REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "Sinking to the Level of Brutes."

TEXT: *"All this came upon the King Nebuchadnezzar."*—Daniel iv., 28.

Colonel Rawlinson, the oriental traveler, says that the exhumed bricks, not only of Babylon, but of a hundred towns in an area of one hundred miles in length and thirty in breadth, are inscribed with the name of Nebuchadnezzar. He was a great warrior and at the glance of his sword nations prostrated themselves. He was a great king and built a city reservoir ninety miles in circumference and one hundred and twenty feet deep, and constructed a hanging garden four hundred feet square and seventy-five feet high, some say to please Amuhia, his wife, who had been born among the hills, and others say to get a pleasure ground free from the mosquitoes, which afflict the levels.

I think from his character the latter reason may have impelled him as much as the former. When he conquered King Zedekiah, so as to have no more trouble with him, he put his eyes out—a most barbarous way of incapacitating an enemy. But Babylon was a great place, the houses surrounded by gardens and the housetops were connected with each other by bridges, and one day Nebuchadnezzar walked out on those suspension bridges and showed, perhaps to a royal visitor, the vastness of his realm as the sun kindles the domes with glistenings almost insufferable and the great streets thunder up their pomp into the ear of the monarch, and armed towers stand around adorned with spoils of conquered empires.

Nebuchadnezzar waves his hand above the stupendous scene and exclaims, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?" In other words: "What a great man I am. Babylon was not anything until I adorned it. See those water works; see those gardens; see those forts. I did all this. I shall never be forgotten. Why, my name is on every brick in all those walls. Just look at me. I am more than a man."

But in an instant all that splendor is gone from his vision, for a voice falls from heaven, saying, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: the kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from men and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the fields; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

One hour from the time he had made the boast he is on his way to the fields a maniac, and rushing into the forests he becomes as one of the beasts, and is after awhile covered with eagles' feathers for protection from the cold, and his nails grow to look like birds' claws, in order that he may dig the earth for roots and climb the trees for nuts.

The mental disaster that seized him was what the Greeks called lycanthropy, by which a man imagines himself a beast and prefers to go out and mingle with brutes. He who had been eating pomegranates and apricots off of plates of gold inlaid with amethyst and diamond, and drinking the richest wines from the royal vats, now browsing on grass, and struck by the horn of the ox as he contends for a better tuft of the pasturage, and instead of an orchestra on benches of ivory playing the national airs, now listening to the moan and bellow and grunt of the beasts. This is not hard for me to believe, for the forms of dementia are innumerable.

A few years ago, arriving in a city on a summer afternoon, while waiting for my engagement in the evening I sauntered forth into what seemed to be a park in front of a large public building, the use of which I knew not. I met a gentleman, with whom I fell into delightful conversation, and he seemed intelligent on all subjects. After awhile I said, "Let us sit down on this bench and rest awhile and enjoy the scene of verdure and fountains." "No," said he. "You sit down, but I cannot. I am made of glass, and if I should sit down I would break to pieces." Then I saw that he was insane and belonged to the large building just behind us.

After such an interview as that I can easily believe this account of my text. Here is Nebuchadnezzar on all fours. He once prided himself on being more than a man, and now he turns out less than a man. The courtiers look out of the windows upon him as he moves among the royal herds and cry, "A beast!" Seven years pass when suddenly his reason returns and he comes back to Babylon a humble worshiper of the God of heaven.

What must have been the excitement in the royal court as this restored maniac emperor walks into the palace. What a time they had in cutting his nails and his hair, which had grown for seven years without being interfered with by any shears. What a scrubbing down must have taken place in the imperial baths. What a transformation necessary in order that he who had been herding with camels and goats and swine may be made fit to associate with princes. What a change from sty to throne room!

While walking from his Babylonian palace down to the pasture field, and from the pasture field back to the palace, the first thing that impresses me is what an incongruous thing it is for a king to be eating grass. It is good for cattle, but not fit for man. And then for one to prefer it to a royal table toward whose bounty the orchards and paddocks and streams and vineyards in all the earth might contribute—what an amazement! And yet the scene is as common as the daylight.

