

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Subject: "The Sundial of Ahaz."

TEXT: "And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz."—II King xx, 11.

Here is the first clock or watch or chronometer or timepiece of which the world has any knowledge. But it was a watch that did not tick and a clock that did not strike. It was a sundial. Ahaz, the king, invented it. Between the hours given to statecraft and the cares of office he invented something by which he could tell the time of day. This sundial may have been a great column, and when the shadow of that column reached one point it was nine o'clock A. M., and when it reached another point it was three o'clock P. M., and all the hours and half hours were so measured. Or it may have been a flight of stairs such as may now be found in Hindostan and other old countries, and when the shadow reached one step it was ten o'clock A. M., or another step it was four o'clock P. M., and likewise other hours may have been indicated.

The clepsydra or water clock followed the sundial, and the sandglass followed the clepsydra. Then came the candle clock of Alfred the Great and the candle was marked into three parts, and while the first part was burning he gave himself to religion, and while the second part was burning he gave himself to politics, and while the third part was burning he gave himself to rest. After a while came the wheel and weight clock, and Pope Sylvester the Second, was its most important inventor. And the skill of centuries of exquisite mechanism toiled at the timepieces until the world had the Vicks clock of the fourteenth century and Huyghens, the inventor, swung the first pendulum and Dr. Hooke contrived the recoil escapement. And the "endless chain" followed, and the "ratchet and pinion lever" took its place, and the compensation balance and the stemwinder followed, and now we have the buzz and clang of the great clock and watch factories of Switzerland and Germany and England and America turning out what seems to be the perfection of timepieces. It took the world six thousand years to make the present chronometer. So with the measurement of longer spaces than minutes and hours, time was calculated from new moon to new moon; then from harvest to harvest. Then the year was pronounced to be three hundred and fifty-four days and then three hundred and sixty days, and not until a long while after three hundred and sixty-five days. Then events were calculated from the foundation of Rome, afterward from the Olympic games. Then the Babylonians had their measurement of the year and the Romans theirs and the Armenians theirs and the Hindus theirs. Chronology was busy for centuries studying monuments, inscriptions, coins, mummies and astronomy, trying to lay a plan by which all question of dates might be settled and events put in their right places in the procession of the ages. But the chronologists only heaped up a mountain of confusion and bewilderment until in the sixth century Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman abbot, said, "Let everything date from the birth of Bethlehem of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world." The abbot proposed to have things dated backward and forward from that great event. What a splendid thought for Christianity! It would have been most natural to date everything from the creation of the world. But I am glad the chronologists could not too easily guess how old the world was in order to get the date in the habit of dating from that occurrence in its documents and histories. Forever fixed is it that all history is to be dated with reference to the birth of Christ, and, this matter settled, Hales, the chief chronologist, declared that the world was made five thousand four hundred and eleven years before Christ, and the deluge came three thousand one hundred and fifty-five years before Christ, and all the illustrious events of the nineteen centuries and all the great events of all time or to come have been or shall be dated from the birth of Christ. These things I say that you may know what a watch is, what a clock is, what an almanac is, and learn to appreciate through what toils and hardships and perplexities the world came to its present conveniences and comforts, and to help you to more respectful consideration of that sundial of Ahaz planted in my text.

We are told that Hezekiah, the king, was lying of a boil. It must have been one of the worst kind of carbuncles, and sometimes deathful. A fig was put upon it as a poultice, Hezekiah did not want to die then. His son, who was to take the kingdom, had not yet been born, and Hezekiah's death would have been the death of the nation. So he prays for recovery and is told he will get well. But he wants some miraculous sign to make him sure of it. He has the choice of having the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz advance or retreat. He replied it would not be so wonderful to have the sun go down, for it always does go down sooner or later. He asks that it go backward. In other words, let the day instead of going on toward sundown, turn and go toward sunrise. I see the invalid king bolstered up and wrapped in blankets looking out of the window upon the sundial in the courtyard. While he watches the shadow on the dial the shadow of the sundial of Ahaz advances or goes on toward six o'clock in the evening. The big poultice had been drawing for some time, and sure enough the boil broke and Hezekiah got well. Now I expect you will come on with your higher criticism and try to explain this away and say it was an optical delusion of Hezekiah, and the shadow only seemed to go back or a cloud came over and it was uncertain which way the shadow did go, and as Hezekiah expected it to go back he took the action of his own mind for the retrograde movement. No; the shadow went back on all the dials of that land and other lands. Turn to II Chronicles xxxii, 81, and find that away off in Babylon the mighty men of the palace noticed the same phenomenon. And if you do not like the Bible authority turn over your copy of Herodotus and find that away off in Egypt the people noticed that there was something the matter with the sun. The fact is that the whole universe waits upon God, and suns and moons and stars are not very big things to Him, and He can with His little finger turn back an entire world as easily as you can set back the hour hand or minute hand of your clock or watch.

