REV. DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

STRAINING AT GNATS AND SWALLOWING CAMELS.

The Sunday Sermon as Delivered by the Brooklyn Divine.

TEXT: *"Ye blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."*—Matthew xiii., 24.

A proverb is compact wisdom, knowledge in chunks, a library in a sentence, the electricity of many clouds discharged in one bolt, a river put through a millrace. When Christ quotes the proverb of the text He means to set forth the ludicrous behavior of those who make a great bluster about small sins and have no appreciations of great ones.

In my text a small insect and a large quadruped are brought into comparison—a gnat and a camel. You have in museum or on the desert seen the latter, a great awkward, sprawling creature, with back two stories high and stomach having a collection of reservoirs for desert travel, an animal forbidden to the Jews as food, and in many literatures entitled "the ship of the desert." The gnat spoken of in the text is in the grub form. It is born in pool or pond, after a few weeks becomes a chrysalis, and then after a few days becomes the gnat as we recognize it. But the insect spoken of in the text is in its very smallest shape, and yet it inhabits the water—for my text is a misprint and ought to read "strain out a gnat."

My text shows you the prince of inconsistencies. A man after long observation has formed the suspicion that in a cup of water he is about to drink there is a grub or the grandparent of a gnat. He goes and gets a sieve or a strainer. He takes the water and pours it through the sieve in the broad light. He says, "I would rather do anything almost than drink this water until this larva be extirpated." This water is brought under inquisition. The experiment is successful. The water rushes through the sieve and leaves against the side of the sieve the grub or gnat.

Then the man carefully removes the insect and drinks the water in placidity. But going out one day and hungry, he devours a "ship of the desert," the camel, which the Jews were forbidden to eat. The gastronomer has no compunctions of conscience. He suffers from no indigestion. He puts the lower jaw under the camel's forefoot and his upper jaw over the hump of the camel's back, and gives one swallow and the dromedary disappears forever. He strained out a gnat, he swallowed a camel.

While Christ's audience were yet smiling at the oppositeness and wit of His illustration—for smile they did in church, unless they were too stupid to understand the hyperbole—Christ practically said to them, "That is you." Punctilious about small things; reckless about affairs of great magnitude. No subject ever withered under a surgeon's knife more bitterly than did the Pharisees under Christ's scalpel of truth.

As an anatomist will take a human body to pieces and put them under a microscope for examination, so Christ finds His way to the heart of the dead Pharisee and cuts it out and puts it under the glass of inspection for all generations to examine. Those Pharisees thought that Christ would flatter them and compliment them, and how they must have writhed under the red hot words as He said, "Ye fools, ye whited sepulchers, ye blind guides which strain out a gnat and swallow a camel."

There are in our day a great many gnats strained out and a great many camels swallowed, and it is the object of this sermon to sketch a few persons who are extensively engaged in that business.

First, I remark, that all those ministers of the Gospel are photographed in the text who are very scrupulous about the conventionalities of religion, but put no particular stress upon matters of vast importance. Church services ought to be grave and solemn. There is no room for frivolity in religious convocation. But there are illustrations, and there are hyperboles like that of Christ in the text that will irradiate with smiles any intelligent auditory. There are men like those blind guides of the text who advocate only those things in religious service which draw the corners of the mouth down, and denounce all those things which have a tendency to draw the corners of the mouth up, and these men will go to installations and to presbyteries and to conferences and to associations, their pockets full of fine sieves to strain out the gnats, while in their own churches at home every Sunday there are fifty people sound asleep. They make their churches a great dormitory, and their somniferous sermons are a cradle, and the drawled out hymns a lullaby, while some wakeful soul in a pew with her fan keeps the flies off unconscious persons approximate. Now, I say it is worse to sleep in church than to smile in church, for the latter implies at least attention, while the former implies the indifference of the hearers and the stupidity of the speaker.

In old age, or from physical infirmity, or from long watches with the sick, drowsiness will sometimes overpower one, but when a minister of the Gospel looks off upon an audience and finds healthy and intelligent people struggling with drowsiness it is time for him to give out the doxology or pronounce the benediction. The great fault of church services to-day is not too much vivacity, but too much somnolence. The one is an irritating gnat that may be easily strained out; the other is a great, sprawling and sleepy-eyed camel of the dry desert. In all our Sabbath schools, in all our Bible classes, in all our pulpits we need to brighten up our religious message with such Christ-like vivacity as we find in the text.

