

# REV. DR. TARMAGE

The Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "The Lessons of Winter."

TEXT: "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"—Job xxxviii, 22.

Grossly maligned is the season of winter. The spring and summer and autumn have had many admirers, but winter, hoary headed and white bearded, with his hoary enemies than friends. Yet without winter the human race would be insane and effulgent. You might speak of the winter as the mother of tempests, a saint, the father of a whole family of physical, mental and spiritual energies. The most people that I know are strong in proportion to the number of snowflakes that had to cling over their heads in childhood, while their fathers drove the sled loaded with logs through the crunching drifts high as the fences.

At this season of the year, when we are so familiar with the snow, those frozen vapors, those falling blossoms of the sky, those white angels of the atmosphere, those poems of the storm, those Halls and Odes of the wintery tempest, I turn over the leaves of my Bible and—though most of it was written in a clime where snow seldom or never fell—I find a few chapters of interesting conceptions. Though the writers may seldom or never have felt the cold touch of the snowflake on their cheek, they had in sight two mountains, and the snow was so suggestive. Other kings sometimes take off their crowns, but Lebanon and Mount Hermon all the year round and through the ages never lift the coronets of crystal from their foreheads.

The first time we find a deep fall of snow in the Bible is where Samuel describes a fight between Beniah and a lion in a pit, and though the snow may have originated under the wounds of both man and brute, the shaggy monster rolled over dead, and the giant was victor. But the snow is not fully recognized in the Bible until the story of Job, the scientist, concerning his wonders, saying, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"

I rather think Job may have examined the snowflake with a microscope; for, although it is supposed that the microscope was invented long after Job's time, there had been wonders of glass long before the microscope and telescope of later days were thought of. So long ago as when the Coliseum was in its full splendor, Nero sat in the emperor's box of that great theatre, which held a hundred thousand people, and looked at the combats through a gem in his finger ring which brought everything close up to his eye.

Four hundred years before Christ, in the stores at Athens, were sold powerful glasses called "burning spheres," and Laysard, the explorer, found a magnifying glass amid the ruins of Nineveh and in the palace of Nimrod. Whether through magnifying instrument or with unaided eye I cannot say, but I am sure that Job somehow went through the galleries of the snowflake and counted its pillars and found wonders, raptures, mysteries, theologies, majestic infinities walking up and down its corridors, as a result of the question which the Lord had asked him, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"

Oh, it is a wondrous meteor! Membold studied it in the Andes, twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea. De Saussure related among these meteors in the Alps, Dr. Scoresby counted ninety-six varieties of snowflake amid the arctic. They are in shape of stars, in shape of coronets, in shape of cylinders, are globular, are hexagonal, are pyramidal, are castellated. After a fresh fall of snow, in one walk you step under your feet, Tuilleries, Windsor castles, St. Paul's, St. Peter's, St. Mark's, cathedrals, Alhambra and palaces innumerable. I know it depends much on our own condition what impression these flying meteors of the snow make.

I shall not forget two rough and unpretending wood cuts which I saw in my boyhood side by side, one a picture of a prosperous farmhouse, with all signs of comfort, and a lad warily dressed looking out of the door upon the bright flurry of snow, and his mind no doubt filled with the sound of jingling sleigh bells and the frolic with playfellows in the deep banks, and he, clapping his hands and shouting, "It snows! it snows!" The other sketch was of a boy, haggard and hollow eyed with hunger, looking from the broken door of a wretched home, and seeing in the falling flakes, not the joyous and less bread and greater privation, but the hands and with tears rolling down his cheeks crying, "Oh, my God! it snows! it snows!" The abundance of snow that characterizes most of our winters may be a speedy relief to all whom this winter finds in want and exposure.

And now I propose, for your spiritual and everlasting profit, if you will accept my guidance, to take you through some of these wonders of crystallization. And notice first God in the little. You may take alpenstock and cross the Mer Glacier, the sea of ice, and ascend Mont Blanc, which rises into the clouds like a pillar of the great white Thron, or with arctic explorer ascend the mountains around the north pole, and see glaciers a thousand feet high grinding against each other three thousand feet high. But I will take you on a less pretentious journey and show you God in the snowflake. There is room enough between the pillars of the great archway to stand. In that one frozen drop on the tip of your finger you may find the throne room of the Almighty. I take up the snow in my hand and see the dominion paving the celestial pavements.

