

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

THE SWELLING OF JORDAN.

"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustest, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"—Jer. 17:5.

Not in a petulant but in kindly terms I must complain that a wrong has been done me, and the cause of honest journalism, by

A PRETENDED SERMON.

that is going the rounds of hundreds of papers with my name appended, a sermon entitled "Frauds Detected;" text, Numbers, ch. 32, v. 23: "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out." Not one sentence of that pretended sermon did I preach. If this were the only offence of the kind I would not speak of it. Such a fraud is not only a wrong to me but to the gentlemen who, at these tables, Sabbath by Sabbath, take accurate reports of what is said and done, and is a gross wrong to the newspapers which give every week my sermon in full to their readers, and often at great expense to themselves. The only fault I have to find with the newspaper press of this country is, that they treat me too well. But I cannot be made responsible for entire sermons not one word of which did I preach! But now I turn from personal explanation to the more important subject of the text.

Jeremiah had become impatient with his troubles. God says, "If you cannot stand these

SMALL TRIALS.

and persecutions what are you going to do when the greater trials and persecutions come? If you have been running a race with footmen and they have beaten you, what chance is there that you will outrun horses?" And then the figure is changed. You know in April and May the Jordan overflows its banks, and the waters rush violently on, sweeping everything before them. And God says to the prophet, "If you are overcome with smaller trials and vexations, which have assailed you, what will you do when the trials and annoyance and persecutions of life come in a freshet?" "If in the land of peace, wherein thou trustest, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

I propose, if God will help me, in a very practical way to ask—If it is such a difficult thing to get along without the religion of Jesus Christ when things are comparatively smooth, what will we do without Christ amid the overpowering

DISASTERS THAT MAY COME.

upon us? If troubles, slow as footmen, surpass us, what will we do when they take the feet of horses? and if now in our life-time we are beaten back and submerged of sorrows because we have not the religion of Jesus to comfort us, what will we do when we stand in death, and we feel all around about us "the swelling of Jordan?"

The fact that you have come here my brother, my sister, shows that you have some things you believe in common with myself. You believe that there is a God. There is not an atheist in all this house. I do not believe there ever was a real atheist in all the world. Napoleon was on a ship's deck bound for Egypt. It was a bright starry night, and as he paced the deck, thinking of the great affairs of the State and of battle, he heard two men on the deck in conversation about God; one saying there was a God, and the other saying there was none. Napoleon stopped and looked up at the starry heavens, and then he turned to these men in conversation and said: "Gentlemen, I heard one of you say there is no God; if there is no God, will you please to tell me who made all that?" "Ay, if you had not been persuaded of it before, you are persuaded of it now; for the shining heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth shows His handiwork."

But you believe more than that; you believe that there was a Jesus; you believe that there was a Cross; you believe that you have an immortal soul; you believe that it must be regenerated by the spirit of God, or you can never dwell in bliss eternal. I think a great many of you will say that you believe it is important to have the religion of Jesus Christ every day of our life, to smooth our tempers and purify our minds, and hold us

IMPETURABLE AMID ANNOYANCE

and all the vexations of life. You and I have seen so many men trampled down by misfortune because they had no faith in Jesus, and you say to yourself, "If they were so easily overcome by the trials of life, what will it be when greater misfortunes come upon them—heart-breaking calamities, tremendous griefs?" Oh, if we have no God to comfort us when our fortune goes, and we look upon the grave of our children, and our houses are desolate, what will become of us? What a sad thing it is to see men all unhelped of God going out to fight giants of trouble; no closet of prayer in which to retreat, no promise of mercy to soothe the soul, no rock of refuge in which to hide from the blast! Oh, when the swift couriers of trouble are brought up, clamping and panting for the race, and the reins are thrown upon their necks, and the lathered flanks at every spring feel the stroke of the lash, what can we do or foot with them? How can we compete with them? If, having run with the footmen, they wearied us, how can we contend with horses?

