

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Washington Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Job Had Boils, Bankruptcy and a Fool Wife, But He Finally Escaped, Body and Soul, From His Troubles—Thousands of Others May Be Similarly Saved

TEXT: "I am escaped with the skin of my teeth."—Job xix., 20.

Job had it hard. What with boils and bereavements and bankruptcy and a fool of a wife he wished he was dead, and I do not blame him. His flesh was gone, and his bones were dry. His teeth wasted away until nothing but the enamel seemed left. He cries out, "I am escaped with the skin of my teeth."

There has been some difference of opinion about this passage. St. Jerome and Solitens and Drs. Good and Poole and Barnes have all tried their forceps on Job's teeth. You deny my interpretation and say, "What did Job know about the enamel of the teeth?" He knew everything about it. Dental surgery is almost as old as the earth. The mummies of Egypt thousands of years old are found today with gold filling in their teeth. Ovid and Horace and Solomon and Moses wrote about these important factors of the body. To other provoking complaints Job, I think, has added an exasperating toothache, and, putting his hand against the inflamed face, he says, "I am escaped with the skin of my teeth."

A very narrow escape, you say, for Job's body and soul, but there are thousands of men who make just as narrow escape for their soul. There was a time when the partition between them and ruin was no thicker than a tooth's enamel, but as Job finally escaped so have they. Thank God! Thank God!

Paul expresses the same idea by a different figure when he says that some people are "saved as by fire." A vessel at sea is in flames. You go to the stern of the vessel. The boats have shored off. The flames advance. You can endure the heat no longer on your face. You slide down on the side of the vessel and hold on with your fingers until the forked tongue of the fire begins to lick the back of your hand, and you feel that you must fall, when one of the lifeboats comes back, and the passengers say they think they have room for one more. The boat swings under you. You drop into it—you are saved. So some men are pursued by temptation until they are partly consumed, but after all get off—saved as by fire.

But I like the figure of Job a little better than that of Paul, because the pulp has not worn it out, and I want to show you, if God will help, that some men make narrow escape for their souls and are saved as "with the skin of their teeth."

It is as easy for some people to look to the cross as for you to look to this pulp. Mild, gentle, tractable, loving, you expect them to become Christians. You go over to the store and say, "Grandson joined the church yesterday." Your business comrades say, "That is just what might have been expected. He always was of that turn of mind." In youth this person whom I describe was always good. He never broke things. He never laughed when it was improper to laugh. At seven he could sit an hour in church, perfectly quiet, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, but straight into the eyes of the minister, as though he understood the whole discussion about the eternal decrees. He never upset things nor lost them. He floated into the kingdom of God so gradually that it is uncertain just when the matter was decided.

Here is another one, who started in life with an uncontrollable spirit. He kept the nursery in an uproar. His mother found him walking on the edge of the house roof to see if he could balance himself. There was no horse that he dared not ride, no tree he could not climb. His boyhood was a long series of predicaments, his manhood was reckless, his middle life very wayward. But now he is converted, and you go over to the store and say, "Arkwright joined the church yesterday." Your friends say, "It is not possible. You must be joking." You say, "No; I tell you the truth. He joined the church." Then they reply, "There is hope for any of us if old Arkwright has become a Christian." In other words, we will admit that it is more difficult for some men to accept the gospel than for others.

I may be preaching to some who have cut loose from churches and Bibles and Sundays, and who no intention of becoming Christians themselves, and yet you may find yourself escaping before you leave this house as "with the skin of your teeth." I do not expect to waste this hour. I have seen boats go off from Cape May or Long Branch and drop their nets and after while come ashore, pulling in the nets without having caught a single fish. It was not a good day, or they had not the right kind of a net. But we expect no such excursion to-day. The water is full of fish, the wind is in the right direction, the gospel net is strong. O thou who didst help Simon and Andrew to fish, show us how to cast the net on the right side of the ship!