The telescope is grand, but I must confess that I am quite as much interested in the microscope. The one reveals the universe above us, the other just as great a universe beneath us. But the microscope overwhelms me, while the microscope comforts me. What you want and I want especially is a God in the little. If we were graphic or archaic in our natures we would want to study God in the great; but such small, weak, short-lived beings as you and I are want to find God in the little.

When I see the Maker of the universe giving Himself to the architecture of a snowflake, and making its shafts, its domes, its curves, its walls, its irradiations so perfect I conclude He was looking after our interests in the affairs. And if we are of more value than a sparrow, most certainly we are of more value than an inanimate snowflake. So the Bible would chiefly impress us with God in the little. It does not say, "Consider the clouds," but it says, "Consider the lilies." It does not say, "Behold the tempests" but "Behold the fowls" and it appoints a cry of cold water and the widow's five mites, and says the hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear, therefore, that you are going to be lost in the crowd. Do not think that because you estimate yourself as only one snowflake among a three days' January snow storm that you will be forgotten. The birth and death of a drop of chilled vapor is as certainly regarded by the Lord as the creation and demolition of a planet. Nothing is big to God and nothing is small.

What makes the honey industries of South Carolina such sources of livelihood and wealth? It is because God teaches the ladybug to make an opening in the rind of the apricot for the bee, who cannot otherwise get at the juices of the fruit. So God sends the ladybug ahead to prepare the way for the honey bee. He teaches the ant to bite each grain of corn that she puts in the ground for winter food in order that it may not take root and so ruin the little granary. He teaches the raven in dry weather to throw pebbles into a hollow tree, that the water far down and out of reach may come up within the reach of the bird's beak. What a comfort that He is a God in the little! The appearance of a map that spread before him his vast dominions, and he could not find Great Britain on the map, and he called in his secretary and said: "Where is Great Britain, that I hear so much about?" "It is under your thumb," said the secretary, and the emperor raised his hand from the map and saw the country he was looking for.

And it is high time that we find this mighty realm of God close by and under our own little finger. To drop one of His memory would be to resign His omniscience. To refuse His protection would be to abdicate His omnipotence. When you tell me that it is the God of Jupiter and the God of Mercury and the God of Saturn, you tell me something so vast that I cannot comprehend it. But if you tell me He is the God of the snowflake, you tell me something I can hold and measure and realize. Thus the smallest snowflake contains a jewel case of comfort. Here is an opal, an amethyst, a diamond. Here is one of the treasures of snow. Take it for your present and everlasting possession.

Behold, also, in the snow the treasure of accumulated power. During a snow storm let an apothecary, accustomed to weigh most delicate quantities, hold his balance scale out of the window and let one flake fall on the surface of the scales, and it will not even make it tremble. When you want to express extreme privation of weight you say, "Light as a feather," but a snowflake is much lighter. It is just twenty-four times lighter than water. And yet the accumulation of these flakes broke down a few days ago, in sight of my house, six telegraph poles made helpless police and fire departments and halted rail trains with two thundering locomotives.

We have already learned so much of the power of electricity that we have become careful how we touch the electric wire, and in many a case a touch has been death. But a few days ago the snow put his hand on the wire of these telegraph poles, and tore them down as though they were cobwebs. The snow was so suggestive. Other kings sometimes take off their crowns, but Lebanon and Mount Hermon all the year round and through the ages never lift the coronets of crystal from their foreheads.

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no," says our celestial dragoman; "that is the residence of a soul whom you never heard of."

"When she gave her charity her left hand knew not what her right hand did. She was mighty in secret prayer, and no one but God and her own soul knew it. She had more trouble than anybody in all the land where she lived, and without complaining she bore it, and though her talents were never great, what she had was all consecrated to God and helping others, and the Lord is making up for her earthly privation by special raptures here, and the King of this country had that piece built especially for her."

As we pass up the street, you find on the out of her palace grounds in her chariot behind those two white horses for a ride on the banks of the river that flows from under the throne of God. Lay down your old classic which says something about these are the men who come out of great tribulation, and they shall reign for ever and ever. You find on the out of her palace grounds in her chariot behind those two white horses for a ride on the banks of the river that flows from under the throne of God. Lay down your old classic which says something about these are the men who come out of great tribulation, and they shall reign for ever and ever. You find on the out of her palace grounds in her chariot behind those two white horses for a ride on the banks of the river that flows from under the throne of God. Lay down your old classic which says something about these are the men who come out of great tribulation, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

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would make them clean. Well, Job had great admiration for snow, but he declares in substance that if he should wash his soul in melted snow he would still be covered with mud, like a man down in a ditch (Job ix, 30). "If I wash myself in snow and make my hands ever so clean, yet shall thou plunge me in the ditch and mine own clothes shall abhor me." We must be washed in the fountain of God's mercy before we can be whiter than snow. "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Oh, for the cleansing power!