We have all yielded to temptation. We have been surprised afterward that so small an inducement could have deceived us from the right. How insignificant a temptation has sometimes captured our soul! And if that is so, my dear brother, what will it be when we come to stand

IN THE PRESENCE OF TEMPTATION.

that prostrated a David, and a Moses, and a Peter, and some of the mightiest men in all God's kingdom? Now we are honest; but suppose we were placed in some path of life, as many of God's children have been, where all the forces of earth and hell combine to capture the soul? Without Jesus we would go down under it. If already we have been seaten by insignificant footmen, we could be distanced ten thousand

leagues by the horses. Ah! I don't like to hear a man say, "I could not commit such a sin as that. I can't understand how a man could be carried away like that." You don't know what you could do if the grace of God lets you. You know what John Bunyan said when he saw a man staggering along the street, thoroughly embriated in his habits. He said: "There goes John Bunyan but for the grace of God." I can say when I see one utterly fallen: "There goes De Witt Talmage but for the grace of God." If we have been delivered from temptation it is because the strong arm of the Lord Almighty has been about us, and not because we were any better than they. It is a great

FOLLY TO BORROW TROUBLE.

If we can meet the misfortunes of today, we will be able to meet the troubles of to-morrow; but suppose now if through a lack of the religion of Jesus we are overthrown by small sorrows, does not our common-sense teach us that we cannot stand up against great ones? If we cannot carry a pound, can we carry a thousand pounds? If we are discomfited coming into battle with one regiment, a brigade will cut us to pieces. If we are unfit to cope with one small trial, won't we be overcome by greater ones? If the footmen are too much for us, won't the odds be more fearful when we contend with horses?

I thank God that some of His dear children have been delivered. How was it that Paul could say, "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing all things?" And David, the Psalmist, soars up into the rock of God's strength and become thoroughly composed amid all his sorrows, saying, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in the time of trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountain shake with the swelling thereof."

But my text suggests something in advance of anything I have said. We must all quit this life. However sound our health may be, it must break down; however good our title may be to houses, land, and estates.

WE MUST SURRENDER.

We will hear a voice bidding us away from all these places. We will have to start on a pilgrimage from which we can never come back. We will have seen for the last time the evening star, and watched the last summer cloud, and felt the breath of the spring wind for the last time. Hands of loved ones may be stretched out to hold us back, but they cannot go with us. About all other exits and changes we may trifle, but not about this. Stupendous moment of life-quitting. Oh, when the great tides of eternity arise about us, and fill the soul and surround it, and sweep it out toward rapture or woe, all that will be "the swelling of Jordan!"

I know people sometimes talk very merrily about the departure from this life. I am sorry to hear it. But men do make fun of the passage from one world to another. Byron joked a great deal about it, but when it came he shivered with horror. Many an infidel has scoffed at the idea of fear in a future world, but lying upon his pillow in the last hour his teeth have chattered with terror. I saw, in Westminster Abbey, an epitaph a poet ordered to be put upon his tomb:

"Life is a jest, and all things show it; I thought so once, but now I know it."

I thought how inapt that, in a place of sepulchre, men should try their wit. A great German having rejected Christ, in his last moment said, "Give me light, give me light!" Oh, we may be smart with our witticisms about the last hour, but when it comes, and the tides are rising, and the surf is beating, and the winds are howling, we will each one, my brethren, find for himself that it is "the swelling of Jordan!" Our natural courage won't hold out then. However familiar we may have been with scenes of mortality, however much we may have screwed our courage up, we want something more than natural resources. When the north-east wind blows off from the sea of death, it will put out all earthly lights. The lamp God-lighted is

THE ONLY LAMP

that can stand in that blast. The weakest arm holding that s all not be confounded; the strongest, the one rejecting that, shall stumble and die. When the Jordan rises in its wrath, the first dash of its wave will swamp them forever. We feel how sad it is for a man to attempt this life without religion. We see what a doleful thing it is for a man to go down into the misfortunes of life without Christian solace; but if that be so, how much more terrible when that man comes face to face with the solemnities of the last hour! Oh, if in the bright sunshine of health and prosperity a man felt the need of something better, how will he feel when the shadows of the last hour gather above his pillow! If, in the warmth of worldly prosperity, he was sometimes dismayed, how will he feel when the last chill creeps over him? If while things were comparatively smooth he was disquieted, what will he do in the agonies of dissolution? "If in the land of peace, in which he trusted, they wearied him, what will he do amid the swelling of Jordan?"

