

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Subject: "The Baptism of Fire."

TEXT: "None of these things move me." Acts xx, 24.

The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., preached at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, his first sermon after the destruction of the Brooklyn Tabernacle by fire. His audience was of vast size, and public interest was extraordinary. The opening hymn was:

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform. He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm.

Dr. Talmage's subject was "The Baptism of Fire," and he said:

But, Paul, have you not enough affliction to move you? Are you not an exile from your native land? With the most genial and loving nature, have you not, in order to be free for missionary journeys, given yourself to celibacy? You not turned away from the magnificent worldly success which would have crowned your illustrious genius? Have you not endured the sharp and stinging neuralgias, like a thorn in the flesh? Have you not been mobbed on the land, and shipwrecked on the sea, the sanhedrin against you, the Roman Government against you, all the world and all hell against you?

"What of that?" says Paul. "None of these things move me." It was not because he was a hard man. Gentleness was never more easily dissolved into tears than he could ever bear to see anybody cry, for in the midst of his sermon when he saw some weeping her sob aloud, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." What then did Paul mean when he said, "None of these things move me?" He meant, "I will not be moved from the work to which I have been called by any and all the adversities and calamities."

I think this morning I express not only my own feelings but that of every man, woman and little child belonging to the Brooklyn Tabernacle, or that of every man, woman or comforted there, or blessed there, when I look toward the blackened ruins of the dear and consecrated spot and with an aroused faith in a loving God, cry out: "None of these things move me."

When I say that, I do not mean that we have no feeling about it. Instead of standing here to-day in this brilliant auditorium, it would be more consonant with my feelings to sit down among the ruins and weep at the words of David: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." Why, let me say to the strangers here to-day in explanation of the deep emotion of my flock, we had there in that building sixteen years of religious revival. I believe that a hundred thousand souls were born there. They came from all parts of the earth and we shall never see them again until the books are opened. Why, sirs, our children were there baptized, and our young men and women and maidens took the marriage vow and out of those gates we carried our dead. When from the roof of my house last Sunday morning at 3 o'clock I saw our church in flames, I said: "That is the last of the building from which we buried our dead, that cold December day when it seemed all Brooklyn wept with my household."

And it was just as hard for you to give up your loved ones as for me to give up mine. Why, like you, I have times that still cover some of the fallen walls of our affections are clamoring all over the ruins, and I could kiss the ashes that mark the place where it once stood. Why, now, that I think of it, I cannot think of it as an inanimate pile, but as a soul, a mighty soul, an indestructible soul. I am sure that majestic organ had a soul, for we have often heard it speak and sing and shout and wail, and when the soul of that organ entered heaven, I think Handel, and Haydn, and Mozart, and Mendelssohn, and Beethoven were at the gates to welcome it. So I do not use the words of my text in a heartless way, but in the sense that we must not and will not be diverted from our work by the appalling disasters which have befallen us. We will not turn aside one inch from our determination to do all we can for the present and everlasting happiness of all the people whom we may be able to meet. "None of these things move me. None of these things move you."

When I looked out through the dismal rain from the roof of my house and saw the church crumbling brick by brick and timber by timber, I said to myself: "Does that mean that my work in Brooklyn is ended? Does that terminate my association with this city, where I have been more than twenty years glad in all its prosperities, and sad in all its misfortunes? And is it no longer still or small but most emphatic and commanding, through pressure of hand, and newspaper column, and telegram and letter, and contributions saying: 'Go forward!'"

I have made and I now make appeal to all Christendom to help us. We want all Christendom to help, and I will acknowledge the receipt of every contribution, great or small, with my own hand. We want to build larger and better. We want it a national church, in which people of all creeds and all nations may find a home. The contributions already sent in make a small hearted church forever impossible. Would not I be a sorry spectacle for my kindred men, if I were to build by Israelites and Catholics, as well as all the styles of people commonly called evangelists, I should, instead of the banner of the Lord God Almighty, raise a fluttering rag of small sectarianism? If we had three hundred thousand dollars we would put them all in one great monument to the mercy of God.

People ask on all sides about what we shall build. I answer, it all depends on the contributions sent in from here and from the ends of the earth. I say now to all the Baptists, that we shall have in it a baptistery. I say to all Episcopalians, we shall have in our services as heretofore at our communion table portions of the Liturgy. I say to the Catholics we shall have a cross over the pulpit and probably on the tower. I say to the Methodists, we mean to sing hymns like the voices of mighty thunderings. I say to all denominations, we mean to preach a religion as wide as heaven and as good as God. We have said we had a total loss. But there was one exception. The only things we saved were the silver communion chalices, for they happened to be in another building, and I take that fact as typical that we are to be in communion with all Christendom. "I believe in the communion of saints."

