TEXT NEVER BEFORE USED.

The Eloquent Preacher Defines and Ana- rific prayer of my text. She is going to Unbellef-A Grand Prayer.

BROOKLYN, Nov. 19 .- In the Tabernable." The text was Exodus xxxii, 32, "If After three years of absence a son thou wilt forgive their sin-and if not, wrote his mother in one of the New Engblot me, I pray thee, out of thy book." | land whaling villages that he was com-

There is in our English language a ing home in a certain ship. Motherlike, she stood watching, and the ship was in small conjunction, which I propose by the offing, but a fearful storm struck it God's help to had out of its present in- and dashed the ship on the rocks that significancy and set upon the throne where it belongs, and that is the conjunction of the safety of where it belongs, and that is the conjunctor for the safety of the son, and just at tied by this rope under your arm?" tion "if." Though made of only two letters, it is the pivot on which everything door, and the son entered, crying out, turns. All time and all eternity are at "Mother, I knew you would pray me not have saved something else?" "Not its disposal. We slur it in our utterance, home!" If I would ask all those in this we ignore it in our appreciation, and assemblage who have been prayed home none of us recognizes it as the most tre-to God by pious mothers to stand up, mendous word in all the vocabulary out-

"If!" Why, that word we take as a tramp among other words, now appear- New England son coming ashore from ing here, now appearing there, but having no value of its own, when it really "My mother prayed me home!" has a millionairedom of worlds, and in its train walk all planetary, stellar, lunar, solar destinies. If the boat of leaves made watertight, in which the infant Moses sailed the Nile, had sunk, who would have led Israel out of Egypt? If the Red sea had not parted for the escape of one host and then come together for the submergence of another host, would the book of Exedus ever have been written?

If the ship on which Columbus sailed for America had gone down in an Atlantic cyclone, how much longer would it have taken for the discovery of this continent? If Grouchy had come up with re-enforcements in time to give the French the victory at Waterloo, what would have been the fate of Europe? If the Spanish armada had not been wrecked off the coast, how different would have been many chapters in English history! If the battle of Hastings, or the battle of Pultowa, or the battle of Valma, or the battle of Mataurus, or the battle of Arbela, or the battle of Chalons, each one of which turned the world's destiny, had been decided the other way!

If Shakespeare had never been born for the drama, or Handel had never been born for music, or Titian had never been born for painting, or Thorwaldsen had never been born for sculpture, or Edmund Burke had never been born for eloquence, or Socrates had never been born for philosophy, or Blackstone had never been born for the law, or Copernicus had never been born for astronomy, or Luther had never been born for the reformation!

Oh, that conjunction "if!" How much has depended on it! The height of it, the depth of it, the length of it, the breadth of it, the immensity of it, the and their genius in the manufacturing verse of the old book than for a whole infinity of it-who can measure? It would of "ifs." With that weaponry are as library containing all the productions of I must confine myself today to the "ifs" and the divinity of Jesus Christ. Almost everybody is chewing on an "if."

The other religions are a sort of cocaine to be been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding to be unmb and deaden the soul while been answered. But notwithstanding the prayer and speak of the "if" of overpowering earnestness, the "if" of incredulity, the "if" of threat, the "if" of argumentation, the pulpit discourse.

THE EARNEST "IF."

First, the "if" of overpowering earnestness. My text gives it. The Israelites have been worshiping an idol, notwithstending all that God had done for that they were all generally supervised them, and now Moses offers the most by the Lord. Second, surrender the idea shall bear it." Christ gives us that "if" vehement prayer of all history, and it that they were all generally supervised turns upon an "if." "If thou wilt for- by the Lord and adopt the theory that this thy day the things which belong unto give their sins—and if not, blot me, I they were not all, but partly, supervised thy peace, but now they are hidden from pray thee, out of thy book." Oh, what by the Lord. Third, believe that they are thine eyes." Paul gives us that "if" an overwhelming "if?" It was as much the gradual evolution of the age, and when he says, "If they shall enter into as to say: "If thou wilt not pardon them, do not pardon me. If thou wilt not the times in which they lived. Fourth, bring them to the promised land, let me never see the promised land. If they not only unworthy of eredence, but permust perish, let me perish with them. In doom, record my doom. If they are shut which the martyrs died to the blatant glory awaiting the righteons no "if that book where thou recordest their out of heaven, let me be shut out of caricature of Christianity as the great-