When I see a man of regal nature, made to rule in realms of thought, capable of all moral elevation, bestowing his faculties, attempting out of low sensualities to satisfy his immortal energies, coming down off of his throne of power into brutalities, sacrificing his higher nature to his lower nature, stooping and stooping, coming down and coming down until all his influence for good is gone, I cry out, "There is a king eating grass like an ox."

And there are tens of thousands of such Nebuchadnezzars. So there are queens who dedicate themselves to the same humiliation. What power for good God gave that woman. Magnetism of personal presence. Influence more than imperial. By her intelligence, by her tenderness, by her charm of smile and manner, capable of soothing so much sorrow, and reforming so much waywardness, and wielding so much elevated power; yet at the call of worldliness, coming out of the throne room of good influence where God would have her reign, coming down over the ivory stairs of mortal power, coming down and coming down until she has no more soul than the dead bird transfixed in her millinery or the chinchilla that was slain to afford her warmth, or the kid that furnished her the glove, and finding her only delight in flatteries of brainless men and midnight schottische and debauched novelettes. I say, "There is one who might have been a queen unto God forever, yet eating straw like an ox."

I look over the pasture fields of folly and sin and find many groveling who ought to be erect. Oh, men and women, go back to your thrones! A young man ran away from home and broke his widowed mother's heart. Fourteen years passed, and he returned and came to the window at which his old mother was sitting. She looked up and immediately recognized him and said: "Oh, Robert Robert! Come in!" "No!" said he. "Mother, I shall never come in till I hear you say you forgive me." Her answer was: "Robert, I have forgiven you long ago. There is nothing to forgive now except that you stayed away so long."

My hearers, forgiveness has been ready for you a good while. With more than a mother's tenderness God will take you back. They are waiting for you up in the palace Nebuchadnezzar was the son of Nabopolassar, who ruled before him, and you are the child of a King!

The next thought that passes into my mind from the contemplation of this incident is that conviction is not conversion. Who is this monarch that makes the boast about Babylon? The very man who, under the revelation of dreams that Daniel made from heaven, deeply humbled himself, while he confessed that God is a God of Gods and a Lord of Lords, yet behold that that humbling and arousing which he before felt did not result in a radical change.

There is no mistake more frequent than of supposing conviction a synonym for conversion. Conviction is merely a sight of sin; conversion is a view of pardon. Conviction is merely alarm; conversion is confidence. Conviction is dissatisfaction with depravity, conversion is a turning away from it. Conviction is a sword wound; conversion is the healing. Conviction is the fever of thirst; conversion is the slaking of that thirst. Conviction is the pain; conversion is the medicine that cures it. Thousands have experienced the former and never experienced the latter.

There are multitudes who think that as soon as a man is serious he is fit for profession of religion. What if a man should only think seriously of being a merchant; would that make him a merchant? What if a man should only think seriously of being a lawyer; would that make him a lawyer? What if a man should only think seriously of being a Christian; would that make him a Christian? Felix was convicted but not converted. The jailer was convicted before he got out of bed, but not converted till at the advice of Paul he believed in Christ. Are you convicted but not converted?

I tell you what you make me think of. You have made up your mind for proper consideration to deed away a property. You have drawn the deed. The seal is affixed opposite where you are to write your name. The commissioner of deeds is present to witness. You have your pen in hand. There is ink in the pen. There is only one thing for you to do, and that is to sign your name. Suppose you stop now without signing your name, what does it all amount to? Nothing.

So you have resolved to give yourself up to God. You propose to sign off to Him your body, your mind, your soul. You have all things necessary for the transfer. The angels of God are here to witness the eternal transfer. Why do you not now with your will complete the work? Halt where you are and all goes for nothing. Sign your name to this spiritual transfer.

Professor Arago, the mathematician, got woefully discouraged in his work and was about to give it up, when he saw some words on the paper which had been used to stiffen the cover of his book, and the words being indistinct he dampened the cover until he could take it off and see the words plainly and he found they were words of advice given by D'Alembert to a student, and the words were, "Go on, sir; go on!" O ye who are convicted, "Go on!" You must take one more step or all the steps you have taken will amount to nothing. Go on!