Some of you in coming to God will have to run against skeptical notions. It is useless for people to say sharp and cutting things to those who reject the Christian religion. I cannot say such things. By what process of temptation or trial or betrayal you have come to your present state I know not. There are two gates to your nature—the gate of the head and the gate of the heart. The gate of your head is locked with bolts and bars that an archangel could not break, but the gate of your heart swings easily on its hinges. If I assailed your body with weapons, you would meet me with weapons, and it would be sword stroke for sword stroke and wound for wound and blood for blood, but if I come and knock at the door of your heart you open it and give me the best seat in your parlor. If I should come at you now with an argument, you would answer me with an argument. If with sarcasm you would answer me with sarcasm—blow for blow, stroke for stroke—but when I come and knock at the door of your heart you open it and say, "Come in, my brother, and tell me all you know about Christ and heaven."

Listen to two or three questions. Are you as happy as you used to be when you believed in the truth of the Christian religion? Would you like to have your children travel on in the road in which you are now traveling? You had a relative who professed to be a Christian and was thoroughly consistent, living and dying in the faith of the gospel. Would you not like to live the same quiet life and die the same peaceful death? I hold in my hand a letter, sent me by one who has rejected the Christian religion. It says: "I am old enough to know that the joys and pleasures of life are evanescent and to realize the fact that it must be comfortable in old age to believe in something relative to the future and to have a faith in some system that proposes to save. I am free to confess that I would be happier if I could exercise the simple and beautiful faith that is possessed by many whom I know. I am not willing to give up the church or out of the faith. My state of uncertainty is one of unrest. Sometimes I doubt my immortality and look upon the dead as being the closing scene, after which there is nothing. What shall I do that I have not

done?" Ah, skepticism is a dark and delolful land! Let me say that this Bible is either true or false. If it be false, we are as well off as you; if it be true, then which of us is safer?

Let me also ask whether your trouble has not been that you confounded Christianity with the inconsistent character of some who profess it? You are a lawyer. In your profession there are mean and dishonest men. Is that anything against the law? You are a doctor. There are unskilled and contemptible men in your profession. Is that anything against medicine? You are a merchant. There are thieves and defrauders in your business. Is that anything against merchandise? Behold, then, the unfairness of charging upon Christianity the wickedness of its disciples. We admit some of the charges against those who profess religion. Some of the most gigantic swindles of the present day have been carried on by members of the church.

There are men standing in the front rank in the churches who would not be trusted for \$5 without good collateral security. They leave their business dishonesties in the vestibule of the church as they go in and sit at the communion. Having concluded the sacrament, they get up, wipe the wine from their lips, go out and take up their sins where they left off. To serve the devil is their regular work, to serve God a sort of play spell. With a Sunday sponge they expect to wipe off from their business slate all the very serious inconsistencies. You have no more right to take such a man's life as a specimen of religion than you have to take the twisted iron and split timbers that lie on the beach at Coney Island as a specimen of an American ship. It is time that we draw a line between religion and the frailties of those who profess it.

Do you not feel that the Bible, take it all in all, is about the best book that the world has ever seen? Do you know any book that has as much in it? Do you not think, upon the whole, that its influence has been beneficial? I come to you with both hands extended toward you. In one hand I have the Bible and in the other hand I have nothing. This Bible in one hand I will surrender forever just as soon as in my other hand you can put a book that is better.

I invite you back into the good old-fashioned religion of your fathers, to the God whom they worshiped, to the Bible they read, to the promises on which they leaned, to the cross on which they hung their eternal expectations. You have not been happy a day since you swung off. You will not be happy a minute until you swing back.

Again, there may be some who in the attempt after a Christian life will have to run against powerful passions and appetites. Perhaps it is a disposition to anger that you have to contend against, and perhaps, while in a very serious mood, you hear of something that makes you feel that you must swear or die. I know a Christian man who was once so exasperated that he said to a mean customer, "I cannot swear at you, for I am a member of the church, but if you will go downstairs my partner in business will swear at you." All your good resolutions heretofore have been torn to tatters by explosion of temper.

Now, there is no harm in getting mad if you only get mad at sin. You need to bridle and saddle those hot-breathed passions and with them ride down injustice and wrong. There are a thousand things in the world we ought to be mad at. There is no harm in getting red-hot if you only bring to the forge that which needs hammering. A man who has no power of righteous indignation is an imbecile. But be sure it is a righteous indignation and not a petulance that blurs and unravels and depletes the soul.

