

IF CHRIST BE ABOARD

THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR IN MAKING LIFE'S STORMY VOYAGE.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Presents a Striking Lesson for the Men and Women of the Present Day—Christ Stilling the Tempest—A Brilliant Picture.

New York, Sept. 22.—In his sermon for today Rev. Dr. Talmage discourses on a dramatic incident during the Saviour's life among the Galilean fishermen and draws from it a striking lesson for the men and women of the present day. The subject was "Rough Sailing," and the text, Mark iv, 36, 37, "And there were also with him other little ships, and there arose a great storm of wind."

Tiberias, Galilee and Gennesaret were three names for the same lake. It lay in a scene of great luxuriance. The surrounding hills, high, terraced, sloping, gorged, were so many hanging gardens of beauty. The streams tumbled down through rocks of gray and red limestone, and flashing from the hillsides bounded to the sea. In the time of our Lord the valleys, headlands and ridges were covered thickly with vegetation, and so great was the variety of climate that the palm tree of the torrid and the walnut tree of rigorous climate were only a little way apart. Men in vineyards and olive gardens were gathering up the riches for the oil press. The hills and valleys were starred and crimsoned with flowers, from which Christ took his text, and the disciples learned lessons of patience and trust. It seemed as if God had dashed a wave of beauty on all the scene until it hung dripping from the rocks, the hills, the oleanders. On the back of the Lebanon range the glory of the earthly scene was carried up as if to set it in range with the hills of heaven.

A Beautiful Sea.

No other gem ever had so exquisite a setting as beautiful Gennesaret. The waters were clear and sweet and thickly inhabited, tempting innumerable nets and affordin' livelihood for great populations. Bassaida, Chorazin and Capernaum stood on the bank roaring with wheels of traffic and flashing with splendid equipages, and shooting their vessels across the lake, bringing merchandise for Damascus and passing great cargoes of wealthy product. Pleasure boats of Roman gentlemen and fishing smacks of the country people, who had come down to cast a net there, passed each other with nod and shout and welcome, or side by side swung idly at the mooring. Palace and luxurious bath and vineyard, tower and shadowy arbor, looking off upon the calm sweet scene, as the evening shadows began to drop, and Hermon, with its head covered with perpetual snow, in the glow of the setting sun looked like a white bearded prophet ready to ascend in a chariot of fire. I think we shall have a quiet night! Not a leaf winks in the air or a ripple disturbs the surface of Gennesaret. The shadows of the great headlands stalk clear across the water. The voices of eveningtide, how drowsily they strike an ear—the splash of the boatman's oar, and the thumping of the captured fish on the boat's bottom, and those indescribable sounds which fill the air at nightfall. You hasten up the beach of the lake a little way, and there you find an excitement as of an embarkation. A flotilla is pushing out from the western shore of the lake—not a squadron with deadly armament, not a clipper to ply with valuable merchandise, not piratical vessels with grappling hook to hug to death whatever they could seize, but a flotilla laden with messengers of light and mercy and peace. Jesus is in the front ship. His friends and admirers are in the small boats following after. Christ, by the rocking of the boat and the fatigues of the preaching exercises of the day, is induced to slumber, and I see him in the stern of the boat, with a pillow perhaps extemporized out of a fisherman's coat, sound asleep. The breezes of the lake run their fingers through the locks of the wornout sleeper, and on its surface there riseth and falleth the light ship, like a child on the bosom of its sleeping mother! Calm night. Starry night. Beautiful night. Run up all the sails, and ply all the oars, and let the boats—the big boat and the small boats—go gliding over gentle Gennesaret.

A Storm Arises.

The sailors prophesy a change in the weather. Clouds begin to travel up the sky and congregate. After awhile, even the passengers hear the moan of the storm, which comes on with rapid strides and with all the terrors of hurricane and darkness. The boat, caught in the sudden fury, trembles like a deer at bay amid the wild clangor of the horns. Great patches of foam are flung through the air. The loosened sails, flapping in the wind, crack like pistols. The small boats poised on the white cliff of the driven sea tremble like ocean petrels, and then plunge into the trough with terrific swoop until a wave strikes them with thunder crack, and overboard go the cordage, the tackling and the masts, and the drenched disciples rush into the stern of the boat and shout amid the hurricane, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" That great personage lifted his head from the fisherman's coat and walked out to the prow of the vessel and looked upon the storm. On all sides were the small boats tossing in helplessness, and from them came the cries of drowning men. By the flash of lightning I see the calmness of the uncovered brow of Jesus and the spray of the sea dripping from his beard. He has two words of command—one for the wind, the other for the sea. He looks into the tempestuous heavens and he cries, "Peace!" and then he looks down into the infuriate waters and he says, "Be still!" The thunders beat a retreat. The waves fall flat on their faces. The extinguished stars rekindle their torches. The foam melts.