Again learn from the misfortune of the king of Babylon what a terrible thing is the loss of reason. There is no calamity that can possibly befall us in this world so great as the derangement of intellect—to have the body of a man and yet to fall even below the instinct of a brute. In this world of sad sights the saddest is the idiot's stare. In this world of awful sounds the most awful is the maniac's laugh. A vessel on the rocks, when hundreds go down never to rise, and other hundreds drag their mangled and shivering bodies up the wintry beach, is nothing compared to the foundering of intellects full of vast hopes and attainments and capacities. Christ's heart went out to those who were epileptic, falling into the fire, or maniacs cutting themselves among the tombs.

We are accustomed to be more grateful for physical health than for the proper working of our mind. We are apt to take it for granted that the intellect which has served us so well will always be faithful. We forget that an engine with such tremendous power, when the wheels have such vastness of circle and such swiftness of motion and the least impediment might put it out of gear, could only be kept in proper balance by a divine hand. No human power could engineer this train of immortal faculties.

How strange it is that our memory, on whose shoulders all the successes and misfortunes and occurrences of a lifetime are placed, should not oftener break down, and that the scales of judgment, which have been weighing so much and so long, should not lose their adjustment, and that fancy, which holds a dangerous wand, should not sometimes maliciously wave it, bringing into the heart forebodings and hallucinations the most appalling. It is not strange that the expectations of this intellect should not be dashed to pieces on its disappointments?

Though so delicately attuned, this instrument of untold harmonies plays on, though fear shocks it, and vexations rack it, and sorrow and joy and loss and gain in quick succession beat out of it their dirge or draw from it their anthem. At morning and at night, when in your prayer you rehearse the objects of your thanksgiving, next to your salvation by Jesus Christ, praise the Lord for the preservation of your reason.

How many fine intellects are being destroyed by anodynes and anæsthetics, which were given by Providence for occasional use in alleviation of pain or insomnia, but by being employed continuously after awhile capture and destroy. Chloral, cocoaine, bromide of potassium, opium and whole shelves of seductive etceteras that help turn Nebuchadnezzars into imbecility into madness. Do not trifle with opiates that benumb the brain. If you cannot live without the perpetual and enslaving use of them, you had better die. Better die a sane man than live a fool. What right have you to kill your brain and put in wild jangle your nervous system? But rum is the cause of more insanity than anything else. There is nothing like rum to put a man, like Nebuchadnezzar, down on all fours.

Again, learn how quickly turns the wheel of fortune, from how high up to how far down went Nebuchadnezzar. Those now in places of position and power, even though they should live, will in a few years be disregarded, while some, who this day are obscure and poverty stricken, will ride up on the shoulders of the people to take their turn at admiration and the spoils of office. Oh, how quickly the wheel turns! Ballot boxes are the steps on which men come down as often as they go up. Of those who were a few years ago successful in the accumulation of property how few have not met with reverses of fortune, while many of those who then were straitened in circumstances now hold the bonds and the gold keys of the nation and win the most bows on the exchange.

Of all fickle people in the world Fortune is the most fickle. Every day she changes her mind, and woe to that man who puts any confidence in what she promises or proposes. She chisers when you go up and laughs when you come down. Oh, trust not a moment your heart's affections to this changeable world. Anchor your soul in God. From Christ's love gather your joy. Then come sorrow or gladness, success or defeat, riches or poverty, honor or disgrace, health or sickness, life or death, time or eternity, all are yours and we are Christ's and Christ is God's.

Learn also from my subject the comforting truth that afflictions are arrested as soon as they have accomplished their mission. For seven years did Nebuchadnezzar dwell among the beasts of the field, but at the expiration of that time his reason returned, and as soon as with proper humility he acknowledged the God of heaven he was brought back to his palace and reinstated in his former affluence and power. Now it does seem that when heavy trials come upon us it is as though they had no limit. We exclaim, "All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me," but forget that the depth of that sea and the power of that billow are definitely determined.

God sees how much our pride is and He sends just enough adversity to humble it. He sees just how worldly minded we are and pulls us just hard enough to detach us from our follies. He sees how hard our heart is and smites just hard enough to break it. He sees how our eyes have been blinded and He cuts only just enough to remove the scales from our spiritual vision. As soon as Abraham's faith is sufficiently tried the lamb is provided. As soon as Pharaoh consents to let the children of Israel depart the plague pauses. As soon as the Israelites have been sufficiently disciplined by their wanderings they find their way into Canaan. But to some the limit is not set in this life. Their whole pilgrimage is through the wilderness and the world is to them a valley of tears.