let me go down into darkness." who, I have no doubt, have, in their all and in those who regard sacred things repent, whether we will believe, whether absorbing desire to have others saved, is the "if" of incredulity. In 1879, in we will rise forever. Is it not time that risked the same prayer, for it is a risk. Scotland, I saw a letter which had been we take our eternal future off that You must not make it unless you are written many years ago by Thomas Car-swivel? Is it not time that we extirpate willing to balance your eternal salvation lyle to Thomas Chalmers. Carlyle, at that "if," that miserable "if," that hazon such an "if." Yet there have been the time of writing the letter, was a ardous "if?" We would not allow this cases where a mother has been so anxious young man. The letter was not to be uncertain "if" to stay long in anything her prayer has swung and trembled and lyle. His death having taken place, the in regard to a railroad bridge, "I have poised on an "if" like that of the text, "If letter ought to be published. not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book. Write his name in the Lamb's Book of lyle expresses the tortures of his own Life, or turn to the pages where my mind while relaxing his faith in Chrisname was written 10 or 20 or 40 or 60 tianity, while at the same time he exyears ago, and with the black ink of presses his admiration for Dr. Chalmers, everlasting midnight erase my first and in which Carlyle wishes that he had name, and my last name, and all my the same faith that the great Scotch minname. If he is to go into shipwreck, let ister evidently exercised. Nothing that me be tossed amid the same breakers. If Thomas Carlyle ever wrote in "Sartor he cannot be a partner in my bliss, let Resartus," or the "French Revolution," me be a partner in his woe. I have for or his "Life of Cremwell," or his immany years loved thee, O God, and it mortal "Essays," had in it more wonhas been my expectation to sit with drous power than that letter which be-Christ and all the redeemed at the ban- wailed his own doubts and extelled the quet of the skies, but I now give up my strong faith of another. promised place at the feast, and my promised robe, and my promised crown, and with the understanding that it should not my promised throne unless John, unless be published until after the death of George, unless Henry, unless my darling Thomas Carlyle; but, returning to my hoson can share them with me. Heaven tel in Edinburgh, I felt uneasy lest some will be no heaven without him. O God, how that letter should get out of my pos-

That is a terrific prayer, and yet there is a young man sitting in the pew on the main floor, or in the lower gallery, or in the top gallery, who has already crushed such a prayer from his mother's heart. He hardly ever writes home, or, living more to him than the rain that drops the difference between the "I know" of death, and he took a newspaper from the caves of the house on a dark Paul, and the "I know" of Job, and the around his luncheon and bound it night. The fact that the death and the "I know" of Job, and the around his luncheon and the night. night. The fact that she does not sleep because of watching for his return late at

REV. DR. TALMAGE PREACHES FROM A self sacrificing and all the ordinary prayers that mothers make for their children, and all have failed. She is coming toward the vivid and venturesome and ter-

tyzes a Great Variety of Ifs-Only Four lift her cwn eternity and set it upon that Steps From a Stout Truth to a Blatant one "if," by which she expects to decide whether you will go up with her or she down with you. She may be this mocle this morning Rev. Dr. Talmage de "O Lord, reclaim him by thy grace," and ment looking heavenward and saying, livered one of his most unique and useful then adding that heart rending "if" of my text, "If not, blot me, I pray thee, dozen shipwrecked, and among them a least "if." Bury dozen shipwrecked, and among them a least "if." How to do it? Fling

side of those words which describe deity. and if I should ask them to give testimony it would be the testimony of that the split timbers of the whaling ship-

