

DR. TALMAG'S SERMON

Cursing and Swearing.

"So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die."—Job 2: 7-9.

A STORY oriental and marvellous, Job was the richest man in all the East. He had camels and oxen, asses and sheep, and what would have made him rich without anything else, seven sons and three daughters. It was the habit of these children to gather together for family reunion. One day, Job is thinking of his children as gathered together at a banquet at the elder brother's house.

While the old man is seated at his tent door, he sees some one running, evidently from his manner bringing bad news. What is the matter now?

"Oh," says the messenger, "a foraging party of Sabaeans have fallen upon the oxen and the asses, and destroyed them and butchered all the servants except myself." Stand aside! Another messenger running. What is the matter now? "Oh," says the man, "the lightning has struck the sheep and the shepherds, and all the shepherds are destroyed except myself." Stand aside! Another messenger running. What is the matter now? "Oh," he says, "the Chaldeans have captured the camels, and slain all the camel-drivers except myself." Stand aside! Another messenger running. What is the matter now? "Oh," he says, "a hurricane struck the four corners of the tent where your children were assembled at the banquet, and they are all dead." But

THE CHAPTER OF CALAMITY

has not ended. Job was smitten with elephantiasis, or black leprosy. Tumors from head to foot—forehead ridged with tubercles—eyelashes fall out—nostrils excoarated—voice destroyed—intolerable exhalations from the entire body, until, with none to dress his sores, he sits down in the ashes with nothing but pieces of broken pottery to use in the surgery of his wounds. At this moment, when he needed all encouragement and all consolation, his wife comes in, in a fret and a rage, and says: "This is intolerable! Our property gone, our children slain, and now you covered up with this loathsome and disgusting disease! Why don't you swear? Curse God and die!"

Job knew right well that swearing would not restore one of his agonized body, would not bring back one of the destroyed camels, would not restore one of his dead children. He knew that profanity would only make the pain more unbearable and the poverty more distressing, and the bereavement more excruciating. But, judging from

THE PROFANITY ABROAD

in our day, you might come to the conclusion that there was some great advantage to be reaped from profanity. Blasphemy is all abroad. You hear it in every direction: The drayman swearing at his cart, the sewing girl imprecating the tangled skein, the accountant cursing the long line of troublesome figures. Swearing at the store, swearing in the loft, swearing in the cellar, swearing on the street, swearing in the factory. Children swear. Men swear. Women swear! Swearing, from the rough calling on the Almighty in the low restaurant, clear up to the reckless "O Lord" of a glittering drawing-room; and the one is as much blasphemy as the other.

There are times when we must cry out to the Lord by reason of our physical agony or our mental distress, and that is only throwing out our weak hand toward the strong arm of a father. It was no profanity when James A. Garfield, shot in the Washington depot, cried out: "My God, what does this mean?" There is no profanity in calling out upon God in the day of trouble, in the day of darkness, in the day of physical anguish, in the day of bereavement; but I am speaking now of the triviality and of the recklessness with which the name of God is sometimes used.

THE WHOLE LAND IS CURED

with it. A gentleman coming from the far West sat in the car day after day behind two persons who were indulging in profanity; and he made up his mind that he would make a record of their profanities, and at the end of two days several sheets of paper were covered with these imprecations, and at the close of the journey he handed the manuscript to one of the persons in front of him. "Is it possible," said the man, "that we have uttered so many profanities the last few days?" "It is," replied the gentleman. "Then," said the man who had taken the paper, "I will never swear again."

But it is a comparatively unimportant thing if a man makes record of our improprieties of speech. The more memorable consideration is that every improper word, every oath uttered, has a record in the book of God's remembrance, and that the day will come when all our crimes of speech, if unrepented of, will be our condemnation. I shall not to-day deal in abstractions. I hate abstractions. I am going to have a plain talk with you, my brother, about a habit that you admit to be wrong.