And while the crew are unloosing the cordage and the cables and baling out the water from the hold of the ship the disciples stand wondering, now gazing into the calm sea, now gazing into the calm face of Jesus, and whispering one to another, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

If Christ Be Aboard.

I learn, first, from this subject that when you are going to take a voyage of any kind you ought to have Christ in the ship. The fact is that those boats would all have gone to the bottom if Christ had not been there. Now, you are about to voyage out into some new enterprise—into some new business relation. You are going to plan some great matter of profit. I hope it is so. If you are content to go along in the treadmill course and plan nothing new, you are not fulfilling your mission. What you can do by the utmost tension of body, mind and soul that you are bound to do. You have no right to be colonel of a regiment if God calls you to command an army. You have no right to be stoker in a steamer if God commands you to be admiral of the navy. You have no right to engineer a ferryboat from river bank to river bank if God commands you to engineer a Cunarder from New York to Liverpool. But whatever enterprise you undertake, and on whatever voyage you start, be sure to take Christ in the ship. Here are men largely prospered. The seed of a small enterprise grew into an accumulated and overshadowing success. Their cup of prosperity is running over. Every day sees a commercial or a mechanical triumph. Yet they are not puffed up. They acknowledge the God who grows the harvests and gives them all their prosperity. When disaster comes that destroys others, they are only helped into higher experiences. The coldest winds that ever blew down from snow capped Hermon and tossed Gennesaret into foam and agony could not hurt them. Let the winds blow until they crack their cheeks. Let the breakers boom—all is well, Christ is in the ship. Here are other men, the prey of uncertainties. When they succeed, they strut through the world in great vanity and wipe their feet on the sensitiveness of others. Disaster comes, and they are utterly down. They are good sailors on a fair day, when the sky is clear and the sea is smooth, but they cannot outride a storm. After awhile the packet is tossed abeam's end, and it seems as if she must go down with all the cargo. Push out from the shore with lifeboat, long boat, shallop and pinnace. You cannot save the crew. The storm twists off the masts. The sea rises up to take down the vessel. Down she goes! No Christ in that ship.

I speak to young people whose voyage in life will be a mingling of sunshine and of darkness, of arctic blast and of tropical tornado. You will have many a long, bright day of prosperity. The skies clear, the sea smooth. The crew exhilarant. The boat stanch will bound merrily over the billows. Crowd on all the canvas. Heigh, ho! Land ahead! But suppose that sickness puts its bitter cup to your lips; suppose that death overshadows your heart; suppose misfortune, with some quick turn of the wheel, hurls you backward; suppose that the wave of trial strikes you athwart ships, and bowsprit shivered, and halcyons swept into the sea, and gangway crowded with piratical disasters, and the wave beneath, and the sky above, and the darkness around are filled with the clamor of voices of destruction. Oh, then you will want Christ in the ship!

When Storms Come.

I learn, in the next place, that people who follow Christ must not always expect smooth sailing. When these disciples got into the small boats, they said: "What a delightful thing this is! Who would not be a follower of Christ when he can ride in one of these small boats after the ship in which Jesus is sailing?" But when the storm came down these disciples found out that following Jesus did not always make smooth sailing. So you have found out, and so I have found out. If there are any people who you would think ought to have had a good time in getting out of this world, the apostles of Jesus Christ ought to have been the men. Have you ever noticed how they got out of the world? St. James lost his head; St. Philip was hung to death against a pillar; St. Matthew was struck to death by a halberd; St. Mark was dragged to death through the streets; St. James the Less had his brains dashed out with a fuller's club; St. Matthias was stoned to death; St. Thomas was struck through with a spear. John Huss in the fire, the Albigenes, the Waldenses, the Scotch Covenanters—did they always find smooth sailing? Why go so far?

There is a young man in a store in New York who has a hard time to maintain his Christian character. All the clerks laugh at him, the employers in that store laugh at him, and when he loses his patience they say, "You are pretty Christian!" Not so easy is it for that young man to follow Christ. If the Lord did not help him hour by hour, he would fail. There are scores of young men today who would be willing to testify that in following Christ one does not always find smooth sailing. There is a Christian girl. In her home they do not like Christ. She has had work to get a silent place in which to say her prayers. Father opposed to religion; mother opposed to religion; brothers and sisters opposed to religion. The Christian girl does not always find it smooth sailing when she tries to follow Jesus. But be of good heart. As seafarers, when winds are dead ahead, by setting the ship on starboard tack and bracing the yards make the winds that oppose the course propel the ship forward, so opposing troubles, through Christ, veering around the bowsprit of faith, will waft you to heaven, when, if the winds had been abaft, they might have rocked and sung you to sleep, and while dreaming of the destined port of heaven you could not have heard the cry of

warning and would have gone crashing into the breakers.

