

The Eminent Washington Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "Storming the Heights."

Text: "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before thee shall be broken down the tower of the strong."

Zerubbabel, who named that difficult name in which three times the letter "b" occurs, disposing of those people to stammer in his pronunciation! Zerubbabel was the splendid man called to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. Stone for the building had been quarried, and the crowd had rung at the behest of the cornerstones, and all went west, when the Carthagenians offered to help in the work. Zerubbabel declined their help, and then the trouble began. The Carthagenians rejected the secretary of the treasury against Zerubbabel, so that the wages of carpenters and masons could not be paid, and the heavy cedar timbers which had been dragged from Mount Lebanon to the Mediterranean and floated in the gulf from Joppa and Tyre were to be drawn by the team from Joppa to Jerusalem had halted, and as a result of the work of these jealous Carthagenians for sixteen years the building of the temple was stopped. But after sixty years Zerubbabel, with a mighty zeal, got a new call from God to go ahead with the temple building, and the name of the Lord in substance said: "They have piled up obstacles in the way of Zerubbabel above his head, and he shall all be thinned down and made flat and smooth as the floor of a house."

Well, the Carthagenians are not all dead yet. They are busy in every neighborhood and every city and every Nation of every age, heaping obstacles in the way of the world's salvation. Some people are so dispirited about the height and breadth of this mountain in front of them that they have given up. Some are so discouraged that many of those who are at work trying to do some thing toward removing the mountain feel in such a way that I can see they have not much faith that the mountain of sin, "crosses will ever be removed. They feel they must do their duty, but they feel all the time—I can hear it in their prayers and exclamations—that they are striking their ankles and their heads against the rocks of the mountain. If the good Lord will help me while I preach, I will give you the names of some of the high mountains which stand in the way and then show you that these mountains are to be prostrated, torn down, ground up, leveled, put out of sight forever. "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

First, there is the mountain of prejudice, as low as a range of the Pyrenees. Prejudice against the Bible as a dull book, an inconsistent book, a cruel book, an unclean book, and in every way an unbecoming book, is the mountain of prejudice. It is the mountain of prejudice. The poor souls do not know that the Moses account agrees exactly with the geological account. No violation of the geological account. By crowbar and pickaxe and shovel and blasting powder the geologist goes down in the earth and says: "The first thing created in the furnishing of the earth was the plants." Moses says: "Aye, I told you that in the book of Genesis. The earth brought forth grass and herb, yielding seed after his kind and the tree bringing forth its fruit after his kind. Let the water bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and God created great whales."

The geologist goes on digging and says: "The next thing in the furnishing of the earth was the creation of the cattle, and the reptiles and the beasts of the field." "Aye," says Moses. "I told you that was next in the next chapter of Genesis." And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after his kind." The geologist goes on digging in the earth and says: "The next creature was a man, a woman, and a serpent, and the hands of the man and woman are stretched upward toward the tree as to pluck the fruit. Thus the Bible story of the fall is confirmed. In a museum at Constantinople are some pieces of the wall that once in the ancient temple of Jerusalem separated the court of the Gentiles and the court of the Israelites, which Paul refers when he says of Christ, "He is our peace, who hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." On tablets recently discovered have been found the names of prominent men of the Bible, spelled a little different, according to the demands of ancient language. "Adams" for Adam, "Abrama" for Abraham, "Abia" for Abel, and so on. Twenty-two feet underground has been found a seal inscribed with the words, "Haggai, son of Shebaniah," thousands of years ago, showing that the Prophet Haggai, who wrote a part of the Bible, was not a myth.

The royal engineers have found, eighty feet below the surface of the ground at Jerusalem, Phoenician pottery and brown stones with inscriptions showing that they were furnished by Hiram, King of Tyre, just as the Bible says they were. The great names of Bible history, that many suppose are names of imaginary beings, are found out into imperishable stones which have within a few years been rolled up from their entombment of ages, such as Sennacherib and Tiglath-Pileser. On the edge of a bronze stop and on burned brick has been found the name of Nebuchadnezzar. Henry Rawlinson and Oppert and Hicks and Palestine exploration societies and Assyriologists and Egyptologists have rolled another Bible up from the depths of the earth, and lo! it corresponds exactly with our Bible. The rock Bible just like the printed Bible, inscriptions on cylinders and brickwork cut 3500 years before Christ testifying to the truth of our Bible. The story of the tower of Babel has been confirmed by the fact that recently at Babel an oblong pile of brick 110 feet high contains the remains of a fallen tower. In the inscribed book of Ezra we read of the great and noble Sanballat, a man that meant nothing special until recently in a Greek Egyptian inscription we have the story there told of him as a great hunter as well as a great warrior. What I say now is news to those prejudiced against the Bible. They are so far behind the times that they know not that the old book is being proved true by the printing of the antiquarian and the ringing hammer of the archaeologist and the plucking hammer of the geologist. No more is infidelity characterized by its blasphemy than by its ignorance, but, oh, what a high mountain of prejudice against the Bible, against Christianity, against churches, against all evangelizing enterprises—a mountain that cuts its long black shadows over the entire continent and over the world's map. Geographers tell us that Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world. Oh, no! The mountain of prejudice against Christianity is higher than the highest crags that lace the lightning of heaven. Before Zerubbabel, can it ever become a plain?

