

GOSPEL OF THE WEATHER

DR. TALMAGE PREACHES ON THE COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE RAIN.

The Wonderful Imagery of the Book of Job—How the Study of It Has Made Weak Men Into Infidels—Nearer Wade Into a Mystery Over Your Head.

BROOKLYN, Ju. —Dr. Talmage's sermon today is on a kind of gospel in which few people believe. The weather is a common object of complaint and fault finding, but Dr. Talmage finds a gospel in it, which today he preaches from the text, "Hath the rain a father?" Job xxxviii, 28.

This Book of Job has been the subject of unbounded theological wrangle. Men have made it the ring in which to display their ecclesiastical pugilism. Some say that the Book of Job is a true history; others, that it is an allegory; others, that it is an epic poem; others, that it is a drama. Some say that Job lived eighteen hundred years before Christ, others say that he never lived at all.

I wade down into a Scripture passage as long as I can, touch bottom, and when I cannot then I wade up to my head and then I get drowned. I study a passage of Scripture so long as it is a comfort and help to my soul, but when it becomes a perplexity and a spiritual upturning I quit. In other words, we ought to wade in up to our heart, but never wade in until it is over our head.

Suppose you understand your family genealogy. You know something about your parents, your grandparents, your great grandparents. Perhaps you know where they were born, or where they died. Have you ever studied the parentage of the shower, "Hath not the rain a father?"

When Dr. Druze, the gunsmith, invented the needle gun, which decided the battle of Sedowa, was it a mere accident? When a farmer's boy showed Blucher a short cut by which he could bring his army up soon enough to decide Waterloo for England, was it a mere accident? When Lord Byron took a piece of money and tossed it up to decide whether or not he should be affianced to Miss Millbank, was it a mere accident which side of the money was up and which was down? When the Christian army was besieged at Buziers, and a drunken drummer came in at midnight and rang the alarm bell, not knowing what he was doing, but, waking up the host in time to fight their enemies that moment arriving, was it an accident?

When in one of the Irish was a staryng mother, flying with her staryng child, sank down and fainted on the rocks in the night and her hand fell on a warm bottle of milk, did that just happen so? God is either in the affairs of men or our religion is worth nothing at all, and you had better take it away from us, and instead of this Bible, which teaches the doctrine, give us a secular book, and let us, as the famous Mr. Fox, the member of parliament, in his last hour, cry out, "Read me the eighth book of Virgil."

Oh! my friends, let us rouse up to an appreciation of the fact that all the affairs of our life are under a king's command, and under a father's watch. Alexander was a horse. Bucephalus would allow anybody to mount him when he was unharmed, but as soon as they put on that war horse, Bucephalus, the saddle and the trappings of the conqueror he would allow no one but Alexander to touch him. And if a soulless horse could have so much pride in his owner, shall not we immortals exult in the fact that we are owned by a King? "Hath the rain a father?"

God's ways are past finding out. Again my subject teaches me that God's dealings with us are inexplicable. That was the original force of my text. The rain was a great mystery to the ancients. They could not understand how the water should get into the cloud, and getting there, how it should be suspended, or fall in, why it should come down in drops. Modern science comes along and says there are two portions of air of different temperature, and they are charged with moisture, and the one portion of air decreases in temperature so the water may no longer be held in vapor, and it falls. And they tell us that some of the clouds that look to be only as large as a man's hand, and are almost quiet in the heavens, are great mountains of mist four thousand feet from base to top, and that they rush miles a minute.

But after all the brilliant experiments of Dr. James Hutton, and Batters, and other scientists, there is an infinite mystery about the rain. There is an ocean of the unfathomable in every raindrop, and God says today as he said in the time of Job, "If you cannot understand one drop of rain, do not be surprised if my dealings with you are inexplicable." Why does that aged man, decrepit, beggar, vicious, sick of the world and the world sick of him, live on, while here is a man in mid life, consecrated to God, hard working, useful in every respect, who dies? Why does that old gossip, gadding along the street about everybody's business but her own, have such good health, while the Christian mother, with a flock of little ones about her whom she is preparing for usefulness and for heaven—the mother who you think could not be spared an hour from that household—why does she lie down and die with a cancer?

Others follow, and after awhile there is a shower of tearful emotion. Yea, there is a rain of tears. "Hath that rain a father?" GOD SEES OUR TEARS.

"Oh," you say, "a tear is nothing but a drop of limpid fluid secreted by the lachrymal gland—it is only a sign of weak eyes." Great mistake. It is one of the Lord's richest benedictions to the world. There are people in Blackwell's Island insane asylum, and at Utica, and at all the asylums of this land, who were demented by the fact that they could not cry at the right time. Said a maniac in one of our public institutions, under a Gospel sermon that started the tears: "Do you see that tear? That is the first I have wept for twelve years. I think it will help my brain."

