

GOD'S MYSTERIOUS RULE

THE RAIN USED BY DR. TALMAGE AS A COMMON ILLUSTRATION.

God Is Infinite in Infinitesimals as Much as in Things Infinitely Great, in Our Everyday Sorrows as in the World's Erection.

BROOKLYN, July 5.—Dr. Talmage's sermon today is on a kind of gospel in which few people believe. The weather is a common object of complaint and fault finding, but Dr. Talmage finds a gospel in it, which today he proclaims from the text, "Hath the rain a father?" Job xxxviii, 28.

This Book of Job has been the subject of unbounded theological wrangle. Men have made it the ring in which to display their ecclesiastical pugilism. Some say that the Book of Job is a true history; others, that it is an allegory; others, that it is an epic poem; others, that it is a drama. Some say that Job lived eighteen hundred years before Christ, others say that he never lived at all. Some say that the author of this book was Job, others, David; others, Solomon. The discussion has landed some in blank infidelity. Now I have no trouble with the books of Job or Revelation—the two most mysterious books in the Bible—because of a rule I adopted some years ago.

I waded down into a Scripture passage as long as I can touch bottom, and when I cannot, then I waded out. I used to wade in until it was over my head, and then I got drowned. I study a passage of Scripture so long as it is a comfort and help to my soul; but when it becomes a perplexity and a spiritual upturning, I quit. In other words, we ought to wade in up to our heart, but never wade in until it is over our head. No man should ever expect to swim across this great ocean of divine truth. I go down into that ocean as I go down into the Atlantic ocean at East Hampton, Long Island, just far enough to bathe, then I come out. I never had any idea that with my weak hand and foot I could strike my way clear over to Liverpool.

SCIENCE IS NOT RELIGIOUS.

I suppose you understand your family genealogy. You know something about your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents. Perhaps you know where they were born or where they died. Have you ever studied the parentage of the shower? "Hath the rain a father?" This question is not asked by a poetaster or a scientist, but by the head of the universe. To humble and to save Job God asks him fourteen questions; about the world's architecture, about the refraction of the sun's rays, about the tides, about the snow crystal, about the lightning, and then he arraigns him with the interrogation of the text, "Hath the rain a father?"

With the scientific wonders of the rain I have nothing to do. A minister gets through with that kind of sermons within the first three years, and if he has piety enough he gets through with it in the first three months. A sermon has come to me to mean one word of four letters, "help." You all know that the rain is not an orphan. You know that it is not cast out of the gates of heaven a foundling. You would answer the question of my text in the affirmative. Safely housed during the storm you hear the rain beating against the window pane, and you find it searching all the crevices of the window sill.

It first comes down in solitary drops, pattering the dust, and then it deluges the fields and angers the mountain torrents, and makes the traveler implore shelter. You know that the rain is not an accident of the world's economy. You know it was born of the cloud. You know it was rocked in the cradle of the wind. You know it was sung to sleep by the storm. You know that it is a flying evangel from heaven to earth. You know it is the gospel of the weather. You know that God is its father.

If this be true, then, how wicked is our murmuring about climatic changes. The first eleven Sabbaths after I entered the ministry it stormed. Through the week it was clear weather, but on the Sabbath the old country meeting house looked like Noah's ark before it landed. A few drenched people sat before a drenched pastor, but most of the farmers stayed at home and thanked God that what was bad for the church was good for the crops. I committed a good deal of sin in those days in denouncing the weather. Ministers of the Gospel sometimes fret about stormy Sabbaths or hot Sabbaths or inclement Sabbaths. They forget the fact that the same God who ordained the deluge saved Noah's ark.

NO ACCIDENTS IN THE DIVINE PLAN. When, in one of the Irish wars, a starving mother, flying with her starving child, sank down and fainted on the ground in the night and her hand fell on an arm bottle of milk, did that just enso? God is either in the affairs of men, or our religion is worth nothing at all, and you had better take it from us; and instead of this Bible which teaches the doctrine, give a secular book, and let us, as the amous Mr. Fox, the member of parliament, in his last hour, cry out, "Read me the eighth book of Virgil."

Oh, my friends, let us rouse up to an appreciation of the fact that all the affairs of our life are under a King's command and under a Father's watch. Alexander's war horse, Bucephalus, would allow anybody to mount him when he was unharnessed, but as soon as they put on that war horse Bucephalus the saddle and the trappings of the conqueror, he would allow no one but Alexander to touch him. And if a soulless horse could have so much pride in his owner, shall not we immortals exult in the fact that we are owned by a King? "Hath the rain a father?" Again, my subject teaches me that God's dealings with us are inexplicable. That was the original force of my text. The rain was a great mystery to the ancients. They could not understand how the water should get into the cloud, and getting there, how it should be suspended, or falling, why it should come down in drops. Modern science comes along and says there are two portions of air of different temperature, and they are charged with moisture, and the one portion of air decreases in temperature so the water may no longer be held in vapor and it falls. And they tell us that some of the clouds that look to be only as large as a man's hand, and to be almost quiet in the heavens, are great mountains of mist four thousand feet from base to top, and that they rush miles a minute.

