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REV. DR. TALMAGE DESCRIBES A HARVEST SCENE.

The Brooklyn Divine's Sermon on Sunday, Aug. 2—Text of His Remarks, Ruth ii, 23—A Discourse That Will Be Read with Interest.

GLENWOOD, Colo., Aug. 2.—A sermon redolent with the breath of the vast harvest fields of the west indicates that Dr. Talmage has found in the scenes through which he has been traveling and in his present surroundings suggestions of Gospel lessons. His text is taken from Ruth ii, 3: "And she went and came and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech."

Within a few weeks I have been in North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Michigan, Canada, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, and they are one great harvest field, and no season can be more enchanting in any country than the season of harvest.

The time that Ruth and Naomi arrive at Bethlehem is harvest time. It was the old custom when a sheaf fell from a load in the harvest field for the reaper to refuse to gather it up; that was to be left for the poor who might happen to come that way. If there were handfuls of grain scattered across the field after the main harvest had been reaped, instead of raking it up as farmers do now it was by the custom of the land left in its place, so that the poor coming along that way might glean it and get their bread. But, you say, "What is the use of all these harvest fields to Ruth and Naomi? Naomi is too old and feeble to go out and toil in the sun; and can you expect that Ruth, the young and the beautiful, should tan her cheeks and blister her hands in the harvest field?"

BOAZ SEES RUTH.

Boaz owns a large farm, and he goes out to see the reapers gather in the grain. Coming there, right behind the swarthy, sunbrowned reapers, he beholds a beautiful woman gleaning—a woman more fit to bend to a harp or sit upon a throne than to stoop among the sheaves. Ah, that was an eventful day!

It was love at first sight. Boaz forms an attachment for the womanly gleaner—an attachment full of undying interest to the church of God in all ages—while Ruth, with an ephah, or nearly a bushel of barley, goes home to Naomi to tell her the successes and adventures of the day. That Ruth, who left her native land of Moab in darkness and journeyed through an undying affection for her mother-in-law, is in the harvest field of Boaz, is affianced to one of the best families in Judah, and becomes in after time the ancestress of Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory! Out of so dark a night did there ever dawn so bright a morning?

I learn in the first place from this subject how trouble develops character. It was bereavement, poverty and exile that developed, illustrated and announced to all ages the summit of Ruth's character. That is a very unfortunate man who has no trouble. It was sorrow that made John Bunyan the better dreamer, and Dr. Young the better poet, and O'Connell the better orator, and Bishop Hall the better preacher, and Havelock the better soldier, and Kitto the better encyclopedist, and Ruth the better daughter-in-law.

TENDERNESS COMES FROM TROUBLE.

I once asked an aged man in regard to his pastor, who was a very brilliant man, "Why is it that your pastor, so very brilliant, seems to have so little tenderness in his sermons?" "Well," he replied, "the reason is, our pastor has never had any trouble. When misfortune comes upon him his style will be different." After awhile the Lord took a child out of that pastor's house, and though the pastor was just as brilliant as he was before, oh, the warmth, the tenderness of his discourses! The fact is that trouble is a great educator. You sometimes see a musician sit down at an instrument, and his execution is cold and formal and unfeeling. The reason is that all his life he has been prospered. But let misfortune or bereavement come to that man, and he sits down at the instrument, and you discover the pathos in the first sweep of the keys. Misfortune and trials are great educators.

A young doctor comes into a sickroom where there is a dying child. Perhaps he is very rough in his prescription, and very rough in his manner, and rough in the feeling of the pulse, and rough in his answer to the mother's anxious question; but the years roll on, and there has been one dead in his own house; and now he comes into the sickroom, and with tearful eye he looks at the dying child, and he says, "Oh, how this reminds me of my Charlie!" Trouble, the great educator! Sorrow—I see its touch in the grandest painting; I hear its tremor in the sweetest song; I feel its power in the mightiest argument.