Oh, I rejoice to know that so many of God's children have gone through that pass without a shudder! Some one said to a dying Christian, "Isn't it hard for you to get out of this world?" "Oh, no," he says, "it is easy dying; it is blessed dying, it is glorious dying!" and then he pointed to a clock on the wall, and he said, "The last two hours in which I have been dying I have had more joy than all the years of my life." A general came into the hospital after the battle, and among the wounded there was

ONE MAN DYING,

and the general said, "Ah! my dear fellow, you seem very much wounded. I am afraid you are not going to get well." "No," said the soldier, "I am not going to get well, but I feel very happy," and then he looked up into

the general's face and said, "I am going to the front." Oh, I have seen them, and so have you, go out of this life without a tear on their cheek! There was weeping all around the room, but no weeping in the bed; the cheeks were dry. They were not thrown down into darkness, they were lifted up. We saw the tides rising around them and the swelling of the wave. It washed them off from the cares and toils of life; it washed them on toward the beach of heaven. They waved to us a farewell kiss as they stood on deck, and floated down further and further, wafted by gales from heaven, until they were lost to our sight—mortality having become immortality—

"Life's duty done, as sinks the ebb, Light from its load the spirit flies; While heaven and earth combine to say, How blest the righteous when he dies!"

What high consolation to you that your departed friends were

NOT SUBMERGED

in the swelling of Jordan! The Israelites were just as thoroughly alive on the western bank of the Jordan as they had been on the eastern banks of the Jordan; and our departed Christian friends have only crossed over—not sick, not dead, not exhausted, not extinguished, not blotted out, but with healthier respiration, and stouter pulses, and keener eyesight, and better prospects, crossed over, their sins, their physical and mental disquiet, all left clear this side, an eternally flowing, impassable obstacle between them and all human and Satanic pursuit. Crossed over! Oh, I shake hands of congratulation with all the bereaved in the consideration that our departed Christian friends are safe!

Why was there years ago so much joy in certain circles in New York when people heard from their friends who were on board the City of Brussels? It was thought that vessel had gone to the bottom of the sea; and when the friends on this side heard that the steamer had arrived safely in Liverpool, had we not the right to congratulate the people of New York that their friends had got

SAFELY ACROSS?

And is it not right this morning that I congratulate you that your departed friends are safe on the shore of heaven? Would you have them back again? Would you have those old parents back again? You know how hard it was sometimes for them to get their breath in the stifled atmosphere of the summer; would you have them back for next summer? Didn't they use their brain long enough? Would you have your children back again? Would you have them take the risk of temptations which through every human pathway? Would you have them cross the Jordan three times in addition to crossing it already, and cross it again to greet you now, and then cross back afterward? For certainly you would not want to keep them forever out of heaven. If they had lived forty or fifty years longer, would they have been safe?

"Pause and weep, not for the freed from pain, But for the sigh of love would pull them back again."

I ask a question, and there seems to come back the answer in

THE HEAVENLY ECHO.

"What, will you never be sick again?" "Never—sick—again." "What, will you never be tired again?" "Never—tired—again." "What, will you never weep again?" "Never—weep—again." "What, will you never die again?" "Never—die—again." Oh, ye army of departed kindred, we hail you from bank to bank! Wait for us when the Jordan of death shall part for us. Come down and meet us half way between the willowed banks of earth and the palm-groves of heaven.

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand, And cast a wistful eye To Canaan's fair and happy land, Where my possession lies."

