REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Washington Divine's Sunday Sermon.

He Takes for His Subject a Thought Most Interesting to All Who Are Trying to Achieve a Livelihood—The Ravens of God That Brought Bread and Flesh.

TEXT: "And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening."—I Kings xvii., 6.

The ornithology of the Bible is a very interesting study—the stork which knoweth her appointed time; the common sparrows teaching the lesson of God's providence; the ostriches of the desert, by careless incubation, illustrating the recklessness of parents who do not take enough pains with their children; the eagle symbolizing riches which take wings and fly away; the pelican emblemizing solitude; the bat, a flake of the darkness; the night hawk, the ossifrage, the cuckoo, the lapwing, the osprey, by the command of God, in Leviticus, flung out of the world's bill of fare.

I would like to have been with Audubon as he went through the woods, with gun and pencil, bringing down and sketching the fowls of heaven, his unfolded portfolio thrilling all Christendom. What wonderful creatures of God the birds are. Some of them this morning, like the songs of heaven let loose, bursting through the gates of heaven. Consider their feathers, which are clothing and conveyance at the same time; the nine vertebræ of the neck, the three eyelids to each eye, the third eyelid an extra curtain for graduating the light of the sun. Some of these birds scavengers and some of them orchestra. Thank God for quail's whistle, and lark's carol, and the twitter of the wren, called by the ancients the king of birds, because when the fowls of heaven went into a contest as to who should fly the highest, and the eagle swung nearest the sun, a wren on back of the eagle, after the eagle was exhausted, sprang up much higher, and so was called by the ancients the king of birds. Consider those of them that have golden crowns and crests, showing them to be feathered imperials. And listen to the humming bird's serenade in the ear of the honeysuckle. Look at the belted kingfisher, striking a dart from sky to water. Listen to the voice of the owl, giving the keynote to all croakers. And behold the condor among the Andes, battling with the reindeer. I do not know whether an aquarium or aviary is the best altar from which to worship God.

There is an incident in my text that baffles all the ornithological wonders of the world. The grain crop has been cut off. Famine was in the land. In a cave by the brook Cherith sat a minister of God, Elijah, waiting for something to eat. Why did he not go to the neighbors? There were no neighbors. It was a wilderness. Why did he not pick some of the berries? There were none. If there had been, they would have been dried up. Seated one morning at the mouth of the cave, the prophet sees a flock of birds approaching. Oh, if they were only partridges, or if he only had an arrow with which to bring them down! But as they come nearer he finds that they are not comestible, but unclean, and the eating of them would be spiritual death. The strength of their beak, the length of their wings, the blackness of their color, their loud, harsh, "cruck, cruck!" prove them to be ravens.

They whir around about the prophet's head, and then they come on fluttering wing and pause on the level of his lips, and one of the ravens brings bread, and another raven brings meat, and after they have discharged their tiny cargo they wheel past, and others come, until after awhile the prophet has enough, and these black servants of the wilderness table are gone. For six months, and some say a whole year, morning and evening, a breakfast and a supper bell sounded as these ravens rang out on the air their "cruck, cruck!" Guess where they got the food from. The old rabbins say they got it from the kitchen of King Ahab. Others say that the ravens got their food from pious Obadiah, who was in the habit of feeding the persecuted. Some say that the ravens brought the food to their young in the trees, and that Elijah had only to climb up and get it. Some say that the whole story is improbable, for these were carnivorous birds, and the food they carried was the torn flesh of living beasts, and therefore ceremonially unclean, or it was carrion and would not have been fit for the prophet. Some say they were not ravens at all, but that the word translated "ravens" in my text ought to have been translated "Arabs," so it would have read, "The Arabs brought bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening." Anything but admit the Bible to be true.

Hew away at this miracle until all the miracle is gone. Go on with the depleting process, but know, my brother, that you are robbing only the man—and that is yourself—of one of the most comforting, beautiful, pathetic and triumphant lessons in all ages. I can tell you who these purveyors were—they were ravens. I can tell you who freighted them with provisions—God. I can tell you who launched them—God. I can tell you who taught them which way to fly—God. I can tell you who told them at what cave to swoop—God. I can tell you who introduced raven to prophet and prophet to raven—God. There is one passage I will whisper in your ear, for I would not want to utter it aloud, lest some one should drop down under its power, "If any man shall take away from the words of the prophecy of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the Holy City."