Another mountain of hindrance is that of positive and outspoken immorality. There is a high mountain of immorality. It is piled with heeds and demijohns and decanters and hog-legs, on which sit the victims of that traffic whose one business is to rob earth and heaven of the most generous and large hearted and splendid of the human race. If their business was to take only the mean and stingy and contemptible and useless, we would not say much against the work, for those who are a nuisance to the world and their obliteration from human society would be a advantage to all that is good. The removal of these moral delinquents would not be in itself a protest against immorality, for it is in itself a protest. Immorality takes the best. The mountain of immorality stands in the way of the kingdom of God, and hundreds of thousands of men and women would step right into the ranks of the Lord's host and march heavenward, each one taking a regiment with him. The mountain of immorality is not a ordinary mountain, but it is a great one. It is a line of fortresses continuing a blazing away its destructive forces upon all our neighborhoods, towns and cities, their volleys of death poured down upon the honours of our country. Under this and this country 100,000 men and women are in the stocks every year imprisoned, and an army of 600,000 drunkards almost shake the earth with their staggering tread. It causes in this country 300 murders and 400 suicides every year. This mountain of immorality has not only assaulted the land, but bombarded the shipping of the sea, and some of the most appalling shipwrecks on Atlantic and Pacific coasts have been the result. What sank the steamer Rothsay Castle, on the way from Liverpool to Dublin, destroying 107 human lives—a drunken sea captain. What blew the Ben Sherrod on the Mississippi and sent 150 to horrible death? A drunken crew. What drove on the breakers a steamer making its way from New York to Charleston and wrecked the families on the way home from summer watering places to the merciless depths of the sea? A drunken sea captain. Gather up from the depths of the rivers and lakes and oceans the bones of those who have perished by intoxicated sailors and crews, and you could build out of them a temple of horrors, all the pillars and altars and floors and ceilings fashioned of human skulls. It is possible that such a mountain of immorality ever be made a plain.

Yonder also is the mountain of crime, with its strata of fraud and malpractices and malfeasance and blackmail and burglary and robbery and embezzlement and larceny and theft, all its heights manned with the desperadoes, the cutthroats, the pickpockets, the thimble riggers, the corals, the wreckers, the thugs, the gamblers, the firebugs, the dynamiters, the shoplifters, the kleptomaniacs, the pyromaniacs, the diplomaniacs, the smugglers, the kidnapers, the Jack Shepards, the Robert Maccares and the Macbeths of villainy. The crimes of the world! Am I not right in calling them, when piled up together, a mountain? But we cannot bring ourselves to appreciate great heights except by comparison. You think of Mount Washington as high, especially those of you who ascend as of old, on mule back, or more recently by rail train, to the Tip Top House. That is not high. For it is only about 2000 feet, whereas rising on the Western Hemisphere are Chimborazo, 21,000 feet high, and Mount Saha, 23,000 feet high, and Mount Marat, 24,300 feet high. But that is not the highest mountain on the Western Hemisphere. The highest mountain in the mountain of crime, and it is possible that this mountain, before our Zerubbabel, can ever be made a plain?

There is also the mountain of war, the most volcanic of all mountains—the Vesuvius of war, not content, like the Vesuvius of Italy, with overwhelming two cities, Herculaneum and Pompeii, but covered with its fiery scoria thousands of cities, and a world like to weevil all the cities of both hemispheres. Give this mountain full utterance, and it would sweep up Washington and New York and London as easily as a feather, with his shovel at 10 o'clock at night, banks a grate fire with ashes. This mountain is a pile of fortresses, barricades and ramparts, the world's artillery heaped, wheels above wheels, columbs in above columbs, seventy-four pounders above seventy-four pounders, wrecked Nations above wrecked Nations.