I take down from my library the biographies of ministers and writers of the past ages, inspired and uninspired, who have done the most to bring souls to Jesus Christ, and I find that without a single exception they consecrated their wit and their humor to Christ. Elijah used it when he advised the Baalites, as they could not make their God respond, telling them to call louder as their god might be sound asleep or gone a-hunting. Job used it when he said to his self-conceited comforters, "Wisdom will die with you." Christ not only used it in the text, but when He ironically complimented the putrefied Pharisees, saying, "The whole need not a physician," and when by one word He described the cunning of Herod, saying, "Go ye, and tell that fox."

Matthew Henry's Commentaries from the first page to the last coruscated with humor as summer clouds with heat lightning. John Bunyan's writings are as full of humor as they are of saving truth, and there is not an aged man here who has ever read "Pilgrim's Progress" who does not remember that while reading it he smiled as often as he wept. Chrysostom, George Herbert, Robert South, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jeremy Taylor, Rowland Hill, Nettleton, George G. Finney and all the men of the past who greatly advanced the kingdom of God consecrated their wit and their humor to the cause of Christ.

So it has been in all the ages, and I say to these young theological students, who cluster in these services Sabbath by Sabbath, sharpen your wits as keen as scimiters and and then take them into the holy war. It is a very short bridge between a smile and a tear, a suspension bridge from eye to lip, and it is soon crossed over, and a smile is sometimes just as sacred as a tear. There is as much religion, and I think a little more, in a spring morning than in a starless midnight.

Religious work without any humor or wit in it is a banquet with a side of beef, and that raw, and no condiments and no dessert succeeding. People will not sit down at such a banquet. By all means remove all frivolity and all pathos and all lightness and all vulgarity—strain them out through the sieve of holy discrimination; but, on the other hand, beware of that monster which overshadows the Christian church to-day, conventionally, coming up from the Great Sahara Desert of Ecclesiasticism, having on its back a hump of sanctimonious gloom—and vehemently refuse to swallow that camel.

Oh, how particular a great many people are about the infinitesimals while they are quite reckless about the magnitudes. What did Christ say? Did He not excoriate the people in His time who were so careful to wash their hands before a meal, but did not wash their hearts? It is a bad thing to have unclean hands; it is a worse thing to have an unclean heart. How many people there are in our time who are very anxious that after their death they shall be buried with their feet toward the east, and not at all anxious that during their whole life they should face in the right direction so that they shall come up in the resurrection of the just whichever way they are buried. How many there are chiefly anxious that a minister of the Gospel shall come in the line of apostolic succession, not caring so much whether he comes from Apostle Paul or Apostle Judas. They have a way of measuring a gnat until it is larger than a camel.

Again, my subject photographs all those who are abhorrent of small sins while they are reckless in regard to magnificent thefts. You will find many a merchant, who while he is so careful that he would not take a yard of cloth or a spool of cotton from the counter without paying for it, and who if a bank cashier should make a mistake and send in a roll of bills five dollars too much would dispatch a messenger in hot haste to return the surplus, yet who will go into a stock company in which after awhile he gets control of the stock and then waters the stock and makes $100,000 appear like $200,000. He stole only $100,000 by the operation. Many of the men of fortune made their wealth in that way.

One of those men engaged in such unrighteous acts, that evening, the evening of the very day when he watered the stock, will find a wharf rat stealing an evening newspaper from the basement doorway, and will go out and catch the urchin by the collar and twist the collar so tightly the poor fellow cannot say that it was thirst for knowledge that led him to the dishonest act, but grip the collar tighter and tighter, saying: "I have been looking for you a long while. You stole my paper four or five times, haven't you? You miserable wretch!" And then the old stock gambler, with a voice they can hear three blocks, will cry out, "Police, police!"

That same man, the evening of the day on which he watered the stock, will kneel with his family in prayer and thank God for the prosperity of the day, then kiss his children good night with an air which seems to say: "I hope you will all grow up to be as good as your father!" Prisons for sins insectile in size, but palaces for crimes dromedarian! No mercy for sins animalcule in proportion, but great leniency for mastodon iniquity.

