

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "The Lesson of the Pyramids."

TEXT: "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness."—Isaiah xix., 19, 20.

Isaiah no doubt here refers to the great pyramid at Gizeh, the chief pyramid of Egypt. The text speaks of a pillar ever lifted; and the text says it is to be at the border of the land; and the text says it shall be for a witness, and the object of this sermon is to tell what this pyramid witnesses. This sermon is the first of a course of sermons entitled, "From the Pyramids to the Acropolis, or What I saw in Egypt and Greece Confirmatory of the Scriptures."

We had, on a morning of December, 1889, landed in Africa. Amid the howling boatmen at Alexandria we had come ashore and taken the rail train at Cairo, Egypt, along the banks of the most thoroughly harnessed river of all the world—the river Nile. We had at once entered the city of Cairo, the city where Christ dwelt while staying in Egypt during the Herodian persecution. It was our first night in Egypt. No destroying angel sweeping through us once, but all the stars were out, and the sky was filled with angels of beauty and angels of light, and the air was balmy as an American June. The next morning we were early awake and at the window, looking upon the palm trees in full glory of leafage, and upon gardens of fruits and flowers at the very season when our homes far away are canopied by bleak skies and the last leaf of the forest has gone down in the equinoxials.

But how can I describe the thrill of expectation, for to-day we are to see what all the world has seen or wants to see—the pyramids. We are mounted for an hour and a half's ride. We pass on amid bazaars stuffed with rugs and carpets, and curious fabrics of all sorts, from Smyrna, from Algiers, from Persia, from Turkey, and through streets where we meet people of all colors and all garbs, carts loaded with garden productions, priests in gowns, women in black veils, Bedouins in long and seemingly superfluous apparel, Janissaries in jacket of embroidered gold—out and on toward the great pyramid, for though there are sixty-nine pyramids still standing, the pyramid at Gizeh is the monarch of pyramids. We meet camels grunting under their loads, and see buffaloes on either side browsing in pasture fields.

The road we travel is for part of the way under clumps of acacia and by long rows of sycamore and tamarisk, but after awhile it is a path of rock and sand, and we find we have reached the margin of the desert, the great Sahara desert, and we cry out to the great dragoman as we see a huge pile of rock looming in sight, "Dragoman, what is that?" His answer is, "The pyramid," and then it seemed as if we were living a century every minute. Our thoughts and emotions were too rapid and intense for utterance, and we ride on in silence until we come to the foot of the pyramid spoken of in the text, the oldest structure in all the earth—four thousand years old at least. Here it is. We stand under the shadow of a structure that shuts out all the earth and all the sky, and we look up and strain our vision to appreciate the distant top, and are overwhelmed while we cry, "The pyramid! The pyramid!"

Each person in our party had two or three guides or helpers. One of them unrolled his turban and tied it around my waist and he held the other end of the turban as a matter of safety. Many of the blocks of stone are four or five feet high and beyond any ordinary human stride unless assisted. But, two Arabs to pull and two Arabs to push, I found myself rapidly ascending from height to height, and on to altitudes terrific, and at last at the top we found ourselves on a level space of about thirty feet square. Through the clearest atmosphere we looked out upon the desert, and off upon the winding Nile, and off upon the Sphinx, with its features of everlasting stone, and yonder upon the minarets of Cairo glittering in the sun, and yonder upon Memphis in ruins, and off upon the wreck of empires and the battlefields of ages, a radius of view enough to fill the mind and shock the nerves and overwhelm one's entire being.

After looking around for awhile, and a kodak had pictured the group, we descended. The descent was more trying than the ascent, for climbing you need not see the depths beneath, but coming down it was impossible not to see the abysses below. But two Arabs ahead to help us down, and two Arabs to hold us back, we were lowered, hand below hand, until the ground was invitingly near, and amid the jargon of the Arabs we were safely landed. Then came one of the most wonderful feats of daring and agility. One of the Arabs solicited a dollar, saying he would run up and down the pyramid in seven minutes. We would rather have given him a dollar not to go, but this ascent and descent in seven minutes he was determined on, and so by the watch in seven minutes he went to the top and was back again at the base. It was a blood-curdling spectacle.

I said the dominant color of the pyramid was gray, but in certain lights it seems to shake off the gray of centuries and become a blond, and the silver turns to the golden. It covers thirteen acres of ground. What an antiquity! It was at least two thousand years old when the baby Christ was carried within sight of it by his fugitive parents, Joseph and Mary. The storms of forty centuries have drenched it, bombarded it, shadowed it, flashed upon it, but there it stands, ready to take another forty centuries of atmospheric attack if the world should continue to exist. The oldest buildings of the earth are juniors to this great senior of the centuries.