While, then, we watch the ravens feeding Elijah, let the swift dove of God's spirit sweep down the sky with divine food, and on outspread wing pause at the lip of every soul hungering for comfort.

On the banks of what rivers have been the great battles of the world? While you are looking over the map of the world to answer that, I will tell you that the great conflict to-day is on the Potomac, on the Hudson, on the Mississippi, on the Thames, on the Savannah, on the Rhine, on the Nile, on the Ganges, on the Hoang-Ho. It is a battle that has been going on for 6000 years. The troops engaged in it are 1,600,000,000, and those who have fallen by the way are vaster in number than those who march. It is a battle for bread.

Sentimentalists sit in a cushioned chair in their pictured study, with their slippered feet on a damask ottoman, and say that this world is a great scene of avarice and greed. It does not seem so to me. If it were not for the absolute necessities of the cases, nine-tenths of the stores, factories, shops, banking houses of the land would be closed to-morrow. Who is that man delving in the Colorado hills, or toiling in a New England factory, or going through a roll of bills in the bank, or measuring a fabric on the counter? He is a champion sent forth in behalf of some home circle that has to be cared for, in behalf of some church of God that has to be supported, in behalf of some asylum of mercy that has to be sustained. Who is that woman bending over the sewing machine, or carrying the bundle, or sweeping the room, or mending the garment, or sweltering at the washtub? That is Deborah, one of the Lord's heroines, battling against Amalekitish want, which comes down with iron chariot to crush her and hers. The great question with the vast majority of people to-day is not home rule, but whether there shall be any home to rule; not one of tariff, but whether there shall be anything to tax. The great questions with the vast majority of the people are: "How shall I support my family? How shall I meet my notes? How shall I pay my rent? How shall I give food, clothing and education to those who are dependent upon me?" Oh, if God would help me to-day to assist you in the solution of that problem, the happiest man in this house would be your preacher. I have gone out on a cold morning with expert sportsmen to hunt for pigeons. I have gone out on the meadows to hunt for quail. I have gone out on the marsh to hunt for reedbirds, but to-day I am out for ravens.

Notice, in the first place in the story of my text, that these winged caterers came to Elijah direct from God.

"I have commanded the ravens that they feed thee," we find God saying in an adjoining passage. They did not come out of some other cave. They did not just happen to alight there. God freighted them, God launched them and God told them by what cave to swoop. That is the same God that is going to supply you. He is your Father. You would have to make an elaborate calculation before you could tell me how many pounds of food and how many yards of clothing would be necessary for you and your family, but God knows without any calculation. You have a plate at his table, and you are going to be waited on, unless you act like a naughty child and kick and scramble and pound saucily the plate and try to upset things.

God has a vast family, and everything is methodized, and you are going to be served if you will only wait your turn. God has already ordered all the suits of clothes you will ever need, down to the last suit in which you will be laid out. God has already ordered all the food you will ever eat, down to the last crumb that will be put in your mouth in the dying sacrament. It may not be just the kind of food or apparel we would prefer. The sensible parent depends on his own judgment as to what ought to be the apparel and the food of the minor in the family. The child would say, "Give me sugars and confections." "Oh, no!" says the parent. "You must have something plainer first." The child would say, "Oh, give me these great blotches of color in the garment!" "No," says the parent; "that wouldn't be suitable."

Now, God is our Father, and we are minors, and He is going to clothe us and feed us, although He may not always yield to our infantile wish for the sweet and glitter. These ravens of the text did not bring pomegranates from the glittering platter of King Ahab. They brought bread and milk. God had all the heavens and the earth before Him and under Him, and yet He sends this plain food, because it was best for Elijah to have it. Oh, be strong, my hearer, in the fact that the same God is going to supply you. It is never "hard times" with Him. His ships never break on the rocks. His banks never fail. He has the supply for you, and He has the means for sending it. He has not only the cargo, but the ship. If it were necessary, He would swing out from the heavens a flock of ravens reaching from His gate to yours until the food would be flung down the sky from beak to beak and from talon to talon.