I think, if all the Brooklyn firemen and all insurance companies should search among those ruins on Schermerhorn street, they would not find a splinter larger than the tip end of the little finger marked with bigotry. And it is said that the exhumed bricks of the walls of Babylon have on them the letter N standing for Nebuchadnezzar. I declare to you that if we ever get a new church the letter we should like to have on every stone and every timber would be the letter C, for that word stands both for Christ and Catholicity. The last two words uttered in the old church on Friday night, some of you may remember, were "Hallelujah! Amen!"

The two words that I utter now as most expressive of my feelings in this our first service after the Baptism of Fire, are "Hallelujah! Amen!" "None of these things move me."

We are kept in this mood by two or three considerations. The first is, that God rules. In what way the church took fire I do not know. It has been charged on the lightning. Well, the Lord controls the lightning. He managed them several thousands of years before our electricians were born. The Bible indicates that through their flash down the sky recklessly, God builds for us a road to travel.

In the Psalms it is said: "He made a way for the lightning and thunder." Ever since the time of Benjamin Franklin the world has been trying to tame the lightning, and they seem to be quite well harnessing, but they occasionally kick over the traces. But though we cannot master great natural forces, God can and does, and that God is

our Father and best Friend, and this thought gives us confidence. We are also reinforced by the increased consolation that comes from fraternity of sorrow. The people who, during the last sixteen years, sat on the other side of the aisle, whose faces were familiar to you, but to whom you had never spoken—you greeted them this week with smiles and tears as you said: "Well, the old place is gone." You did not want to seem to cry, and so you swept right in to the corner of the eye, and the tears of the sharer whose fingers over your eyes weak. Ah! there was nothing the matter with your eyes; it was your soul bubbling over. I tell you that it is impossible to sit for years around the same church fire and not have sympathies in common. Somehow you feel that you would like those people on the other side of the aisle, about whom you know but little, prospered and pardoned and blessed and saved. You feel as if you were in the same boat, and you want to glide up the same harbor, and you want to disembark at the same wharf.

If you put gold and iron and lead and zinc in sufficient heat, they will melt into a conglomerate mass; and I really feel that last Sabbath's fire has fused us all, grosser and finer natures, into one. It seems as if we all had our hands on a wire connected with an electric battery; and when this church service started it thrilled through the whole circle, and we all felt the shock. The oldest man and the youngest child could join hands in this misfortune. Grandfather and I expected from those altars to be buried; and one of the children last Sabbath cried: "Grandpa, that place was next to our own house." You are supported and comforted in this time by the cross of Christ.

That is used to the fire. On the dark day when Jesus died, the lightning struck it from above, and the flames of hell dashed up against it from beneath. That fearful, painful, tear, blessed, glorious stands. On it we hang all our hopes; beneath it we put down all our sins; in the light of it we expect to make the rest of our pilgrimage. Within sight of such a sacrifice, who can feel that he has sinned? In the sight of such a symbol, who can be discouraged, however great the darkness that may come down upon him? Jesus lives! The loving, patient, sympathizing, mighty Jesus! It shall not be told on earth, or in hell, or in heaven, that three Hebrew children had the Son of God beside them in the fire, and that a whole church was forsaken by the Lord when they went through a furnace about two hundred feet wide.

Lord Jesus! shall we take out of Thy hand the flowers and the fruits, and the brightness and the joys, and then turn away because Thou dost give us one cup of bitterness? Oh, no, Jesus, we will drink it dry. But how it is changed! Blessed be Jesus, what has Thou put into the cup to sweeten it? Why, it has become the wine of heaven, and our souls grow strong. I come here, and place both of my feet deep down into the blackened ashes of our former church, and I cry out with an exhilaration that I never felt since the day of my soul's emancipation. "Victory! victory! through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Down from the willows lake, Lord to the praise of love divine, every evening strikes awake.

We are also reinforced by the Catholicity that I have already referred to. We are in the Academy to-day, not because we have no other place to go. Last Sabbath morning at 9 o'clock we had but one church. Now we have about thirty, all at our disposal. Their pastors and their trustees say: "You may take our main audience rooms, you may take our lecture rooms, you may take our church parlors, you may take in our baptisteries, and sit on the same altars as we." Oh! if there be any larger hearted ministers or larger hearted churches anywhere than in Brooklyn, tell me where they are, that I may go and see them before I die. The millennium has come. People shall be able to go to heaven, and I believe I have come. The lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and the tiger eats straw like an ox. I should like to have seen two of the old time bigots, with their swords, fighting through that great fire on Schermerhorn street last Sabbath.