Herodotus says that for ten years preparations were being made for the building of this pyramid. It has eighty-two million one hundred and eleven thousand cubic feet of masonry. One hundred thousand workmen at one time toiled in its erection. To bring the stones from the quarries a causeway sixty feet wide was built. The top stones were lifted by machinery such as the world knows nothing of to-day. It is seven hundred and forty-six feet each side of the square base. The structure is four hundred and fifty feet high; higher than the cathedrals of Cologne, Strasbourg, Rouen, St. Peter's and St. Paul's. No surprise to us that it was put at the head of the seven wonders of the world. It has a subterranean room of red granite called the "king's chamber," and another room called the "queen's chamber," and the probability is that there are other rooms yet unexplored.

The evident design of the architect was to make these rooms as inaccessible as possible. After all the work of exploration and all the digging and blasting, if you would enter these subterranean rooms, you must go through a passage only three feet seven inches high and less than four feet wide. A sarcophagus of red granite stands down under this mountain of masonry. The sarcophagus could not have been carried in

after the pyramid was built. It must have been put there before the structure was reared. Probably in that sarcophagus once lay a wooden coffin containing a dead king, but time has despoiled the coffin and destroyed the last vestige of human remains. For three thousand years this sarcophagus room was unopened, and would have been until to-day probably unopened had not a superstitious impression got abroad that the heart of the pyramid was filled with silver and gold and diamonds, and under Al Mamoun an excavating party went to work, and having bored and blasted through a hundred feet of rock, they found no opening ahead, and were about to give up the attempt when the workmen heard a stone roll down into a seemingly hollow place, and encouraged by that they resumed their work and came into the subterranean rooms.

The disappointment of the workmen in finding the sarcophagus empty of all silver and gold and precious stones was so great that they would have assassinated Al Mamoun, who employed them, had he not hid in another part of the pyramid as much silver and gold as would pay them for their work at ordinary rates of wages and induced them there to dig till they to their surprise came upon adequate compensation.

I wonder not that this mountain of limestone and red granite has been the fascination of scholars, of scientists, of intelligent Christians in all ages. Sir John Herschel, the astronomer, said he thought it had astronomical significance. The wise men who accompanied Napoleon's army into Egypt went into profound study of the pyramid. In 1865 Professor Smyth and his wife lived in the empty tombs near by the pyramid that they might be as continuously as possible close to the pyramid which they were investigating. The pyramid, built more than four thousand years ago, being a complete geometrical figure, wise men have concluded it must have been divinely constructed. Men came through thousands of years to fine architecture, to music, to painting, but this was perfect at the world's start, and God must have directed it.

All astronomer, geometer, and scientists say that it was scientifically and mathematically constructed before science and mathematics were born. From the inscriptions on the pyramid, from its proportions, from the points of the compass recognized in its structure, from the direction in which its tunnels run, from the relative position of the blocks that compose it, scientists, Christians and infidels have demonstrated that the being who planned this pyramid must have known the world's spaciety, and that its motion was rotary, and how many miles it was in diameter and circumference, and how many tons the world weighs, and knew at what point in the heavens certain stars would appear at certain periods of time.

Not in the four thousand years since the putting up of that pyramid has a single fact in astronomy or mathematics been found to contradict the wisdom of that structure. Yet they had not at the age when the pyramid was started, an astronomer or an architect or a mathematician worth mentioning. Who then planned the pyramid? Who superintended its erection? Who from its first foundation stone to its capstone erected everything? It must have been God, Isaiah was right when he said in my text, "A pillar shall be at the border of the land of Egypt, and it shall be for a sign and a witness." The pyramid is God's first Bible. He has written, the lesson of the pyramid was written.

Well, of what is this Cyclopean masonry a sign and a witness? Among other things—of the prolongation of human work compared with the brevity of human life. In all the four thousand years this pyramid has only lost eighteen feet in width; one side of its square at the base changed only from seven hundred and sixty-four feet to seven hundred and forty-six feet, and the most of that eighteen feet taken off by architects to furnish stone for building in the city of Cairo. The man who constructed the pyramid worked at it only a few years, and then put down the trowel, and the compass, and the square, and lowered the derrick which had lifted the ponderous weights; but forty centuries has their work stood, and it will be good for forty centuries more.

All Egypt has been shaken by terrible earthquakes and cities have been prostrated or swallowed, but that pyramid has defied all volcanic paroxysms. It has looked upon some of the greatest battles ever fought since the world stood. Wars are the men who constructed it? Their bodies gone to dust and even the dust scattered. Even the sarcophagus in which the king's mummy may have slept is empty.

