

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: The Battle of Creeds.

TEXT: "He that passeth by and meddleth with strife belonging not to him is like one that taketh a dog by the ears."—Proverbs xxvi, 17.

Solomon here deplores the habit of rushing in between contestants; of taking part in the antagonisms of others; of joining in fights which ought to shun. They do no good to others and get damage for themselves. He compares it to the experiment of taking a dog by the ears. Nothing so irritates canines as to be clutched by the nugs. Take them by the back of the neck and lift them and it does not seem to hurt or offend; but you take the dog by the ear, and he will take you with his teeth. In all the history of kennels no intelligent or spirited dog will stand that. "Now," says Solomon, "you go into quarrels or controversies that are not yours and you will get lacerated and torn and bitten. He that passeth by and meddleth with strife belonging not to him is like one that taketh a dog by the ears."

This is the time of resounding ecclesiastical quarrels. Never within your memory or mine has the air been so full of missiles. The Presbyterian Church has on hand a controversy so great that it finds it prudent to postpone its settlement for at least one more year, hoping that something will turn up. Somebody might die or a new general assembly may have grace to handle the exciting questions. The Episcopal Church has cast out some recalcitrants, and its digestive organs are taxed to the utmost in trying to assimilate others. "Shall women preach?"

"Or be sent as delegates to conferences?" are questions that have put many of our Methodist brethren on the "anxious seat." And the waters in some of the great baptistries are troubled waters. Because of the controversies throughout Christendom the air is now like an August afternoon about five o'clock, when it has been steaming hot all day, and clouds are gathering, and there are lions of thunder with grumbling voices and flashing eyes coming forth from their cloudy lairs, and people are waiting for the full burst of the tempest. I am not much of a weather prophet, but the clouds look to me mostly like wind squalls. It may be a big blow, but I hope it will soon be over. In regard to the Battle of the Creeds, I am every day asked about it. I want to make it so plain this morning what I think that no one will ever ask again.

Let those who are jurymen in the case—I mean those who in the different ecclesiastical courts have the questions put directly before them—weigh and decide. Let the rest of us keep out. The most damaging thing on earth is religious controversy. No one ever comes out of it going in, man or dog, as goes in. Some of the ministers in all denominations who before the present acrobacy were good and kind and useful, now seem almost swearing mad. These brethren I notice always open their violent meetings with prayer before devouring each other, thus saying "I raise before meat." They have a moral hydrophobia that makes us think they have taken a dog by the ears. They never read the imprecatory Psalms of David with such zest as since the Briggs and Newton and MacQuerry and Bridgman and Brooks questions got into full swing. May the horns of the sheepfold soon have their horns sawed off! Before the controversies are settled a good many ministers will, through what they call liberalism, be landed into practical infidelity, and others through what they call conservatism will shrink up into bigots tight and hard as the mummies of Egypt which got through their controversies three thousand years ago.

This trouble throughout Christendom was directly inspired by Satan. He saw that too much good was being done. Recruits were being gathered by hundreds of thousands to the Gospel standard. The victories for God and the truth were too near together. Too many churches were being dedicated. Too many ministers were being ordained. Too many philanthropies were being fostered. Too many souls were being saved. It had been a dull time in the nether world, and the arrivals were too few. So Satan rose upon his throne and said, "Ye powers of darkness, hear!" And all up and down the caverns the cry was, "Hear! Hear!" Satan said: "There is that American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. It must either be demolished or crippled, or the first thing you know they will have all nations brought to God. Apollyon the Younger! You go up to Andover and get the professors to discussing whether the heathen can be saved without the Gospel. Divert them from their missions and get them in angry conversation in a room at Young's Hotel, Boston, and by the time they adjourn the cause of foreign missions will be gloriously and magnificently injured. Diabolus the Younger! You go up and get Union Theological Seminary of New York and the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church at Detroit at sword's point and diverted from the work of making earnest ministers of religion, and turn that old Presbyterian Church, which has been keeping us out of customers for hundreds of years into a splendid pan-demonium on a small scale. Abandon the Third! You go up and assault that old Episcopal Church, which has been storming the heavens for centuries with the sublimest prayers that were ever uttered—church of Bishop Leighton, Bishop White and Bishop McIlvane, and get that denomination discussing men instead of discussing the eternities. Abandon the Fourth! You go up to that old Methodist Church, which has, through her revival, sent millions to heaven, which we would otherwise have added to our population; the church of Wesley and Matthew Simpson, against which we have an especial grudge, and get them so absorbed in discussing whether women shall take part in her conference that they shall not have so much time to discuss how many sons and daughters she will take to glory."