THE "IFS" OF INCREDULITY. Another Bible "if" is the "if" of incredulity. Satan used it when Christ. vitality was depressed by 40 days' abstinence from food and the tempter pointed to some stones, in color and shape like loaves of bread, and said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." That was appropriate, for Satan is the father of in such an exigency. I have had 14 great that 'if' of incredulity. Peter used that bereavements, to say nothing of lesser same "if" when, standing on the wet bereavements, for I was the youngest of and slippery deck of a fishing smack on a large family. I have had as much per-Lake Galilee, he saw Christ walking on the sea as though it were as solid as a had all kinds of trial, except severe and pavement of basalt from the adjoining volcanic hills, and Peter cried out, "If it be thou, let me come to thee on the

What a preposterous "if!" What hudefying the mightiest law of the universe-the law of gravitation-and standing erect on the top of the liquid. Yet since before you were born, removing the incredulous Peter cries out to the her spectacles because she will have clear Lord, "If it be thou." Alas, for that in- vision in the home to which she has credulous "if!" It is working as powerfully in the latter part of this nineteenth | child reclining amid the flowers that Christian century as it did in the early pile the casket and looking as natural part of the first Christian century.

gospel chariot. "If!" "If!" We have the gospel of Jesus Christ. swamp snything but omnipotence. But sailed the Pentateuch, and the miracles, all the other religions of all the ages. puts his knee on an "if." "if" of eternal significance, or so many and atheism and all immoralities has sunlight and halleluiah. Do not adulof these "ifs" as I can compass in the two doorposts, and the one is made up of terate it with one drop of the tincture of time that may be reasonably allotted to the letter "i" and the other of the let- incredulity. ter "f."

There are only four steps between strong faith and complete unbelief: First, nal significance. Solomon gives us that surrender the idea of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and adopt the idea men wrote according to the wisdom of my rest." All those "ifs" and a score believe that the Bible is a bad book and responsibility of our salvation on ournicious and debasing and cruel.

Only four steps from the stout faith in heaven. If they go down into darkness, est sham of the centuries. But the door to all that precipitation and horror is made out of an "if." The mother of attaches itself to the question as to ness of prayer! Yet there are those here unrests in the minds of Christian people whether we will accept, whether we will published until after the death of Car- else of importance. Let some one say

It was a letter in which Thomas Car-

save my boy or count me among the session and be published before its time. So I took it back to the person by whose permission I had copied it. All reasons

"I know" of all those who hold with a over the three miles underground to the

aloft," said Captain Judkins to his mate, grateful emotion. "and look out for wrecks."

Before the mate had gone far up the Lifeboats were lowered, and 40 men volboy of 12 years.

"That, sir, is my mother's Bible. She told me never to lose that." "Could you and saved that." "Did you expect to go down?" "Yes, sir, but I meant to take my mother's Bible down with me." "Bravol" said Captain Judkins. "I will take care of you."

That boy demonstrated a certainty and a confidence that I like. Just in proportion as you have few "ifs" of incredulity in your religion will you find it a comfortable religion. My full and unquestioning faith in it is founded on the fact that it soothes and sustains in time of trouble. I do not believe that any man who ever lived had more blessings and prosperity than I have received from God and the world. But I have had trouble enough to allow me opportunity for finding out whether our religion is of any use bereavements, for I was the youngest of secution as comes to most people. I have prolonged sickness, and I would have been dead long ago but for the consolatory power of our religion.