There is a large class of persons in middle life who have still in them appetites that were aroused in early manhood, at a time when they prided themselves on being a "little fast," "high liver," "free and easy," "hall fellows well met." They are now paying in compound interest for troubles they collected twenty years ago, some of you are trying to escape, and you will, yet very narrowly, "as with the skin of your teeth." God and your own soul only know what the struggle is. Omnificent grace has pulled out many a soul that was deeper in mire than you are. They line the beach of heaven—the multitude whom God has rescued from the trail of suicidal habits. If you this day turn back on the wrong and start anew, God will help you. Oh! the weakness of human help! Men will sympathize for a while and then turn you off. If you ask for their pardon, they will give it and say they will try you again; but, falling away again under the power of temptation, they cast you off forever. But God forgives seventy times seven; yes, seven hundred times; yes, though this be the ten thousandth time. He is more earnest, more sympathetic, more helpful this last time than when you took your first misstep.

If with all the influences favorable for a right life men make so many mistakes, how much harder is it when, for instance, some appetite thrusts its iron grapple into the roots of the tongue and pulls a man down with hands of destruction? If, under such circumstances, he breaks away, there will be no sport in the undertaking, no holiday enjoyment, but a struggle in which the wrestlers move from side to side and bend and twist and when for an opportunity to get in a heavier stroke, until with one final effort, in which the muscles are distended and the veins stand out and the blood starts, the swarthy habit falls under the knee of the victor—escaped at last as "with the skin of his teeth."

The ship Emma, bound from Gettensburg to Harwich, was sailing on when the man on the lookout saw something that he pronounced a vessel bottom up. There was something on it that looked like a sea gull, but was afterward found to be a waving handkerchief. In the small boat the crew pushed out to the wreck and found that it was a capized vessel, and that three men had been digging their way out through the bottom of the ship. When the vessel capized, they had no means of escape. The captain took his penknife and dug away through the planks until his knife broke. Then an old nail was found, with which they attempted to scrape their way up out of the darkness, each one working until his hand was well nigh paralyzed, and he sank back faint and sick. After long and tedious work the light broke through the bottom of the ship. A handkerchief was hoisted. Help came. They were taken on board the vessel and saved. Did ever men come so near a watery grave without drowning in it? How narrowly they escaped—only "with the skin of their teeth." There are men who have been capized of evil passions and capized midocean, and they are a thousand miles away from any shore of help. They have for years been trying to dig their way out. They have been digging away and digging away, but they can never be delivered unless now they will hoist some signal of distress. However weak and feeble it may be, Christ will see it and bear down upon the helpless craft and take them on board, and it will be known on earth and in heaven how narrowly they have escaped—"escaped as with the skin of their teeth."

There are others who in attempting to come to God must run between a great many business perplexities. If a man go over to business at 10 o'clock in the morning and come away at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, he has some time for religion, but

how shall you find time for religious contemplation when you are driven from sunrise to sunset and have been for five years going behind in business and are frequently dunned by creditors whom you cannot pay, and when from Monday morning until Saturday night you are doing bills that you cannot meet? You walk day by day in uncertainties that have kept your brain on fire for the past three years. Some with less business troubles than you have gone crazy. The clerk has heard a noise in the back counting room and gone in and found the chief man of the firm a raving maniac, or the wife has heard the bang of a pistol in the back parlor and gone in, stumbling over the dead body of her husband—a suicide. There are men pursued, harassed, trodden down and scalped of business perplexities, and which way to turn next they do not know. Now God will not be hard on you. He knows what obstacles are in the way of your being a Christian and your first effort in the right direction He will crown with success. Do not let Satan, with cotton bales, and kegs, and hogheads, and counters, and stocks of unsalable goods, block up your way to heaven. Gather up all your energies. Tighten the girdle about your loins. Take an agonizing look into the face of God, and then say, "Here goes one grand effort for life eternal," and then bound away for heaven, escaping "as with the skin of your teeth."

In the last day it will be found that Hugh Latimer, and John Knox, and Husa and Ridley were not the greatest martyrs, but Christian men who went up incorrupt from the contaminations and perplexities of Pennsylvania avenue, Broad street, State street and Third street. On earth they were called brokers or stock jobbers, or retailers, or importers, but in heaven Christian heroes. No fagots were heaped about their feet; no inquisition demanded from them recantation; no soldier aimed a pike at their heart, but they had mental torture compared with which all physical consuming is as the breath of a spring morning.