What amazes me most is that all people do not see that the entire movement at this time all over Christendom is satanic. Many of the infernal attacks are sly and hidden and strategic and so ingenious that they are not easily discovered. But here is a bold and uncovered attempt of the powers of darkness to split up the churches, to get ministers to take each other by the throat, to make religion a laughing stock of earth and hell, to leave the Bible with no more respect or authenticity than an old almanac of 1852, which would be the change of weather to heaven which we would otherwise have added to our population; the church of Wesley and Matthew Simpson, against which we have an especial grudge, and get them so absorbed in discussing whether women shall take part in her conference that they shall not have so much time to discuss how many sons and daughters she will take to glory."

A peculiar patchwork quilt was during the Civil War, made by a lady and sent to the hospitals at the front. She had a boy in the army, and was naturally interested in the welfare of soldiers. But what a patchwork quilt she sent! On every block of the quilt was a passage of Scripture or a verse of a hymn. The months and years of the war went by. On that quilt many a woman

brought from the timbers of the crushed rail train. In a little while it will be too late. Come for God's sake! Come right away!" "No," says the doctor, "not until we have settled whether the medicine on that top shelf was rightly mixed. I say there were too many drops of laudanum in it, and this other man says there were too many drops of camphire, we must get this question settled before we can attend to the railroad accident."

And one doctor takes another doctor by the collar and pushes him back against the counter, and one of the druggists says, "If you will not admit that I am right about that one bottle I will smash every bottle in your apothecary store," and he proceeds to smash. Meantime, on the lower shelf, plainly marked and within easy reach are all the medicines needed for the helping of the sufferers by the accident, and in that drawer, easily opened, are bandages and splints for the lack of which fifty people are dying outside the drug store. Before I apply this thought every one sees its application. Here is this old world, and it is off track. Sin and sorrow have clogged with it. The groan of agony is fourteen hundred million voiced. God has opened for relief and cure a great sanitarium, a great house of mercy, and all its shelves are filled with balsams, with catholicons, with help—glorious help, tremendous help, help so easily administered that you need not go upon any step ladder to reach it. You can reach it on your knees and then hand it to all the suffering, and the sinning, and the dying. Comfort for all the troubled! Pardon for all the guilty! Peace for all the dying! But while the world is needing the relief and perishing for lack of it, what of the church? Why, it is full of fighting doctors. On the top shelf are some old bottles, which several hundred years ago Calvin or Arminius, or the members of the synod of Dort, or the formers of the Nicene creed filled with holy mixtures, and until we get a revision of these old bottles and find out whether we must take a teaspoonful or table-spoonful, and whether before or after meals, let the nations suffer and groan and die. Save the bottles by all means, if you cannot save anything else.