At the opening of the new year people are moralizing on the flight of time. You all feel that you are moving on toward sundown and many of you are under a consequent depression. I propose this morning to set the hands of your watches and clocks to going the other way. I propose to show you how you make the shadow of your dial like the shadow on the dial of Ahaz to set going forward and make it go backward. You think I have a big undertaking

on hand, but it can be done if the same Lord who reversed the shadow in Hezekiah's courtyard moves upon us. While looking at the sundial of Hezekiah we find the shadow retreating. We ought to learn that God controls the shadows. We are all ready to acknowledge His management of the sunshine. We stand in the glow of a bright morning and we say in our feelings if not with so many words, "This life is from God, this warmth is from God." Or, we have a ruan of prosperity and we say, "These successes are from God. What a providential thing it was I bought that lot just before the rise of real estate! How grateful to God I am that I made that investment! Why, they have declared ten per cent dividend! What a mercy it was that I sold out my shares before that collapse!" Oh, yes; we acknowledge God as the sunshine of a bright day or the sunshine of a great prosperity. But suppose the day is dark? You have to light the gas at noon. The sun does not show himself all day long. There is nothing but shadow. How long we are to realize that the storm is from God and the darkness from God and the chill from God. Or we buy the day before the market retreats, or we make an investment that never pays, or we purchase goods that we cannot dispose of, or a crop of grain we sowed is ruined by drought or freshet, or when we took account of stock on the first of January we found ourselves thousands of dollars worse off than we expected. Who under such circumstances says, "This loss is from God. I must have been allowed to go into that unfortunate enterprise for some good reason; God controls the east wind as well as the west wind."

My friends, I cannot look for one moment on that retrograde shadow of Ahaz's dial without learning that God controls the shadows and that lesson we need all to learn. That He controls the sunshine is not so necessary a lesson for anybody can be happy when things go right. When you sleep eight hours a night and rise with an appetite that cannot easily wait for breakfast and you go over to the store and open your mail to read more orders than you can fill, and in the next letter you find a dividend far larger than you have been promised, and your neighbor comes in to tell you some flattering thing he has just heard said about you, and you find that all the styles of goods in which you deal have advanced fifteen per cent in value, and on your way home you meet your children in full romp and there are roses on the center of the tea table and roses of hearts in cheeks all round the table, what more do you want of consolation? I don't pity you a bit. You feel as if you could boss the world. But for those in just opposite circumstances my text comes in with an omnipotence of meaning. The shadow! Oh, the shadow! Shadow of bereavement! Shadow of sickness! Shadow of bankruptcy! Shadow of mental depression! Shadow of persecution! Shadow of death! Speak out, oh sundial of Ahaz, and tell the people that God manages the shadow! As Hezekiah sat in his palace wrapped in ivy and surrounded by anointings and castanets and looked out upon the black hand of the only clock known at that time and saw it move back ten degrees, he learned a lesson that a majority of the human race need this hour to learn—that the best friend a man ever had controls the shadow. The setbacks are sometimes the best things that can happen. The great German author, Schiller, could not work unless he had in his room the scent of rotten apples, and the decay of the fruits of earthly prosperity may become an inspiration instead of a passion. Robert Chambers's lame feet shut him up from other work, and he became the world renowned publisher, and helped fashion the best literature of the ages. The painful disorder like that of Hezekiah called a carbuncle is spelled exactly the same as the precious stone called the carbuncle, and the pang of suffering may become the jewel of immortal value. Your setback, like that of Ahaz's sundial, may be recovery of a carbuncle, or a setback but it turned out to be set forward. You never would have become a Christian if you had not had a setback. The highest thrones in heaven are for the setbacks. In 1861 the shadow of the sundial of this nation was set back, and all things seemed going to ruin, and it was set back further in 1862, and further in 1863, and still further in 1865, but there is not an intelligent and well balanced man—north or south, east or west—but feels it was set back toward the sunrise.