So men die but their work lives on. We are all building pyramids not to last four thousand years, but forty thousand, forty million, forty trillion, forty quadrillion, forty quintillion. For a while we wield the trowel, or pound with the hammer, or measure with the yard stick, or write with the pen, or experiment with the scientific battery, or pian with the organ, and for a while the foot walks, and the eye sees, and the ear hears, and the tongue speaks. All the good words or bad words we speak are spread out into one layer for a pyramid. All the kind deeds or malevolent deeds we do are spread out into another layer. All the Christian or un-Christian example we set is spread out in another layer. All the indirect influences of our lives are spread out in another layer. Then the time comes when we put down the implement of toil and pass away, but the pyramid stands.

The pyramid is a sign, and a witness that big tombstones are not the best way of keeping one's self affectionately remembered. This pyramid and the sixty-nine other pyramids still standing were built for sepulchres, all this great pile of granite and limestone by which we stand to-day, to cover the memory of a dead king. It was the great Westminster abbey of the ancients. Some say that Cheops was the king who built this pyramid, but it is uncertain. Who was Cheops anyhow? All that the world knows about him could be told in a few sentences. The only thing certain is that he was bad, and that he shut up the temples of worship, and that he was hated so that the Egyptians were glad when he was dead.

This pyramid of rock seven hundred and forty feet each side of the square base and four hundred and fifty feet high was for him no respect. If a bone of his arm or foot had been found in the sarcophagus beneath the pyramid, it would have excited no more veneration than the skeleton of a camel bleaching on the Libyan desert; yea, less veneration, for when I saw the carcass of a camel by the roadside on the way to Memphis, I said to myself, "Poor thing, I wonder of what it died." We say nothing against the marble or the bronze of the necropolis. Let all the sculpture and florescence and arabesque can do for the pieces of the dead be done, if means will allow it. But if after one is dead there is nothing left to remind the world of him but some pieces of stone, there is but little left.

While there seems to be no practical use for post mortem consideration later than the time of one's great-grandchildren, yet no one wants to be forgotten as soon as the obsequies are over. This pyramid, which Isaiah says is a sign and a witness, demonstrates that neither limestone nor red granite are competent to keep one affectionately remembered; neither can bronze; neither can Parian marble; neither can Aberdeen granite do the work. But there is something out of which to build an everlasting monument and that will keep one freshly re-

members four thousand years—yea, forever and ever. It does not stand in marble yards. It is not to be purchased at mourning stores. Yet it is to be found in every neighborhood, plenty of it, inexhaustible quantities of it. It is the greatest stuff in the universe to build monuments out of. I refer to the memories of those to whom we can do a kindness, the memories of those whose struggles we may alleviate, the memories of those whose souls we may save.

A minister passing along the street every day looked up and smiled to a baby in the window. The father and mother wondered who it was that thus pleasantly greeted their child. They found out that he was the pastor of a church. They said, "We must go and hear him preach." They went and heard him and both were converted to God. Will there be any power in fifty million years to erase from the souls of those parents the memory of that man who by his friendliness brought them to God? Matthew Cranswick, an evangelist, said that he had the names of two hundred souls saved through his singing the hymn, "Arise, my soul, arise." Will any of the four hundred and seventy-nine women and children imprisoned at Lucknow, India, waiting for massacre by the Sepoys, forget Havelock and Outram and Sir David Baird, who broke in and effected their rescue?

As in Egypt that December afternoon, 1889, exhausted in body, mind and soul, we mounted to return to Cairo, we took our last look of the pyramid at Gizeh. And you know there is something in the air toward evening that seems productive of solemn and tender emotion, and that great pyramid seemed to be smiling and with lips of stone it seemed to speak and cry out:

"Hear, my man, mortal and immortal! My voice is the voice of God. He designed me. Isaiah said I would be a sign and a witness. I saw Moses when he was a lad. I witnessed the long procession of the Israelites as they started to cross the Red Sea and Pharaoh's host in pursuit of them. The falcons and the eagles of many centuries have brushed my brow. I stood here when Cleopatra's barges landed with her sorceries, and Hyppatia for her virtues was slain in yonder streets. Alexander the Great, Socrates and Ptolemy admired my proportions. Herodotus and Pliny sounded my praise. I am old, I am very old. For thousands of years I have watched the coming and going of generations. They tarry only a little while, but they make everlasting impression. I bear on my side the mark of the trowel and chisel of those who more than four thousand years ago expired. Beware what you do, oh, man! for what you do will last long after you are dead! If you would be affectionately remembered after you are gone, trust not to any earthly commemoration.