The habit grows in the community, by young

PEOPLE THINKING IT MANLY

to swear. Little children, hardly able to walk straight on the street, yet have enough distinctness of utterance to let you know that they are damning their own souls, or damning the souls of others. It is an awful thing the first time the little feet are lifted, to have them set down on the burning pavement of hell! Between sixteen and twenty years of age, there is apt to come a time when a young man is as much ashamed of not being able to swear gracefully as he is of the dirtiness of his first cigar. He has his hat, his boots, and his coat of the right pattern, and now, if he can only swear without awkwardness, and as well as his comrades, he believes he is in the fashion. There are young men who walk in an atmosphere of imprecation

—oaths on their lips, under their tongues, nesting in their shock of hair. They abstain from it in the elegant drawing-room, but the street and the club-house ring with their profanities. They have no regard for God, although they have great respect for the ladies! My young brother, there is no manliness in that. The most ungentlemanly thing a man can do is to swear.

FATHERS FOSTER THIS CRIME.

There are parents who are very cautious not to swear in the presence of their children; in a moment of sudden anger, they look around to see if the children are present when they indulge in this habit. Do you not know, O father, that your child is aware of the fact that you swear? He overheard you in the next room, or someone has informed him of your habit. He is practicing now. In ten years he will swear as well as you do. Do not, O father, be under the delusion that you may swear and your son not know it. It is an awful thing to start the habit in a father—the father to be profane, and then to have the echo of his example come back from other generations; so that generations after generations curse the Lord.

The crime is also fostered by master mechanics, boss carpenters, those who are at the head of men in hat factories and in dock-yards, and at the head of great business establishments. When you go down to look at the work of the scaffolding, and you find it is not done right, what do you say? It is not prying, is it? The employer swears—his employe is tempted to swear. The man says: "I don't know why my employe, worth \$50,000 or \$100,000, should have any luxury I should be denied, simply because I am poor. Because I am poor and dependent on a day's wages, haven't I as much right to swear as he has with his large income?" Employers swear, and that makes so many employe swear. The habit also comes

FROM INFIMITY OF TEMPER.

There are a good many people who, when they are at peace, have righteousness of speech, but when angered they blaze with imprecation. Perhaps all the rest of the year they talk in right language, but now they pour out the fury of a whole year in one red-hot paragraph of five minutes. I knew of a man who excused himself for the habit saying: "I only swear once in a great while. I must do that just to clear myself out."

The habit comes also from the profuse use of bywords. The transition from a byword, which may be perfectly harmless, to imprecation and profanity, is not a very large transition. It is "my stars!" and "mercy on me!" and "good gracious!" and "by George!" and "by Jove!" and you go on with that a little while, and then you swear. The words, perfectly harmless in themselves, are next door to imprecation and blasphemy. A profuse use of bywords always ends in profanity.

THE HABIT IS CREEPING UP

into the highest styles of society. Women have no patience with flat and unvarnished profanity. They will order a man out of the parlor indulging in blasphemy, and yet you will sometimes find them with fairy fan to the lip, and under chandeliers which bring no blush to their cheek, taking on their lips the holiest of names in utter triviality.

Why, my friends, the English language is comprehensive, and capable of expressing all shades of feeling and every degree of energy. Are you happy—Noah Webster will give you ten thousand words with which to express your exhilaration. Are you righteously indignant—there are whole armies in the vocabulary, righteous vocabulary—whole armies of denunciation, and scorn, and sarcasm, and irony, and caricature, and wrath. You express yourself against some meanness or hypocrisy, in all the oaths that ever smoked up from the pit, and I will come right on after you and give you a thousandfold more emphasis of denunciation to the same meanness and the same hypocrisy, in words across which no slime has ever trailed, and into which the fires of hell have never shot their forked tongues—the pure, the innocent, God-honored Anglo-Saxon in which Milton sang, and John Bunyan dreamed and Shakespeare dramatized.

THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR PROFANITY

when we have such a magnificent language—such a flow of good words, potent words, mighty words, words to suit every crisis and every case.