It is time that we learn in America that sin is not excusable in proportion as it declares large dividends and has outriders in equipage. Many a man is riding to perdition postilion ahead and lackey behind. To steal a dollar is a gnat; to steal many thousands of dollars is a camel. There is many a fruit dealer who would not consent to steal a basket of peaches from a neighbor's stall, but who would not scruple to depress the fruit market; and as long as I can remember we have heard every summer the peach crop of Maryland is a failure, and by the time the crop comes in the misrepresentation makes a differences of millions of dollars. A man who would not steal one peach basket steals fifty thousand peach baskets.

Any summer go down into the Mercantile library, in the reading rooms, and see the newspaper reports of the crops from all parts of the country, and their phraseology is very much the same, and the same men wrote them, methodically and infamously carrying out the huge lying about the grain crop from year to year and for a score of years. After a while there is a "corner" in the wheat market, and men who had a contempt for a petty theft will burglarize the wheat bin of a nation and commit larceny upon the American cornerib. And men will sit in churches and in reformatory institutions trying to strain out the small gnats of scoundrelism, while in their grain elevators and in their storehouses they are fattening huge camels which they expect after awhile to swallow. Society has to be entirely reconstructed on this subject. We are to find that a sin is inexcusable in proportion as it is great.

I know in our time the tendency is to charge religious frauds upon good men. They say, "Oh, what a class of frauds you have in the Church of God in this day," and when an elder of a church or a deacon or a minister of the Gospel or a superintendent of a Sabbath school turns out a defaulter what display heads there are in many of the newspapers—great primer type; five line pica—"Another Saint Absconded," "Clerical Scoundrelism," "Religion at a Discount," "Shame on the Churches," while there are a thousand scoundrels outside the church to where there is one inside the church, and the misbehavior of those who never see the inside of a church is so great it is enough to tempt a man to become a Christian to get out of their company.

But in all circles, religious and irreligious, the tendency is to excuse sin in proportion as it is mammoth. Even John Milton in his "Paradise Lost," while he condemns Satan, gives such a grand description of him you have hard work to suppress your admiration. Oh, this straining out of small sins like gnats, and this gulping down great iniquities like camels.

This subject does not give the picture of of one or two persons, but is a gallery in which thousands of people may see their likenesses. For instance, all these people who, while they would not rob their neighbor of a farthing, appropriate the money and the treasure of the public. A man has a house to sell, and he tells his customer it is worth $20,000. Next day the assessor comes around and the owner says it is worth $15,000. The Government of the United States took off the tax from personal income, among other reasons because so few people would tell the truth, and many a man with an income of hundreds of dollars a day made statements which seemed to imply he was about to be handed over to the overseer of the poor.

Careful to pay their passage from Liverpool to New York, yet smuggling in their Saratoga trunk ten silk dresses from Paris and a half dozen watches from Geneva, Switzerland, telling the custom house officer on the wharf, "There is nothing in that trunk but wearing apparel," and putting a five dollar gold piece in his hand to punctuate the statement.

Described in the text are all those who are particular never to break the law of grammar, and who want all their language an elegant specimen of syntax, straining out all the inaccuracies of speech with a fine sieve of literary criticism, while through their conversation go slander and innuendo and profanity and falsehood larger than a whole caravan of camels, when they might better fracture every law of the language and shock their intellectual taste, and better let verb seek in vain for its nominative, and every noun for its government, and every preposition lose its way in the sentence, and adjectives and participles and pronouns get into a grand riot worthy of the Fourth ward on election day, then to commit a moral inaccuracy. Better swallow a thousand gnats than one camel.

Such persons are also described in the text who are very much alarmed about the small faults of others and have no alarm about their own great transgressions. There are in every community and in every church watchdogs who feel called upon to keep their eyes on others and growl. They are full of suspicions. They wonder if that man is not dishonest, if that man is not unclean, if there is not something wrong about the other man. They are always the first to hear of anything wrong. Vultures are always the first to smell carrion. They are self appointed detectives. I lay this down as a rule without any exception—that those people who have the most faults themselves are most merciless in their watching of others. From scalp of head to sole of foot they are full of jealousies and hypercriticisms.

They spend their life in hunting for muskrats and mud turtles instead of hunting for Rocky Mountain eagles; always for something mean instead of something grand. They look at their neighbors' imperfections through a microscope, and look at their own imperfections through a telescope upside down. Twenty faults of their own do not hurt them half so much as one fault of somebody else. Their neighbor's imperfections are like gnats, and they strain them out; their own imperfections are like camels, and they swallow them.