But perhaps God has a special throne in heaven that no ordinary saint can occupy, and by extraordinary trials He has prepared that Christian soul for extraordinary glory. God will not keep you in the furnace one moment too long. Just as soon as Paul had met with enough imprisonment and scourgings he reached up and plucked his eternal crown. God will keep us no longer under the hammer and on the stocks than is necessary to fit us for entrance into the haven of eternal rest. Glory be to the divine grace that, as soon as our afflictions have accomplished their mission, they are arrested.

The defeats and sorrows of life have sometimes been the greatest advantage. It was because Dante failed as a statesman that he gave up politics and wrote his immortal "Divinia Commedia." It was a violent thunderstorm that first set Martin Luther seriously thinking, and the thunder of this world's disaster has started a reformation. James Y. Simpson went from a surgeon's operating table to experiment and see if he could not find something that would alleviate human pain, and he kept on until he had discovered chloroform as an anæsthetic, and the story of distress has almost always been followed by the story of rescue.

For many years after Shakespeare's death his work was so little appreciated that in 1663 there was only one edition of his works, and that of only three hundred copies, in existence, and that edition was nearly all burned in the great London fire. But forty-eight copies had been sold out of the city, and those forty-eight copies saved Shakespeare for all nations and all time. Your suppression on a smaller scale may last a good while, but for all you are worth you will yet shine out on earth or in heaven.

Again, learn from my subject that connected with the most distressing judgments of God there are displays of divine mercy. God might justly have left Nebuchadnezzar in the field, but infinite compassion brought him back to the palace. No sooner was Eden blasted than a blessing followed on the heels of the curse promising the coming of One who would destroy sin and make the whole world a paradise. The deluge descends, but not until Noah had invited the people into the ark. The destroying angel comes upon Egypt for the smiting of the first born, but left unmolested every house whose door was sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice.

Fiery tempests bear down upon Sodom, but not until two angels have warned Lot and his family to flee from the destruction. Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, but not until Jeremiah had sounded an alarm, bidding them turn from their abominations. On the darkest cloud of wrath there is a rainbow of mercy. Zechariah in his prophetic vision beheld four chariots, symbolical of God's government.

The first chariot was drawn by red horses. They indicated the wars that were coming. The second chariot was drawn by black horses. They indicated the coming of a famine and pestilence. The third chariot was drawn by white horses. They indicated the spotless purity of His conquests. But, mark well that the fourth chariot was drawn by horses "grisled and bay," denoting that mercy was mixed with all the desolating judgments of God. Sinai cannot thunder so loud as to drown the invitations of Calvary. The Lord utters the admonition, "The wages of sin is death," but exhaustless mercy responds, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom."

Hide Thee quick in the rock, Christ Jesus. Let not this insignificant "Now" absorb Thee more than the great hereafter. The path leading to this side of the grave is only a few furlongs, but the path which commences at the other side of it is without end. The powers of darkness gather about your soul, and the temptations of an evil heart and the allurements of the world I know are trying to drown the voice of the preacher, but taking hold of the silver trumpet of the Gospel which made Felix tremble, and at the Pentecost brought three thousand souls out of their sepulcher, I would blow one long, loud blast, crying, "Whosoever will, let him come."

Take this goodly religion which has done so much for me that I can commend it to all. Without it I should have gone the whole downward career. Stolid and phlegmatic natures going astray do not go so far, but natures like mine, sanguine, intense, emotional, optimistic, social to the last degree and echoing to all the heights and depths of mirth, if they get off the track they go with one wild leap to hell. As to the restraining power of this religion upon a mercurial temperament, I testify. This is not abstraction or something gotten from books. I speak of what I know. Go out and ask all who have tried this religion and ask them how it works.