Do you know that this trivial use of God's name results in perjury? Do you know that people who take the name of God on their lips in recklessness and thoughtlessness are fostering the crime of perjury? Make the name of God a football in the community, and it has no power when in court-room and in legislative assembly it is employed in solemn adjuration! See the way, sometimes, they administer the oath—"S'help you God—kiss the book!" Smuggling, which is always a violation of the oath, becomes in some circles a grand joke. You say to a man: "How is it possible for you to sell these goods so very cheap? I can't understand it." "Ah!" he replies, with a twinkle of the eye, "the Custom-house tariff of these goods isn't as much as it might be." An oath does not mean as much as it would were the name of God used in reverence and in solemnity. Why is it that so often jurors render unaccountable verdicts, and judges give unaccountable charges, and useless schemes pass in our State capitals?

What is an oath? Anything solemn? Anything that calls upon the Almighty? Anything that marks an event in a man's history? Oh, no! It is kissing the book! There is no habit, I tell you, plain and I talk to hundreds and thousands of men to-day who will thank me for my utterance—I tell you, my brother—I talk to you not professionally but just as one brother talks to another on some very important theme—I tell you there is no habit that so depletes a man's nature as the habit of profanity.

You might as well try to raise vineyards and orchards on the sides of bleaching Stroboli, as to raise anything good on a heart from which there pours out the scoria of profanity. You may swear yourself down; you cannot swear yourself up. When the Mohammedan finds a piece of paper he cannot read, he puts it aside very cautiously for fear the

name of God may be on it. That is one extreme. We go to the other.

WHAT IS THE CURE

of this habit? It is a mighty habit. Men have struggled for years to get over it. There are men in this house of God who would give half their fortune to get rid of it. An aged man was in the delirium of a fever. He had for many years lived a most upright life and was honored in all the community; but when he came into the delirium of this fever he was full of imprecation and profanity, and they could not understand it. After he came to his right reason he explained it. He said: "When I was a young man I was very profane. I conquered the habit, but I had to struggle all through life. You haven't forty years heard me say an improper word, but it has been an awful struggle. The tiger is chained, but he is alive yet."

If you would get rid of this habit, I want you, my friends, to dwell upon

THE USELESSNESS OF IT.

Did a volley of oaths ever start a heavy load? Did they ever extirpate meanness from a customer? Did they ever collect a bad debt? Did they ever cure a tooth-ache? Did they ever stop the twinge of the rheumatism? Did they ever help you forward one step in the right direction? Come now, tell me, ye who have had the most experience in this habit, how much have you made out of it? Five thousand dollars in all your life? No. One thousand? No. One hundred? No. One dollar? No. One cent? No. If the habit be so utterly useless, away with it!

But you say: "I have struggled to overcome the habit a long while, and I have not been successful." You struggled in your strength, my brother. If ever a man wants God, it is in such a crisis of his history. God alone, by His grace, can emancipate you from that trouble. Call upon Him day and night, that you may be delivered from this crime. Remember, also, in the cure of this habit, that it arouses God's indignation. The Bible reiterates, from chapter to chapter, and verse after verse, the fact that it is accursed for this life, and that it makes a man miserable for eternity. There is not a sin in all the catalogue that is so often perpetually

PUNISHED IN THIS WORLD

as the sin of profanity. There is not a city or a village, but can give an illustration of a man struck down at the moment of imprecation. A couple of years ago, briefly referring to this in a sermon, I gave some instances in which God had struck swearers dead at the moment of their profanity. That sermon brought to me from many parts of this land and other lands statements of similar cases of instantaneous visitation from God upon blasphemers. My opinion is that such cases occur somewhere every day, but for various reasons they are not reported.

In Scotland a club assembled every week for purposes of wickedness, and there was a competition as to which could use the most horrid oath, and the man who succeeded was to be president of the club. The competition went on. A man uttered an oath which confounded all his comrades, and he was made president of the club. His tongue began to swell, and it protruded from the mouth, and he could not draw it in, and he died, and the physicians said: "This is the strangest thing we ever saw; we never saw any account in the books like unto it; we can't understand it. I understand it. He cursed God and died."

At Catskill, N. Y., a group of men stood in a blacksmith's shop during a violent thunderstorm. There came a crash of thunder, and some of the men trembled. One man said: "Why, I don't see what you are afraid of. I am not afraid to go out in front of the shop and defy the Almighty. I am not afraid of lightning." And he laid a wager on the subject, and he went out, and he shook his fist at the heavens, crying, "Strike, if you dare!" and instantly he fell under a bolt. What destroyed him? Any mystery about it? Oh, no.