But after all the brilliant experiments of Dr. James Hutton and Saussure and other scientists, there is an infinite mystery about the rain. There is an ocean of the unfathomable in every raindrop, and God says today as he said in the time of Job, "If you cannot understand one drop of rain, do not be surprised if my dealings with you are inexplicable." Why does that aged man, decrepit, beggared, vicious, sick of the world, and the world sick of him, live on, while here is a man in midlife, consecrated to God, hard working, useful in every respect, who dies?

Why does that old gossip, gadding along the street about everybody's business but her own, have such good health, while the Christian mother, with a flock of little ones about her whom she is preparing for usefulness and for heaven—the mother who you think could not be spared an hour from that household—why does she lie down and die with a cancer? Why does that man, selfish to the core, go on adding fortune to fortune, consuming everything on himself, continue to prosper, while that man who has been giving ten per cent. of all his income to God and the church goes into bankruptcy?

Before we make stark fools of ourselves let us stop pressing this everlasting "why." Let us worship where we cannot understand. Let a man take that one question, "Why?" and follow it far enough, and push it, and he will land in wretchedness and perdition. We want in our theology fewer interrogation marks and more exclamation points. Heaven is the place for explanation. Earth is the place for trust. If you cannot understand so minute a thing as a raindrop, how can you expect to understand God's dealings? "Hath the rain a father?"

GOD'S TENDER MERCIES OVER ALL.

My text also suggests God's minute supervisal. You see the divine Sonship in every drop of rain. The jewels of the shower are not flung away by a spendthrift who knows not how many he throws or where they fall. They are all shining princes of heaven. They all have an eternal lineage. They are all the children of a king. "Hath the rain a father?" Well, then, I say if God takes notice of every minute raindrop he will take notice of the most insignificant affair of my life. It is the astronomical view of things that bothers me.

We look up into the night heavens and we say, "Worlds! worlds!" and how insignificant we feel! We stand at the foot of Mount Washington or Mont Blanc, and we feel that we are only insects, and then we say to ourselves, "Though the world is so large the sun is one million four hundred thousand times larger." "Oh!" we say, "it is no use; if God wheels that great machinery through immensity he will not take the trouble to look down at me!" Infidel conclusion. Saturn, Mercury and Jupiter are no more rounded and weighed and swung by the hand of God than are the globules on a lilac bush the morning after a shower.

God is no more in magnitudes than he is in minutiae. If he has scales to weigh the mountains he has balances delicate enough to weigh the infinitesimal. You can no more see him through the telescope than you can see him through the microscope; no more when you look up than when you look down. Are not the hairs of your head all numbered? And if Himalaya has a God, "Hath not the rain a father?"

I take this doctrine of a particular Providence, and I thrust it into the very midst of your everyday life. If God fathers a raindrop, is there anything so insignificant in your affairs that God will not father that? When Drayze, the gunsmith, invented the needle gun, which decided the battle of Sadowa, was it a mere accident? When a farmer's boy showed Blucher a short cut by which he could bring his army up soon enough to decide Waterloo for England, was it a mere accident?

When Lord Byron took a piece of money and tossed it up to decide whether or not he should be affianced to Miss Millbank, was it a mere accident which side of the money was up and which was down? When the Christian army were besieged at Bezier, and a drunken drummer came in at midnight and rang the alarm bell, not knowing what he was doing, but waking up the host in time to fight their enemies that moment arriving, was it an accident?

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JUDGE NOT BY PEBBLE SENSE.

Again, my text makes me think that the rain of tears is of divine origin. Great clouds of trouble sometimes hover over us. They are black, and they are gorged, and they are thunderous. They are more portentous than Salvalor or Claude ever painted—clouds of poverty or persecution or bereavement. They hover over us, and get darker and blacker, and after a while a tear starts, and we think by an extra pressure of the eyelid to stop it. Others follow, and after a while there is a shower of tearful emotion. Yea, there is a rain of tears. "Hath that rain a father?"

"Oh," you say, "a tear is nothing but a drop of limpid fluid secreted by the lachrymal gland—is only a sign of weak eyes." Great mistake. It is one of the Lord's richest benedictions to the world. There are people in Blackwell's Island insane asylum, and at Utica, and at all the asylums of this land, who were demoted by the fact that they could not cry at the right time. Said a man in one of our public institutions, under a Gospel sermon that started the tears: "Do you see that tear? That is the first I have wept for twelve years. I think it will help my brain."