I have not one word to say about any astronomer who studied the heavens from my heights, or any king who was supplicated in my bosom. I am slowly passing away. I am a dying pyramid. I shall yet lie down in the dust of the plain, and the sands of the desert shall cover me, or when the earth goes I will go. But you are immortal. The feet with which you climbed my sides to-day will turn to dust, but you have a soul that will outlast me and all my brotherhood of pyramids. Live for eternity! Live for God! With the shadows of the evening now falling from my side, I pronounce upon you a benediction. Take it with you across the Mediterranean. Take it with you across the Atlantic. God only is great! Let all the earth keep silence before Him. Amen!"

And then the lips of granite hushed, and the great giant of masonry wrapped himself again in the silence of ages, and as I rode away in the gathering twilight, this course of sermons was projected.

Wonderous Egypt! Land of ancient pomp and pride,
Where Beauty walks by hoary Rain's side,
Where plenty reigns and still the seasons smile,
And rolls—the gift of God—exhaustless Nile.

ANOTHER SWINDLE SQUELCHED

The Elder Publishing Company of Chicago Comes to Grief.

The hot-bed of swindlers and wild-cat schemes, Chicago, has furnished the latest victim to Uncle Sam's postal authorities. This time it is the Elder Publishing Company, and the instrument of its downfall was a green country boy named Jared (Heaven forgive his parents) Housel, of Three Rivers, Mich. Jared paid \$50 for his title of "General Manager of the Elder Publishing Company for Three Rivers," and \$5.25 for four samples of 17 cent books. Being unable to sell the cheap literature, he wrote to the company demanding a return of his money. In reply he received a letter admonishing him to "put on the armor of self-reliance and press forward and make a name that would be remembered with honor." Instead of doing this he put on his fighting clothes and made such a row for the swindling company that its projectors were landed in jail. He was but one of several thousand victims.

Besides the scheme they worked on Housel, the "company" had another. In reply to their advertisements for agents they received from 300 to 500 answers per day. A circular would be mailed to each applicant telling him or her to furnish not less than eight references, with sixteen 2-cent stamps to cover the cost of correspondence with such references. If the applicants in their letters of special greenness and qualities, the smooth swindlers, without having written the references at all, would wait a few days and then inform the would-be agent that "after investigation they had decided to not appoint him;" and they were just fourteen 2-cent stamps ahead on that one "sucker." But, if the applicant appeared to be a fit subject—and hundreds of them were—then the fun began, and he was plucked unmercifully.

The scheme was ingenious, but its successful working depended upon the carelessness with which the fool-killer attended to his business. And it came to grief.

It will not be long, however, before another takes its place.

Population of Idaho.
The population of the State of Idaho according to the present census is 84,385. The population in 1880 was 32,610. This is an increase of 51,775, or 158.77 per cent. during the decade.

QUEER APPETITES.

A Philadelphia Grocer Who is a Gastronomic Freak.

He Puts Salt in His Coffee and Eats Gravy on Ice Cream.

A very remarkable case of a perverted and artificial taste is found in the person of Charles J. Cummings, a thriving grocer of West Philadelphia. The queerest combinations of food imaginable—mixtures which would nauseate an ordinary person—are his favorite dishes. It is not that he likes food prepared different from the usual styles, but it is the manner in which he mixes ordinary dishes which excites so much wonder, and has given rise to so many conjectures and attempted explanations. For instance, Mr. Cummings butters raw tomatoes, puts salt in his coffee, vinegar in his milk, gravy in his ice-cream, cream on his melon, and makes many other combinations to tickle his palate which are nothing if not unique. One of his favorite dishes is rare steak breaded with fruit cake, with a dressing of currant jelly. In winter a regular morning meal of this gentleman is lettuce chopped fine, with a dressing of molasses and red pepper. There are many other unheard-of dishes which delight his peculiar palate, but enough have been mentioned.

This freak of appetite has excited the curiosity of Mr. Cummings' friends for many years, and even the neighbors have indulged in comments as to the cause of such a striking phenomenon. Hearing about the case, a reporter visited Mr. Cummings at his home. The gastronomic freak is a pleasant man of 40, of ordinary appearance. He was found in his comfortable home surrounded by an interesting family. He told the following story of the way he acquired his remarkable appetite:

"I don't know that I am more stubborn than other men," he said with a smile as he lighted a fresh cigar, "but they tell me that I was as perverse as Old Nick when a child. No matter what other people did, I wanted to do just the opposite, out of 'pure cussedness.' And so among other things I took to mixing my food into unheard-of dishes. I can even remember that when I began this thing I did not find it pleasant, but the devil in me would not let me back down, and so I really had a relish for what I ate. Indeed it was not long before I became indifferent to dishes prepared in the usual style, and today they are really distasteful to me."