HE CURSED GOD, AND DIED.

Oh, my brother, God will not allow this sin to go unpunished. There are styles of writing with manifold sheets, so that a man writing on one leaf, writes clear through ten, fifteen, or twenty sheets; and so every profanity we utter goes right down through the leaves of the book of God's remembrance. It is no exceptional sin. Do you suppose you could count the profanity of last week—the profanities of office, store, shop, factory? They cursed God, they cursed His Word, they cursed His only Begotten Son. One morning, on Fulton Street, as I was passing along, I heard a man swear by the name of Jesus. My hair bristled. My blood ran cold. My breath caught. My foot halted. Do you not suppose that God is aggravated? Do you not suppose that God knows about it? Dionysius used to have a cave in which his culprits were incarcerated, and he listened at the top of that cave, and he could hear every groan, he could hear every sigh, and he could hear every whisper of those who were imprisoned. He was a tyrant. God is not a tyrant; but he bends over this world, and he hears everything—every voice of praise, every voice of imprecation. He hears it all. The oaths seem to die on the air, but

THEY HAVE ETERNAL ECHO.

They come back from the ages to come. Listen! Listen! "All blasphemers shall have their place in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." And if, according to the theory of some, a man commits in the next world the sins which he commits in this world—if unpardoned, unrepented—think of a man's going on cursing in the name of God to all eternity! The habit grows. You start with a small oath, you will come to the large oath. I saw a man die with an oath between his teeth. Voltaire only gradually came to his tremendous imprecation; but the habit grew on him until, at the last moment, supposing Christ stood at the bed, he exclaimed, "Crush that wretch! Crush that wretch!" Oh, my brother, you begin to swear, and there is nothing impossible for you in the wrong direction. Who is this God whose name you are using in swearing? Who is He? Is

He a tyrant? Has He pursued you all your life long? Has He starved you, frozen you, tyrannized over you? No! He has loved you. He has sheltered you. He watched you last night. He will watch you to-night. He wants to love you, wants to help you, wants to save you. He was

YOUR FATHER'S GOD,

and your mother's God. He has housed them from the blast, and He wants to shelter you. Will you spit in his face by an imprecation? Will you ever thrust Him back by an oath? Who is this Jesus whose name I heard in the imprecation? Has He pursued you all your life long? What vile thing has He done to you that you should so dishonor His name? Why, He was the Lamb whose blood simmered in the fires of sacrifice for you. He is the Brother that took off His crown, that you might put it on. He has pursued you all your life long with mercy. He wants you to love Him, wants you to serve Him. He comes with streaming eyes and broken heart, and blistered feet to save you.

Were is the hand that will ever be lifted in imprecation again? Let that hand, now bloodstained, be lifted, that I may see it. Not one. Where is the voice that will ever be uttered in dishonoring the name of that Christ? Let it speak now. Not one. Not one. Oh, I am glad to know that these vices of the community, and these crimes of our city, will be gone. Society is going to be bettered. The world, by the power of Christ's Gospel, is going to be saved, and this crime, this iniquity, and all the other iniquities, will vanish before the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon the nation.

There was one day in New England memorable for storm and darkness. I hardly ever saw such an evening. The clouds which had been gathering all day unlimbered their batteries. The Housatonic, which flows quietly, save as the paddles of pleasure-parties rattle the oarlocks, was lashed into foam, and the waves hardly knew where to lay themselves.

OH, WHAT A TIME IT WAS!