Three young men in a factory came out on the Lord's side, but two of them, overcome by the jeers of their comrades, went back and joined the scoffers. The one held on to his Christian hope, and one day when they pressed him hard and were telling how much infidelity had done for the world, and that Cristianity had done nothing, the persecuted Christian turned upon them, and pointing to Henry and George, who had for a little while followed Christ and then turned back, he said:

"You have tried your principles on them and know what they have done for them. When they tried to serve Christ they were civil, good tempered, kind husbands and fathers. They were cheerful, industrious and ready to oblige. What have you made them? Look and see. They are cast down and cross; their mouths are full of cursing and filthiness; they are drunk every week; their children half clothed, their wives broken hearted, their homes wretched. That is what your principles have done. Now I have tried Christ and His religion and what has it done for me? You know well what I used to be. There was none of you that could drink so much, swear so desperately and fight so masterly. I had no money and nobody would trust me. My wife was ill used, I was ill humored, hateful and hating. What has religion done for me? Thank God, I am not afraid to put it to you. Am I not a happier man than I was? Am I not a better workman and a kinder companion? Would I once have put up with what I now bear from you? I could bent any of you as easily now as ever. Why don't I? Do you ever hear a foul word from my mouth? Do you catch me at a public house? Has anybody a score against me? Go and ask my neighbors if I am not altered for the better. Go and ask my wife. Let my house bear witness. God be praised, here is what Christianity has done for me; there is what infidelity has done for Henry and George."

Out of this audience I could gather a thousand men and women who could tell you as startling a story as that as to what religion has done for them. Yea, if times of persecution should come as of old, and they may come, they are a thousand here who would for Christ's sake as cheerfully walk into the furnace of fire as though it were an arbor of thyme and honeysuckle, and face the lions as though they were lambs of frisking of the hillside, and wade down into the deep waters which are to submerge them as happily as ever at Narragansett beach they took the surf at a summer bathing.

Come up and join those on the way to a palace. What an absurd thing for a king to be eating grass. Instead of living on the poor fodder that the world affords come and sit among the princes of God at the royal banquet and hear the bands play: "Eat, O Friends! Drink, O Beloved!" Here is a crown, wear it. Here is a scepter, sway it. Here is a throne, mount it. This is your hour, improve it.

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Senator Gordon's Severe Wound.

In speaking about a wound received in the cheek at the battle of Sharpsburg Senator Gordon not long ago told a curious story which illustrates a feature of his character which will come into play during his Senatorial career. It is the fact that Gordon never loses his head, and that he can think under any circumstances. Said Gen. Gordon:

"While I lay there wounded on the field my mind went through a curious process of reasoning. I thought I had been struck by a cannon ball, and I said to myself: 'I have been struck in the head with a six-pound solid shot. It has carried away my head. I can feel that there is a little piece of the skull left on the left side. But my brains must be gone entirely. Therefore I am dead. And yet I am thinking. And how can a man think with his head shot off? And, if I am thinking, I cannot be dead. And yet no man can live after his head is shot off. Still, I may have consciousness after I am dead, but my body cannot have action. Now, if I can lift my leg then it must be that I am alive. I will try that. Can I? Yes, I can. I see it rising. I am not dead, after all.' And with that I woke up and found that my head was still on, but I reasoned as philosophically and logically over the matter as though I was in my office."—Pittsburg Dispatch.

A Scotch Sabbatarian Quest on.

Is it lawful to sell milk to a duchess on Sunday? This is the great question which has just been agitating a west of Scotland presbytery. Robert Lelso, a farmer and elder of the Free kirk in the Island of Arran, has been in the habit of supplying milk to the duchess of Hamilton at Brodick Castle Sundays. His minister remonstrated with him for this particular form of Sabbath desecration. No exemption, the minister pointed out, was made in the camp of Israel in regard to manna—Saturday's supply having always to serve for Sunday—therefore, no exemption ought to be made in Arran, even in the case of milk to a duchess. The kirk session supported the minister, and decided that the wicked elder should be admonished. The elder, however, refused to submit, and appealed to the presbytery, and this body, while recognizing the zeal of the session, has enjoined that no admonition shall take place. The elder thus returns to his island victorious, and Sunday calls at the castle will presumably be continued. Meantime, "the medical man in London" who was irreverent enough to affirm that "milk diet was a necessity for duchess and Lady Mary" on Sundays as well as other days may well be left to the "after-biting" of his own conscience.—Pall Mall Gazette.

JAGSON says that even the policeman wouldn't be nearly so apt to stay out nights if he didn't have his club.—Elmira Gazette.

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