

SACRED THINGS.

A Strong Plea is Made for Their Observance.

The Story of Nebuchadnezzar is Told for the Benefit of Sabbath Breakers—In Proportion as We are Wrong Are We Boisterous in Our Religious Contentions.

In his latest Washington sermon Dr. Talmage urges upon the people the importance of living a good life. His text was Daniel 4: 33: "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

Better shade your eyes lest they be put out with the splendor of Babylon, as some morning you walk out with Nebuchadnezzar on the suspension bridges which hang from the house-tops, and he shows you the vastness of his realm. As the sun kindles the domes with glistening and insufferable and the great streets thunder up their pomp into the ear of the monarch, and armed towers stand around, adorned with the spoils of conquered empires, Nebuchadnezzar waves his hand above the stupendous scene and exclaims: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" But in an instant all that splendor is gone from his vision, for a voice falls from Heaven, saying: "Oh, King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee; and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee eat grass as oxen, and seven years shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whosoever He will." One hour from the time that he made the boast he is on the way to the fields, a maniac, and rushing into the forests, he becomes one of the beasts, covered with eagles' feathers for protection from the cold, and his nails growing to birds' claws in order that he might dig the earth for roots and climb the trees for nuts.

You see, there is a great variety in the Scriptural landscape. In several discourses we have looked at mountains of excellence, but now we look down into a great, dark chasm of wickedness as we come to speak of Nebuchadnezzar. God in His word sets before us the beauty of self-denial, of sobriety, of devotion, of courage, and then, lest we should not thoroughly understand him, He introduced Daniel and Paul, and Deborah, as illustrations of those virtues. God also speaks to us in His word as to the hatefulness of pride, of folly, of impiety, and lest we should not thoroughly understand Him, introduces Nebuchadnezzar as the impersonation of these forms of depravity. The former style of character is a lighthouse, showing us a way into a safe harbor, and the latter style of character is a black buoy, swinging on the rocks, to show where vessels wreck themselves. Thanks unto God for both the buoy and the lighthouse! The host of Nebuchadnezzar is thundering at the gates of Jerusalem. The crown of that sacred city is struck into the dust by the hand of Babylonian insolence. The vessels of the temple, which had never been desecrated by profane touch, were ruthlessly seized for sacrilege and transportation. Oh, what a sad hour when those Jews, at the command of the invading army, are obliged to leave the home of their nativity! How their hearts must have been wrung with anguish when, on the day they departed, they heard the trumpets from the top of the temple announcing the hour for morning sacrifice and saw the smoke of the altars ascending around the holy hill of Zion, for well they knew that in a far distant land they would never hear that trumpet call, nor behold the majestic ascent of the sacrifice.

Behold those captives on the road from Jerusalem to Babylon! Worn and weary, they dare not halt, for round about are armed men urging them on with hoot and shout, and blasphemy. Aged men tottered along on their staves, weeping that they could not lay their bones in the sleeping place of their fathers, and children wondered at the length of the way and sobbed themselves to sleep when the night had fallen. It seemed as if at every step a heart broke. But at a turn of the road Babylon suddenly springs upon the view of the captives, with its gardens and palaces. A shout goes up from the army as they behold their native city, but not one huzza is heard from the captives. These exiles saw no splendor there, for it was not home. The Euphrates did not have the water-gleam of the brook Kedron or the pool of Siloam. The willows of Babylon, on which they hung their untuned harps, were not as graceful as the trees which at the foot of Mount Moriah seemed to weep at the departed glory of Judah, and all the fragrance that descended from the hanging gardens upon that great city was not so sweet as one breath of the acacia and frankincense that the high priest kindled in the sanctuary at Jerusalem.

On a certain night, a little while after these captives had been brought to his city, Nebuchadnezzar is scared with a night vision. A bad man's pillow is apt to be stuffed with deeds and forebodings which keep talking in the night. He will find that the eagles' down in his pillow will stick him like porcupine quills. The ghosts of old transgressions are sure to wander about in the darkness and beckon and hiss. Yet when the morning came he found that the vision had entirely fled from him. Dreams drop no anchors, and therefore are apt to sail away before we can fasten them. Nebuchadnezzar calls all the wise men of the land into his presence, demanding that by their necromancy they explain his dream. They of course fail. Then their wrathful king issues an edict with as little sense as

mercy, ordering the slaying of all the learned men of the country. But Daniel the prophet comes in with the interpretation just in time to save the wise men and the Jewish captives.