Notice again in this story of the text that the ravens did not allow Elijah to hoard up a surplus. They did not bring enough on Monday to last all the week. They did not bring enough one morning to last until the next morning. They came twice a day and brought just enough for one time. You known as well as I that the great fret of the world is that we want a surplus, we want the ravens to bring enough for fifty years. You have more confidence in the Washington banks or Bank of England than you have in the Royal Bank of Heaven. You say: "All that is very poetic, but you may have the black ravens. Give me the gold eagles." We had better be content with just enough. If in the morning your family eat up all the food there is in the house, do not sit down and cry and say, "I don't know where the next meal is to come from." About 5, or 6, or 7 o'clock in the morning just look up, and you will see two black spots on the sky, and you will hear the flapping of wing, and instead of Edgar A. Poe's insane raven alight on the chamber door, "only this and nothing more," you will find Elijah's two ravens, or two ravens of the Lord, the one bringing bread and the other bringing meat—plumed butcher and baker.

God is infinite in resource. When the city of Rochelle was besieged and the inhabitants were dying of the famine, the tides washed up on the beach as never before, and as never since, enough shellfish to feed the whole city. God is good. There is no mistake about that. History tells us that in 1555 in England there was a great drought. The crops failed, but in Essex, on the rocks, in a place where they had neither sown nor cultured, a great crop of peas grew until they filled 100 measures, and there were blossoming vines enough, promising as much more.

But why go so far? I can give you a family incident. Some generations back there was a great drought in Connecticut, New England. The water disappeared from the hills, and the farmers living on the hills drove their cattle down toward the valleys and had them supplied at the wells and fountains of the neighbors. But these after awhile began to fail, and the neighbors said to Mr. Birdseye, of whom I shall speak: "You must not send your flocks and herds down here any more. Our wells are giving out." Mr. Birdseye, the old Christian man, gathered his family at the altar, and with his family he gathered the slaves of the household—for bondage was then in vogue in Connecticut—and on their knees before God they cried for water, and the family story is that there was weeping and great sobbing at that altar that the family might not perish for lack of water, and that the herds and flocks might not perish.

The family rose from the altar. Mr. Birdseye, the old man, took his staff and walked out over the hills, and in a place where he had seen scores of times, without noticing anything particular, he saw the ground was very dark, and he took his staff and turned up the ground, the water started, and he beckoned to his servants, and they came and brought pails and buckets until all the family and all the flocks and the herds were cared for, and then they made troughs reaching from that place down to the house and barn, and the water flowed, and it is a living fountain to-day.

Now I call that old grandfather Elijah, and I call that brook that began to roll then and is rolling still the brook Cherith, and the lesson to me and to all who hear it is, when you are in great stress of circumstances, pray and dig, dig and pray, and pray and dig. How does that passage go? "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My loving kindness shall not fail." If your merchandise, if your mechanism, if your husbandry fail, look out for ravens. If you have in your despondency put God on trial and condemned Him as guilty of cruelty, I move to-day for a new trial. If the biography of your life is ever written, I will tell you what the first chapter and the middle chapter and the last chapter will be about if it is written accurately. The first chapter about mercy, the middle chapter about mercy, the last chapter about mercy. The mercy that hovered over your cradle. The mercy that will hover over your grave. The mercy that will cover all between.

Again, this story of the text impresses me that relief came to this prophet with the most unexpected and with seemingly impossible conveyance. If it had been a robin redbreast, or a musical meadow lark, or a meek turtledove, or a sublime albatross that had brought the food to Elijah, it would not have been so surprising. But no. It was a bird so fierce and inauspicate that we have fashioned one of our most forceful and repulsive words out of it—ravenous. That bird has a passion for picking out the eyes of men and of animals. It loves to maul the sick and the dying. It swallows with vulturous guzzle everything it can put its beak on, and yet all the food Elajah gets for six mohths or a year is from ravens. So your supply is from an unexpected source.