Grecian mythology said that the fountain of Hippocrene was struck out by the foot of the winged horse Pegasus. I have often noticed in life that the brightest and most beautiful fountains of Christian comfort and spiritual life have been struck out by the iron shod hoof of disaster and calamity. I see Daniel's courage test by the flash of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. I see Paul's prowess test when I find him on the foundering ship under the glare of the lightning in the breakers of Melita. God crowns his children amid the howling of wild beasts, and the chopping of blood splashed guillotine, and the crackling fires of martyrdom.

It took the persecutions of Marcus Aurelius to develop Polycarp and Justin Martyr. It took the pope's bull, and the cardinal's curse, and the world's anathema to develop Martin Luther. It took all the hostilities against the Scotch covenanters and the fury of Lord Claverhouse to develop James Renwick and Andrew Melville and Hugh McKail, the glorious martyrs of Scotch history. It took the stormy sea, and the December blast, and the desolate New England coast, and the war whoop of savages to show forth the prowess of the Pilgrim Fathers—

When amid the storms they sang,
And the stars heard, and the sea;
And the sounding aisles of the dim wood
Rang to the anthems of the free.

THE LIFTING UP OF THE NATION.

It took all our past national distresses, and it takes all our present national sorrows, to lift up our nation on that high career where it will march along after the foreign despotisms that have mocked, and the tyrannies that have jeered shall be swept down under the omnipotent wrath of God, who hates oppression, and who by the strength of his own red right arm will make all men free. And so it is individually, and in the family, and in the church, and in the world, that through darkness and storm and trouble men, women, churches, nations, are developed.

Again, I see in my text the beauty of unfaltering friendship. I suppose there were plenty of friends for Naomi while she was in prosperity; but of all her acquaintances, how many were willing to trudge off with her toward Judea, when she had to make that lonely journey? One—the heroine of my text. One—absolutely one. I suppose when Naomi's husband was living, and they had plenty of money, and all things went well, they had a great many callers; but I suppose that after her husband died, and her property went, and she got old and poor, she was not troubled very much with callers. All the birds that sang in the bower while the sun shone have gone to their nests, now the night has fallen.

Oh, these beautiful sunflowers that spread out their color in the morning hour! but they are always asleep when the sun is going down! Job had plenty of friends when he was the richest man in Uz; but when his property went and the trials came, then there were none so much that pestered as Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathlite.

Life often seems to be a mere game, where the successful player pulls down all the other men into his own lap. Let suspicions arise about a man's character and he becomes like a bank in a panic, and all the imputations rush on him and break down in a day that character which in due time would have had strength to defend itself. There are reputations that have been half a century in building which go down under some moral exposure, as a vast temple is consumed by the touch of a sulphurous match. A hog can uproot a century plant.

In this world, so full of heartlessness and hypocrisy, how thrilling it is to find some friend as faithful in days of adversity as in days of prosperity! David had such a friend in Hushai; the Jews had such a friend in Mordecai, who never forgot their cause; Paul had such a friend in Onesiphorus, who visited him in jail; Christ had such in the Marys, who adhered to him on the cross; Naomi had such a one in Ruth, who cried out, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT.

Again, I learn from this subject that paths which open in hardship and darkness often come out in places of joy. When Ruth started from Moab toward Jerusalem, to go along with her mother-in-law, I suppose the people said: "Oh, what a foolish creature to go away from her father's house, to go off with a poor old woman toward the land of Judea! They won't live to get across the desert. They will be drowned in the sea, or the jackals of the wilderness will destroy them." It was a very dark morning when Ruth started off with Naomi, but behold her in my text in the harvest field of Boaz, to be affianced to one of the lords of the land, and become one of the grandmothers of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory. And so it often is that a path which starts very darkly ends very brightly.

When you started out for heaven, oh, how dark was the hour of conviction—how Sinai thundered and devils tormented, and the darkness thickened! All the sins of your life pounced upon you, and it was the darkest hour you ever saw when you first found out your sins. After awhile you went into the harvest field of God's mercy; you began to glean in the fields of divine promise, and you had more sheaves than you could carry, as the voice of God addressed you, saying, "Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered." A very dark starting in conviction, a very bright ending in the pardon, and the hope, and the triumph of the Gospel!