No Need of Fear.

Again, my subject teaches me that good people sometimes get very much frightened. From the tone and manner of these disciples as they rushed into the stern of the vessel and woke Christ up, you know that they are fearfully scared. And so it is now that you often find good people wildly agitated. "Oh!" says some Christian man, "the infidel magazines, the bad newspapers, the spiritualistic societies, the importation of so many foreign errors, the church of God is going to be lost, the ship is going to founder! The ship is going down!" What are you frightened about? An old lion goes into his cavern to take a sleep, and he lies down until his shaggy mane covers his paws. Meanwhile the spiders outside begin to spin webs over the mouth of his cavern and say, "That lion cannot break out through this web," and they keep on spinning the gossamer threads until they get the mouth of the cavern covered over. "Now," they say, "the lion's done, the lion's done." After awhile the lion awakes and shakes himself, and he walks out from the cavern, never knowing there were any spiders' webs, and with his voice he shakes the mountain. Let the infidels and the skeptics of this day go on spinning their webs, spinning their infidel gossamer theories, spinning them all over the place where Christ seems to be sleeping. They say: "Christ can never again come out. The work is done. He can never get through this logical web we have been spinning." The day will come when the Lion of Judah's tribe will rouse himself and come forth and shake mightily the nations. What then all your gossamer threads? What is a spider's web to an aroused lion? Do not fret, then, about the world's going backward. It is going forward.

You stand on the banks of the sea when the tide is rising. The almanac says the tide is rising, but the wave comes up to a certain point and then it recedes. "Why," you say, "the tide is going back." No, it is not. The next wave comes up a little higher, and it goes back. Again you say the tide is going out. And the next time the wave comes to a higher point, and then to a higher point. Notwithstanding all these recessions at last all the shipping of the world knows it is high tide. So it is with the cause of Christ in the world. One year it comes up to one point, and we are greatly encouraged. Then it seems to go back next year. We say the tide is going out. Next year it comes to a higher point and falls back, and next year it comes to a still higher point and falls back, but all the time it is advancing, until it shall be full tide, "and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters fill the sea."

"Ecce Deus."

Again, I learn from this subject that Christ is God and man in the same person. I go into the back part of that boat, and I look on Christ's sleeping face and see in that face the story of sorrow and weariness, and a deeper shadow comes over his face, and I think he must be dreaming of the cross that is to come. As I stand on the back part of the boat looking on his face I say: "He is a man! He is a man!" But when I see him come to the prow of the boat, and the sea kneels in his presence, and the winds fold their wings at his command, I say: "He is God! He is God!" The hand that set up the stormy pillars of the universe wiping away the tears of an orphan! When I want pity and sympathy, I go into the back part of this boat, and I look at him, and I say: "O Lord Jesus, thou weary One, thou suffering One, have mercy on me!" "Ecce homo!" Behold the man! But when I want courage for the conflict of life, when I want some one to beat down my enemies, when I want faith for the great future, then I come to the front of the boat and I see Christ standing there in all his omnipotence, and I say, "O Christ, thou who canst hush the storm can hush all my sorrows, all my temptations, all my fears!" "Ecce Deus!" Behold the God!

The Hushed Tempest.

I learn also from this subject that Christ can hush the tempest. Some of you, my hearers, have a heavy load of troubles. Some of you have wept until you can weep no more. Perhaps God took the sweetest child out of your house, the one that asked the most curious questions, the one that hung around you with greatest fondness. The gravedigger's spade cut down through your bleeding heart. Or perhaps it was the only one that you had, and your soul has ever since been like a desolated castle, where the birds of the night hoot amid the falling towers and along the crumbling stairway. Or perhaps it was an aged mother that was called away. You used to send for her when you had any kind of trouble. She was in your home to welcome your children into life, when they died she was there to pity you. You know that the old hand will never do any more kindness for you, and the lock of white hair that you keep so well in the casket of the locket does not look so well as it did on the day when she moved it back from the wrinkled forehead under the old fashioned bonnet in the church in the country. Or perhaps your property has gone. You said, "There, I have so much in bank stock, so much I have in houses, so much I have in lands, so much I have in securities." Suddenly it is all gone. Alas! for the man who once had plenty of money, but who has hardly enough now for the morning marketing. No storm ever swept over Gennesaret like that which has gone trampling its thunders over your quaking soul. But you awoke Christ in the back part of the ship, crying, "Master, carest thou not that I perish?" and Christ rose up and quieted you. Jesus hushing the tempest.