But there is one step still in advance suggested by this subject. If this religion of Christ is so important in life and so important in the last hours of life, how much more important it will be in the great eternity! I need not stand here and argue it. There is something within your soul that says now, while I speak, "I am immortal; the stars shall die, but I am immortal." You feel that your existence on earth is only a small piece of your being. It is only

A MILE TO THE GRAVE,

but it is ten thousand miles beyond. The slab of the tomb is only the milestone on which we read of infinite distance yet to be travelled. The world itself will grow old and die. The stars of our night will burn down in their sockets and expire. The sun, like a spark struck from an anvil, will flash and go out. The winds will utter their last whisper, and seven heavens its last groan; but you and I will live forever! Gigantic—immortal. Mighty to suffer or enjoy. Mighty to love or hate. Mighty to soar or to sink. Then, what will be to us the store, the shop, the office, the applause of the world, the scorn of our enemies, the things that lifted us up, and the things that pressed us down? What to John Wesley are all the mobs that howled after him? What to Voltaire are all the nations that applauded him? What to Paul now the dungeons that chilled him. What to Latimer now the flames that consumed him? All those who through the grace of Christ reach that land will never be disturbed. None to dispute their throne, they shall reign forever and ever.

But alas! for those who have made no preparations for the future. When the sharp-shod hoofs of eternal disaster come up panting and swift to go over them, how will they contend with horses? And when the waves of their wretchedness rise up, white and foamy, under the swooping of eternal storms, oh, what will they do "amid the swelling of Jordan?"

If I could come into your heart this moment, I would see many of you, my friends, had

VOWED TO BE THE LORD'S.

I know not what sickness it was, or what trial; but I verily believe there is not a man in the house but has some time vowed he would be the Lord's. It might have been at the time when your child lay sick you said, "O Lord, if Thou wilt let this child get well, I will be a Christian." Or it might have

been in some business trouble, when you have said, "O Lord, if Thou wilt let me keep my property, I will be a Christian." You kept your property, your child got well, the peril passed. Are you a Christian? We say, "O Lord, do so, and I will do so." The darkness passes, the peril goes away. We are as we were before, or worse; for oh, how often I have seen men start for the kingdom of God, come up to within an arm's reach of it, and then go back farther from God than they ever were before, dropping from the very moment of their privilege into darkness forever! Oh, how ungrateful we have been!

A RESCUE BY A DOG.

There was a steamer on one of the Western lakes heavily laden with passengers, and there was a little child who stood on the side of the taffrail, leaning over and watching the water, when she lost her balance and dropped into the waves. The lake was very rough. The mother cried, "Save my child! Save my child!" There seemed none disposed to leap into the water. There was a Newfoundland dog on deck. He looked up in his master's face, as if for orders. His master said, "Tray, overboard, catch 'em!" The dog sprang into the water, caught the child by the garments, and swam back to the steamer. The child was picked up by loving hands, the dog was lifted on deck, and the mother, ere she fainted away, in utter thanksgiving to that dog, threw her arms around its neck and kissed it; but the dog shook himself off from her embrace, and went and laid down as though he had accomplished nothing. Shall a mother be grateful to a dog that saves her child, and be ungrateful to the Son of God who, from the heights of heaven, plunged into the depths of darkness and suffering and woe that He might lift us up out of our sin and place us on the Rock of Ages? Oh, the height, the depth, the length, the infinity, the horror of our ingratitude! Don't you treat Jesus like that any more. Don't you thrust Him back from your soul. He has been the best Friend you ever had. You will want Him after awhile. When the world is going away from your grasp, and all the lights that shine on your soul are going out, and the friends that stand around you can do you no good, and you feel your feet slipping from beneath you—oh, then you will want Him—the loving Jesus, the sympathetic Jesus, the pardoning Jesus—to stand close by you, and hold you up "amid the swelling of Jordan!"

Bound to get Along.

I guess young Jones will get on. He's in an office on California street, or somewhere thereabouts. He's careless, and had made so many mistakes that he knew the one he made last would be fatal. He went back from lunch the other day and a fellow-clerk met him on the stairs.

"You'll get it, Jones. The old man's just boiling, and he's been calling for you the last fifteen minutes."

Jones stopped on the landing and cogitated. He must head off the old man, somehow. He ran down stairs and up the street as hard as he could go, to a drist. There he purchased a little 15-cent boutonniere, and marched gravely back.

"Mr. Jones!" came in a loud tone from the private office as he entered.