So very often in our worldly business or in our spiritual career, we start off on a very dark path. We must go. The flesh may shrink back, but there is a voice within, or a voice from above, saying, "You must go;" and we have to drink the gall, and we have to carry the cross, and we have to traverse the desert, and we are pounded and flailed of misrepresentation and abuse, and we have to urge our way through ten thousand obstacles that have to be slain by our own right arm. We have to ford the river, we have to climb the mountain, we have to storm the castle: but, blessed be God, the day of rest and reward will come.

On the tiptop of the captured battlements we will shout the victory; if not in this world, then in that world where there is no gall to drink, no burdens to carry, no battles to fight. How do I know it? Know it! I know it because God says so. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes."

NOAH AND THE SCOFFERS.

It was very hard for Noah to endure the scoffing of the people in his day while he was trying to build the ark, and was every morning quizzed about his old boat that would never be of any practical use; but when the deluge came, and the tops of the mountains disappeared like the backs of sea monsters, and the elements, lashed up in fury, clapped their hands over a drowned world, then Noah in the ark rejoiced in his own safety and in the safety of his family, and looked out on the wreck of a ruined earth.

Christ, hounded of persecutors, denied a pillow, worse maltreated than the thieves on either side of the cross, human hate smacking its lips in satisfaction after it had been draining his last drop of blood, the sheeted dead bursting from the sepulchers at his crucifixion. Tell me, O Gethsemane and Golgotha! were there ever darker times than those? Like the booming of the midnight sea against the rocks, the surges of Christ's anguish beat against the gates of eternity, to be echoed back by all the thrones of heaven and all the dungeons of hell.

But the day of reward comes for Christ; all the pomp and dominion of this world are to be hung on his throne, uncrowned heads are to bow before him on whose head are many crowns, and all the celestial worship is to come up at his feet, like the humming of the forest, like the rushing of the waters, like the thundering of the seas, while all heaven, rising on their thrones, beat time with their scepters: "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Hallelujah, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

That song of love, now low and far,
Ere long shall swell from star to star;
That light, the breaking day which tips
The golden spired Apocalypse.

Again, I learn from my subject that events which seem to be most insignificant may be momentous. Can you imagine anything more unimportant than the coming of a poor woman from Moab to Judea? Can you imagine anything more trivial than the fact that this Ruth just happened to alight—as they say—just happened to alight on that field of Boaz? Yet all ages, all generations, have an interest in the fact that she was to become an ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all nations and kingdoms must look at that one little incident with a thrill of unspeakable and eternal satisfaction. So it is in your history and in mine: events that you thought of no importance at all have been of very great moment. That casual conversation, that accidental meeting—you did not think of it again for a long while; but how it changed all the current of your life!

THE BEGINNING OF MINSTRELSY.

It seemed to be of no importance that Jubal invented rude instruments of music, calling them harp and organ, but they were the introduction of all the world's minstrelsy. And as you hear the vibration of a stringed instrument, even after the fingers have been taken away from it, so all music now of lute and drum and cornet is only the long continued strains of Jubal's harp and Jubal's organ. It seemed to be a matter of very little importance that Tubal Cain learned the uses of copper and iron, but that rude foundry of ancient days has its echo in the rattle of Birmingham machinery and the roar and bang of factories on the Merrimac.

Again, I see in my subject an illustration of the beauty of female industry. Behold Ruth toiling in the harvest field under the hot sun, or at noon taking plain bread with the reapers or eating the parched corn which Boaz handed to her. The customs of society, of course, have changed, and without the hardships and exposure to which Ruth was subjected every intelligent woman will find something to do. I know there is a sickly sentimentality on this subject. In some families there are persons of no practical service to household or community; and though there are so many woes all around about them in the world they spend their time languishing over a new pattern or bursting into tears at midnight over the story of some lover who shot himself! They would not deign to look at Ruth carrying back the barley on her way home to her mother-in-law, Naomi.

All this fastidiousness may seem to do very well while they are under the shelter of their father's house; but when the sharp winter of misfortune comes, what of these butterflies? Persons under indulgent parentage may get upon themselves habits of indolence; but when they come out into practical life their soul will recoil with disgust and chagrin. They will feel in their hearts what the poet so severely satirized when he said:

Folks are so awkward, things so impolite,
They're elegantly pained from morn till night.

