

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

A DISCOURSE ON THE LIGHTNING OF THE SEA.

An Unusually Attractive and Eloquent Sermon—The Pathway of the Almighty—An Irradiated Wave of Gladness—The Glow of Good Deeds

A Path That Shines.

In the Brooklyn Tabernacle last Sunday Rev. Dr. Talmage preached an unusually attractive and eloquent gospel sermon to a crowded audience. The subject was "The Lightning of the Sea," the text selected being Job, 11, 3, "He maketh a path to shine after Him."

If for the next thousand years ministers of religion should preach from this Bible, there will yet be texts unexplored and unexplained and unappreciated. What little has been said concerning this chapter in Job from which my text is taken bears on the controversy as to what was really the leviathan described as disturbing the sea. What creature it was I know not. Some say it was a whale. Some say it was a crocodile. My own opinion is that it was a sea monster now extinct. No creature now floating in Mediterranean or Atlantic waters corresponds to Job's description.

Lightning of the Sea.

What most interests me is that as it moved on through the deep it left the waters flashing and resplendent. In the words of the text, "The lightning of the sea." What was that lightning? It was phosphorescence. You find it in the wake of a ship in the night, especially after rough weather. Phosphorescence is the lightning of the sea. That this kind of speech is correct in describing its appearance I am certified by an incident. After crossing the Atlantic the first time and writing from Basle, Switzerland, to an American magazine an account of my voyage, in which I mentioned more facts than I had the phosphorescence in the ship's wake, I called it the lightning of the sea.

Down to the postoffice I hastened to get the manuscript and with great labor and some expense got possession of the magazine article and put quotation marks around the sentences, although it was as original with me as with John Ruskin. I suppose that ninetenths of you living so near the seacoast have watched this marine appearance called phosphorescence, and I hope that the ocean steam-ship on some day be so happy as to witness it. It is the waves of the sea diamonded; it is the inflorescence of the billows; the waves of the sea crimsoned as was the deep after the sea fight of Lepanto; the waves of the sea on fire.

There are times when the horizon horizon the entire ocean seems in conflagration with this strange splendor as it changes every moment to tamer or more dazzling color on all sides of you. You sit looking over the fairfall of the sunset or the moonlight and waiting to see what new thing the God of beauty will do with the Atlantic. It is the ocean in transfiguration; it is the marine world casting its garments of glory in the pathway of the Almighty. He walks the deep. It is the lighted firmament with all its stars gone down with it. No picture can present it, for photographer's camera cannot be successfully trained to catch it, and before it the hand of the painter drops its pencil, overawed and powerless.

This phosphorescence is the appearance of myriads of the animal kingdom rising, falling, playing, flashing, living, dying. These luminous animalcules for nearly 150 years have been the study of naturalists and the fascination and solemnization of all who have been enough to think. Now, God who puts in His Bible nothing trivial or useless, calls the attention of Job, the greatest scientist of his day, to this phosphorescence, and as the leviathan of the deep sweeps past points out the fact that "he maketh a path to shine after him."

Is that true of us now, and will it be true of us when we have gone? Will there be subsequent light or darkness? Will there be a trail of gloom or cheer? Can anyone between now and the next 100 years say as truthfully as the text says of the leviathan of the deep, "He maketh a path to shine after Him." For we are moving on. While we live in the same house and transact business in the same store, and write on the same table, and chisel in the same studio, and thrash in the same barn, and worship in the same church, we are in motion and are in many respects moving on. Years ago, now where we were ten years hence, moving on.

Look at the family record, or the album, or into the mirror, and see if anyone of you is where you were. All in motion. Other feet may trip and stumble and halt, but the feet of not one moment for the last sixty centuries has tripped or stumbled or halted. Moving on! Society moving on! The world moving on! Heaven moving on! The universe moving on. Time moving on. Eternity moving on. Therefore it is absurd to think that we ourselves can stop, as we must move with all the rest. Are we like the creature of the text, making our path to shine after us? It may be a peculiar question, but it is a question that we should ask.

What influence will we leave in this world after we have gone through it? "None," answer hundreds of voices; "we are not one of the immortals. Fifty years after we are out of the world, it will be as though we never inhabited it." You are wrong in saying that. I pass down through this audience and up through these galleries, and I am looking for some one who is looking for one who will have no influence in this world 100 years from now. But I have found the man who has the least influence, and I inquire into his history, and I find that by a yes or no he decides the one's eternity. If that man gives an affirmative answer to a question, he gives an affirmative or negative to some temptation which another hearing of, was induced to decide in the same way.

Clear on the other side of the next millennium comes the influence of the long reaching influence of the yes or no, but hear of it you will. Will that father make a path to shine after him? Will that mother make a path to shine after her? You will be walk-

ing these streets or along that country road 100 years from now in the character of your descendants. They will be affected by your courage, your cowardice, your purity, your dishonesty, your boldness or your sin. You will make the path to shine after you or blacken after you.