But I promise to show you how the shadows might be turned back. First, by going much among the young people. In most family circles there are grandchildren. By this divine arrangement most of the people who have passed the meridian of life can compass themselves by juvenility. It is a bad thing for an old man or old woman to sit looking at the vicinity of their grandchildren shouting, "Sit, that racket!" Better join in the fun. Let the eight-year-old grandfather join the eight-year-old grandson or granddaughter. My father and mother lived to see over eighty children and grandchildren and great grandchildren, and a more boisterous crew were never turned out on this sublimity sphere, and they all seemed to cry to the old folks, "Keep young, and they did keep young. Don't walk with a cane unless you have to or only as a defense in a city affray, or only to retreat. He replied it would not be so wonderful to have the sun go down, for it always does go down sooner or later. He asks that it go backward. In other words, let the day instead of going on toward sundown, turn and go toward sunrise. I see the invalid king bolstered up and wrapped in blankets looking out of the window upon the sundial in the courtyard. While he watches the shadow on the dial the shadow of the sundial of Ahaz advances or goes on toward six o'clock in the evening. The big poultice had been drawing for some time, and sure enough the boil broke and Hezekiah got well. Now I expect you will come on with your higher criticism and try to explain this away and say it was an optical delusion of Hezekiah, and the shadow only seemed to go back or a cloud came over and it was uncertain which way the shadow did go, and as Hezekiah expected it to go back he took the action of his own mind for the retrograde movement. No; the shadow went back on all the dials of that land and other lands. Turn to II Chronicles xxxii, 81, and find that away off in Babylon the mighty men of the palace noticed the same phenomenon. And if you do not like the Bible authority turn over your copy of Herodotus and find that away off in Egypt the people noticed that there was something the matter with the sun. The fact is that the whole universe waits upon God, and suns and moons and stars are not very big things to Him, and He can with His little finger turn back an entire world as easily as you can set back the hour hand or minute hand of your clock or watch.

Set back the clock of human life. Make the shadow of the sundial of Ahaz retreat ten degrees. People make themselves old by always talking about being old, and wishing for the good old days which were never as good as these days. From all I can hear the grandchildren are not half as bad as the grandparents were. Matters have been hushed up. But if you have ever been in a room adjoining a room where some very old people, a little deaf, were talking over old times, you will find that this age does not monopolize all the young rascals. It may now be hard to get young people up early enough in the morning, but their grandparents always had to be called out of bed. It is wrong now to play mischievous tricks on the unsuspecting, but eighty years ago at school that now venerable man sat down on a crooked pin not accidentally placed there, and purposely drove the sleigh riding party too near the edge of the embankment that he might see how they would look when tumbled into the snow. And that man who has so little patience with childish exuberance was in olden times up to his ears, one of which he practiced by the right year-old of to-day would set grandfather and grandmother crazy. Revive your remembrance of what you were between five and ten years of age, and with patience capable of everything join with the young. Put back the shadow of the dial ten degrees, but fifty and sixty and seventy degrees.