Through that gate of indolence how many men and women have marched, useless on earth, to a destroyed eternity! Spinola said to Sir Horace Vere, "Of what did your brother die?" "Of having nothing to do," was the answer. "Ah," said Spinola, "that's enough to kill any general of us." Oh, can it be possible in this world, where there is so much suffering to be alleviated, so much darkness to be enlightened, and so many burdens to be carried, that there is any person who cannot find anything to do?

Madame de Stael did a world of work in her time, and one day, while she was seated amid instruments of music, all of which she had mastered, and amid manuscript books which she had written, some one said to her, "How do you find time to attend to all these things?" "Oh," she replied, "these are not the things I am proud of. My chief boast is in the fact that I have seventeen trades, by any one of which I could make a livelihood if necessary." And if in secular spheres there is so much to be done, in spiritual work how vast the field! How many dying all around about us without one word of comfort! We want more Abigails, more Hannahs, more Rebeccas, more Marys, more Deborahs consecrated—body, mind, soul—to the Lord who bought them.

Once more I learn from my subject the value of gleaning. Ruth going into that harvest field might have said: "There is a straw, and there is a straw, but what is a straw? I can't get any barley for myself or my mother-in-law out of these separate straws." Not so said beautiful Ruth. She gathered two straws and she put them together, and more straws, until she got enough to make a sheaf. Putting that down she went and gathered more straws, until she had another sheaf, and another, and another, and another, and then she brought them all together, and she threshed them out, and she had an ephah of barley, nigh a bushel. Oh, that we might all be gleaners!

WE ARE ALL GLEANERS.

Elihu Burritt learned many things while toiling in a blacksmith's shop. Abercrombie, the world renowned philosopher, was a physician in Scotland, and he got his philosopy, or the chief part of it, while, as a physician, he was waiting for the door of the sickroom to open. Yet how many there are in this day who say they are so busy they have no time for mental or spiritual improvement; the great duties of life cross the field like strong reapers and carry off all the hours, and there is only here and there a fragment left that is not worth gleaning. Ah, my friends, you could go into the busiest day and busiest week of your life and find golden opportunities, which gathered might at last make a whole sheaf for the Lord's garner. It is the stray opportunities and the stray privileges which, taken up and bound together and beaten out, will at last fill you with much joy.

There are a few moments left worth the gleaning. Now, Ruth, to the field! May each one have a measure full and running over! Oh, you gleaners, to the field! And if there be in your household an aged one or a sick relative that is not strong enough to come forth and toil in this field, then let Ruth take home to feeble Naomi this sheaf of gleaning, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." May the Lord God of Ruth and Naomi be our portion forever!

A Duty for Every Young Mother.

A most serious fault with many mothers, and one accountable for a terrible waste of life, is that of failing to properly discipline their children to take medicine when offered them and patiently submit to any other treatment to bear which little or no fortitude is required.

Every young mother should distinctly understand that there are many occasions in child life when the chances of recovery depend almost entirely upon the early training. If a child is pampered and petted and hired to take medicine, there is sure to come a time when all persuasion is utterly useless and force must be resorted to.

In diphtheria, for instance, if he has always had his own way, little or nothing need be expected from medical treatment, and before the disease has reached its most dangerous point bribes and artifices will have long since been exhausted, and medicine or food can be administered only by "main strength." Force must now be used, for it would never do to permit a child to go without treatment, and yet in not a few instances it must do more harm than good.

All this trouble and much of the danger might easily be obviated by mothers. At a very early age they should fix in their little ones the habit of taking, without hesitation, everything offered them in a spoon or cup.—Boston Herald.

River Problems.

Should the rank of a river be measured by its length or by its average volume of water? is a question on which geographers have apparently failed to agree. On the first named principle the Mississippi would be only the chief northern tributary of the Missouri. On the second, the Mississippi and Missouri combined would be mere brooks, compared with the giant streams of the American tropics. Near their junction with the Amazon, both the Rio Negro and the Toncantins are at least three times broader and deeper than the Mississippi at New Orleans.—Philadelphia Times.

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