My friends, do you not see that pride and ruin ride in the same saddle? See Nebuchadnezzar on the proudest throne of all the earth, and then see him graze with the sheep and the cattle! Pride is commander, well-plumed and caparisoned, but it leads forth a dark and frowning host. The arrows from the Almighty's quiver are apt to strike a man when on the wing. Goliath shakes his great spear in defiance, but the smooth stones from the brook make him stagger and fall like an ox under a butcher's bludgeon. He who is down cannot fall. Vessels scudding under bare poles do not feel the force of the storm, while those with all sails set capsize at the sudden descent of the tempest.

Remember that we can be as proud of our humility as of anything else. Antisthenes walked the streets of Athens with a ragged cloak to demonstrate his humility, but Socrates declared he could see the hypocrisy through the holes in his cloak. We would all see ourselves smaller than we are if we were as philosophic as Severus, the emperor of Rome, who said at the close of his life: "I have been everything and everything is nothing." And when the urn that was to contain his ashes was, at his command, brought to him, he said: "Little urn, thou shalt contain one for whom the world was too little."

Do you not also learn from the misfortune of this king of Babylon what a terrible thing is the loss of reason. There is no calamity that can possibly befall us in this world so great as derangement of intellect; to have the body of man and yet to fall even below the instinct of a brute. In this world of horrible sights, the most horrible is the idiot's stare. In this world of horrible sounds, the most horrible is the maniac's laugh. A vessel driven on the rocks, when hundreds go down never to rise and other hundreds drag their mangled and shivering bodies upon the winter's beach, is nothing compared to the foundering of intellects full of vast hopes and attainments and capacities. Christ's heart went out toward those who were epileptic, falling into the fire, or maniacs cutting themselves among the tombs. We are accustomed to be more grateful for physical health than for the proper working of our mind.

We forget that an engine of such tremendous power, where the wheels have such vastness of circle and such swiftness of motion and the least impediment might put it out of gear, can only be kept in proper balance by a divine hand. No human hand could engineer the train of immortal faculties. How strange it is that our memory, on whose shoulders all the misfortunes and successes and occurrences of a lifetime are placed, should not oftener break down, and that the scales of judgment, which have been weighing so much and so long, should not lose their adjustment and that fancy, which holds a dangerous wand, should not sometimes maliciously wave it, bringing into the heart forebodings and hallucinations the most appalling! Is it not strange that this mind, which hopes so much in its mighty leaps for the attainment of its objects, should not be dashed to pieces on its disappointments? Though so delicately tuned, this instrument of untold harmony plays on, though fear shakes it and vexations rack it, and sorrow and joy and loss and gain in quick succession beat out of it their dirge or toss from it their anthem. At morning and at night, when in your prayer you rehearse the causes of your thanksgiving, next to the salvation by Jesus Christ, praise the Lord for the preservation of your reason.

The plagues descend, the locusts, and the hail, and the destroying angel, showing that there is a God who will defend the cause of His people, and finally, after the Israelites have passed through the parted sea, behold, in the wreck of the drowned army, that God's enemies are chaff in a whirlwind! In some financial panic the rightwises suffered from the wicked. Houses and stores and shops in a night foundered on the rock of bankruptcy, and healthy credit without warning dropped dead in the street, and money ran up the log ladder of 25 per cent. to laugh down upon those who could not climb after it. Dealers with pockets full of securities stood shouting in the deaf ears of banks. Men rushed down the streets with protested notes after them. Those who before found it hard to spend their money, were left without money to spend. Laborers went home for want of work, to see hunger in their chair at the table and upon the hearth. Winter blew his breath of frost through fingers of icicles, and sheriffs with attachments dug among the cinders of fallen store-houses, and whole cities joined in the long funeral procession, marching to the graves of dead fortunes and a fallen commerce. Verily, the righteous suffered with the wicked, but generally the wicked had the worst of it. Splendid estates that had come together through schemes of wickedness were dashed to pieces like a potter's vessel, and God wrote with letters of fire, amid the ruin and destruction of reputations and estates that were thought impregnable, the old-fashioned truth, which centuries ago He wrote in His Bible: "The way of the wicked He turneth upside down."