But lest any might think they escape the scrutiny of the text, I have to tell you we all come under the divine satire when we make the questions of time more prominent than the questions of eternity. Come now, let us all go into the confessional. Are not all tempted to make the question, Where shall I live now? greater than the question, Where shall I live forever? How shall I get more dollars here? greater than the question, How shall I lay up treasures in heaven? the question, How shall I pay my debts to man? greater than the question, How shall I meet my obligations to God? the question, How shall I gain the world? greater than the question, What if I lose my soul? the question, Why did God let sin come into the world? greater than the question, How shall I get it extirpated from my nature? the question, What shall I do with the twenty or forty or seventy years of my sublunar existence? greater that the question, What shall I do with the millions of cycles of my postterrestial existence? Time, how small it is! Eternity, how vast it is! The former more insignificant in comparison with the latter than a gnat is insignificant when compared with a camel. We dodged the text. We said, "That doesn't mean me, and that doesn't mean me," and with a ruinous benevolence we are giving the whole sermon away.

But let us all surrender to the charge. What an ado about things here. What poor preparation for a great eternity. As though a minnow were larger than a behemoth, as though a swallow took wider circuit than an albatross, as though a nettle were taller than a Lebanon cedar, as though a giant were greater than a camel, as though a minute were longer than a century, as though time were higher, deeper, broader than eternity. So the text which flashed with lightning of wit as Christ uttered it, is followed by the crashing thunders of awful catastrophe to those who make the questions of time greater than the questions of the future, the oncoming, overshading future. O Eternity! Eternity! Eternity!

WINTER WHEAT.

The Injury by the Recent Heavy Freezes Not so Great as Was Feared.

This week's Farmer's Review says regarding the condition of winter wheat:

It was feared that the winter wheat had been greatly injured by the recent heavy freezes. Reports from alternate counties of the States covered show that while there was some injury, it has not been so widespread as was feared.

In Illinois three-fifths of the correspondents say that the outlook is still fair to good. The others report the condition as bad.

In Indiana seventy per cent. of the correspondents report the condition fair and good, and the others report poor.

The condition in Ohio is a little worse than in the two preceding States. Only half of the correspondents report the condition as fair to good. The rest report from poor to very bad.

In Michigan two-thirds of the correspondents report the condition as fair and good, the others poor.

In Kentucky half the correspondents report the outlook as good, and nearly forty per cent. report fair, and little or no damage was done by recent unpropitious weather.

In Missouri two-thirds of the correspondents report the condition as fair to good.

In Kansas one-half of the correspondents report the condition of the crops as good; one-fourth report fair, and the rest poor.

In Iowa very few correspondents report any wheat. Of those reporting, two-thirds give the prospects from fair to good.

In Wisconsin the outlook is decidedly bad. Not more than one-third of the correspondents report the condition as either good or fair. The others give a gloomy report of the condition of the crop.

No Short Hours For Englishmen.

LONDON, March 26—In the house of commons to-day a Liberal member moved the second reading of the miners' eight-hour bill. He said the measure would affect 531,000 men. The bill was rejected by a vote of 272 to 160.

A Terrible Fire in Amsterdam.

AMSTERDAM, March 24—During a fire yesterday which destroyed four houses, five persons were killed and 22 injured, seven of whom are not expected to live. The fire was caused by the explosion of a benzine barrel.

THE LABOR WORLD.

THE coal strike in England has terminated.

THERE are 20,000 waiters in New York City.

THE mining interests show a heavier production.

SHIP buildings, both on coast and lake, are thriving.

THE British House of Commons rejected the Miners' Eight Hours bill.

THE outlook for laborers in the iron manufacturing business is gloomy.

THE theatres in London, England, regularly employ over 12,000 people.

A BOSTON (Mass.) dry goods house has a regular physician for its employes.

RUSSIA is employing 150,000 Poles in Poland in building new roads and fortifications.

EIGHTEEN THOUSAND men are needed at once to man the vessels of the United States Navy.

AN alien labor bill is being urged in the Canadian Parliament in retaliation on the United States.

THE reduction in the wages of puddlers from $4 to $3.50 a ton went into effect a few days ago at Lebanon, Penn.