There are a great many in the grave who could not stand any longer under the glacier of trouble. If that glacier had only melted into weeping they could have endured it. There have been times in your life when you would have given the world, if you had possessed it, for one tear. You could shriek, you could blaspheme, but you could not cry. Have you never seen a man holding the hand of a dead wife, who had been all the world to him? The temples livid with excitement, the eye dry and frantic, no moisture on the upper or lower lid. You saw these bolts of anger in the cloud, but no rain. To your Christian comfort, he said, "Don't talk to me about God; there is no God, or if there is I hate him; don't talk to me about God, would he have left me and these motherless children?"

But a few hours or days after, coming across some lead pencil that she owned in life, or some letters which she wrote when he was away from home, with an outcry that appals, there bursts the fountain of tears, and the sunlight of God's consolation strikes that fountain of tears, you find out that it is a tender hearted, merciful, pitiful and all compassionate God who was the father of that rain. "Oh," you say, "it is absurd to think that God is going to watch over tears." No, my friends. There are three or four kinds of them that God counts, bottles and stores.

First, there are the tears of grief, and there are more of these than of any other kind, because the most of the race die in infancy, and that keeps parents mourning all around the world. They never get over it. They may live to shout and sing afterward, but there is always a corridor in the soul that is silent, though it once resounded.

My parents never mentioned the death of a child who died fifty years before without a tremor in the voice and a sigh, oh, how deep fetched! It was better she should die. It was a mercy she should die. She would have been a lifelong invalid. But you cannot argue away a parent's grief. How often you hear the moan, "Oh, my child, my child!" Then there are the tears of love, little children soon get over the loss of parents. They are easily diverted with a new toy. But where is the man that has come to thirty or forty or fifty years of age, who can think of the old people without having all the fountains of his soul stirred up? You may have had to take care of her a good many years, but you never can forget how she used to take care of you.

There have been many sea captains converted in our church, and the peculiarity of them was that they were nearly all prayed ashore by their mothers, though the mothers went into the dust soon after they went to sea. Have you never heard an old man in delirium of some sickness call for his mother, and the fact is we get so used to calling for her the first ten years of our life we never get over it, and when she goes away from us it makes deep sorrow. You sometimes, perhaps, in days of trouble and darkness, when the world would say, "You ought to be able to take care of yourself," you wake up from your dreams finding yourself saying, "Oh, mother, mother! Have these tears no divine origin? Why take all the warm hours that ever bent in all lands, and in all ages, and put them together and their united throb would be weak compared with the throb of God's eternal sympathy. Yes, God also is father of all that rain of repentance."

Did you ever see a rain of repentance? Do you know what it is that makes a man repent? I see people going and trying to get their sins washed away, and they do not know how to repent until God helps him to repent. How do I know? By this passage, "Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour to give repentance." Oh, it is a tremendous hour when one wakes up and says, "I am a bad man. I have not sinned against the laws of the land, but I have sinned against God. I have asked me for my services, and I haven't given me services. Oh, my sins; God forgive me." When that tear starts it thrills all heaven. An angel cannot keep his eye off it, and the church of God assembles around, and there is a commingling of tears, and God is the Father of that rain, the Lord, long suffering, merciful and gracious.

THE CRY OF A MOTHER'S HEART. In a religious assemblage a man arose and said: "I have been a very wicked man; I broke my mother's heart. I became an infidel, but I have seen my evil way, and I have surrendered my heart to God, but it is a grief that I never can get over that my parents should never have heard of my salvation. I don't know whether they are living or dead." While yet he was standing in the audience a voice from the gallery said, "Oh, my son, my son!" He looked up and he recognized her. It was his old mother. She had been praying for him a great many years, and when at the foot of the cross the prodigal son and the praying mother met each other, there was a rain, a tremendous rain, of tears, and God was the Father of those tears. Oh, that God would break us down with a sense of our sin, and then lift us with an appreciation of his mercy. Tears over our wasted life. Tears over a grieved spirit. Tears over an injured father. Oh, that God would move upon this audience with a great wave of religious emotion.

The King of Carthage was dethroned. His people rebelled against him. He was driven into banishment. His wife and children were outrageously abused. Years went by, and the King of Carthage made many friends. He gathered up a great army. He marched again toward Carthage. Reaching the gates of Carthage the best men of the place came out to meet him, and with ropes around their necks, crying for mercy. They said, "We abused you and we abused your family, but we cry for mercy." The King of Carthage looked down upon the people from his chariot and said: "I came to bless, I didn't come to destroy. You drove me out, but this day I pronounce pardon for all the people. Open the gates and let the army come in." The King marched in and took the throne, and the people all shouted, "Long live the King!" My friends, you have driven the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the church, away from your heart; you have been making him all these years; but he comes back today. He stands in front of the gates

of your soul. If you will only pray for his pardon he will meet you with his gracious spirit and he will say, "Thy sins and thine iniquities I will remember no more. Open wide the gate; I will take the throne. My peace I give unto you." And then, all through this audience, from the young and from the old, there will be a rain of tears, and God will be the father of that rain!