Any religion will do in time of prosperity. Buddhism will do. Confucianman foot was ever so constructed as to ism will do. Theosophy will do. No walk on water? In what part of the religion at all will do. But when the earth did law of gravitation make excep- world gets after you and defames your tion to the rule that a man will sink to best deeds, when bankruptcy takes the the elbows when he touches a wave of place of large dividends, when you fold river or lake, and will sink still farther for the last sleep the still hands over the unless he can swim? But here Peter looks still heart of your old father whe has out upon the form in the shape of a man | been planning for your welfare all these years, or you close the eyes of your mother who has lived in your life, ever gone, or you give the last kiss to the and lifelike as she ever did reclining in Though a small conjunction, it is the the cradle, then the only religion worth biggest block today in the way of the anything is the old fashioned religion of

theological seminaries which spend most | I would give more in such a crisis for of their time and employ their learning one of the promises expressed in half a The door but our religion is inspiration, illuminathrough which people pass into infidelity tion, imparadisation. It is a mixture of A SIGNIFICANT "IF."

Another Bible "if" is the "if" of eter-"if" twice in one sentence when he says, "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest, thou alone when he says, "If thou hadst known in more that I might recall put the whole selves. Christ's willingness to pardonno "if" about that. Christ's willingness to help-no "if" about that. Realms of

The only "if" in all the case worth moment's consideration is the "if" that and you would not cross it. Let some one say, "I have reasons to ask if that steamer is trustworthy," and you would

not take passage on it. Let some one suggest in regard to a property that you are about to purchase, "I have reason to ask if they can give a good title," and you would not pay a dollar down until you had some skillful real estate lawyer examine the title. But I allowed for years of my lifetime, and some of you have allowed for years of your lifetime an "if" to stand tossing up and down questions of eternal destiny. Oh, decide! Perhaps your arrival here today may decide. Stranger things that that have put to flight forever the "if"

A few Sabbath nights ago in this of uncertainty. church a man, passing at the foot of the pulpit, said to me, "I am a miner from as into a Scottish home, may suggest its into a Scottish home. printing, for that letter shows more rock fell on me, and my fellow laborer

turing "if" of incredulity on the other, wound I read on it something that I like the positive faith of that sailor boy saved my soul, and it was one of your that Captain Judkins of the steamship Scotta picked up in a hurricane. "Go passed on, leaving me transfixed with

And who knows but the words I now speak, blessed of God, may reach some ratlines he shouted: "A wreck! A wreck!" wounded soul deep down in the black "Where away?" said Captain Judkins. mine of sin, and that these words may "Off the port bow," was the answer, be blessed to the stanching of the wound and the eternal life of the soul? unteered to put out across the angry sea Settle this matter instantly, positively body, mind and soul in a prayer as ear-"Who are you?" said Captain Judkins. nest as that of Moses in the text. Can The answer was: "I am a Scotch boy, you doubt the earnestness of this prayer My father and mother are dead, and I of the text? It is so heavy with emotion am on my way to America." "What have that it breaks down in the middle. It you here?" said Captain Judkins as he was so carnest that the translators in opened the boy's jacket and took hold of the modern copies of the Bible were filled up. Such an abrupt pause; such a sudden snapping off of the sentence.

You cannot parse my text. It is an offense to grammatical construction. But that dash put in by the typesetters is mightily suggestive. "If thou wilt forgive their sin" (then comes the dash)— "and if not, blot me. I pray thee, out of thy book." Some of the most earnest prayers ever uttered could not be parsed and were poor specimens of language. They halted; they broke down; they passed into groans or sobs or silences God cares nothing for the syntax of prayers; nothing for the rhetoric of prayers. Oh, the wordless prayers! If they were piled up, they would reach to the rainbow that arches the throne of God. A deep sigh may mean more than a whole liturgy. Out of the 116,000 words of the English language there may not be a word enough expressive for the soul.

The most effective prayers I have ever heard have been prayers that broke down with emotion-the young man for the first time rising in a prayer meeting and saying, "O Lord Jesus!" and then sitting down, burying the face in the handkerchief; the penicent in the inquiry room kneeling and saying, "God help me," and getting no further; the broken prayer that started a great re-vival in my church in Philadelphia. A prayer may have in style the gracefulness of an Addison, and the sublimity of a Milton, and the epigrammatic force of an Emerson, and yet be a failure, having a horizontal power, but no perpendicular power; horizontal power reaching the ear of man, but no perpendicular power reaching the ear of God.