I find in the community a large class of men who have been cheated, so lied about so outrageously wronged, that they have lost their faith in everything. In a world where everything seems so topsy turvy they do not see how there can be any God. They are confounded and frenzied and misanthropic. Elaborate arguments to prove to them the truth of Christianity or the truth of anything else touch them nowhere. Hear me, all such men. I preach to you no rounded periods, no ornamental discourse, but put my hand on your shoulder and invite you into the peace of the gospel. Here is a rock on which you may stand firm, though the waves dash against it harder than the Atlantic, pitching its surf clear above Eddystone lighthouse. Do not charge upon God all these troubles of the world. As long as the world stuck to God God stuck to the world, but the earth seceded from His government, and hence all these outrages and all these woes. God is good. For many hundreds of years He has been coaxing the world to come back to Him, but the more He has coaxed the more violent have men been in their resistance, and they have stepped back and stepped back until they have dropped into ruin.

Try this God, ye who have had the bloodhounds after you, and who have thought that God had forgotten you. Try Him and see if He will not help. Try Him and see if He will not pardon. Try Him and see if He will not save. The flowers of spring have no bloom so sweet as the flowering of Christ's affections. The sun bathes no warmth compared with the glow of His heart. The waters have no refreshment like the fountain that will slake the thirst of thy soul. At the moment the reindeer stands with his lip and nostril thrust in the cool mountain torrent, the hunter may be coming through the thicket. Without cracking a stick under his foot, He comes close by the stag, aims his gun, draws the trigger, and the poor thing runs in its death agony and falls backward, its antlers crashing on the rocks. But the panting hart that drinks from the water brooks of God's promise shall never be fatally wounded and shall never die.

This world is a poor portion of your soul. O business man! An eastern king had graven on his tomb two fingers, represented as sounding on each other with a snap, and under them the motto, "All is not worth that." Apeius Collius hanged himself because his steward informed him that he had only £80,000 sterling left. All of this world's riches make but a small inheritance for a soul. Robespierre attempted to win the applause of the world, but when he was dying a woman came rushing through the crowd, crying to him, "Murderer of my kindred, descend to hell, covered with the curses of every mother in France!" Many who have expected the plaudits of the world have died under its anathemas.

Oh, find your peace in God! Make one strong pull for heaven. No half-way work will do. There sometimes comes a time on a shipboard when everything must be sacrificed to save the passengers. The cargo is nothing, the rigging nothing. The captain puts the trumpet to his lips and shouts, "Cut away the mast!" Some of you have been tossed and driven, and you have, in your effort to keep the world, well nigh lost your soul. Until you have decided this matter let everything else go. Overboard with all those other anxieties and burdens. You will have to drop the sails of your pride and cut away the mast. With one earnest cry for help put your cause into the hand of Him who helped Paul out of the breakers of Melita, and who, above the shrill blast of the whistling tempest that ever blackened the sky or shook the ocean, can hear the faintest imploration for mercy.

I shall close this sermon feeling that some of you who have considered your case as hopeless will take heart again, and that with a blood red earnestness, such as you have never experienced before, you will start for the good land of the gospel—at last to look back, saying, "What a great risk I ran! Almost lost, but saved! Just got through, and no more! Escaped by the skin of my teeth."

A Great Improvement. The B. & O. officials are very much pleased with certain statistics that have recently been prepared, of the performance of freight trains on the Second division, which handles all the east and west bound traffic between Baltimore and Cumberland. Before the new freight engines were purchased, and the improvements made in the track, in the way of straightening curves and reducing grades, the average number of cars to the train was 25½. Now with more powerful and modern motive power and a better track, the average is 40 cars per train, an increase of 41 per cent. On the Third division, Cumberland to Grafton, where there are grades 125 feet to the mile, the engines used to haul 19½ loads to the train. Now the average is 25½ loads per train, an increase of 31 per cent.