THE Pharmaceutical Union is about to make a demand for a reduction of the hours of labor for druggists' clerks.

THE average annual wages of British working-people are about $260 a year for every man, woman and child.

THE Furriers' Union has adopted a union label, a copy of which has been sent to Washington to be duly registered.

THE unemployed of Germany are still making matters interesting for the Government by threatening disturbances.

BUILDING material men are all crowding work at present, and architects speak confidently of booming demands ahead.

THE proprietors of two Boston (Mass.) hotels have issued orders that none in their employ shall hereafter wear either mustache or beard.

THE puddlers in the iron works of Menden and Schwerte, in Westphalia, are now provided with furnace shields to protect them from the intense heat.

THE hotel and restaurant waiters of Brooklyn and New York City have asked all members of organized labor not to patronize restaurants that employ female waiters.

THE recently organized Federation of Metal Workers is composed of the International Association of Machinists, with 29,000 members; Iron Moulders' Union, 33,000; Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, 4000; Brotherhood of Brass Workers, 3,000, and Pattern-Makers' National Union, 2000 members.

EMPLOYES of the Grand Trunk Railroad have been ordered not to smoke while on duty or when in uniform. They must remove their hats while passing through a dining car or any car in which an official of the road may be seated. They will not be allowed to use a seat, part of which is already occupied by a passenger.

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 3RD.

"Way of the Righteous," Psalm i., 1–16 —Golden Text: Psalm, 1. Commentary.

1. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." The whole book of Psalms is divided into five books, the endings of which are easily seen (xli., 13; lxxii., 19; lxxxix. 52; cvi., 48, cxix., 6). The ancient Rabbins, saw in the five books of Psalms the image of the five books of the law. It has been said that the Law is the Lord's fivefold word to the congregation, and the Psalter is the congregation's fivefold word to the Lord. Psalm i. is the preface to the whole book or or the text of the sermon. The subject is the happiness of the righteous and the destruction of sinners. The word translated "Blessed," or more literally, "O the blessings," is used over forty times in the Old Testament, twenty-five of which are in the Psalms. The first is in Deut. xxxiii., 29, and the last in Dan. xii., 12. It is a different word from another which is translated "Blessed," signifying to bend the knee to, or worship, and used over 300 times. In this negative description of the happy man observe the three times three of the down grade of the wicked, which he avoids—walketh, standeth, sitteth, the counsel, the way, the seat, the ungodly, sinners, the scornful. The counsel would be to let religion alone. The way is that of the theater, the gambler, the drunkard. The seat is that of confirmed impiety. By resisting the first we get victory over all. The following are very helpful texts in reference to counsel: Ps. cvi., 43; xxxiii., 10, 11 lxxiii., 24; xxxii., 8, margin.

2. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night." This is the positive description of the happy man and the secret of his blessedness. In the word of God he finds God Himself, and God becomes his delight. The entrance of the word has enlightened him, caused him to see his sinfulness and plead guilty, led him to the blood that maketh atonement for the soul, and now he is the happy man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered and to whom iniquity is not imputed (Ps. cxix., 130; xxxii., 1, 2; Rom. iii., 19, 24; Lev. xvii., 11). Having, as a poor man—one possessing nothing but sin—found the riches of the Lord, yea, durable riches and righteousness (Prov. viii., 18, 19), his heart goes out to others who as poor as he once was, and so carrying to them the word of the Lord which made him rich, and seeing the Lord's grace to them, he learns to delight greatly in the Lord (Ps. xli., 1; Isa. lviii., 8, 11, 14).

3. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." He learns to say with Thomas A. Kempis, "I have no rest but in a nook with the Book," and thus eating the word day and night, his roots go down deep by the living water and he learns to say to God, "All my springs are in Thee" (Ps. lxxxvii., 7). And though he may be outwardly oppressed and afflicted, even falsely accused and imprisoned like Joseph, or actually beaten like Paul and Silas, yet he prospers, and can make his joy in the Lord to be heard and felt (Gen. xxxix., 2, 23; Acts xvi., 25). The fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, etc., is only ripened, mellowed and brought out more beautifully by the fruits of affliction. In Jer. xvii., 7, 8, there is a very similar description of one whose trust is in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. The secret is that the Almighty God is the all sufficient home of the soul—or, in other words, in Jesus dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and we are filled full in Him (Gen. xvii., 1; II Cor. vi., 17, 18; Col. ii., 9, 10).