The hills jarred under the rumbling of God's chariots. Blinding sheets of rain drove the cattle to the bars, or beat against the window pane as though to dash it in. The grain fields threw their crowns of gold at the feet of the storming. When night came in, it was a double night. Its mantle was torn with the lightnings, and into its locks were twisted the leaves of uprooted oaks and the shreds of canvas torn from the masts of the beached shipping. It was such a night as makes you thank God for shelter, and open the door to let in the spaniel howling outside with terror. We went to sleep under the full blast of heaven's great orchestra, the forests with uplifted voices, in chorus that filled the mountains, praising the Lord. We woke not until the fingers of the sunny morn touched our eyelids. We looked out the window, and the Housatonic slept as quiet as an infant's dream. The trees sparkled as though there had been some great grief in heaven, and each leaf had been God-appointed to catch an angel's tear. It seemed as if our Father had looked upon the earth, His wayward child, and stooped to her tear-wet cheek and kissed it. So will

THE DARKNESS OF SIN

and crime leave our world before the dawn of the morning. The light shall gild the city spire, and strike the forests of Maine and the masts of Mobile, and all between. And one ending resting on the Pacific beach, God will spring a great rainbow arch of peace, in token of everlasting covenant that the world shall nevermore see a deluge of crime. "Behold," says some one, "preaching against the evils of society will accomplish nothing. Do you not see that the evils go right on?" I answer, we are not at all discouraged.

It seemed insignificant for Moses to stretch his hand over the Red Sea. What power could that have over the waters? But the east wind blew all night; the water gathered into two glittering palisades on either side. The billows reared as God's hand pulled back upon their crystal bits. Whirl Pearls crash under the feet. The shout of hosts mounting the beach answers the shout of hosts mid-sea; until, as the last line of the Israelites have gained the beach, the shields clang, and the cymbals clap; and as the waters whelm the pursuing foe, the swift-fingered winds on the white keys of the foam play the grand march of Israel delivered, and the awful dirge of Egyptian overthrow. So we go forth, and stretch out the hand of prayer and Christian effort over these dark, boiling waters of crime and sin. "Aha! Aha!" say the deriding world. But wait. The winds of divine help will begin to blow; the way will clear for the great army of Christian philanthropists; the glittering treasures of the world's beneficence will line the path of our feet; and to the other shore we will be greeted with the clash of all heaven's cymbals; while those who resist and deride and pursue us will fall under the sea, and there will be nothing left of them but here and there, cast high and dry upon the beach, the splintered wheel of a chariot, and thrust out from the surf, the breathless nostril of a riderless charger.

A BOTTLE MAKING MACHINE.

Like many other industries, the work of bottle making has of late years suffered so much from foreign competition that it has almost been driven from this country, Germany and Belgium being the largest producers. It is hoped, however, that the lost industry may be again revived here, these hopes being founded upon a lately invented machine, which will turn out bottles far more expeditiously than they can be made by hand, and at a tithe of the cost. This machine is the invention of Mr. Howard M. Ashley, and is being worked at the glass manufactory of Messrs. Sykes, Macvay & Co., of Castleton. In this machine the molten glass is poured into a mold, and the application of air under pressure distends the glass and causes it to fill the interior of that mold. It is believed that when this machine is complete, with six or eight molds, it will be possible by it to make twenty-four bottles per minute.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 1893.

The Talents.

LESSON TEXT. (Matt. 25: 14-30. Memory verses, 20-21.)

LESSON PLAN.

TOPIC OF THE QUARTER: Jesus the King in Zion.

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER:

But ye behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor.—Heb. 2: 9.

LESSON TOPIC: A Message Emphasizing Accountability.

Outline: 1. Talents Entrusted, vs. 14-18. 2. Faithfully Rewarded, vs. 19-22. 3. Neglect Punished, vs. 24-30.

GOLDEN TEXT: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—Rev. 2: 10.

DAILY HOME READINGS:

M.—Matt. 25: 14-30. Accountability emphasized.

T.—Luke 19: 11-27. Accountability emphasized.

W.—Matt. 21: 33-46. Accountability emphasized.

T.—1 Cor. 12: 1-31. Diversities of gifts.

F.—Rom. 12: 1-21. Faithful service.

S.—1 Cor. 3: 1-15. Service tested.

S.—Matt. 25: 31-46. Reward and punishment.

LESSON ANALYSIS.

I. TALENTS ENTRUSTED.

1. Varied Abilities:

To each according to his several ability (15).

Having gifts differing according to the grace... given (Rom. 12: 6).