Set back your clocks also by entering on new and absorbing Christian work. In our desire to inspire the young we have in our essays had much to say about what has been accomplished by the young; of Romulus, who founded Rome when he was twenty years of age; of Cortes, who had conquered Mexico at thirty years; of Pitt, who was Prime Minister of England at twenty-four years; of Raphael, who died at thirty-seven years; of Calvin, who wrote his "Institutes" at twenty-six; of Melancthon, who took a learned professor's chair at twenty-one years; of Luther, who had conquered Germany for the Reformation by the time he was thirty-five years. And it is all very well for us to show how early in life one can do very great things for God and the welfare of the world, but some of the mightiest work for God has been done by septuagenarians and octogenarians and nonagenarians. Indeed, there is work which none but such can do. They preserve the equipoise of senates, of religious denominations, of reformatory movements. Young men for action, old men for counsel. Instead of any of you beginning to fold up your energies, arouse anew your energies. With the experience you have obtained and the opportunities of observation you have had during a long life, you ought to be able to do in one year now more than you did in ten years right after you have passed out of your teens. Physical growth less, your spiritual power ought to be more. Up to the last hour of their lives what powers for good old Dr. Archibald Alexander, old Dr. Woods, old Dr. Hawes, old Dr. Minor, old Dr. McIlvane, old Dr. Tyng, old Dr. Candlish, old Dr. Chalmers! What have been Bismarck to Germany, and Gladstone to England, and Oliver Wendell Holmes to America in the time of an advanced age? Let me say to those in the afternoon of life: Don't be putting off the harness; when God wants it off he will take it off. Don't be frightened out of life by the grip as many are. As the first sneeze of an influenza many give up all as lost. No new terror has come on the earth. The microbes as the cause of disease were described in the Talmud seventeen hundred years ago as "invisible legions of dangerous ones." Don't be scared out of life by all this talk about heart failure. That trouble has always been in the world. That is what all the people that ever passed out of this life have died of—heart failure. Adam had it and all of his descendants have had it or will have it. Do not be watching for symptoms, or you will have symptoms of everything. Some of you will yet die of symptoms. Symptoms are often only what we sometimes see in the country—a dead owl nailed on a barn door to scare living owls. Put your trust in God, go to bed at ten o'clock, have the window open six inches to let in the fresh air, sleep on your right side, and fear nothing. The old maxim was right, "Get thy spindle and distaff ready, and God will turn the flax."

But while looking at this sundial of Ahaz and I see the shadow of it move, I notice that it went back toward the sunrise instead of forward toward the sunset—toward the morning instead of toward the night. That thing the world is willing now to do, and in many cases has done. There have a great many things been written and spoken about the sunset of life. I have said some of them myself, and I will say a better one. The Lord who turned back that day from going toward sundown and started it toward sunrise is willing to do the same thing for all of us. The theologians who stick to old religious technicalities until they become soporifics would not call it anything but conversion. I call it a change from going toward sundown to going toward sunrise. That man who never tries to unsmother the clasp of evil habit and who keeps all the sins of the past and the present freighting him and who ignores the one redemption made by the only one who could redeem, if that man will examine the sundial he will find that the shadow is going forward and he is on the way to sundown. His day is on the road to night. All the watches that tick, all the clocks that strike, all the sand glasses that empty themselves, all the shadows that move on all the sundials indicate the approach of darkness. But now, in answer to prayer, as in my text the change was in answer to prayer, the pardonable Lord reverses things and the man starts toward sunrise instead of sunset. He turns the other way. The Captain of salvation gives him the military command, "Attention! Right about face!" He was marching toward indifference, marching toward hardness of heart, marching toward prayerlessness, marching toward sin, marching toward gloom, marching toward death. Now he turns and marches toward peace, marches toward light and marches toward comfort and toward his high hoped and marches toward a triumph stupendous and everlasting, toward hosannas that ever hoist and hallelujahs that ever roll. Now if that is not the turning of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz from going toward sundown to going toward sunrise, what is it?

I have seen day break over Mount Blanc and the Matterhorn, over the heights of Lebanon, over Mount Washington, over the Sierra Nevada, and mid-Atlantic, the morning after a parted storm when the billows were laid Alpi and liquid Sierra Nevada, but the sunrise of the soul is more effulgent and more transporting. It bathes all the heights of the soul, and illumines all the depths of the soul, and whelms all the faculties, all the aspirations, all the ambitions, all the hopes with a light that sickness cannot eclipse, or death extinguish, or eternity do anything but augment and magnify. I preach the sunrise. As I look at that retrograde movement of the shadow on Ahaz's dial, I remember that it was a sign that Hezekiah was going to get well and he got well. So I have to tell all you who are by the grace of God having your day turned from decline toward night to ascent toward morning, that you are going to get well, well of all your sins, well of all your sorrows, well of all your earthly distresses. Sunrise!