A Literary Curiosity. A veritable literary curiosity is the invitation to the annual dinner of the Fort-nightly Shakespeare club in New York. It reads this way:

"Good friends, sweet friends (Julius Caesar), his lot June (Henry IV), (but) there are sweet roses in the summer air (Love's Labor Lost), (which) sweetly recommends itself unto our gentle senses (Macbeth). We hold a feast (Midsummer Night). It will be pastime passing excellent (Taming of the Shrew). The beauty of the kingdom will be done (Henry VIII), please grace us with your company (Macbeth). You shall be welcome (Pericles). Excuses shall not be admitted (Henry IV), and so fall not our feast (Macbeth). That you do love me I am nothing jealous (Julius Caesar), and so I pray you, come, sit down and do your best (Winter's Tale)."

"I know each other well (Troilus and Cressida). Let's take the instant by the foreword top (All's Well), frame our minds to mirth and merriment, which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life (Taming of the Shrew). (We'll e'en be red with mirth) (Winter's Tale), and fleet the time as carelessly as they did in the golden time (As You Like It). But who's so waste I t'ere to counsel thee (Two Gentlemen). Brief let me be (Hamlet). If 'twere done, when 'tis done it were well it were done quickly (Macbeth). Write it straight (As You Like It), a rare letter (Twelfth Night) (aye), a fine volume of works and quickly shot off (Cymbeline)."

"It is near dinner time (Two Gentlemen), I am as constant as the northern star (Midsummer Night) and will be there (Two Gentlemen). I'll drink the words you send and thank you for your pains (Cymbeline). When all is done (Macbeth) (each guest shall say) night hath been too brief (Troilus and Cressida), I am yours forever (Winter's Tale). Adieu till we meet (Cymbeline). ANNA RANDALL DIEHL, President of the Fortnightly Shakespeare. Yet here's a postscript (Twelfth Night). Open thy purse that the money (for the dinner) may be at once delivered (Two Gentlemen). Defer no time; delays have dangerous ends (Henry VI). A. R. D." Philadelphia Equiv.

As Strange as a Romance. These are days of great and surprising financial booms. Twelve years ago a young man lived in a Maine town. His parents were poor, so poor that they required help from the town. The young man himself was crippled by rheumatism, was discouraged, and instead of bustling for the wherewithal to spend his time in idleness and fishing, for several years he, too, was supported by contributions from relatives and the town fathers. The current belief was, "He will never amount to anything."

Well, did he? He cut loose from his home and associates, borrowed enough money to carry him to Massachusetts, and struck in for fame and fortune with all the vim and spirit for which thoroughly awakened Maine boys are famous. That was twelve years ago. Today he can draw his check for \$500,000, and unless indications are amiss will be a millionaire within five years. He is one of the leading shoe manufacturers in Brockton, Mass., and every dollar of his fortune was won by his own endeavor. He has made a present of a handsome new school house to his native town. He still owns and pays taxes on the old home place, and there isn't a man in town but who is proud to point out the house to strangers and tell the story of the man who has made a big bright mark in the bustling world.—Lewiston Journal.

The Coffee Cup a Business Thermometer. Germans began drinking water during the Seven Years' war (1756-63), solidly held out opposition to the practice, and hated Napoleon all the more for restricting it by his "Continental Blockade." Universal peace was accompanied by universal indulgence in the exhilarating cup. Americans took kindly to its contents; and by constantly enlarging demand imparted powerful impetus to coffee commerce and culture. Rise in prices during the great civil war diminished the consumption about two hundred thousand tons. But for that it is asserted that "the world would not have had coffee enough." Demand rose with every Union victory, and fell with every Union defeat. Consumption increased 33.84 per cent. in 1864, 17.5 per cent. in 1865, 23.5 per cent. in 1866, and 37.25 per cent. in 1867. Removal of duties and financial prosperity increased the call for the aromatic berry, and advance in price because of short crops or syndicate operations diminished it. The coffee cup is a business thermometer in the United States.—Richard Wheatley in Harper's Weekly.

The Largest Gas Tank in the World. The erection of an immense gas holder—said to be the largest in the world—is now under way for the East Greenwich station in London. Some idea of the magnitude of the structure may be obtained when it is stated that it will have a capacity of 12,000,000 feet of gas; that it will be 300 feet in diameter, with an altitude of 180 feet when at its full height; that its total weight will be 3,230 tons, of which 1,840 tons will be of wrought iron, 60 tons of cast iron and 330 tons of steel, and that it will require 4,200 tons of coal to fill it with gas. For the reception of the gigantic gasometer a concrete tank 308 feet in diameter and 31 feet 6 inches deep has been made, at a cost of \$75,000 the greater part of the work having been done by the strikers, who would otherwise have been discharged during the summer months. The cost of the holder alone—its manufacture, erection and completion—will be \$205,975.—New York Telegram.

Fast Time Eating Eggs. Edward Smith, a wood carver in the employ of the Gilbert Clock company, made a wager with one of the workmen that he could eat twenty-four eggs in three minutes. The contest between Smith and the eggs came off Saturday afternoon, and was won by Smith. As the bet was for only one dollar it looks decidedly as though Smith had the worst of it.—Waterbury American.

Advantage of a Big Wedding. There is a certain frankness of tone in this sentence from a recent article by Mrs. Florence Howe Hall, "One advantage of a large wedding over a small one, and there-fore in most cases, of a church wedding, is that it gives the bride a chance to receive a greater number of presents."

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