refuse them. That hope seems now beyond realization. I have returned to the land of the living and I have been here for some time. It is hard and I battled long before doing it. May God

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