Now, what part shall you and I take in this controversy which fills all Christendom with clangor? My advice is, take no part. In time of riot all masters of cities advise good citizens to stay at home or in their places of business, and in this time of religious riot I advise you to go about your regular work for God. Leave the bottles on the higher shelves for others to fight about, and I take the two bottles on this shelf within easy reach, the two bottles which are all this dying world needs; the one filled with a potion which is for the cleansing of all sin, the other filled with a potion which is for the soothing of all suffering. Two Gospel bottles! Christ mixed them out of His own tears and blood. In them is no human admixture. Spend no time on the mysteries! You, a man only five or six feet high, ought not to try to wade an ocean a thousand feet deep. My own experience has been vivid. I devoted the most of my time for years in trying to understand God's eternal decrees, and I was determined to find out why the Lord let sin come into the world, and I set out to explore the doctrine of the Trinity, and with a yardstick to measure the throne of the Infinite. As with all my predecessors, the attempt was a dead failure. For the last thirty years I have not spent two minutes in studying the controverted points of theology, and if I live thirty years longer I will not spend the thousandth part of a second in such exploration. I know two things, and these I will devote all the years of my life in proclaiming—God will through Jesus Christ pardon sin, and He will comfort trouble.

Creeds have their uses, but just now the church is crested to death. The young men entering the ministry are going to be launched in the thickest fog that ever settled on the coasts. As I am told that in all our services students of Princeton and Union and Drew and other theological seminaries are present, and as these worlds will come to thousands of young men who are soon to enter the ministry, let me say to such and through them to their associates, keep out of the bewildering, befitting, destroying and angry controversies abroad. The questions our doctors of divinity are trying to settle will not be settled until the day after the day of judgment. It is such a poor economy of time to spend years and years in trying to fathom the unfathomable, when in five minutes in heaven we will know all we want to know. Wait till we get our throne. Wait till the light of eternity flashes upon our newly ascended spirits. It is useless for ants on different sides of a mole hill to try to discuss the comparative heights of Mount Blanc and Mount Washington. Let me say to all young men about to enter the ministry that soon the greatest morality in the world will be the unadulterated religion of Jesus Christ. Preach that and you will have a crowd. The world is sick to regurgitation with the modern quacks in religion. The world has been swinging off from the old Gospel, but it will swing back, and by the time you young men go into the pulpits the cry will be coming up from all the millions of mankind, "Give us the bread of life; no sweetened bread, no bread with sickly raisins stuck here and there into it, but old-fashioned bread as God our mother mixed and baked it!"

Now, what is the simple fact that you in the pew and Sabbath-school class and reformatory association and we in the pulpits have to deal with? Is it this: That God has somewhere, and it matters not where, but somewhere, provided a great heaven, great for quietness for those who want quiet; great for vast assemblies for those who like multitudes; great for architecture for those who like architecture; great for beautiful landscape for those who like beautiful landscape; great for music for those who like music; great for processions for those who like armies on white horses; and great for anything that one especially desires in such a rapturous dominion; and through the doings of one who was born about five miles south of Jerusalem and died about ten minutes' walk from its eastern gate all may enter that great heaven for the earnest and heartfelt as King. Is that all? That is all. What, then, is your work and mine? Our work is to persuade people to face that way and I start thitherward and finally go in. But has not religion something to do with this world as well as the next? Oh, yes; but do you not see that if the people start for heaven on their way there they will do all that good they can? They will at the very start of the journey get so much of the spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of kindness and self-sacrifice and generosity and burden-bearing and helpfulness, that every step they take will result with good deeds. Oh, get your religion out of stiffs! Get it down out of the high towers! Get it on a level with the wants and woes of our poor human race! Get it out of the dusty theological books that few people read, and put it in their hearts and lives. Good thing is it to profess religion when you join the church, but every day, somehow, we ought to profess religion.

A great patchwork quilt was during the Civil War, made by a lady and sent to the hospitals at the front. She had a boy in the army, and was naturally interested in the welfare of soldiers. But what a patchwork quilt she sent! On every block of the quilt was a passage of Scripture or a verse of a hymn. The months and years of the war went by. On that quilt many a woman

man had lain and suffered and died. But one morning the hospital nurse saw a patient under the blanket kissing the figure of a leaf in the quilt, and the nurse supposed he was only wandering in his mind. But no; he was the son of the mother who had made the quilt and he recognized that figure of a leaf as part of a gown his mother used to wear, and it reminded him of home. "Do you know where this quilt came from?" he asked. The nurse answered, "I can find out for there was a card pinned fast to it, and I will find that." Sure enough, it confirmed what he thought. Then the nurse pointed to a passage of Scripture in the block of the quilt, the passage which says, "When he was yet a great ways off his father saw him and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." "Yes," said the dying soldier, "I was a great way off, but God has met me and had compassion on me."