If there be in all this audience one man or woman whose thoughts have always been right, whose actions are always right, let such a one rise, or if already standing, lift the right hand. Not one! All we, like sheep, have gone astray. Unclean! unclean! and yet we may be made whiter than snow whiter than that which, on a cold winter's morning, after a night of storm, clothes the tree from bottom of trunk to top of highest branch, whiter than that which this hour makes the Adirondacks and the Sierra Nevada and Mount Washington heights of pomp and splendor fit to enthrone an archangel.

In the time of Graham, the essayist, in one mountain district of Scotland an average of ten shepherds perished every winter in the snow drifts, so he proposed that at the distance of every mile a pole fifteen feet high and with two cross pieces be erected, showing the points of the compass, and a bell hung at the top, so that every breeze would ring it, and the shepherds on the mountains would hear the sound and take the direction given by its poles with the cross pieces and get safely home. Whether that proposed plan was adopted or not I do not know, but I do know that you are here and you are not blinding drifts of sin and sorrow that there is a cross near by that can direct you to home and peace and God; and hear you not the ringing of the gospel bell hanging to the cross, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it?"

The fact that the electric light has inflicted a severe blow at the occupation of the "midnight marauder" is now a familiar one, and a recent expression of opinion on the subject of protecting houses against the depredations of house-breakers has called special attention to the means which are now available for that purpose. The task of the cracksmen is becoming a weary and comparatively profitless one, and it is easy to believe that the lament which is occasionally wafted from his lips into the columns of the daily paper, that "there is now nothing in it," is uttered with the utmost sincerity. At one time it was a very easy matter for a burglar to saw through a bar or cut a pane of glass, but with the electrical appliances now being used in many houses, and which are so easily adjusted and so reliable in operation, it is only a question of time when all houses will be provided with them. The slightest movement of door or window after the alarm has been set will form a connection and start a gong in a distant part of the house. The alarm is thus given to the inmates, while the man, unconscious of the fact, is busily occupied in looking after the family silver. The same connection that alarms the sleeper may convey the alarm to the nearest police station, so that by the time the burglar gets through with his engrossing work he may find a couple of policemen outside patiently waiting his pleasure. Not long ago an enthusiastic merchant in Paris was so delighted with the working of this form of burglar alarm that he became enamored of thief-catching as a sport. He cleverly spread stories of the boards of jewelry and valuable bric-a-brac that were to be found in certain rooms of his house, and the bait was irresistible to the master cracksmen of the city. The merchant bagged his game very neatly several times, but at last the story crept out, and his unique sporting career came to a sudden end. Screen doors as well as windows can be provided with the alarm fittings so that the least attempt to make a hole will close the circuit and let the inmates of the house know of the advent of their uninvited visitor.—Chicago News.

The Sap-Sucker. A great many useful birds have been destroyed on the erroneous charge that they are in some way wholly detrimental to the farmers' interests with a compensating habit, and twice as many more that are admitted to be useful in some degree, in the mistaken belief that on the whole they are the authors of more harm than good. In the first category may be named the sap-sucker that is commonly considered a fair target for everybody's gun, on the plea that he is continually injuring young fruit trees for the purpose of feeding on the tender bark or sucking the sap, as popularly supposed. This is the head and front of his offending, for it is never pretended that he seriously injures fruit or grains. Close observers, however, are fully convinced that the little bird in question does not make original holes in the bark of the tree at which it is pecking, but that all its efforts are directed to destroying and devouring the borers that are concealed in holes already existing, which the birds have not made. At the very worst the bird does no more than in some cases to widen the hole enough to allow its beak to reach the worm.

As good an authority as Cassius M. Clay is on record as saying, from his own study of its habits, that the sap-sucker is the deadliest foe of the vermin which destroy our trees, and that every one should encourage the multiplication of sap-suckers.—St. Louis Republic.

Wigg's Apple. Thomas Wigg, of Wood County, W. Va., picked an apple the other day which had the figures "1890" on its side as plain as if they had been printed. Wigg thinks it is a warning that he will die next year.