You think some great-hearted, generous man will come along and give you his name on the back of your note, or he will go security for you in some great enterprise. No, he will not. God will open the heart of some Shylock toward you. Your relief will come from the most unexpected quarter. The providence which seemed ominous will be to you more than that which seemed auspicious. It will not be a chaffinch with breast and wing dashed with white and brown and chestnut. It will be a black raven.

Here is where we all make our mistake and that is in regard to the color of God's providence. A white providence comes to us, and we say, "Oh, it is mercy!" Then a black providence comes toward us, and we say, "Oh, that is disaster!" The white providence comes to you, and you have great business success, and you have $100,000, and you get proud, and you get independent of God, and you begin to feel that the prayer, "Give me this day my daily bread," is inappropriate for you, for you have made provision for 100 years. Then a black providence comes, and it sweeps everything away, and then you begin to pray, and you begin to feel your dependence, and begin to be humble before God, and you cry out for treasures in heaven. The black providence brought you salvation. The white providence brought you ruin. That which seemed to be harsh and fierce and dissonant was your greatest mercy. It was a raven. There was a child born in your house. All your friends congratulated you. The other children of the family stood amazed, looking at the newcomer and asked a great many questions, genealogical and chronological. You said—and you said truthfully—that a white angel flew through the room and left the little one there. That little one stood with its two feet in the very sanctuary of your affection, and with its two hands it took hold of the altar of your soul. But one day there came one of the three scourges of children—scarlet fever, or croup, or diphtheria—and all that bright scene vanished. The chattering, the strange questions, the pulling at the dresses as you crossed the floor—all ceased.

As the great friend of children stooped down and leaned toward that cradle, and took the little one in His arms and walked away with it into the bower of eternal summer, your eye began to follow Him, and you followed the treasure He carried, and you have been following them ever since, and instead of thinking of heaven only once a week, as formerly, you are thinking of it all the time, and you are more pure and tender hearted than you used to be, and you are patiently waiting for the daybreak. It is not self righteousness in you to acknowledge that you are a better man than you used to be—you are a better woman than you used to be. What was it that brought you the sanctifying blessing? Oh, it was the dark shadow on the nursery, it was the dark shadow on the soft grave, it was the dark shadow on your broken heart, it was the brooding of a great black trouble, it was a raven—it was a raven! Dear Lord, teach this people that white providences do not always mean advancement and that black providences do not always mean retrogression.

Children of God, get up out of your despondency. The Lord never had so many ravens as he has to-day. Fling your fret and worry to the winds. Sometimes under the vexations of life you feel like my little girl of four years, who said under some childish vexation, "Oh, I wish I could go to heaven and see God and pick flowers!" He will let you go when the right time comes to pick flowers. Until then, whatever you want pray for. I suppose Elijah prayed pretty much all the time. Tremendous work behind him, tremendous work before him. God has spared no ravens for idlers or for people who are prayerless. I put it in the boldest shape possible, and I am willing to risk my eternity on it. Ask God in the right way for what you want and you shall have it if it is best for you.

Mrs. Jane Pithey, of Chicago, a well-known Christian woman, was left by her husband a widow with one half dollar and a cottage. She was palsied and had a mother ninety years of ago to support: The widowed soul every day asked God for all that was needed in the household, and the servant even was astonished at the precision with which God answered the prayers of that woman, item by item, item by item. One day, rising from the family altar, the servant said, "You have not asked for coal, and the coal is out."

Then they stood and prayed for the coal. One hour after that the servant threw open the door and said: "The coal has come." A generous man, whose name I could give you, has sent—as never before and never since—a supply of coal. You cannot understand it. I do. Ravens! Ravens!

My friend, you have a right to argue from precedent that God is going to take care of you. Has he not done it two or three times every day? That is most marvelous. I look back and wonder that God has given me food three times a day regularly all my lifetime, never missing but once, and then I was lost in the mountains, but that every morning and that very night I met the ravens.