Now, suppose a man seated in a corner grocery or business office among clerks gives himself to jolly skepticism. He laughs at the Bible, makes sport of the miracles, speaks of perdition in jest. He is a man of the world, and at the passage of a funeral procession, which always solemnizes sensible people, says, "Boys, let's take a drink." There is in that group a young man who is making a great struggle against temptation. He rises at five and morning and reads his Bible and is asking God for help day by day. But that scoffing and Christianity makes him lose his grip of sacred things, and he goes on and goes on from bad to worse, till he falls under dissipation, dies in a lazar house and is buried in the potter's field.

Another young man who heard that job's skepticism, says to himself that "it makes no difference what we do or say, for we will all come out at last at the right place," and began as a consequence to perjure. Some money that came into his hands for others he applied to his own use, and he thought he would make it straight some other time, and all would be well even if he did not make it straight. He ends in the penitentiary. That scoffing who uttered the jokes against Christianity he realized that he was doing and he passed on through life and out of it and into a future that I am not now going to depict.

It do not prone with a searchlight to show the breakers of the awful coast. You are a very young man, and your business now is to watch the sea after the keel has plowed it. No phosphorescence in the wake of the ship, but behind it two souls struggling in the wave—two young men destroyed by reckless skepticism, an unlimited ocean beneath and on all sides of them. Blackness of darkness.

You know what a gloriously good man Rev. John Newton was the most of his life, but before his conversion on a very stormy night he was on board the ship *Harwich* instilled idleness and vice in the mind of a young man—principles which destroyed him. Afterward the two met, and Newton tried to undo his bad work, but in vain. The young man became worse and worse day by day, and he died in a lazar house, profanities those who stood by him in his last moments.

Better look out what bad influence you start, for you may not be able to stop it. It does not require very great influence to ruin a man. You know many years ago a great flood nearly destroyed New Orleans. A crawfish had burrowed into the banks of the river until the ground was saturated and the banks weakened until the flood burst.

What Ordinary Persons Can Do.

There were in the seventeenth century men and women whose names you never heard of who to-day influencing schools, colleges, churches, nations. You can no more measure the the gracious results of their lifetime than you can measure the results of the bullets and depth of the phosphorescence last night following the ship of the White Star Line 1,500 miles out at sea. How the courage and consecration of others inspire us to follow, as a general in the army inspires his troops, as the living bullets, inspired a trembling soldier, who said afterward, "I was nearly scared to death, but I saw the old man's white mustache over his shoulder and went on." Aye, we are all following somebody either in right or wrong direction.

A few days ago I stood beside the garlanded casket of a gospel minister, and in my remarks had occasion to recall a snowy night in a farmhouse when a boy and an evangelist spending the night in the farmer's house, who said something so tender and beautiful and impressive that it led me into the kingdom of God and decided my destiny for this world and the next. You will, before twenty-four hours go by, meet some man or woman with a big pack of care and trouble on his back, and say something to him or her that will endure until this world shall have been so far lost in the past that nothing but the stretch of angelic memory will be able to realize that it ever existed at all.

I am not talking of remarkable men and women, but of what ordinary folks can do. I am not speaking of the phosphorescence in the wake of a Campania, but of the phosphorescence in the track of a Newfoundland fishing smack. God makes thunderbolts out of sparks, and out of the small words and deeds of a small life he can launch a power that will flash and burn and thunder through the eternities.

How do you like this prolongation of your earthly life? How many of the living bulle? Many a babe that died at 6 months of age by the anxiety created in the parent's heart to meet that child in realms seraphic is living yet in the transformed heart and life of those present. How will it live on forever in the history of that family. If this be the opportunity of ordinary souls, what is the opportunity of those who have special intellectual or social or monetary equipment?

How do you like this arithmetic capable of estimating the influence of our good and gracious friend who a few days ago went up to rest—George W. Childs of Philadelphia? From a newspaper that was printed for 30 years without one of its editors ever being guilty of scandal, and putting chief emphasis on virtue and charity and clean intelligence, he reaped a fortune for himself and then distributed a vast amount of it among the poor and struggling, putting his name on the titles of his benefactions, until his name stands everywhere for large heartedness and sympathy and help and highest style of Christian gentleman.

In an era which had in the chairs of its universities and in the pulpits of a Henry J. Raymond, and a James Gordon Bennett, and an Erasmus Brooks, and a George William Curtis, and a Irenaeus Prime, none of them will be longer remembered than George W. Childs. His influence is being unceasingly multiplied, and he has had at least a large expense in our Greenwood in memory of Professor Proctor, the astronomer, lest I should say something in praise of the man who had paid the price of the world for the highest American journalism.