William Graw, who died a year ago in Pittsburg, was thought to be worth \$9,000,000, and yet his estate has cleared up \$20,000,000.

The Shah of Persia has a passion for photography, and wherever he goes is accompanied by a court photographer with a camera always ready.

Six thousand different species of birds are known, and of these Europe possesses 603, and North America, 471.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY, 22, 1891. Elijah's Successor.

LESSON TEXT. Kings 2: 12-22. Memory verses: 12-14.

LESSON PLAN. TOPIC OF THE QUARTER: *Sinning and Serving.*

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER: *Godliness is profitable unto all things.*—1 Tim. 4: 8.

LESSON TOPIC: *God's Servant Impoverished.*

LESSON OUTLINE: 1. The Successor of Elijah, vs. 12-14. 2. The Gift of the Prophets, vs. 15-18. 3. The Benefactor of Men, vs. 19-22.

GOLDEN TEXT: *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*—Zech. 4: 6.

DAILY HOME READINGS: M.—2 Kings 2: 12-22. God's servant empowered. T.—John 16: 1-15. The source of power. W.—John 20: 1-23. Power imparted. T.—1 Cor. 1: 12-31. Power defined. F.—1 Cor. 2: 1-16. Power illustrated. S.—Acts 2: 1-21. Power at Pentecost. S.—Acts 2: 22-47. Power at Pentecost.

LESSON ANALYSIS. I. THE SUCCESSOR OF ELIJAH.

I. Separation: And he saw him no more (12). The Lord would take up Elijah... into heaven (2 Kings 2: 1). The Lord will take away thy master... to-day (2 Kings 2: 3). Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken (2 Kings 2: 9). A chariot of fire... which parted them both asunder (2 Kings 2: 11).

II. Sorrow: He took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two (12). Jacob rent his garments... and mourned for his son (Gen. 37: 34). When I heard this thing, I rent my garment (Ezra 9: 3). Mordcai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth (Esther 4: 1). Then Job rose, and rent his mantle (Job 1: 20).

III. Success: When he also had smitten the waters, they were divided (14). Moses stretched out his hand;... the waters were divided (Exod. 14: 21). The waters... stood, and rose up in one heap (Josh. 3: 16). Elijah... smote the waters, and they were divided (2 Kings 2: 8). He made the waters to stand as a heap (Psa. 78: 13).

IV. "He saw him no more." (1) Elijah's removal; (2) Elijah's bereavement;—(1) Companionship; Separation; (3) Loneliness.

"He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him. (1) The translated prophet; (2) The fallen mantle; (3) The qualified successor. When he also had smitten the waters, they were divided." (1) Smitten by Elijah; (2) Smitten by the Lord;—(1) The river's flow; (2) The prophet's blows; (3) The Lord's response.

V. THE CHIEF OF THE PROPHETS. I. Authority Acknowledged: The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha (15). Now I know that thou art a man of God (1 Kings 17: 24). Elisha... anointed to be prophet in thy stead (1 Kings 19: 16). Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me (2 Kings 2: 9). I perceive that this is an holy man of God (2 Kings 4: 9).

II. Reverence Shown: They... bowed themselves to the ground before him (15). They... bowed down themselves to him to the earth (Gen. 43: 26). I fell down before the Lord (Deut. 9: 18). She fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground (Ruth 2: 10). They fell down and worshipped him (Matt. 2: 11).

III. Petitions Asked: Let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master (16). Now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not (1 Kings 2: 16). Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother (1 Kings 19: 20). Elijah said, ... Ask what I shall do for thee (2 Kings 2: 9). Ye... know how to give good gifts unto your children (Matt. 7: 11).

IV. The Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. (1) The spirit of the departed prophet; (2) The spirit of the incoming prophet;—(1) Elijah's qualifications; (2) Elisha's request; (3) Elisha's endowment.

V. Let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master. (1) The departed master; (2) The importunate prophets; (3) The authorized successor.

VI. "Did not I say unto you, Go not?" (1) Elisha's first report; (2) The young man's persistent doubt; (3) Elisha's complete vindication.

III. THE BENEFACTOR OF MEN. I. Help Needed: The water is nagled, and the land miscarrieth (19). Ye have brought us forth... to kill... with hunger (Exod. 16: 3). The people thirsted there for water (Exod. 17: 3). They fell down, and there was none to help (Psa. 107: 12). Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat (John 6: 5).