"Shall I write to your mother and tell her that the lost one is found and the dead is alive again?" He answered, "I wish you would, if it would not be too much trouble." Do you suppose that woman who made that quilt and filled it with Scripture passages and any trouble about which Melchizelek was, or how the doctrine of God's sovereignty can be harmonized with man's free agency, or who wrote the Pentateuch or the inconsistencies of the Nicene creed? No, no; go to work for God and suffering humanity and all your doubts and fears and mysteries and unbeliefs put together will not be heavy enough to stir the chemist's scales, which is accustomed to weighing one-fiftieth part of a grain of chamomile flowers. Way stop a moment to understand the mysteries when there are so many certitudes? Why spend our time exploring the dark garrets and coal holes of a great palace which has above ground one hundred rooms flooded with sunshine? It takes all my time to absorb what has been revealed, so that I have no time to upturn and root out and drag forth what has not been revealed. The most of the effort to solve mysteries and explore the inexplicable and harmonize things is an attempt to help the Lord out of theological difficulties. Good enough intention, my brother, no doubt, but the Lord is not anxious to have you help Him. He will keep His throne without your assistance. Don't be afraid that the Bible will fall apart from inconsistencies. It hung together many centuries before you were born, and your funeral sermon will be preached from a text taken from its undisturbed authenticity.

Do you know that I think that if all ministers in all denominations would stop this nonsense of ecclesiastical strife and take hold of the word of God, the only question with each of us being how many souls we can bring to Christ and in how short a time, the Lord would soon appear for the salvation of all nations? Why not all at once light all the torches of Gospel invitation? Why not ring all the bells of welcome? Why not light up the long night of the world's sin and suffering with bonfires of victory? Why not number all the Gospel batteries and let them boom across the earth, and boom into the partitioned heavens. The King is ready to land if we are ready to receive Him. Why cannot we who are now living see His descent? Must it all be postponed to later ages? Has not our poor world groaned long enough in moral agonies? Have there not been martyrs enough, and have not the lakes of tears and the rivers of blood been deep enough? Why cannot the final glories roll in now? Why cannot this dying century feel the incoming tides of the oceans of heavenly mercy? Must our eyes close in death and our ears take on the deafness of the tomb, and these hearts beat their last throbs before the day comes? O Christ! Why tarriest Thou? Wait Thou not, before we go the way of all the earth, let us see Thy scarred feet under some noonday cloud coming this way? Before we die let us behold Thy hands that were spiked, spread out in benediction for a lost race. And why not let us, with our mortal ears, hear that voice which spoke peace as Thou didst go up, speak pardon and emancipation and love and holiness and joy to all nations as Thou comest down? But the skies do not part. I hear no rumbling of chariot wheels coming down over the sapphire. There is no swoop of wings, I see no flash of angelic apparitions. All is still. I hear nothing; but the tremor of my own heart as I pause between these utterances. The King does not land because the world is not ready and the church is not ready. To clear the way for the Lord's coming let us devote all our energies of body, mind and soul. A Russian general riding over the battlefield, his horse trampling amid the dying and dead, a wounded soldier asked him for water, but the officer did not understand his language and knew not what the poor fellow wanted. Then the soldier cried out "Christos," and that word meant sympathy and help, and the Russian officer dismounted and put to the lips of the sufferer a cooling draught. Be that the charmed word with which we go forth to do our whole duty. In many languages it has only a little difference of termination. Christos! It stands for sympathy. It stands for help. It stands for pardon. It stands for hope. It stands for heaven. Christos! In that name we were baptized. In that name we took our first sacrament. That will be the battle shout that will win the whole world for God! Christos! Put it on our banners when we march! Put it on our lips when we die! Put in the funeral psalm at our obsequies! Put it on the plain slab over our grave! Christos! Blessed be His glorious name forever! Amen!