As the stars of heaven are reflected from the waters of the earth, even so God's great and magnificent purposes are reflected back from the boiling sea of human passion and turmoil. As the voice of a sweet song uttered among the mountains may be uttered back from the cavernous home of wild beast and rocks split and thunder-scared, so the great harmonies of God's providence are rung back from the darkest caverns of this sin-struck earth. Senacherib, and Abimelech, and Herod, and Judas, and Nero, and Nebuchadnezzar, though they struggled in beasts unbroken to the load, were put into a yoke, where they were com-

pelled to help draw ahead God's great project of mercy.

Again, let us learn the lesson that men can be guilty of polluting the sacred vessels of the temple and carrying them away to Babylon. The sacred vessels in the temple at Jerusalem were the cups and plates of gold and silver with which the rites and ceremonies were celebrated. The laying of heathen hands upon them and the carrying them off as spoils was an unbounded offense to the Lord of the temple. Yet Nebuchadnezzar committed this very sacrilege. Though that wicked king is gone, the sins he inaugurated walk up and down the earth, cursing it from century to century. The sin of desecrating sacred things is committed by those who on sacramental day take the communion cup, while their conversation and deeds all show that they live down in Babylon. How solemn is the sacrament! It is a time for vows, a time for repentance, a time for faith. Sinai stands near, with its fire-split clouds, and Caivary, with its victim. The Holy Spirit broods over the scene, and the glory of Heaven seems to gather in the sanctuary. Vile indeed must that man be who will come in from his idols and unrepented follies to take hold of the sacred vessels of the temple. O, thou Nebuchadnezzar! Back with you to Babylon!

Those also desecrate sacred things who use the Sabbath for any other than religious purposes. This holy day was let down from Heaven amid the intense secularities of the week to remind us that we are immortal, and to allow us preparation for an endless state of happiness. It is a green spot in the hot desert of this world that gushes with fountains and waves with palm trees. This is the time to shake the dust from the robes of our piety and in the tents of Israel sharpen our swords for future conflict. Heaven, that seems so far off on other days, alights upon the earth, and the song of heavenly choirs and the hosanna of the white-robed seem to mingle with our earthly worship. We hear the hammering of Bethlehem, and the hammer-stroke of the carpenter's weary son in Nazareth, and the prayer of Gethsemane, and the bitter cry of Golgotha. Glory be unto the Lord of the Sabbath! With that one day in seven God divides this great sea of business and gaiety, so that dry shod we may pass between the worldly business of the past and the worldly business of the future!

But to many the Sabbath comes only as a day for neighborhood visiting, field rambling, hotel lounging and political caucusing. This glorious Sabbath, which was intended only as a golden chalice from which the thirsty should drink in this moment being carried down to Babylon. I do not exaggerate the truth when I say that to tens of thousands there is no distinction between the Sabbath and the week days, except that on the Lord's day they do not work, while they eat more largely and dissipate more thoroughly. Sabbath-breakers are like hunters who should compel their hounds to take rest while themselves continue on the weary chase, for men on the Sabbath allow their bodies which are merely the animal nature, sufficient repose, while their immortal nature, which should be fed and refreshed, is compelled to chase up and down this world's highway. How shameful to rob God of his day, when he allows men so much lawful acquisition, even of a worldly nature, on the Sabbath; for although men themselves are commanded to rest, the corn and the wheat and the grass grow just as rapidly on the Sabbath as on other days, so that while they sit in the sanctuary they are actually becoming richer in worldly things.

He who breaks the Sabbath not more certainly robs God than robs himself. Inevitably, continuous desecration of the sacred day ends either in bankruptcy or destroyed health. A great merchant said: "Had it not been for the Sabbath I have no doubt I should have been a maniac long ago." This remark was made in a company of merchants, and one of them said: "That corresponds with the experience of my friend, a great importer. He often said: 'The Sabbath is the best day of the week to plan successful voyages.' He has for years been in an insane hospital, and will probably die there."