II. God Honored: Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters (21). The Austrian Archbishops are probably the most highly paid in the world. The Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna has only about £6,000 a year, but the Cardinal Archbishop of Olmutz has £43,000, the Cardinal Archbishop of Prague has £35,000, and the Archbishop of Erzurum has £60,000. And the primate of Hungary, the Cardinal Archbishop of Grau, has £80,000 a year.

Moses cried unto the Lord (Exod. 17: 4).

Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble (Psa. 107: 13). Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness (Psa. 107: 15). Having given thanks, he distributed (John 6: 11).

III. Relief Secured: So the waters were healed unto this day (22). I will rain bread from heaven for you (Exod. 16: 4). The quails came up, and covered the camp (Exod. 16: 13). Water came forth abundantly (Num. 20: 11). He saved them out of their distresses (Psa. 107: 13).

1. "The men of the city said unto Elisha. (1) Jericho's advantages; (2) Jericho's disadvantages; (3) The citizen's appeal; (4) The prophet's assistance.

2. "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters." (1) An evil condition; (2) A competent helper; (3) A complete cure.—(1) The waters; (2) The salt; (3) The Lord; (4) The cure.

3. "So the waters were healed." (1) By divine power; (2) Through human intercession; (3) By appointed means.

LESSON BIBLE READING. THE PROPHETS OF OLD. God's spokesmen (Hos. 12: 10; Heb. 1: 1). God's messengers (2 Chron. 36: 15; Isa. 44: 26). God's servants (Jer. 35: 15; Rev. 22: 9). God's watchmen (Ezek. 3: 17; 33: 7). Were numerous (1 Sam. 10: 5; 1 Kings 18: 4). Gathered in school (1 Sam. 19: 20; 2 Kings 2: 3, 5). Spake by the Holy Ghost (2 Sam. 23: 2; 2 Pet. 1: 20, 21). Persecuted (Matt. 23: 29-33; Luke 11: 47, 48). Avenged (Matt. 23: 34-36; Luke 11: 49-51). Mighty through faith (Heb. 11: 32-34).

INTERVENING EVENTS.—There are none. PLACES.—The east bank of the Jordan, then the west bank, then Jericho, and the fountain supplying it with water, identified from the earliest times with the Fountain of Elisha, now known as 'Ayn es Sultan. This is near the site of ancient Jericho, which is north-west of the Jericho of the Gospels, and some miles from the modern village Eriha.

TIME.—Immediately after the last lesson; B. C. 896 (usual chronology); others give B. C. 898, and some place it as late as B. C. 853. The length of Elisha's stay at Jericho is not indicated.

PERSONS.—Elisha, the fifty men on the west bank of the Jordan; fifty sent out to look for Elisha; the people of Jericho; probably the rulers and elders. INCIDENTS.—Elisha, seeing Elijah in his ascent, cries out and rends his clothes; taking the fallen mantle of Elijah, he also divides the waters. The sons of the prophets, waiting for him, recognize and honor him as the successor of Elijah. They desire to search for the vanished prophet; Elisha forbids, but at last gives way to their importunity, and an unsuccessful search of three days occurs. The men of Jericho complain of the water, Elisha casts salt into the spring, announcing the Lord's healing of the waters, which thenceforward remained healed.

There is no parallel to the account of the ministry of Elisha. Weight of Ice on Tree Branches. A gentleman of Brookline has sent to the Liberator an account of a very interesting experiment in taking the weight of the ice upon tree branches during an ice-storm, when the ice on the trees was at its maximum. The gentleman thus describes the result of his experiment: "A branch of five syringas which weighed one pound had five pounds of ice on it, and a branch of pine needles weighing one pound had twelve pounds of ice on it. I got these weights by taking the wood with the ice on it at first, and then taking weight of wood after the ice had melted. This does not represent correctly the enormous strain or actual pressure exerted on the branches of trees by these ice-storms, but will easily account for the sad breakage of trees so common the past few days, and the dangers from these ice-storms on both trees and wires." It was surely a most fortunate thing that, during the days when the ice remained on the trees, we had no high winds. There must have been in that case, much more damage than was inflicted.—Boston Transcript.

By Accident. The term "tweed," which is used for a well-known kind of woollen cloth, is said to be a corruption of "tweels." The latter word was blotted or imperfectly written on an invoice, and so gave rise to the now familiar name of these goods. "Tweed" was read as "tweel" by the late James Locke, of London, a pioneer of the trade, and it was thought so