Oh, the Lord is so good that I wish all His people would trust Him with the two lives—the life you are living and that which every tick of the watch and every stroke of the clock informs you is approaching. Bread for your immortal soul comes to-day. See. They alight on the platform. They alight on the backs of all the pews. They swing among the arches. Ravens! Ravens! "Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled. To all the sinning, and the sorrowing, and the tempted, deliverance comes this hour. Look down, and you see nothing but your spiritual deformities. Look back, and you see nothing but wasted opportunity. Cast your eye forward, and you have a fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary. But look up, and you behold the whipped shoulders of an interceding Christ, and the face of a pardoning God, and the irradiation of an opening heaven. I hear the whir of their wings. Do you not feel the rush of air on your cheek? Ravens! Ravens!

There is only one question I want to ask, How many of this audience are willing to trust God for the supply of their bodies and trust the Lord Jesus Christ for the redemption of their immortal souls? Amid the clatter of the hoofs and the clang of the wheels of the judgment chariot the whole matter will be demonstrated.

LIONS IN THE CELLAR.

Strange Discovery of a Farmer in the California Hills.

In the hills near Sunol, Alameda County, Cal., Antonio Nunez, a farmer, moved two weeks ago from his old house into another that had not yet been occupied. For several days after that the family heard strange sounds coming apparently from the cellar.

Antonio called in a few friends to his assistance, and, armed with shotguns, they made their way into the cellar. They had hardly reached the side of the stone wall when from beneath the stairway bounded a splendid California lioness. Before a shot could be fired the animal escaped through the open door.

A second later the lion, a big ugly beast, made a jump for the stairway. This time Antonio was ready and killed the animal at the first fire. While his friends stood guard at the doorway Antonio made a search underneath the stairway and found four cubs. They were as comfortable as kittens, having an overcoat and a quilt for a bed. The lioness did not return.

Watercresses in Plenty.

A New York man named Kretchmar is reported to have leased the sunken meadows on the Greenhills, Kingston, N. Y., from where he will furnish the New York market with watercresses. The water at this place is ice cold all summer, and acres of watercresses of the finest variety grow there, some of them with stems four feet in length. The cresses are to be picked and shipped every evening in crates to New York. There is an inexhaustible supply at the place mentioned of the spicy plant which makes such a favorite table salad.

A Baby With Three Eyes.

Mrs. John Higgs, of Glenham, N. Y., gave birth to triplets. What is more extraordinary still, one of the babies has three eyes, two in the place naturally reserved for them, and the third just over the bridge of the nose.

None to Waste.

The author of "Campaigning in South Africa and Egypt" gives a pertinent illustration of the virtue there is in necessity. He had been asked by a friendly Boer in Africa to go out shooting. Accordingly, he writes, he took a rifle and a bag of cartridges and set out for the appointed spot. When I met my friend, he said,—

"What have you got in that bag—your dinner?"

"No," I answered, "cartridges."

Whereupon he roared with laughter.

"You Englishmen must be very rich," said he. "They cost sixpence apiece here."

"Where are yours?" I asked.

"In this," he answered, tapping his double-barrelled rifle.

"You don't intend to shoot much?"

"Two spring bucks are all I can carry."

"Suppose you miss?"

"Nobody misses when a cartridge cost sixpence."

There was something instructive in the remark. It perhaps proved why the Boers had, in 1881, beaten the English, for the Boer, unwilling to waste his ammunition, will aim and take down his rifle a dozen times, until he is satisfied that he is going to get something for his cartridge.

On the occasion in question my friend got his two bucks, while I fired five cartridges and got one.

What to Do With Wet Boots.

When a man arrives home with wet boots he will usually either stand them in the fireplace or simply throw them with their soles down, anywhere out of the way. The former method does harm to the boots, and the latter to the wearer. Boots must not be placed too near a fire. To dry them, they should be set at a distance of about two feet away, with soles toward the fire; they will then dry gradually. If trees are available, put them in when the boots are about half dry; but it is of no use treeing boots that are sodden if it is desired to wear them next day.

Many regard themselves as moral, disinterested, truthful and gentle merely because they inexorably insist that others shall be so.

A SCIENTIST SAVED.

President Barnaby, of Hartsville College, Survives a Serious Illness Through the Aid of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People.

From the Republican, Columbus, Ind.