4. "The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." And yet Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. v, 6) and is not willing that any should perish (II Pet. iii., 9), entreating those whose sins are as deep dyed as scarlet and crimson to come to Him and be made whiter than snow (Isa. i., 18). But if they will not turn to Him, persisting in disobedience and rebellion, then when He gathers in His wheat into the garner He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Math. iii., 12). He will say unto some, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angles." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal" (Math. xxv., 41, 46). Chaff is just like wheat in form, but it is all form and no substance. Let us take heed.

5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Thus early in Scripture do we find reference to the distinctive resurrections and judgments of unrighteousnes which are so clearly spoken of in the New Testtment. The word "stand" in this verse is in Ps. lxxxviii., 10, and elsewhere translated "arise;" so we might read, "The ungodly shall not arise in the judgment." The Scriptural programme is simply this: At death the spirits of the righteous enter into conscious bliss, the spirits of the lost into conscious torment, the bodies of all alike going to corruption; when Christ comes to the air for His saints their bodies rise, and soul and body reunited appear at His judgment seat to receive rewards for service and places in His kingdom. Only believers are in that judgment. They return with Him to judge the living nations and convert Israel and bring in the millennium, or thousand years, at the end of which the ungodly arise to stand before the great white throne and go away into the lake of fire (Luke xvi., 22, 23; Phil. i., 21, 23; I Thess. iv., 16–18; II Cor. v., 10; Luke xix., 11–15; Rev. iii., 21; I Cor. vi., 2; Rev. xx., 1–15).

6. "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." He looks with approval upon the way of the righteous for they walk in His way. Their prayer is "Show me Thy way, O Lord teach me Thy paths" (Ps. xxv., 4), and they find that all His ways are pleasant and His paths are peace (Prov. iii., 17). The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein (Hos. xiv., 9). The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord (Prov. xv., 9). There are openly ungodly people who confess that they care not for the way of the Lord, these are not the worst enemies of Christ, although by their own confession they are without hope in the world. There are others who bear the name of the people of God, and, like the remnant in Jeremiah's day, say, "Pray for us unto the Lord thy God, that the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk and the thing that we may do." Then when God's way is made known to them, because it does not happen to be to their liking, they turn their backs upon God and do their own pleasure. (See Jer. xlii., 2, 3, xliv., 16, 17).—Lesson Helper.

Endeavoring to Finish the Grant Monument.

NEW YORK, March 23—Merchants of various branches of trade in the Chamber of Commerce inaugurated a movement looking to the completion of the long deferred monument to General Grant. Committees were appointed to arouse interest in the matter, so that the cornerstone may be laid on April 27, the 70th anniversary of General Grant's birth. It is estimated that about $350,000 is yet needed to complete the monument.

A Triple Tragedy.

DECATUR, ALA., March 24.—John Fritz, while in a drunken frenzy, shot and instantly killed Mrs. Thomas Wolcott. Mrs. Ed. Whitten was shot and seriously injured. Fritz then blew his own brains out. He was chief engineer of the U. S. Rolling Stock plant.

RELIGIOUS READING.

WE COME TO THEE.

We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!
Just because we need Thee so;
None need Thee more than we do;
None are half so vile or low.

We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!
None will have us, Lord, but Thee;
And we want none but Jesus,
And His grace that makes us free.

We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!
With our broken faith again;
We know Thou wilt forgive us,
Nor upbraid us, nor complain.

We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!
It is love that makes us come;
We are certain of our welcome,
Of our Father's welcome home.

We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!
For to whom, Lord, can we go?
The words of life eternal
From Thy lips forever flow.

We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!
We have tried Thee oft before;
But now we come more wholly,
With the heart to love Thee more

We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!
And Thou wilt not ask us why;
We cannot live without Thee,
And still less without Thee die.
—[Faber.

GO AND DO IT.

Go and do it now, this moment, instantly. Go, run. "To do what?" say you; the commandments of God, all, everything in the Book, the great Book, the Book of Books. Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Diffuse life, light and glory; scatter widely the seeds of benevolence. "Wash you, make you clean, cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow;" in a word, follow the golden rule, keep thyself unspotted. Any thing more, any thing less? Go and do it.

I AM THE WAY.