Those also repeat the sin of Nebuchadnezzar who in any way desecrate the Holy Scriptures. There are men who use the word of God as an instrument of angry controversy. Bigots at heart and zealots in the advocacy of their religious peculiarities they meet other sects with the fury of a highwayman, thrusting them through and through with what they consider the sword of the spirit. It is a wonder to me that some men were not made with horns to hook with, and hoofs to kick with, and with claws to grab with. What Christ said to rash Peter, when he struck off the ear of Malchus, He says to every controversialist: "Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Just in proportion as men are wrong will they be boisterous in their religious contentions. The lamb of religion is always gentle, while there is no lion so fierce as the roaring lion that goes about seeking whom he may devour. Let Gibraltar belch their war flame on the sea, and the Dardanelles darken the Hellespont with the smoke of their batteries, but forever and ever let there be good will among those who profess to be subjects of the gospel of gentleness. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

What an embarrassing thing to meet in Heaven if we have not settled our controversies on earth. So I give out for all people of all religions to sing John Fawcett's hymn, in short meter, composed in 1773, but just as appropriate for 1897:

Best be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.
From sorrow, toil, and pain,
And sin we shall be free,
And perfect love and friendship reign
Through all eternity.

THE RETIRED BURGLAR.

An Experience Which Was Unexpected and Decidedly Unpleasant.

"Looking over the stuff on the sideboard of a house I was in one night," said the retired burglar, "I couldn't help thinking that if this was a fair sample of the house I'd lost a night. Silver plated teapots and sugar bowls fit for nothing but to hold tea and sugar and spoonholders and everything else just the same. In the drawers, among the plated spoons and forks, there was a miserable little lot of thin silver spoons and light forks, scarcely worth carrying off, and a souvenir spoon or two, but I sorted out these things and laid 'em together, corded in a little pile on the left hand side of the top of the sideboard, handy to pick up when I was ready. I had finished the sideboard and picked up the spoons and was just about to put 'em into my left hand inside coat pocket when I heard somebody say:

"There, that'll do nicely!" "Naturally enough, I suppose, I faced around toward where the sound came from, still holding the spoons in my hand. I realized in a minute just what it meant, and I might have thrown the spoons at him or turned the other way or dropped; but, to tell you the truth, I was a little surprised—it's a watchful man that's never surprised—and in the fraction of a second that I stood there thinking about it there was a click and a flash, and I knew I'd been photographed.

"I think," he says, "you'll find that'll come out very nicely—features and all the accessories clear and distinct. We'll send you a proof in about two weeks. What is the address, please?" And when I said nothing, he went on: "It is customary for us to require a deposit from customers that we don't know. If you don't wish to make a deposit, you might leave the spoons with us as a sort of guarantee of good faith."

"I'd dropped the spoons in my pocket and reached for my gun. I wasn't going away without that photograph machine and everything in it, but long before I was ready he'd pulled a string or something and turned up every light in that room and the next, and he was standing just inside the next room holding a gun very steady across the top of the camera. He was a cool, business-like looking man—very much so. It was clear that there wasn't anything for me to do but to leave the spoons, and that's what I did, and when he said nothing further, but just held the gun on me, I understood that there was no use of my waiting for another sitting.

"I was back in that town two or three years after that, and I looked along in the photographers' showcases for the picture, but I didn't see it."—New York Sun.

The Giants and the Flood.

Among the many queer stories related in the old Jewish Talmud is one concerning the action taken by the great race of giants at the time of the deluge. According to Rabbi Eliezer, when the flood broke upon the earth the giants exclaimed, "If all of the waters of the earth be gathered together they will only reach to our waists, and if the fountains of the great deep be broken up we will stamp them down again." The same writer, who was one of the compilers of the Talmud, says that they actually tried to do this when the flood finally came. Eliezer says that Og, their leader, "planted his foot upon the fountain of the deep and with his hands closed the windows of heaven." Then, according to this same queer story, "God made the waters hot and boiled the flesh from the bones of the haughty giants."