"Yes sir," and he deposited his hat, hid the flower in his coat, walked into the private office and closed the door carefully.

"Mr. Jones, I have frequently—" "I beg your pardon, sir, but I have a private message for you."

"Mr. Jones, you've been—a private message! What is it?"

His tones changed as Jones quietly laid the flower on the desk before him.

"What is this?" "It's a little bouquet. A lady came in while you were out—a young lady—and inquired for you. 'He's not in,' I said. 'Can I do anything for you?' 'Can I trust you?' she asked. 'With the utmost confidence,' I said. 'Will you give this flower to Mr. Johnson?' And don't let anybody see you, and tell him it was left by the lady in the blue bonnet. And here it is, sir."

"Dear me! that's odd." Jones saw a beam come in his face, and he knew he was all right. "The lady in the blue bonnet! Bless my soul, Jones, that's curious. I don't know any—what was she like?"

"She was very pretty."

"Pretty! Very well, Mr. Jones, you'll really have to be a little more careful. You've been making another—by the way, Jones, if you can find out anything about the lady—you needn't mention, of course—you can let me know."

And the old man's been looking fixedly at every woman in a blue bonnet he has met since.

Condition of Honduras.

In referring to the industries of Honduras a few days ago, The Observer called attention to the fact with proper cultivation the country could be made one of the most productive of the Central American states. The only reason why its progress has been so slow is to be found in the character of its inhabitants. According to a recent authority society is scandalously demoralized, and drunkenness, debauchery and gambling prevail without restraint or limit. Money is plenty, comparatively speaking, and easily obtained, and as in the mining camps of California in 1849 and 1850, it is used to gratify the lowest vices. There is no effort whatever to save.

The large amount of money which is constantly being distributed along the coast in exchange for fruit would make any civilized and temperate community prosperous and happy, says Consul Burchard of Truxillo. But in the place of the neat houses and handsome public works that one might expect to see, only a collection of wretched hovels covered with leaves and plastered with mud, with dirt floors and no windows, meets the eye. Men go barefoot and dirty, ragged and profane, their sickly and bloated looks telling of bad living and dissipation. Women whose loud dress, flashy ornaments and general demeanor indicate their mode of life, and dirty, half-clad children, with cadaverous faces from the great majority of the population of the coast cities,

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 1887.

Jacob's Sunday.

LESSON TEXT.

(Gen. 32: 9-12, 24-30.)

LESSON PLAN.

TOPIC OF THE QUARTER: Beginnings.

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER: Before the mountains were brought forth, or even thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.—Psa. 90: 2.

LESSON TOPIC: The Beginning of Human Exaltation.

Lesson Outline: (1) Humiliation, vs. 9-12. (2) Perseverance, vs. 24-25. (3) Exaltation, vs. 27-30.

GOLDEN TEXT: And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.—Gen. 32: 26.

DAILY HOME READING:

M.—Gen. 32: 9-12, 24-30. Beginning of human exaltation. T.—Gen. 32: 1-8. Jacob's alarm. W.—Gen. 32: 13-23. Jacob's schemes. T.—Gen. 33: 1-20. Jacob comforted. F.—Gen. 35: 1-15. Jacob in prosperity. S.—Rom. 8: 1-18. Human exaltation proceeding. S.—Rev. 7: 9-17. Human exaltation complete.

LESSON ANALYSIS.

I. HUMILIATION.

I. Promises Remembered: O Lord, which saidst unto me, Return, (9). Return unto the land of thy fathers (Gen. 31: 3).

Now arise, . . . return unto the land of thy nativity (Gen. 31: 13). There hath not failed one word of all his good promise (1 Kings 8: 56). Having . . . these promises, . . . let us excuse ourselves (2 Cor. 7: 1).

II. Unworthiness Confessed: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies (10).

Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear (Matt. 3: 11).

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come (Matt. 8: 8).

I am no more worthy to be called thy son (Luke 15: 19).

I . . . am not meet to be called an apostle (1 Cor. 15: 9).

III. Fear Acknowledged: For I fear him, lest he come and smite me (11).

I heard thy voice, . . . and I was afraid (Gen. 3: 10).