There are diversities of gifts (1 Cor. 12: 4).

Some to be apostles; and some, prophets (Eph. 4: 11).

As each hath received a gift, ministering to it (1 Pet. 4: 10).

II. Opportunity Improved.

He... made other five talents (16).

She of her wad did cast in all that she had (Mark 12: 44).

She hath done what she could (Mark 14: 8).

According to their power... they gave (2 Cor. 8: 3).

Ye were running well (Gal. 5: 7).

III. Opportunity Neglected.

He... hid his lord's money (18).

I have called, and ye refused (Prov. 1: 24).

He went away sorrowful (Matt. 19: 22).

They made light of it (Matt. 22: 5).

Others mocking said, They are filled with new wine (Acts 2: 13).

1. Called his own servants, and delivered unto them his own goods.

(1) The master; (2) The servants; (3) The trust.

2. "To each according to his several ability." (1) Ability universal; (2) Ability varied; (3) Ability employed.

3. "Straightway he... went and traded with them, and made other five talents." (1) Activity; (2) Promptness; (3) Profit.—(1) Going; (2) Trading; (3) Making.

IV. FAITHFULLY REWARDED.

1. The Returning Lord:

The lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning (19).

There is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom (Matt. 25: 6).

Ye know not when the lord of the house cometh (Mark 13: 35).

Behold, he cometh with the clouds (Rev. 1: 7).

Yea, I come quickly (Rev. 22: 20).

II. The Good Report:

Lo, I have gained other five talents (20).

Lo, I have gained other two talents (Matt. 25: 22).

Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more (Luke 19: 16).

I labored more abundantly than they all (1 Cor. 15: 10).

I have fought the good fight (2 Tim. 4: 7).

III. The Rich Reward:

Enter thou into the joy of thy lord (21).

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you (Matt. 25: 34).

Have thou authority over ten cities (Luke 19: 17).

There is laid up for me the crown (2 Tim. 4: 8).

I will give thee the crown of life (Rev. 2: 10).

1. "The lord... cometh, and maketh a reckoning." (1) The coming of the lord; (2) The reckoning with the servants; (3) The settlement of their destiny.

2. "Well done, good and faithful servant." (1) The servant's character; (2) The servant's conduct; (3) The servant's commendation.

3. "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (1) A grand opportunity; (2) A gracious invitation.

III. NEGLECT PUNISHED.

1. The Buried Talent:

I... hid thy talent in the earth (25).

Jonah rose up to flee... from the presence of the Lord (Jonah 1: 3).

If... the light that is in thee be darkness, how great! (Matt. 6: 23).

He... said, I go, sir; and went not (Matt. 21: 30).

Thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin (Luke 19: 20).

II. The Neglected Duty:

Thou oughtest... to have put my money to the bankers (27).

Do it with thy might (Ecc. 9: 10).

Seek ye first his kingdom (Matt. 6: 33).

Wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank? (Luke 19: 23).

Do all the glory of God (1 Cor. 10: 31).

III. The Terrible Penalty:

Cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness (30).

The sons... shall be cast forth into the outer darkness (Matt. 8: 12).

And shall cut him asunder (Matt. 24: 51).

That servant... shall be beaten with many stripes (Luke 12: 47).

Slay them before me (Luke 19: 27).

1. "I knew thee that thou art a hard

man." (1) Superior knowledge claimed; (2) Unjust severity charged; (3) Base neglect extenuated.

2. "Lo, thou hast thine own." (1) His own unimpaired; (2) His own unimproved.—(1) The solemn trust; (2) The faithful service; (3) The insolent restoration; (4) The unexpected doom.

3. "Thou oughtest." (1) The basis of human obligation; (2) The scope of human obligation; (3) The sequences of human obligation.

LESSON BIBLE READING.

HUMAN ACCOUNTABILITY.

Covers all things (Matt. 12: 36).

Proportioned to ability (2 Cor. 8: 12; Mark 12: 43, 44).

Makes each man a steward (1 Pet. 4: 10).

Cannot be escaped (Matt. 25: 27; Luke 19: 23).

Should constantly be remembered (Ecc. 11: 9).