Who? Jesus Christ.
Whence? From sin, woe, hell.
Whither? To holiness, joy, heaven.
How? By his perfect obedience, atoning blood, and new creating Spirit.

Is there any other way? Not one. Said Peter, by the Holy Ghost, "neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Cannot then morality save us? Nor Alms? Nor penance? Nor masses? Nor priestly dispensations? Nor the merits of saints? Most certainly not. Are not the words of God just cited, plain? Are they not explicit? Need any man misunderstand them? Will any man peril his soul, by perverting or neglecting them? What more than madness! To every heir of guilt and immorality, Jesus Christ says, pointing from hell to heaven—I am the way!—[Presbyterian of the West.

PRAYER.

"He will not hear those who have not a steadfast belief in His promises." He deserves our confidence, and He requires it.

"Nor will he hear those who come unto His presence full of worldly feelings." We must love God supremely, and allow neither our houses, our stores, our ships, our stocks, our money, our goods, to occupy the thoughts that should be given to Him.

"He will not hearken to those who ask the things they do not sincerely desire." Some go through a round of petitions without feeling a need of the things they ask, or without any strong desire to obtain them.

"He will not listen to those who ask with perfect selfishness, and without any regard to His glory." Our prayers must be disinterested. We must not implore for things to pamper appetites, promote our own ease and indulgence, or the worldly prosperity of our families. We must not petition for objects that will not increase our spirituality, Christian activity and carefulness. We must have a supreme regard for the glory of God in all we ask of Him.

"He cannot consistently hear us when we cry to Him for things he has revealed he cannot consistently with his glory grant." It is an insult to God to ask him for what he has told us he cannot and ought not to give. Such prayers are an abomination in the sight of a benevolent God.

"He will not regard the prayers of those who supplicate for things without using the means necessary for their attainment." God helps those who help themselves. He confers blessings through human instrumentality. We must do our part, or God will withhold his aid.

"It is inconsistent for God to hear the prayers of those who pray without relying on the blood and righteousness of Christ." All the blessings conferred on us are the purchase of the atoning Saviour. We must plead his righteousness and the great atonement He has made. "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine annointed."

THE CONDITIONS OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

"And all things, whatsoever ye believe," etc. Have we not sometimes been tempted to think that here, at least, is a case in which our Lord has not literally and always kept his word? in which we do not get quite so much as the plain English of the promise might lead us to expect? If so, well may he say to us, "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?" This marvelous "Whatsoever" depends upon five great conditions, and if we honestly examine we shall find that every case of seeming failure in the promise can be accounted for by our own failure in one or more of these:

(1) "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." Really, not verbally only, in the name of Jesus; asking not in our own name at all; signing our petition, as it were, with his name only; coming to the Father by our Advocate, our Representative. Do we always ask this?

(2) "Believing that ye shall receive." The faith-heroes of old "through faith * * * obtained promises," and there is no new way of obtaining them. Is it any wonder that, when we stagger at any promise of God through unbelief, we do not receive it?

(3) "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Ah, here is a deeper secret of asking and not having, because we ask amiss. And this leads us to see the root of our failure in another condition.

(4) "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." Only as we are abiding in him can we bring forth the fruit of obedience.

(5) "If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us." When what we ask is founded on a promise or any written evidence of what the will of the Lord is, this is comfortingly clear. But what about petitions which may or may not be according to His will? Surely, then, the condition can only be fulfilled by a complete blending of our own will with His.

Two comforting thoughts arise: First, the very consciousness of our failure in these conditions shows us the wonderful kindness and mercy of our King, who has answered so many a prayer in spite it of according to His own heart, and not according to our fulfillment, giving us of His royal bounty that to which we had forfeited all shadow of claim; secondly, that he who knoweth our frame knows also the possibilities of His grace, and would never tantalize us by offering magnificient gifts on impossible conditions. Will he give him a stone? Would an earthly parent? Would you? Therefore the very annexing of these intrinsically most blessed conditions implies that His grace is sufficient for their fulfillment, and should lure us on to a blessed life of faith, abiding in Jesus, walking in obedience unto all pleasing, and a will possessed of his own divine will.—[Frances Ridley Havergal.

CURIOUS FACTS.

Of Waterloo veterans France has eight left.

A Missouri man has carried the same knife for sixty-nine years.

There are now living in Germany no fewer than 529,987 Mullers.