I was afraid, . . . the Lord was wrath (Deut. 9: 19).

I feared the people and obeyed their voice (1 Sam. 15: 24).

I feared thee, because thou art an austere man (Luke 19: 21).

1. "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies." (1) A high estimate of God's mercies; (2) A low estimate of personal deserts.

2. "Deliver me, I pray thee; . . . for I fear him." (1) The danger; (2) The Deliverer; (3) The deliverance.—(1) Man's emergency; (2) God's opportunity.

3. "And thou saidst." (1) God's promises remembered; (2) God's promises urged.—(1) God has spoken; (2) Man should hear.

IV. PERSEVERANCE.

I. The Long Struggle: There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day (24).

He had power over the angel, and prevailed (Hos. 12: 4).

He that endureth to the end, . . . shall be saved (Matt. 10: 22).

Be ye steadfast, unmovable (1 Cor. 15: 58).

Let us not be weary in well-doing (Gal. 6: 9).

II. The Powerful Antagonist: He touched, . . . and . . . Jacob's thigh was strained (25).

I will work, and who shall let it? (Isa. 43: 13).

There is nothing too hard for thee (Jer. 32: 17).

No one shall snatch them out of my hand (John 10: 28).

Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood (Eph. 6: 12).

III. The Fixed Decision: I will not let thee go, except thou bless me (26).

We will serve the Lord (Josh. 24: 15). My heart is fixed, O God (Psa. 108: 1).

I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die (Acts 21: 13).

I press on toward the goal (Phil. 3: 14).

1. "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." (1) The parties to the contest; (2) The purpose of the contest; (3) The spirit of the contest; (4) The outcome of the contest.

2. "Let me go, for the day breaketh." (1) A testing proposition; (2) An arousing proposition.—(1) The angel's appeal; (2) The man's success.

III. EXALTATION.

I. New Name: Thy name shall be called . . . Israel (28).

I have called thee by thy name (Isa. 43: 1).

Thou shalt be called by a new name (Isa. 62: 2).

Upon the stone a new name written (Rev. 2: 17).

I will write upon him the name of my God (Rev. 3: 12).

II. New Power: Thou hast striven with God, . . . and hast prevailed (29).

He had power with God (Hos. 12: 3).

I truly am full of power by the spirit of the Lord (Mic. 3: 8).

God, which had given such power unto men (Matt. 9: 8).

But ye shall receive power (Acts 1: 8).

III. New Views: I have seen God face to face (30).

From my flesh shall I see God (Job 19: 23).

They shall see God (Matt. 5: 8).

Now we see in a mirror, . . . then face to face (1 Cor. 13: 12).

We shall see him even as he is (1 John 3: 2).

- 1. "No more Jacob, but Israel." (1) A new character; (2) A new name (3) A new outlook.—(1) Old things have passed away; (2) All things have become new.
- 2. "He blessed him there." (1) The nature of Jacob's blessing; (2) The means of Jacob's blessing; (3) The lessons of Jacob's blessing.
- 3. "I have seen God face to face." (1) A marvelous condescension in God; (2) A wonderful privilege for man.—A spectacle (1) Amazing; (2) Ineffable; (3) Exalting.

LESSON BIBLE READING.

ISRAEL.

The name bestowed (Gen. 32: 23; 35; 9, 10).

Extended to a nation (Exod. 5; 2; 18; 25; Deut. 34: 8).

Cherished as a title (1 Kings 18: 31; Isa. 43: 1).

God spoken of Israel (Exod. 6: 6-8; Num. 10: 25).

Favors bestowed on Israel (Deut. 7: 6; Rom. 9: 1, 2; 9: 4, 5).

Christ to come of Israel (Num. 24: 17; Luke 2: 32).

Israel a sectional name (1 Kings 12: 16-20).

Israel, the sect, cut off (2 Kings 10: 32; 17: 5, 6).

A spiritual Israel (John 8: 39; Rom. 9: 6-8).

Holy fruits demanded (Matt. 3: 7-9; Rom. 2: 28, 29).

F