A medallion of Pasteur, executed by the sculptor Auguste Patey, will be placed in the wall of the laboratory where the great scientist worked, in the Ecole Normale Iris. The medallion is of bronze, with a wreath of oak and laurel, in pink marble, around it, and bears the date of his principal discoveries from 1857 to 1885.

VIRGINIA ITEMS.

The recent action of the Treasury Department in reducing the compensation of the deputy collectors of customs at Onancock and Chincoteague to \$100 each per annum virtually abolishes the offices at these two places. Last spring, when the compensation of these officials was reduced from \$900 to \$480 per annum, it was thought by some that the department was adopting this policy to force the incumbents to resign, and the further reduction to \$100 per annum gives some color to the suspicion that the Treasury Department may be pursuing this course to force the resignation of officials whose term of office has not yet expired, and that when republicans shall be put into these offices the compensation will be restored to the original figures. Those, however, who know Secretary Gage are of the opinion that he would not permit such a thing to be done. And yet it seems strange that the Secretary did not abolish the offices outright, as he has full power to do. There is hardly any probability that competent persons would take these places for such meagre compensation, unless they believed that it would soon be increased.

Improvements are rushing now on the Portsmouth side of the river. Between five hundred and six hundred men are employed on the Dismal Swamp canal improvements, and the force of workmen and the dredgers and stump pullers engaged in widening and deepening the waterway are within four miles of Deep creek, working this way from South Mills, N. C. The canal is twice as wide as formerly, and the depth of the water will carry a vessel drawing ten feet. In some places the canal will be fifteen feet deep. The construction of the locks is the heaviest work, but it will not be a great many months before the contractors will be through and the splendid route for coasting vessels inside of Hatteras will be completed. The work of constructing the Belt Line around Norfolk, Portsmouth and Berkley has commenced, and the Southern Railway has put out for improvements at Pinners Point about \$250,000.

In Portsmouth two electric railways are in process of construction, the city doing a considerable amount of paving, and a magnificent park is being constructed at Burton's Point, on the Elizabeth river, just outside of Portsmouth. In addition a beautiful boulevard is to be opened from High street to Cottage Place as a driveway, to avoid the car lines, and for the benefit of the country people coming to the city.

In Norfolk building operations are active and work is rushing on the big Monticello Hotel and the costly Citizens' Bank building. At Stever's Station, on the Seaboard Air Line, the store of W. T. Duke took fire and was destroyed. The conflagration spread to an adjoining residence, occupied by Mr. John Jones, and that, too, was burned. The new store building was worth about \$800; no insurance. The dwelling house, which was owned by the Seaboard Air Line, was worth about \$1,000.

CLAIMS AGAINST SPAIN.

Administration to Negotiate a Treaty for the Appointment of a Commission.

It is probable that a convention will be negotiated between Spain and the United States for the settlement of all claims on account of the Cuban trouble by a commission similar to that appointed in 1871, which settled the claims of citizens of both countries after the insurrection of that time.

It can be stated that, although numerous claims of American citizens against the government of Spain for injuries done their persons and property in the Island of Cuba during the present revolution have been filed with the State Department, no formal presentation of these claims has been made to the Spanish government by the Secretary of State, although, as soon as these claims have been filed at the State Department, a notice of such filing has been presented to the foreign office at Madrid.

General Woodford, in his instructions, was directed to negotiate such a convention as was arranged by General Sickles with the Spanish government in 1871.

OIL FOR MARINE ENGINES.

Navy Department Investigating Petroleum with a View to Its Use.

The Secretary of the Navy has ordered Lieut. Nathan Sargent to proceed at once to the oil fields of Pennsylvania, where he will make a careful investigation of the various grades of petroleum produced in that region, with a view to its use as fuel for marine engines. Upon the conclusion of this work he will report to the authorities in charge of the Newport torpedo station and plans will be drawn for an oil engine, which will be placed in one of the new torpedo-boats now being built by the Herreshoffs.

This will be the first attempt to use petroleum as fuel for the torpedo fleet, but from the success that has been attained with it in swift steam launches both here and abroad the Navy Department looks very favorably on the experiment. Some of the advantages expected from the new fuel are economy of machine space and consequently greater fuel-carrying capacity; economy in cost of fuel and the ability to develop extremely high steam pressure under forced draught.