I am sure the swords would have melted, and they who wielded them have learned war no more. I can never say a word against any other denomination of Christians. I thank God I am not a sectarian. I have been told I ought to be, and I have tried to be, but I have not enough material in me to make such a structure. Every time I get the thing most common to the common fire, or something else, and all is gone. The angels of God shake out on this air, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." I do not know but I see on the horizon the first gleaming of the morning which shall unite all denominations in one organization, distinguished only by the locality as in apostolic times. It was then the Church of Thyrtaria, and the Church of Thessalonica, and the Church of Antioch, and the Church of Laodicea. So I do not know but that in the future history, and not far off either, it may be simply a distinction of locality, and not of creed, as the Church of New York, the Church of Brooklyn, the Church of Boston, the Church of Charleston, the Church of Memphis, the Church of Constantinople, the Church of America.

My dear brethren, we cannot afford to be severely divided. Standing in front of the great altar of our common Christianity, we want to put on the whole armor of God, and march down in solid column, shoulder to shoulder, one commander, one trumpet!

The trumpet gives a martial strain: "Arise, the combat to maintain, Arise, and put thy foes to flight."

We are also reinforced by the thought that we are on the way to a heaven that can never burn down. Fires may sweep through other cities—but I am glad to know that the New Jerusalem is fireproof. There will be no engines rushing through those streets; there will be no temples consumed in that city. Coming to the doors of that heaven, we will find them open, resonant with songs, and not cries of fire. Oh, my dear brother and sister! if this short lapse of life comes up so soon to that blessed place, what is there to worry? I have felt a good many times this last week like Father Taylor, the sailor preacher. He got in a long sentence while he was preaching one day, and lost himself, and could not find his way out of the sentence. He stopped and said: "Brethren, I have lost the meaning of this sentence, and things are generally mixed up, but I am bound for the kingdom anyhow!"

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Ah! that is a good land. Why, they tell me that in that land they never have a heart ache. They tell me that a man might walk five hundred years in that land and never see a tear or hear a sigh. They tell me that our friends who have left us and gone there, their feet are radiant as the sun, and that they hold of the hand of Jesus familiarly, and that they open that hand and give us the palm of it a healed wound that must have been very cruel before it was healed. And they tell me that there is no winter there, and that they never get hungry or cold, and that the serving girl never wades through the snow bank to her daily toil, and that the clock never strikes twelve for the night, but only twelve for the day.

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have set that light there in the window." No; my guess again. Jesus set it there, and He will keep it burning until the day we put our finger on the latch of the door and go in to be at home forever. Oh! when my sight gets black, whose faces were familiar to you, but to whom you had never spoken—you greeted them this week with smiles and tears as you said: "Well, the old place is gone." You did not want to seem to cry, and so you swept right in to the corner of the eye, and the tears of the sharer whose fingers over your eyes weak. Ah! there was nothing the matter with your eyes; it was your soul bubbling over. I tell you that it is impossible to sit for years around the same church fire and not have sympathies in common. Somehow you feel that you would like those people on the other side of the aisle, about whom you know but little, prospered and pardoned and blessed and saved. You feel as if you were in the same boat, and you want to glide up the same harbor, and you want to disembark at the same wharf.

If you put gold and iron and lead and zinc in sufficient heat, they will melt into a conglomerate mass; and I really feel that last Sabbath's fire has fused us all, grosser and finer natures, into one. It seems as if we all had our hands on a wire connected with an electric battery; and when this church service started it thrilled through the whole circle, and we all felt the shock. The oldest man and the youngest child could join hands in this misfortune. Grandfather and I expected from those altars to be buried; and one of the children last Sabbath cried: "Grandpa, that place was next to our own house." You are supported and comforted in this time by the cross of Christ.

That is used to the fire. On the dark day when Jesus died, the lightning struck it from above, and the flames of hell dashed up against it from beneath. That fearful, painful, tear, blessed, glorious stands. On it we hang all our hopes; beneath it we put down all our sins; in the light of it we expect to make the rest of our pilgrimage. Within sight of such a sacrifice, who can feel that he has sinned? In the sight of such a symbol, who can be discouraged, however great the darkness that may come down upon him? Jesus lives! The loving, patient, sympathizing, mighty Jesus! It shall not be told on earth, or in hell, or in heaven, that three Hebrew children had the Son of God beside them in the fire, and that a whole church was forsaken by the Lord when they went through a furnace about two hundred feet wide.