But, says one, all that you say may be true but that does not hinder the horrors of dissolution. Why, you who are the Lord's are not going to die. All that the grave gets of you as compared with your chief, your immortal nature, is as the clippings of your finger nails as compared with your whole body. As you run the scissors along the edge of your thumb nail and cut off that which is no use but rather a hindrance, you do not mourn over the departure of that fragment which flies away. Death will be only the scissoring off of that which could be of no use, and the soul has no funeral over that which would be an awful nuisance if we could not get rid of it. This body as it now is, what a failure it would make of heaven if our departing soul had to be burdened with it in the next world. While others there go ten thousand miles a minute we would take about an hour to walk four miles, and while our neighbor immortals could see a hundred miles we could see only ten, and the feeblest and the healthiest of our bodies if seen there would make it necessary to open in heaven an asylum for cripples. No, no; one of the best possible things that will happen to us will be the sloughing off of this body when we have no more use for it in its present state. When it shall come up in its resurrected form we will be very glad to get it back again, but not as it is now with its limitations and bedevancements innumerable. Sunrise!

There shall I bathe my weary soul in seas of beatitude. And not a wave of trouble roll Across my peaceful breast.

Sunrise! But not like one of those mornings after you had gone to bed late or did not sleep well, and you get up chilled and yawning and the morning bath is a repulsion and you feel like saying to the morning sun shining into your window, "I do not see what you find to smile about; your brightness is to me a mockery." But the inrush of the next world will be a morning after a sound sleep, a sleep that nothing can disturb; and you will rise, the sunshines in your faces; and in your first morning in heaven you will wade down into the sea of glass, mingled with fire, the foam on earth, and the rolling waves are doxologies, and the rocks of that shore are golden and the pebbles of that beach are pearls, and the skies of that arch are a comingling of all the colors that St. John saw on the wall or heaven—the crimson and the blue, and the saffron, and the orange, and the purple, and the gold, and the green wrought on those skies in shap of garlands, of banners, of ladders, of chariots, of crowns, of thrones. What a sunrise! Do you not feel its warmth on your faces? Scoville McCullum, the dying boy of our Sunday-school, uttered what shall be the peroration of this sermon, "Throw back the shutters and let the sun in!" And so the shadow of Ahaz's sundial turns from sunset to sunrise.

A NEWSBOY-GOVERNOR.

North Dakota's Chief Executive Originally a New York Waif.



GOVERNOR ANDREW H. BURKE. Andrew H. Burke, the present Governor of North Dakota, is one of the 75,000 waifs of New York for whom the Children's Aid Society of that city has provided homes in the West. Young Andrew Burke was sent West many years ago and was adopted by a gentleman named Butler. For two years he was employed in a wholesale house in Minneapolis and was married there. From Minneapolis he went to a small station named New York Mills, on the Northern Pacific Railroad, and took charge of a general store and sawmills. Afterward he removed to Casselton, N. D., and after six months' residence became Cashier of the First National Bank there. Three years later he was elected Treasurer of the county and held the position for six years. At the last election he was elected Governor on the Republican ticket.

THERE were 4093 miles of new railway constructed between January 1, 1891, and January 1, 1892, which brings the total mileage of the United States up to 171,105. This is a decrease of 1574 miles from last year's figures, and the smallest mileage built during any year since 1855, during which only 1381 miles of track were laid.

THE MARKETS.

Table listing market prices for various commodities in New York, Buffalo, and Boston. Includes items like Beaves, Milk Cows, Calves, Sheep, Lambs, Hogs, Flour, Wheat, Rye, Barley, Corn, Oats, Hay, Straw, Butter, Cheese, Eggs, Steers, Sheep, Lams, Hogs, etc.

Table listing market prices for various commodities in Philadelphia. Includes items like Flour, Wheat, Corn, Oats, Potatoes, Butter, Cheese, etc.

Table listing market prices for various commodities in Furs and Skins. Includes items like Black bear, Cubs and yearlings, Otter, Beaver, Mink, Rind, Fox, Raccoon, Skunk, etc.