There is one storm into which we must all run. When a man lets go this life to take hold of the next, I do not care how much grace he has, he will want it all. What is that out yonder? That is a dying Christian rocked on the surges of death. Winds that have

wrecked magnificent flotillas of pomp and worldly power come down on that Christian soul. All the spirits of darkness seem to be let loose, for it is their last chance. The wailing of kindred seems to mingle with the swirl of the waters, and the scream of the wind and the thunder of the sky. Deep to deep, billow to billow, yet no tremor, no gloom, no terror, no sighing for the dying Christian. The fact is that from the back part of the boat a voice sings out, "When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee." By the flash of the storm the dying Christian sees that the harbor is only just ahead. From heavenly carles voices of welcome come over the waters. Peace drops on the angry wave as the storm soba itself to rest like a child falling asleep amid tears and trouble. Christ hath hushed the tempest.

THE UNSEEN WORLD.

Hades as It Is Pictured in the Books of the Apocrypha.

The book of Daniel, dating from the Maccabean age, is perhaps the earliest work in which any clear moral differentiation as regards the unseen world is manifest. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." To find a more detailed account of Hades we must turn to the books of the Apocrypha, written in Greek, and pervaded by ideas not precisely Hellenic, but Hellenistic. In particular the book of Enoch, which deals largely in eschatology and the secrets of the universe, speaks in some detail of the future of righteous and wicked: "All goodness and joy and glory are prepared for them and are written down for the spirits of those who have died in righteousness, and manifold good will be given to you in recompense for your labors, and your lot is abundantly beyond the lot of the living." And in contrast: "Know ye that their souls (the sinners) will be made to descend into sheol, and they will become wretched, and great will be their tribulation, and into darkness and a net and a burning fire, where there is grievous condemnation, will your spirits enter, and there will be grievous condemnation for the generations of the world."

In the fourth book of Esdras it is said of the enemies of God that "they shall decay in confusion, and be consumed with shame, and wither in fear, when they see the glory of the Most High, in whose sight they sin while they are alive." Much influence on later Jewish thought was exercised by a well known passage of the later Isaiah: "They shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." These words in their primary meaning refer to the material bodies of the dead, but in the Hellenistic age they were used of the future world of spirits. And the picture of which the outline was thus sketched was by degrees filled in from non-Biblical sources. But this filling in went on but slowly and was not far advanced at the beginning of the Christian era.—Contemporary Review.

LETTER WRITING.

The Art a Lost One to the Present Day Scribblers of Hasty Notes.

Every one knows, of course, that the actual number of letters passing through the mails of every civilized country is greater, rather than less, year by year. But every one also feels that these letters are no longer letters, in the true sense, at all. They are amplified telegrams, bald and bare statements of fact, and they have the loose and disjointed and careless phraseology of the telegraphic message. That sense of the fit expression, the graceful concept; that feeling for the lucid and connected exposition of the ideas, for the balance of the parts, of a letter, for its composition, in short—the very term is pre-Adamite to the end of the century era—that used to preoccupy the best letter writers of another generation have gone from our present day scribblers of hasty notes, as though such musty things had never been.

The only people who "compose" their letters now are cultivated old ladies. Their college bred granddaughters, intellectually armed and professionally equipped, exhibit productions in that line, of which, for the most part, it might be said, as Henry James remarked of the notes of invitation of the London society woman, that they have nothing in common with the epistolary art but the postage stamp. It may be held that such an accomplishment is not, after all, of the greatest value. But behind it there is an instinct, deep seated in the race, that a widespread habit of careless writing affects very directly the thinking of a people. And this one cannot but believe to be the case. It takes no intellect to put plain facts into honest, self-respecting phrases. But it takes self-restraint and attentiveness, and these lead in time to a disciplined and coherent way of looking at life.—"The Point of View" in Scribner's.

Payn's American Duel.

James Payn, the English writer, tells this story of the "American plan" of dueling, wherein the two duellists, with one second, meet within doors and draw lots for who shall shoot himself: On a recent occasion, A and B, having had a "difficultly," A was the unlucky man, and retired for the purpose of self destruction into the next apartment. B and the second, both very much moved by the tragedy of the situation, remained in listening attitudes. At last the pistol was heard; they shuddered with emotion and remorse, when suddenly in rushed the supposed dead man, triumphantly exclaiming, "Missed!"

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