Lord Jesus! shall we take out of Thy hand the flowers and the fruits, and the brightness and the joys, and then turn away because Thou dost give us one cup of bitterness? Oh, no, Jesus, we will drink it dry. But how it is changed! Blessed be Jesus, what has Thou put into the cup to sweeten it? Why, it has become the wine of heaven, and our souls grow strong. I come here, and place both of my feet deep down into the blackened ashes of our former church, and I cry out with an exhilaration that I never felt since the day of my soul's emancipation. "Victory! victory! through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Down from the willows lake, Lord to the praise of love divine, every evening strikes awake.

We are also reinforced by the Catholicity that I have already referred to. We are in the Academy to-day, not because we have no other place to go. Last Sabbath morning at 9 o'clock we had but one church. Now we have about thirty, all at our disposal. Their pastors and their trustees say: "You may take our main audience rooms, you may take our lecture rooms, you may take our church parlors, you may take in our baptisteries, and sit on the same altars as we." Oh! if there be any larger hearted ministers or larger hearted churches anywhere than in Brooklyn, tell me where they are, that I may go and see them before I die. The millennium has come. People shall be able to go to heaven, and I believe I have come. The lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and the tiger eats straw like an ox. I should like to have seen two of the old time bigots, with their swords, fighting through that great fire on Schermerhorn street last Sabbath.

I am sure the swords would have melted, and they who wielded them have learned war no more. I can never say a word against any other denomination of Christians. I thank God I am not a sectarian. I have been told I ought to be, and I have tried to be, but I have not enough material in me to make such a structure. Every time I get the thing most common to the common fire, or something else, and all is gone. The angels of God shake out on this air, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." I do not know but I see on the horizon the first gleaming of the morning which shall unite all denominations in one organization, distinguished only by the locality as in apostolic times. It was then the Church of Thyrtaria, and the Church of Thessalonica, and the Church of Antioch, and the Church of Laodicea. So I do not know but that in the future history, and not far off either, it may be simply a distinction of locality, and not of creed, as the Church of New York, the Church of Brooklyn, the Church of Boston, the Church of Charleston, the Church of Memphis, the Church of Constantinople, the Church of America.

My dear brethren, we cannot afford to be severely divided. Standing in front of the great altar of our common Christianity, we want to put on the whole armor of God, and march down in solid column, shoulder to shoulder, one commander, one trumpet!

The trumpet gives a martial strain: "Arise, the combat to maintain, Arise, and put thy foes to flight."

We are also reinforced by the thought that we are on the way to a heaven that can never burn down. Fires may sweep through other cities—but I am glad to know that the New Jerusalem is fireproof. There will be no engines rushing through those streets; there will be no temples consumed in that city. Coming to the doors of that heaven, we will find them open, resonant with songs, and not cries of fire. Oh, my dear brother and sister! if this short lapse of life comes up so soon to that blessed place, what is there to worry? I have felt a good many times this last week like Father Taylor, the sailor preacher. He got in a long sentence while he was preaching one day, and lost himself, and could not find his way out of the sentence. He stopped and said: "Brethren, I have lost the meaning of this sentence, and things are generally mixed up, but I am bound for the kingdom anyhow!"

And during this last week, when I saw the rushing in and Tro and the excitement, I said to myself: "I do not know just where I shall start again, but I am bound for the kingdom anyhow." I do not want to go just yet. I want to be pastor of this people until I am about eighty-nine years of age, but I have sometimes thought that there are such glories ahead that I may be persuaded to go a little earlier—for instance, at eighty-two or three; but I really think that, if we could have an appreciation of what God has in reserve for us, we would want to go, stepping right out of the Academy of Music into the glories of the skies.

Ah! that is a good land. Why, they tell me that in that land they never have a heart ache. They tell me that a man might walk five hundred years in that land and never see a tear or hear a sigh. They tell me that our friends who have left us and gone there, their feet are radiant as the sun, and that they hold of the hand of Jesus familiarly, and that they open that hand and give us the palm of it a healed wound that must have been very cruel before it was healed. And they tell me that there is no winter there, and that they never get hungry or cold, and that the serving girl never wades through the snow bank to her daily toil, and that the clock never strikes twelve for the night, but only twelve for the day.

See that light in the window. I wonder who gets it there. "Oh! you say, my father that went into glory must have seen that light in the window." No; my guess again. "My mother, who died fifteen years ago in Jesus, I think must have seen that light there." No; my guess again. You say: "My darling little child, that last summer I put away for the resurrection. I think she must

WIDE-AWAKE TRADESMEN



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