Western New York has a skunk farm where black skunks are bred and raised for their pelts.

Portland, Me., in a recent entire week had but two arrests out of a population of 40,000 persons.

Old postage stamps are highly prized in China, and a hundred cancelled stamps will buy a baby.

The new German tent is devisible into two portions, each of which can be converted into an overcoat in case of rain.

St. Tammany Parish, La., boasts of a spring which pours forth clear pure water during the day, but goes dry when the sun sets.

An 800-pound cinnamon bear was captured recently in Lassen County, California. It is believed to be one of the largest ever taken in a trap.

In a New Hampshire graveyard there is a large marble shaft on which the following words are inscribed: "Sacred to the memory of three twins."

All other things being equal, a baritone voice in a man and a contralto voice in a woman will wear better and last longer than any of the others.

A Mississippi man who has counted the number of seeds in a bushel of various grains found that corn went 72,130; wheat, 830,000; peas, 109,000; cotton seed, 164,166.

At a Catholic convent in Fort Berthold, North Dakota, all the sisters, including the mother superior, are Indians, and the spiritual director is a priest of Mohawk descent.

A new diamond is being cut in Antwerp, Belgium, said to be the largest ever found in Africa. It weighs 400 carats, and when it is finished it will be reduced one-half.

Tea and coffee are not foods. If this pair of moderate stimulants were lost from off the face of the earth to-day and forever they would not take away an ounce of physical prosperity.

Antelope skin, which has been extensively used for pocketbooks, photograph frames, etc., is now being employed for gloves. It is very soft and pliable, resembling the finest suede, and comes in all the tan and light shades.

Shoulderings, jeerings and biting of thumbs were the favorite provocatives to quarrel with the "roughs" of St. Paul's walk, London, England, in Shakspeare's time, and many a braggart brawler bit the dust for biting his thumb at a better man.

Thomas Connolly, a woodsman of Bell's Mills, Forest County, Penn., while splitting a chestnut tree into rails, found an ox shoe in the trunk of the tree a foot from the surface. The shoe evidently had been pounded into the tree when it was a sapling.

In the magnificent court of the temple of Medinet Haboo the traveler will see a score of columns, several of them bearing Greek inscriptions, and in the chambers on the northwest side of the temple he will see crosses designed to consecrate parts of the building which had previously been devoted to pagan uses.

The precipitous mountain crags around a large lake near the Columbia River, in Idaho, are said to be the finest fields for sport in hunting the large white mountain goat and black bear that there are in the world. So white are the goats that it takes days of practice hunting them to detect a band moving over the snow.

Hook and Ladder Service in New York

There is generally a misconception as to what is meant by a hook and ladder company. The use of the ladder is at once understood, and the necessity of it; the hook is an implement used to pull down portions of buildings with. The hook is among the oldest of implements used for scaling walls, and dates back from mediæval times. The scaling ladders are made of a single length of tough wood, with the rungs at right angles with it, and passing through it. Its upper end terminates with a metal hook, which permits it to be attached to the window sills, or copings of a house. In ordinary cases ladders are used, but there are many fires where, in order to obtain access to the upper portions of a house, the hook becomes a necessity. Ladders are not always long enough to reach the desired heights, and then the hooks supplement them.

Hook and ladder companies are essentially life-saving in their duties. To each fire battalion in New York there are generally assigned two hook and ladder companies. There are thirty-six to forty hook and ladder machines, though they may be all in service at one time, some being under repair. To a hook and ladder company there is given an average of twelve men, and in particular cases there have been as many as eighteen. These men represent the pick of the service as to physique. All of them have passed through the school of instruction, and have been specially trained for their duties. It is not coolness alone that is requisite, but that perfect reliance which comes from well-trained muscles.

On the apparatus is carried in addition to the ladders, which, with their extensions, are ninety feet long, a number of hooks, with axes, crowbars, ropes, life-saving nets and fire extinguishers. On account of the extreme length of the ladders, the apparatus is extended and there is a steering wheel, acting on the back axle, which enables the truck to turn sharp corners. The three horses attached to such a lumbering machine must be of the best, for every minute lost in reaching a centre of conflagration means chances of death or destruction of property.—Harper's Weekly.

The landed surface of the Northern Hemisphere is about 44,000,000 square miles, as against 16,000,000 square miles embraced by the Southern Hemisphere.