If you would calculate his influence for good, you must count how many sheets of his newspapers have been published in the last quarter of a century, and how many people have read them, and how many of those who read them, but upon all whom they shall influence for all time, while you add to that the work of the churches he helped build and of the institutions of mercy he helped found. Better give the dark room and the measurement of the phosphorescence in the wake of that ship of the Celestial line. Who can tell the post mortem influence of a Savonarola, a Winkfield, a Gatenberg, a Marley, a Taylor, a Deering, a Toussaint, a Bolivar, a Clarkson, a Robert Raikes, a Harlan Page, who had 125 Sabbath scholars, 84 of whom became Christians, and six of them ministers of the gospel.

But mark you that the phosphorescence has a glow that the night monopolizes, and I ask you not only what kind of influence you are going to leave in the world as you pass through the dark room, but what you are going to throw across the world's night of sin and sorrow? People who are sailing on smooth sea and at noon do not need much sympathy, but what are you going to do for people in the night of sin and sorrow? Do you drop them in shadow, or will you kindle for them phosphorescence?

At this moment there are more people crying than laughing, more people on the round world this moment hungry than well fed, more people who are left than homes unbroken. What are you going to do about it? "Well," says your soul, "I would like to do something toward illumining the great darkness of human wretchedness, but I cannot do much." Do not say that. Can you do as much as one of the phosphor in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, creates smaller than the point of a sharp pin? "Oh, yes," you say. Then, what do you stand before the looking glass and experiment to see if you cannot get that scowl of your forehead, that peevish look out of your lips. Have at least one bright ribbon in your bonnet. Embroider at least one white cord somewhere in the middle of your apron. Do not say any longer impudent a funeral. Shine! Do say something cheerful about society and about the world. Put a few drops of Heaven into your disposition. Once in awhile substitute a sweet orange for your apparel. Do not say. Remember that pessimism is blasphemy and that optimism is Christianity. Throw some light on the night ocean. If you cannot be a lantern swinging in the rigging, be one of the shining stars in the firmament. Shine! "Let your light so shine before men that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

Make one person happy every day, and that is twenty years, and you will have made 3,000 happy. You know a man who has lost all his property by an unfortunate investment or by putting his name on the back of a friend's note. After you have taken a brief nap, which every man and woman is entitled to, go after noon, go and cheer up that man. You can if God helps you, say something that will do him good after both of you have been dead a thousand years.

Shine! You know of a family with a bad name, but who are going home. Go before night and tell that father and mother the parable of the prodigal son, and that some of the illustrious and useful men now in church and State had a dirty passage in their lives and ran away from home. Shine! You know of a man who has lost a child, and the silence of the nursery glooms the whole house from cellar to garret. Go before night and tell them how much that child has happily escaped, since the most prosperous life on earth is a struggle.

Shine! You know of some invalid who is dying for lack of an appetite. She cannot get well because she cannot eat. Broil a chicken and take it to her before night and cheer her poor appetite. You know of a man who has lost a child, and the silence of the nursery glooms the whole house from cellar to garret. Go before night and tell them how much that child has happily escaped, since the most prosperous life on earth is a struggle.

Shine! Oh, for a disposition so charged with sweetness and light that we cannot help it. Remember that if you cannot be a leviathan lashing the ocean into fury you can be one of the phosphor, doing your part toward making a path of phosphorescence. Then I will tell you what impression I have had upon my path through his life and after you are gone. I will tell you to your face and not leave it to the minister who officiates at your obsequies.

The Failure of Eulogy.

The failure in all eulogium of the departed is that they cannot hear it. I hear it except the one most interested. This, in substance, is what I or some one else will say of you on such an occasion: "We gather for offices of respect to this departed one. It is impossible to tell how many tears he shed, how many burdens he lifted, or how many souls he saved, under God, instrumental in saving. His influence will never cease. We are all better for having known him. That pillow of flowers on the casket was for him, and with it a noble class, all of whom he brought to Christ. That cross of flowers at the head was presented by the orphan asylum which he befriended. Those three single flowers—one was sent by a poor woman for whom she had labored a day, and one was by a wife of the street whom he rescued through the midnight mission, and the other was from the prison cell which he had often visited to encourage repentance in a young man who had done well."

"Those three lone flowers mean quite as much as the costly garlands now breathing their aroma through this saddened home crowded with sympathizers. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.' They are at rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

Or if should be the more solemn burial at sea, let it be after the sun has gone down, and the captain has read the appropriate litany, and the ship's bell has tolled, and you are let down from the stern of the vessel into the resplendent phosphorescence at the wake of the ship. Then let some one say, in the words of the text, "He maketh a path to shine after him."

One way of being unfair is to compel a merchant to buy tickets you are selling because you trade with him.

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