There are a great many in the grave who could not stand any longer under the glacier of trouble. If that glacier had only melted into weeping they could have endured it. There have been times in your life when you would have given the world, if you had possessed it, for one tear. You could shriek, you could blaspheme, but you could not cry. Have you never seen a man holding the hand of a dead wife, who had been all the world to him? The temples livid with excitement, the eye dry and frantic, no moisture on the upper or lower lid. You saw there were bolts of anger in the cloud but no rain.

To your Christian comfort he said, "Don't talk me about God; there is no God; or if there is I hate him; don't talk to me about God; would he have left me and these motherless children?" But a few hours or days after, coming across some lead pencil that she owned in life, or some letters which she wrote when he was away from home, with an outcry that appals there bursts the fountain of tears, and as the sunlight of God's consolation strikes that fountain of tears you find out that it is a tender hearted, merciful, pitiful and all compassionate God who was the father of that rain.

"Oh," you say, "it's absurd to think that God is going to watch over tears." No, my friends. There are three or four kinds of them that God counts, bottles and eternizes. First, there are all parental tears, and there are more of these than of any other kind, because the most of the race die in infancy, and that keeps parents mourning all around the world. They never get over it. They may live to shout and sing afterward, but there is always a corridor in the soul that is silent, though it once resounded.

My parents never mentioned the death of a child who died fifty years before without a tremor in the voice and a sigh, oh! how deep fetched. It was better she should die; it was a mercy she should die. She would have been a lifelong invalid. But you cannot argue away a parent's grief. How often you hear the moan, "Oh! my child, my child!" Then there are the filial tears.

OUR GRIEF FOR THE DEAD. Little children soon get over the loss of parents. They are easily diverted with a new toy. But where is the man who has come to thirty or forty or fifty years of age who can think of the old people without having all the fountains of his soul stirred up? You may have had to take care of her a good many years, but you never can forget how she used to take care of you. There have been many sea captains converted in our church, and the peculiarity of them was that they were nearly all prayed ashore by their mothers, though the mothers went into the dust soon after they went to sea. Have you never heard an old man in delirium of some sickness call for his mother?

The fact is we get so used to calling for her the first ten years of our life we never get over it, and when she goes away from us it makes deep sorrow. You sometimes, perhaps, in days of trouble and darkness, when the world would say, "You ought to be able to take care of yourself," you wake up from your dreams finding yourself saying, "Oh, mother! mother!" Have these tears no divine origin? Why, take all the warm hearts that ever beat in all lands and in all ages, and put them together, and their united throbs would be weak compared with the throb of God's eternal sympathy. Yes, God also is Father of all that rain of repentance.

Did you ever see a rain of repentance? Do you know what it is that makes a man repent? I see people going around trying to repent. They cannot repent. Do you know no man can repent until God helps him to repent? How do I know? By this passage, "Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour to give repentance." Oh! it is a tremendous hour when one wakes up and says: "I am a bad man; I have not sinned against the laws of the land, but I have wasted my life. God asked me for my services and I haven't given those services. Oh! my sins, God forgive me."

When that tear starts it thrills all heaven. An angel cannot keep his eye off it, and the church of God assembles around, and there is a commingling of tears, and God is the father of that rain, the Lord, long suffering, merciful and gracious. In a religious assemblage a man arose and said: "I have been a very wicked man; I broke my mother's heart; I became an infidel; but I have seen my evil way, and I have surrendered my heart to God. But it is a grief I never can get over that my parents should never have heard of my salvation. I don't know whether they are living or dead."

While yet he was standing in the audience, a voice from the gallery said, "Oh, my son, my son!" He looked up and he recognized her. It was his old mother. She had been praying for him for a great many years, and when at the foot of the cross the prodigal son and the praying mother embraced each other, there was a rain, a tremendous rain, of tears, and God was the Father of those tears. Oh, that God would break us down with a sense of our sin, and then lift us up with an appreciation of his mercy. Tears over our wasted life. Tears over a grieved spirit. Tears over an injured father. Oh, that God would move upon this audience with a great wave of religious emotion.

THE GREAT KING PARDONS.

The king of Carthage was dethroned. His people rebelled against him. He was driven into banishment. His wife and children were outrageously abused. Years went by, and the king of Carthage made many friends. He gathered up a great army. He marched again toward Carthage. Reaching the gates of Carthage the best men of the place came out barefooted and bareheaded, and with ropes around their necks, crying for mercy. They said, "We abused you and we abused your family; but we cry for mercy." The king of Carthage looked down upon the people from his chariot and said: "I came to bless, I didn't come to destroy. You drove me out, but this day I pronounce pardon for all the people. Open the gate and let the army come in." The king marched in and took the throne, and the people all sounded, "Long live the king!"