The Hartsville College, situated at Hartsville, Indiana, was founded years ago in the interest of the United Brethren Church, when the State was mostly a wilderness, and colleges were scarce. The college is well known throughout the country, former students having gone into all parts of the world.

PROF. ALVIN P. BARNABY.

A reporter recently called at this famous seat of learning and was shown into the room of the President, Prof. Alvin P. Barnaby. When last seen by the reporter Prof. Barnaby was in delicate health. To-day he was apparently in the best of health. In response to an inquiry the professor said:

"Oh, yes, I am much better than for some time. I am now in perfect health; but my recovery was brought about in rather a peculiar way."

"Tell me about it," said the reporter.

"Well, to begin at the beginning," said the professor, "I studied too hard when at school, endeavoring to educate myself for the professions. After completing the common course I came here, and graduated from the theological course. I entered the ministry, and accepted the charge of a United Brethren Church at a small place in Kent County, Mich. Being of an ambitious nature, I applied myself diligently to my work and studies. In time I noticed that my health was failing. My trouble was indigestion, and this with other troubles brought on nervousness.

"My physician prescribed for me for some time, and advised me to take a change of climate. I did as he requested and was some improved. Soon after, I came here as professor in physics and chemistry, and later was financial agent of this college. The change agreed with me, and for awhile my health was better, but my duties were heavy, and again I found my trouble returning. This time it was more severe, and in the winter I became completely prostrated. I tried various medicines and different physicians. Finally, I was able to return to my duties. Last spring I was elected President of the college. Again I had considerable work, and the trouble, which had not been entirely cured, began to affect me, and last fall I collapsed. I had different doctors, but none did me any good. Professor Bowman, who is professor of natural science, told me of his experience with Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People and urged me to give them a trial, because they had benefited him in a similar case, and I concluded to try them.

"The first box helped me, and the second gave great relief, such as I never had experienced from the treatment of any physician. After using six boxes of the medicine I was entirely cured. To-day I am perfectly well. I feel better and stronger than for years. I certainly recommend this medicine."

To allay all doubt Professor Barnaby cheerfully made an affidavit before

LYMAN J. SCUDDER, *Notary Public.*

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People are sold by all dealers, or will be sent postpaid on receipt of price, 50 cents a box or six boxes for $2.50 (they are never sold in bulk, or by the 100), by addressing Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Schenectady, N. Y.

Pertinent Questions.

Why Will a Woman Throw Away Her Good Looks and Comfort?

Why will a woman drag out a sickly, half-hearted existence and miss three-quarters of the joy of living, when she has health almost within her grasp? If she does not value her good looks, does she not value her comfort?

Why, my sister, will you suffer that dull pain in the small of your back, those bearing-down, dragging sensations in the loins, that terrible fullness in the lower bowel, caused by constipation proceeding from the womb lying over and pressing on the rectum? Do you know that these are signs of displacement, and that you will never be well while that lasts?

What a woman needs who is thus affected is to strengthen the ligaments so they will keep her organs in place. There is nothing better for this purpose than Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. The great volume of testimony which is constantly rolling in, proves that the Compound is constantly curing thousands of just such cases.

The following letter from Mrs. Marlow is only one of many thousands which Mrs. Pinkham has received this year from those she has relieved—surely such testimony is convincing:

"My trouble commenced after the birth of my last child. I did not know what was the matter with me. My husband went to our family physician and described my symptoms, and he said I had displacement and falling of the womb. He sent me some medicine, but it did little good. I let it go on about two years, and every time I did any hard work my womb would come down. Finally a lady friend advised me to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, which I did. The first bottle helped me so much, I continued to take it right along. My back was almost the same as no back. I could not lift scarcely any weight. My life was just a drag to me. To-day I am well of my womb trouble, and have a good, strong back, thanks to Mrs. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."—MRS. L. MARLOW, Milford, Ill.

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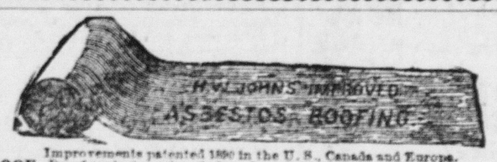

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