Selected Thoughts.

HOPE is the cordial of the human heart.—Chicago Standard.

THE man who overcomes himself disappoints himself.

DEVOTEDNESS is all that is the grandest and most sublime in human life; it is, so to speak, the Divine side of our humanity.—P. Felix.

THE seeming shipwrecks we meet with in the voyage of life often prove the very things which best speed our course to the haven where we would be.—New York Observer.

IT is one thing to praise the beatitudes; it is another thing to practice their spirit. Any one can do the former; it requires grace to succeed in the latter.—United Presbyterian.

HE is a fool who hopes that our reason will follow to their conclusions the mysterious ways of Him who is one being in three persons. Know, then, how to restrain thyself, O man, when thou desirest to question the things of God.—Dante.

THE peace of God is rich in its blessings. It tells us that our sins are forgiven and that we are walking in His commandments. His peace is essential to enjoyment and progress in the Christian life. Only as we possess it can we use the Divine word with profit. As Mr. Spurgeon says: "Put sheep in good pasture and they can not thrive if constantly driven about by dogs."—Christian Inquirer.

A GREAT many people get into the swim who can't swim.

INDIAN SHOWS.

Curious Tricks Performed by the "Mystery Men."

Hocus-Pocus Like That of the Jugglers of India.

"Mankind in all ages has enjoyed illusions," said Prof. Otis T. Mason to a writer for the Washington Star. "He has always evinced a surprising fondness for shows of any sort that depended for their effectiveness upon the deception of the eye. Take a little trick, for example, that is performed by the Chippewa Indians. A number of the sorcerers or 'mystery men,' as they are called, gather in a circle closely with their heads bowed together so as to shut out the view from without. Presently, after going through some monkey business, they separate, and lo! there is a century plant growing on the prairie where nothing had been before—a plant actually of a dozen years' growth and two or three feet high. How is it done? I don't believe any white man can tell you that with certainty, although doubtless it is some *hocus-pocus*, like similar feats performed by the native jugglers in India. My own theory is that there must be some hole previously dug beneath the surface of the ground, in which the plant and a confederate are concealed. When the performers are gathered together in the way I describe, the vegetable may be pushed up and the earth made smooth again around it before the spectators are permitted to see anything. But many credible authorities, among them several Catholic priests, have testified to having seen these aboriginal mystery men go out on the baldest spot in a plain and seemingly make the grass spring up all over it for a distance of many feet within a few moments.

"Another trick performed by the northwest coast Indians is more strictly of the nature of an optical illusion. It is a sort of stage play, representing the capture of a seal through the ice, a double platform serving for the concealment of the man who represents the animal taken. To attract the prey the pretended hunters scratch upon the platform with their spears, as they do on a real hunt. Whereupon the man who impersonates the victim, clad in sealskins, appears at a hole and is immediately thrust through with a spear and dragged out. Apparently the weapon has gone clear through his body and he is carried off thus impaled by two of his captors, each shouldering an end of the spear. Blood flows in streams from his body and it is difficult for the observer to realize that he has not really been killed. But a few moments later he makes his appearance before the audience as sound as ever and smilingly makes his bow. The secret of the whole business is that the spear thrust at him shuts up into the handle, like a stage dagger. He grasps it close to his body, while at the same instant a spear point that has been concealed behind his back is jerked by a string, so as to project outward, while the hunters carry him away, a sort of sling passing between his legs and under his clothing serving to support his body. Of course, the blood comes from a hidden bladder that is cut simultaneously.