My friends, you have driven the Lord Jesus Christ, the king of the church, away from your heart; you have been mistreating him all these years; but he comes back today. He stands in front of the gates of your soul. If you will only pray for his pardon, he will meet you with his gracious spirit and he will say: "Thy sins and thine iniquities I will remember no more. Open wide the gate; I will take the throne. My people I give unto you." And then, all through the audience, from the young and from the old, there will be a rain of tears, and God will be the father of that rain!

It is not very often that dining rooms are visited by wild animals of their own accord, but on Sunday a large, fat woodchuck made his way into the dining room of Mrs. Foster, on Front street, where he was captured, and he is now in a cage in their yard.—Lewis-ton Journal.

London Electric Lighting System. London was slow to accept the electric light, but is now making up for lost time. At the general meeting of the Metropolitan company the chairman reported that within a year the number of the lamps supplied by them had increased from 6,000 to 60,000. As to their system of underground mains, he said that the length of conduit at present laid was forty miles, and into these conduits there had been laid ninety miles of mains, and not one fault or leakage had occurred.—New York Telegram.

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ODDS AND ENDS.

Fruit stains will usually yield to hot water when persistently poured upon them. Teachers' salaries in the United States annually amount to more than \$60,000,000. There is a difference of only twenty-two square miles between the areas of England and Iowa.

The first word spoken through the London-Paris telephone was the good old English word "Hallo."

A billion dollars would give 100,000 young men enough capital to start in a profitable business for themselves.

The Duke of Portland is said to possess, in addition to mine and lands, an interest in house property to the extent of \$20,000,000.

The man who fears most sarcastically at the ability of medical men is usually the quickest to send for a doctor whenever he has a pain.

Phosphorus is now being made by decomposing a mixture of acid phosphates and carbon by the heat of an electric arc within the mass.

Strychnine has been found to increase the amount of gastric juice secreted in the stomach, the general acidity and the quantity of free acid in the secretion. Proverbs have been called the condensed wisdom of experience, so it may be well to heed this one, likewise of Arabian origin, "To succeed in love or at law, you need the devil for your friend."

Manufacture of Thimbles.

Dies of different sizes are used, into which the metal, whether gold, silver or steel, is pressed. The hole punching, finishing, polishing and tempering are done afterward. Celluloid and rubber are molded. The best thimbles are made in France, where the process is more thorough.

The first step in the making of a Paris gold thimble is the cutting into a disk of the desired size a thin piece of sheet iron. This is brought to a red heat, placed over a graduated hole in an iron bench and hammered down into it with a punch. This hole is the form of the thimble. The iron takes its shape and is removed from the hole. The little indentations to keep the needle from slipping are made in it, and all the other finishing strokes of the perfect thimble put on it. The iron is then made into steel by a process peculiar to the French thimble maker, and is tempered, polished and brought to a deep blue color. A thin sheet of gold is then pressed into the interior of the thimble and fastened there by a mandril.

Gold leaf is attached to the outside by great pressure, the edges of the leaf being fitted in and held by small grooves at the base of the thimble. The article is then ready for use. The gold will last for years. The steel never wears out, and the gold can be readily replaced at any time.—New York Telegram.

A Tennis Costume.

Buy ten yards of outing cloth at twelve cents a yard. If you like stripes, choose one of the pretty combinations of soft blues, pinks, grays and creams; but if you prefer you can get the cloth this season in a solid color. If you have a supply of silk shirts and a good blazer you will not need more than seven yards. Have a full round short skirt, the draperies being as plain and straight as possible. If you cannot afford silk shirts make a shirt of the outing cloth on the model of the silk shirts sold in the stores, with turnover collar and lacings in front of bright color.

Get a leather belt, if you have a slim figure, to match in color your tennis shoes; or get a silk waist scarf or sash, knotting it in convenient position at one side without passing about the waist, if you are not slim. Get two or three silk scarfs to knot into pretty ties at your throat, and then you will be fixed, except as to shoes.

Your tennis shoes, if they are good ones, will cost about three dollars, and you can tie them up with cords of the color of your sash and the bright stripe of your gown.

Then there is the hat—it was nearly forgotten. A little sailor hat answers fairly well, simply trimmed with ribbons like your sash and shoe lacings, or, if it becomes you, a big bright Tam o' Shanter is a patch of color in the tennis field.—New York Recorder.

White Neckties.

Within the past two or three years there has been a marked increase in the number of people wearing white neckties of silk, satin, linen or cotton, in the public streets, wearing them not in preparation for dinner, but as a part of the regular daily garb. A reporter who walked along Broadway the other afternoon saw over a score of them around the necks of well dressed men. In some cases they were becoming; in others, they were not. The bowknot white necktie looked seemly upon some wearers; the white scarf looked well on others.—New York Sun.

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