Table listing market prices for various commodities in Farm Land. Includes items like S. Dak., fine, rich soil, and such land as will be worth \$25 an acre inside of five years, etc.

Remarkable Boulders. Accepting reported measurements, the largest erratic block, or boulder, as yet recognized in the United States, and probably in the world, is in the town of Madison, N. H., and, according to Professor Crosby, of the Boston Institute of Technology, has the following maximum dimensions: Length, 83 feet; width, in excess of 45 feet; height, 30 to 37 feet; contents, 90,000 cubic feet; and probable weight, 15,300,000 pounds, or 7,650 tons.

Next to this in size is undoubtedly the great rock in the town of Montville, New London County, Connecticut, generally known by its Indian designation as "Sheegan," and also as "Mohegan." In the opinion of some, this rock is an isolated granite protuberance, and not a true "erratic" or boulder; but recent examinations have seemed to completely negative the first supposition. Its approximate maximum dimensions are: Length, 75 feet; width, 58 feet; height, 60 feet; contents, 70,000 cubic feet; weight, 6000 tons. If allowance be made for an immense fragment which has fallen from its northeast side, the dimensions and cubic contents of "Sheegan" would approximate more closely to those of the Madison boulder. One point that goes far toward substantiating the claim on behalf of the "Sheegan" rock that it is a true boulder, is the number of undoubted boulders of an immense size and of the same granite which exist in comparative proximity. — Popular Science Monthly.

Rough Diamonds in a Chicken's Crop. A few days ago C. Jacobson, of Hastings, Neb., received word from a firm in Butte City, Montana, that one of their customers, a Mrs. White, had found three rough diamonds in the crop of a chicken sold by them a few days before Christmas. Mr. Jacobson is a large poultry shipper, and supplies his henney with gravel from the bed of the Blue River, seven miles south of Hastings. The curiosity of several miners in Butte City was aroused by the discovery, and Jacobson has received many letters inquiring as to where he secured the sand. Mrs. White submitted the three rough stones to a jeweler in Butte for inspection, and he pronounced them diamonds and offered her a good price for them, but she refused and has sent them East to be cut.

Out of Sorts

Describes a feeling peculiar to persons of dyspeptic tendency, or caused by change of climate, season or life. The stomach is out of order, the head aches or does not feel right.

The Nerves seemed strained to their utmost, the mind is confused and irritable. This condition finds an excellent corrective in Hood's Sarsaparilla, which, by its regulating and toning powers soon

Cures Indigestion restores harmony to the system, gives strength of mind, nerves and body. Be sure to get Hood's Sarsaparilla which in curative power is peculiar to itself.

TUTT'S TINY LIVER PILLS. THE SMALLEST PILL IN THE WORLD! have all the virtues of the larger ones—equally effective; purely vegetable. Exact size shown in this border.

"August Flower"

Mr. Lorenzo F. Sleeper is very well known to the citizens of Appleton, Me., and neighborhood. He says: "Eight years ago I was taken 'sick, and suffered as no one but a 'dyspeptic can. I then began taking August Flower. At that time I was a great sufferer. Everything I ate distressed me so that I had to throw it up. Then in a few moments that horrid distress would come on and I would have to eat and suffer 'a gain. I took a 'little of your medicine, and felt much 'better, and after 'taking a little more 'Dyspepsia disappeared, and since that time I have never had the first sign of it. I can eat anything without the 'least fear of distress. I wish all 'that are afflicted with that terrible 'disease or the troubles caused by 'it would try August Flower, as I 'am satisfied there is no medicine 'equal to it'"

Farm Land

ASTHMA CURED TO STAY CURED. We Want Name and Address of Every ASTHMATIC. P. Harold Hayes, M.D. Buffalo, N.Y. MORPHINE HABITS CURED IN 10 TO 20 DAYS. No pay till cured. DR. J. STEPHENS, Lebanon, Ohio. PRIZE for best plants raised by anyone from our Prize Chrysanthemum seed. Package of seed and Illustrated Catalogue, No. 10 only 25 cts. Pletcher & Wanda, Short Hill, N.Y.