The mountain of war is not only loaded to cannonade the earth, but it is also a cemetery, holding the corpses of 3,000,000 slain in the wars of Alexander and Cyrus, 60,000 slain in Roman wars, 181,000,000 slain in war with Russia and Saxony and Prussia, about 33,000,000,000, not million, but billion, which was the estimate made by Edmund Burke more than 100 years ago of those who would be destroyed by war, so that you would have to add more millions. Twenty years ago a careful author estimated that about fourteen times the total population of the world had gone down in battle or in hospital after battle. All this mountain of war is not like an ordinary mountain. It is like Kilaua, one of the Sandwich Islands, which holds the greatest volcano in the world, and concerning which I wrote in the "Herald" a few years ago: "What a hissing, belching, tumbling, seething force is Kilaua! Lake of unquenchable fire; convulsions and paroxysms of flame; eruptions of nature in torture, torridity and luridly; congregation of dreadful, menacing horrors; sulphurous azyms; swirling mystery of all times; infinite turbulences; chimney of threats; glooms infernal and dark; aqueous caldron stirred by the champion witch of pandemonium; empire of the armies of Diabolus; wrath of the mountains in full of their utterance; incandescence, protection of the planet; furnace blast of the ages; Kilaua!" But, my friends, mightier, higher, vaster, hotter, more raging, is the volcanic mountain of war. It has been blazing for thousands of years and will keep on blazing until, until—but I dare not hazard a prophecy. Can it be that its fire will ever be put out? Can it be that its roar will ever be silenced? Can it be that before our Zerubbabel that blazing mountain will ever become a plain?

There is also the long range of mountains, longer than Appalachian range, longer than Caucasus range, longer than Sierra Nevada range—two piled up opposition of bad literature, bad homes, bad institutions, bad amusements, bad customs, bad religions—Paganism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism and countless and confused gods and goddesses, devoted to ambition and lust and hydra-headed, argus-eyed abominations, as it stands with lifted hat and mocking lips, challenging Jehovah upon the throne of the universe to strike if he dare. Oh, it is a great mountain, as my text declares. There is no use in denying it. The most authentic of titles declares that it is a volcano of the times profane. All the Christians workers realize it. It is a mountain, and the mountain can never be struck down, says worldly speculation. "The mountain can never be made a plain," says a small faith in the churches. Well, my friends, let us look about for the implements we can lay our hands on. Let us count the number on our side who are willing to dig with a shovel or bore a tunnel or blast a rock. Let us see if there is any foreigner that will come in to re-enforce us. I do not want to make myself absurd by attempting an impossibility. If it is only one Jew at the foot of Mount Zion, if there is only one arm, capable of lifting but a few pounds, against a mountain that weighs 100,000,000 tons, let us quit before we make ourselves the travesty and caricature of the universe. If we are to undertake this job, first of all we must have a competent engineer, one who knows all about excavations, about embankments, about tunnels, about mountains. I know engineers, who have carved up mountains, cut down mountains, removed mountains. I will do nothing unless I know who it is to be our engineer. Zerubbabel led at the rebuilding of the ancient temple, and Matthew Henry, the greatest of commentators, declares that our Zerubbabel is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Zerubbabel of my text was only a type of the glorious and omnipotent Jesus, and as I

look up into the face of this divine engineer and see it glow with all the splendors of the Godhead, and see that in His arm is the almighty power that flung out all the worlds that glitter in the midnight heavens, and that to lift the Himalayas would cost Him no more effort than for me to lift an ounce, my courage begins to rally, and my faith begins to mount, and my enthusiasm is all aflame, and the words of my text this morning just fit my lips and express the triumph of my soul, and I cry out: "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

I tell you the mountain is coming down. It is coming down rapidly. It will all come down. There are those who hear or read the words who will gaze upon its complete prostration, for what is the use of my keeping back any longer the full statement of the fact, which I have somewhat delayed through lawful sermons strategy, the fact that the Lord God Almighty, in the full play of His omnipotence, will accomplish this supernatural work. If God can build a mountain, I guess He can remove a mountain. After God has given full opportunity for the shovels He will come in with His thunderbolts. We have amplified the idea of the Lamb of God. I tell you now of the lion. Here is a thought that I have never seen projected, and yet it is the shoveling of all considerations and plainly Scriptural, the thought that as at the opening of the gospel dispensation in the Christy and eternal world, when the machinery of the natural world was brought into service, the shadow of eclipses and the agitation of earthquakes, impeded us to sleep under the wings of divine pity, iron bolts of prisons closed upon us, and yet it is the shoveling of all considerations and plainly Scriptural, the thought that as at the opening of the gospel dispensation in the Christy and eternal world, when the machinery of the natural world was brought into service, the shadow of eclipses and the agitation of earthquakes, impeded us to sleep under the wings of divine pity, iron bolts of prisons closed upon us, and yet it is the shoveling of all considerations and plainly Scriptural, the thought that as at the opening of the gospel dispensation in the Christy and eternal world, when the 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