USE OF "IF" IN PRAYER. Between the first and the last sentences of my text there was a paroxysm of earnestness too mighty for words. will take half of an eternity to tell of all the answers of earnest and faithful prayer. In his last journal David Livingstone, in Africa, records the prayer so soon to be answered: "19 March-Birthday. My Jesus, my God, my Life, my All, I again dedicate my whole self to thee. Accept me and grant, O gracious Father, that ere this year is gone I may finish my task. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.

When the dusky servant looked into Livingston's tent and found him dead on his knees, he saw that the prayer had the text it was a defeated prayer and was not answered. I think the two "ifa" in the prayer defeated it, and one "if" is enough to defeat any prayer, whatever other good characteristics it may have. 'If thon wilt forgive their sins-and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book." God did neither. As the following verses show, he punished their sins, but I am sure did not blot out one letter of the name of Moses from the book of

There is only one kind of prayer in which you need to put the "if," and that is the prayer for temporal blessings. Pray for riches and they may engulf us, or for fame and it may be witch us, or for worldly success of any sort and it may destroy us. Better say, "If it be best," "if I can make proper use of it," "if Thou seest I need it." A wife, praying for the recovery of her husband from illness stamped her foot and said with frightful emphasia: "I will not have him die, God shall not take him." Her prayer was answered, but a few years after the community was shocked by the fact that he had in a moment of anger slain her.

A mother, praying for a son's recovery from illness, told the Lord he had no right to take him, and the boy recovered, but plunged into all abominations and died a renegade. Better in all such prayers and all prayers pertaining to our temporal welfare put an "if," saying, "If it be thy will!" But praying for spiritual good and the salvation of our soul we need never insert an "if." spiritual welfare is sure to be for the best, and away with the "ifs."

Abraham's prayer for the rescue of Sodom was a grand prayer in some respects, but there were six "ifs" in it, or peradventures," which mean the same "Peradventure there may be 50 righteons in the city, peradventure 45, peradventure 40. peradventure 30, peradventure 20, peradventure 10." six peradventures, those six "ifs," killed the prayer, and Sodom went down and went under. Nearly all the prayers that were answered had no "ifs" in them
—the prayer of Elijah that changed dry weather to wet weather, the prayer that changed Hezekiah from a sick man to a well man, the prayer that halted sun and moon without shaking the universe to pieces.

Oh, rally your soul for a prayer with no "ifs" in it. Say in substance, "Lord, thou hast promised pardon, and I take it. coat sleeve and said, "Do you see that scar on my arm?" I said: "Yes. You permission I had copied it. All reasons scar on my arm? I said: "Les. I've my chains of bondage; by the gospel for its privacy having vanished, I wish it might be published. I wish some time." He said: "Yes, it nearly hammer strike them off. I am floring

With the Mosaic earnestes text and without its Mosaic "ifs," let us

THE INSUF THE BIBLE night does not choke his laughter or hasten his step forward. firm grip the old gospel, on the one hand, and the unmooring, bestorming and to:



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David McKillep,

HOWARD, er's dash of the text, and with a wordless silence implore pardon and comfort and life and heaven. For this assemblage, all of whom I shall meet in the last judgment, I dare not offer the prayer of my text, and so I change it and say, 451 Marion Street. "Lord God, forgive our sins and write our names in the book of thy loving remembrance, from which they shall never

Robert Mantell intends to have "Parrhasius" reconstructed so as to make a four act play. The piece, when completed, is to be produced with elaborate scenic effects.

be blotted out."

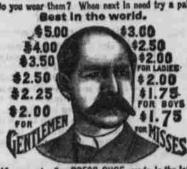
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