Mr. Cummings continued, as if there was no possibility of any one doubting his veracity:

"The most curious thing about this matter is that one of my children has inherited my acquired taste, and stranger still that this child should be my youngest."

Then Mr. Cummings went out and brought in a pretty child of 4 years.

"This child, sir," said the father, as he put her on his knee, "has been a puzzle to a lot of physicians and physiologists. They all say that they never heard of such a remarkable case of heredity. You see that she does not look like me, but is the image of her mother, and yet she has inherited from me a taste which even with me is acquired. I have not met a man yet who can explain the thing even to his own satisfaction."

The little girl soon became tired of the conversation and demanded her supper.

"And what do you think her supper will be? Sliced peaches and cold bean soup?"

As his auditor looked incredulous, Mr. Cummings took him into the nursery, and sure enough there was little Lily discussing her peaches and cold soup with the utmost relish.

All the other children have normal tastes, and, though they have made some experiments in imitation of their father just for the fun of the thing, they have not been tempted to invent any new menus.—[Philadelphia Times.]

Limitation of a Theory.
Ethel—After marriage we two shall be one, shall we George?
George—Theoretically; though I doubt if they will make out the board bill that way.—[New York Sun.]

The Pleasures of Prison Life.

Here is a very suggestive passage taken from William P. Andrew's article on the "Increase of Crime by Reformatory Prisons" in the Forum.

"Several times the prisoners have complained to the writer that the officers have made a mistake in copying their mittimus and not giving them time enough. Here is a complaint of this character last made to him: 'I have got but two months, and I am entitled to four. Please have it altered for me; I want all four months altered for me; I want all four months altered in a country prison a physician sentenced for two years for malpractice, the writer was astounded with the conversation. The prisoner was a man who had been noted for his enjoyment of the luxuries of existence. He said, 'It is a great mistake you fellows make in thinking you are inflicting punishment when you send men here. I have been here a year, and can truly say I have enjoyed it so much that I shall not feel sorry if my pardon is not obtained. You see, it has been vacation, with just enough to do to amuse me. The novels in the prison library are entertaining, and I am very fond of dominoes and checkers, and find some first-rate players among the men. Now, if it strikes me in this way, who have been accustomed to every luxury, how must it be to the poor devils who never have a square meal outside? Do you wonder that they flock by hundreds and thousands to the jails in winter? My only surprise is that you can keep any of them out at all. This is the opinion of an educated man who has experienced the benefits of the system in his own person; and finds them 'delightful'—a life from which he is loath to part. But it is evident that it is far from the 'austerity and severity' which once did pervade the prison place; and it will be hard from this to realize the good man's desire of 'impressing the prisoner with the idea that the way of the transgressor is hard.'"

The Treasury Watch.

The United States Treasury Watch, at Washington, is composed of seventy veteran soldiers, who are cut into three squads, dividing every twenty-four hours into three equal watches of eight hours each. The men wear uniforms, and would not impress the casual visitor to the treasury during the hours when the public is admitted. The guards go unarmed during the day, but at night carry a large forty-two-calibre, six-chambered revolver, which is too large to be concealed in pocket and must be carried in the hands all the time. Everyone who passes the treasury at night may see pacing to and fro in the lofty arch between the granite pillars and the wall of the building solitary figures. A person cannot approach within a hundred feet of the building without seeing a guard. Such a watchman, silent and martial in bearing, guards each of the four entrances to the treasury. The guards who traverse the corridors at stated intervals touch electric buttons to announce their presence in certain parts of the building. All this system of interior watchfulness was the work of Secretary Folger, who during his term of office lived in constant dread of an attack on the treasury. So far as human watchfulness can be relied on, the treasury is guarded, but there must be new safes, and the commission will soon report to Treasury Secretary Nebecker its recommendations for building new vaults and strengthening the old ones.—[Indianapolis Journal.]

A Famous Ruin.

Stonehenge is a famous ruin of great but uncertain antiquity, situated in the centre of a plain near Avebury in Wiltshire, England. At present it is merely a confused mass of moss-covered stones which must be closely inspected in order to trace out the original form, which was two concentric circles of huge upright stones enclosing two ellipses, the whole surrounded by a circular ditch or embankment; the wall being 1200 feet high and 1010 in circumference. There is much difference of opinion among antiquarians as to what the original building, monument or edifice was used for. Many eminent scientists believe it to be the remains of a Druidical temple, erected long before the Roman invasion of Britain.—[St. Louis Republic.]