BATTLE WITH BANK BURGLARS.

Policeman Rout a Gang of Professional Robbers and Kills One.

About 1 o'clock in the morning Merchant Policeman Charles S. Hemminger interrupted the operations of a gang of burglars who were trying to break into the vaults of the Isaac Hater & Sons' bank at Canton, O. As a result, one of the robbers, whose name is unknown, lies dead at the morgue. The others escaped.

Hemminger came upon the robbers in the dark, and they opened fire upon him. He fired at them and brought down one of the burglars. Other policemen arrived, but not in time to arrest any of the other members of the gang. The wounded man died in an hour or two after he was shot. He was about twenty-five years of age, well dressed and good looking.

The robbers were undoubtedly professional, as an investigation of the premises revealed a full outfit of burglar's tools. The robbers had begun work in a systematic way on the foundation of the vault, and, if not interrupted, they would probably have made a good haul.

SORROW FOR JOHN P. LOVELL.

A General Expression of Sympathy Called Out by His Death.

Seldom has there been such a general expression of sympathy over the loss of one whose life has been devoted to business pursuits, as has been called forth by the recent death at Cottage City, Mass., of that venerable landmark of the business world, the late John P. Lovell, founder and President of the John P. Lovell Arms Company of Boston. Almost numberless messages and letters of condolence, on the death of his honored father, have been received by Colonel Benjamin S. Lovell, Treasurer of the Lovell Arms Company. The wide scope covered by these communications is in itself evidence of the great regard in which he was held by the leaders in business and public life. These expressions of sympathy have not been confined to New England, but they have come from every prominent business centre of the North, East, West and South—in fact, from every portion of the Union; because the name of John P. Lovell, and the corporation created by him, have been for more than a half century the synonym of honest dealing and business integrity. Even from England, from firms with whom Mr. Lovell had enjoyed the pleasantest business relations for more than fifty years, Colonel Lovell has received messages of sympathy.

WASHINGTON NOTES.

Senor Romero, the Mexican Minister will go to St. Paul as the representative of Mexico at the national gathering of farming organizations in that city.

The Dolphin, with Secretary Long on board, arrived at Bar Harbor, where the North Atlantic squadron is at present. The Secretary may review some evolutions of the fleet before it sails for Hampton Roads.

The Marblehead has arrived at Sydney, Cape Breton Island. The Marblehead will cruise in the vicinity until the arrival of the American mackerel fleet.

Nathan A. C. Smith, of Wisconsin, for a quarter of a century a well-known employe of the Postoffice Department, and recently chief of the bond division, resigned. His successor is Capt. C. D. Dickey, of Ohio, another veteran employe.

The Raleigh has sailed from La Goulette to Tripoli.

The French Government has asked for the extradition of William Bohens, now in prison in New York for offenses committed in that city. Extradition cannot be granted unless the local authorities waive claim to him and sufficient proof of his alleged crime in France is shown.

MARKETS.

Table with columns for BALTIMORE GRAIN ETC. and prices for FLOUR, WHEAT, CORN, etc.

Table with columns for CANNED GOODS and prices for TOMATOES, PEAS, CORN, etc.

Table with columns for HIDES and prices for CITY STEERS, etc.

Table with columns for POTATOES AND VEGETABLES and prices for POTATOES, SWEETS, ONIONS, etc.

Table with columns for PROVISIONS and prices for HOGS PRODUCTS, BUTTER, etc.

Table with columns for BUTTER and prices for BUTTER-Fine Cream, etc.

Table with columns for CHEESE and prices for CHEESE-N. Y. Fancy, etc.

Table with columns for EGGS and prices for EGGS-State, etc.

Table with columns for LIVE POULTRY and prices for CHICKENS, etc.

Table with columns for TOBACCO and prices for TOBACCO-Md. Infer's, etc.

Table with columns for LIVE STOCK and prices for BEEF, SHEEP, HOGS, etc.

Table with columns for FURS AND SKINS and prices for MUSKRAT, etc.

Table with columns for NEW YORK and prices for FLOUR, WHEAT, etc.

Table with columns for PHILADELPHIA and prices for FLOUR, WHEAT, etc.

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