"However, the most civilized people are not less appreciative of the enjoyment to be found in optical illusions than are savages. They delight in nothing more than sleight-of-hand performances and stage deceptions of all sorts, including the trickery of the ear by ventriloquism. Londoners seem to be more fond of Punch and Judy shows than of anything else in the world. At every other corner almost you will find one, and the gamins of the street are so familiar with the puppet plot and dialogue that if the showman misses a word in it they will object. They know it all by heart and yet they never tire of it."

Moral Bull Fights.

A Mexican moralist champions the cause of the matadors on the ingenious plea that the sale of intoxicating drinks has often been successfully prohibited within the precincts of the arena, and that on Sunday afternoons it would not be easy to enforce the sobriety of three thousand idlers in any other way.—Belford.

Thought His Legs Were Glass.

A physician of long experience in the treatment of mental diseases told a few days ago of the remarkable case of a young man who was perfectly sound on all topics but one. All the screws in his brain were right but one. That was loose. He was an inmate of a Connecticut asylum, the doctor said, and had demanded to be examined, asserting that he was sane. When the physician reached the asylum he was shown into a handsomely furnished room and presented to a tall, good-looking young fellow, apparently in robust health.

"Tell me," said the physician, "about your case."

The young man, speaking with perfect coherency, and using the best of language, said that he was confined at the instance of his father. They had both loved the same girl, and when the son returned to his home after an absence of a few days, he found that his father had married her. His father desiring to get him out of the way, had then placed him in an asylum. The doctor made notes, and when the patient concluded told him that he would do all he could for him.

"Now," said the doctor, "won't you walk out into the hall with me?" "I can't," said the young man, sorrowfully. "Why not?" asked the doctor. "Because if I do I'll break," was the rather surprising reply. "What do you mean?" asked the physician. "Why, don't you know?" said the patient, "that from my thighs down I'm made of glass, and that I'm only safe in this room."

The doctor left him. His disease was incurable.—[New York Recorder.

Gaiety of the Japanese.

There are no people so fond of tops as the Japanese. About one day out of every three is a holiday in their country and even their pilgrimages to temples of worship are performed in gala costume, with dancing and sports by the wayside. Play is, from their point of view, the object of existence, work being the means to the end, because it is necessary to earn pleasure in order to find it enjoyable. Americans, of course, know better than this, having ascertained that the purpose of life is labor and that fun in any shape is waste of time.

The Japanese have the most perfect kindergarten system in the world. In fact, they originated this method of instructing by entertainment instead of by punishment inflicted. Their play apparatus for such purposes is elaborate, but all of it is adapted to the infant mind, which is designed at once to amuse and to inform. The little ones of that nation even become somewhat interested in mathematics by seeing and feeling what a pretty thing a cone, a sphere or a cylinder is when cut out of wood with a lathe. They make outlines of solid figures out of straws, with green paste dried to hold the joints together, and for the instruction of the blind flat blocks are provided, with the Japanese characters raised upon them.—[Washington Star.

Sympathetic Pain in Amputated Limb.

The following was related in Washington City a few days ago by Dr. J. M. Bailey of Gainesville, Ga., to a group of doctors:

"I was a surgeon in Polk's command during the war. During one of the battles before Atlanta, I was called upon to amputate the leg of the major of the Forty-eighth Georgia. He was a giant in stature and stood the shock of amputation very well. During the night succeeding the amputation he was seen to clutch the bedclothes with his hands, while his body writhed in agony. A nurse hastened to his side with the impression that the main artery of the leg had sloughed, or had been improperly tied, and that the man was dying. On being questioned he said the toes of the amputated leg cramped him. The case was reported to me and I had the amputated leg found, and sure enough the toes of the foot were in a cramped position. They were straightened, and instantly the patient was relieved. I had read of similar cases in surgical practice and had laughed at the idea, but sure as you are born, I saw the case practically exemplified."—[New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Most great men have great mothers. Most great women have great fathers.