The Targum of Palestine also says that the waters of the flood were hot and that the skin of the rhinoceros lay in folds because he was not allowed to enter the ark, but saved himself by hooking his horn under the sides of the vessel and floating with it. But the water which was directly under and at the sides of the ark was not hot—the rhinoceros loosened his skin swimming from a mountain peak to the side of the vessel. One account says that Og and another giant named Lami also saved themselves by taking refuge in the cool water under the edge of the ark's hull, along with the rhinoceros. One rabbinic authority quoted by Gould in his "Patriarchs and Prophets" says that Og saved himself by climbing upon the top of the ark, and that when Noah discovered and tried to dislodge him he swore to be a slave to Noah's family forever if allowed to remain.—St. Louis Republic.

How Legged Stockings.

During last autumn a pitman was asked by a friend who was very bow legged to purchase, when next "it" the town," a pair of stockings for him. On the following day Saturday the pitman entered the shop of a well known hosier to make the purchase. The shopman was most obliging, but having shown the intending purchaser nearly every pair in stock he at last thought it time to ask of the man a more minute description of what was required.

He said he had shown nearly all they had, and he was sure their shop was second to none, and as they had hitherto given satisfaction to all classes it was strange that they could not now suit a customer. The pitman laconically replied, "What I want is a pair of bow-legged yins."—Strand Magazine.

Eugene's First Ancestor.

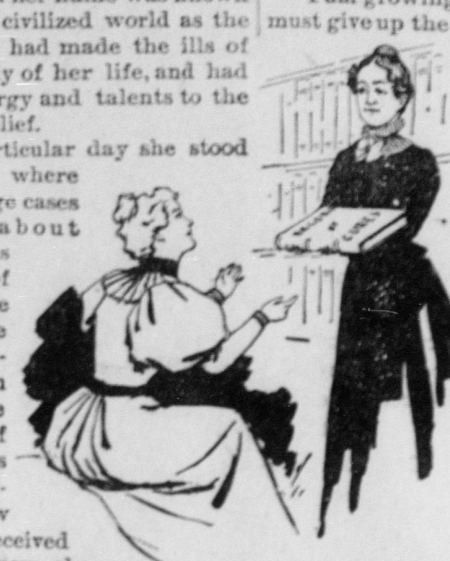
It is not generally known that Empress Eugenie was partly an Irish woman. Yet upon one side she was descended from an Irish soldier of fortune—there were any amount of them—who made a name and place for himself in the interminable Spanish wars. When there was talk of her marrying the Emperor Napoleon, some of the old nobility sneered at her pedigree. Then came heralds tracing out Irish blood lines until the French authorities in disgust conceded that Eugenie was descended from all the royalties of Ireland back to Brian Boru.

A NOBLE GIFT
Placed in the Hands of a Daughter
IN ORDER THAT A LIFE'S WORK MAY
BE PERPETUATED.

How Lydia E. Pinkham Arranged that the Great Work Which She Had Commenced Should Be Carried On After She Had Been Called to Her Reward.

It was an eventful day; one of the most widely known women of the age felt the weight of years upon her.

Her whole life had been given to one grand work, and her name was known throughout the civilized world as the one woman who had made the ills of her sex the study of her life, and had devoted her energy and talents to the cause of their relief. Upon this particular day she stood in her library, where were filed in huge cases upon shelves about her the records of thousands of cases of female ills which she had treated successfully. In turning over the leaves of one of these great books she read some extracts from a few of the letters received from women whom she had relieved from suffering, and before her was a younger woman.



It was a young woman, "they give the history of each case and how it was treated. "I am growing old, and some day I must give up the effort, and I bequeath to you my life-work for the physical salvation of women. Carry the good work forward."

The elder woman was Lydia E. Pinkham. The younger was her daughter, Mrs. Charles H. Pinkham, the one woman fully equipped by nature, education and experience to carry out the requirements of this noble legacy, her experience having extended over a number of years in assisting her mother to carry on the voluminous correspondence incident to her personal treatment of so many cases of female ills. The good work has been carried on to a greater extent than ever, and this can be fully appreciated when our readers will realize that Mrs. Pinkham receives letters from, and extends her advice to, something over one hundred thousand women per year, and she urges women to accept her advice in the same friendly spirit in which it is offered; for not only is it her desire to be of as great service to her suffering sisters as possible, but also to merit the great confidence placed in her by her mother when she was left in charge of that great woman's most cherished life work.

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