AT THE TABERNACLE.

"LIGHTNING OF THE SEA" THE SUBJECT OF DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

He Likens Man's Journey Through Life to a Ship's Course Through the Ocean—Our Worth Is Known by the Good Deeds That Live After Us.

BROOKLYN, Feb. 18.—In the Brooklyn Tabernacle this forenoon Rev. Dr. Talmage preached an unusually attractive and eloquent gospel sermon to a crowded audience, who listened with rapt interest. The subject was "The Lightning of the Sea," the text selected being Job xii, 39. "He maketh a path to shine after him."

If for the next thousand years ministers of religion should preach from this Bible, there will yet be texts unexpounded and unexplained and unappreciated. What little has been said concerning this chapter in Job from which my text is taken bears on the controversy as to what was really the leviathan described as disturbing the sea. What creature it was I know not. Some say it was a whale. Some say it was a crocodile. My own opinion is it was a sea monster now extinct. No creature now floating in Mediterranean or Atlantic waters corresponds to Job's description.

What most interests me is that as it moved on through the deep it left the waters flashing and resplendent. In the words of the text, "He maketh a path to shine after him." What was that illumined path? It was phosphorescence. You find it in the wake of a ship in the night, especially after rough weather. Phosphorescence is the lightning of the sea. That this figure of speech is correct in describing its appearance I am certified by an incident. After crossing the Atlantic the first time and writing from Basle, Switzerland, to an American magazine an account of my voyage, in which nothing more fascinated me than the phosphorescence in the ship's wake, I called it the lightning of the sea. Returning to my hotel, I found a book of John Ruskin, and the first sentence my eyes fell upon was his description of phosphorescence, in which he called it "the lightning of the sea."

Down to the postoffice I hastened to get the manuscript, and with great labor and some expense got possession of the magazine article and put quotation marks around that one sentence, although it was as original with me as with John Ruskin. I suppose that nine-tenths of you living so near the seacoast have watched this marine appearance called phosphorescence, and I hope that the other one-tenth may some day be so happy as to witness it. It is the waves of the sea diamonded. It is the inflorescence of the billows—the waves of the sea crimsoned, as was the deep after the sea fight of Lepanto—the waves of the sea on fire.

There are times when from horizon to horizon the entire ocean seems in conflagration with this strange splendor as it changes every moment to tamer or more dazzling color on all sides of you. You sit looking over the taffrail of the yacht or ocean steamer, watching and waiting to see what new thing the God of beauty will do with the Atlantic. It is the ocean in transfiguration; it is the marine world casting its garments of glory in the pathway of the Almighty as he walks the deep; it is an inverted firmament with all its stars gone down with it. No picture can present it, for photographer's camera cannot be successfully trained to catch it, and before it the hand of the painter drops its pencil, overawed and powerless.

This phosphorescence is the appearance of myriads of the animal kingdom rising, falling, playing, dashing, living, dying. These luminous animalcules for nearly 150 years have been the study of naturalists and the fascination and solemnization of all who have brain enough to think. Now, God, who puts in his Bible nothing trivial or useless, calls the attention of Job, the greatest scientist of his day, to this phosphorescence, and as the leviathan of the deep sweeps past points out the fact that "he maketh a path to shine after him."

WHAT WAKE WILL YOU LEAVE?

Is that true of us now and will it be true of us when we have gone? Will there be subsequent light or darkness? Will there be a trail of gloom or good cheer? Can any one between now and the next 100 years say of us truthfully as the text says of the leviathan of the deep, "He maketh a path to shine after him?" For we are moving on. While we live in the same house, and transact business in the same store, and write on the same table, and chisel in the same studio, and thresh in the same barn, and worship in the same church, we are in motion and are in many respects moving on, and we are not where we were 10 years ago, nor where we will be 10 years hence. Moving on!

Look at the family record, or the almanac, or into the mirror, and see if any one of you is where you were. All in motion. Other feet may trip and stumble and halt, but the feet of not one moment for the last 60 centuries has tripped or stumbled or halted. Moving on! Society moving on! The world moving on! Heaven moving on! The universe moving on! Time moving on! Eternity moving on! Therefore it is absurd to think that we ourselves can stop, as we must move with all the rest. Are we like the creature of the text, making our path to shine after us? It may be a peculiar question, but my text suggests it.

What influence will we leave in this world after we have gone through its "None," answer hundreds of voices; "we are not one of the immortals. Fifty years after we are out of the world it will be as though we never inhabited it." You are wrong in saying that. I pass down through this audience and up through these galleries, and I am looking for some one whom I cannot find.

I am looking for one who will have no influence in this world 100 years from now. But I have found the man who has the least influence, and I inquire into his history, and I find that by a yes or a no he decided some one's eternity. In time of temptation he gave an affirmative or a negative to some temptation which another, hearing of, was induced to decide in the same way.

Clear on the other side of the next million years may be the first you hear of the long reaching influence of that yes or no, but hear of it you will. Will that father make a path to shine after him? Will that mother make a path to shine after her? You will be walking along these streets, or along that country road, 200 years from now in the character of your descendants. They will be affected by your courage or your cowardice, your purity or your depravity, your holiness or your sin. You will make the path to shine after you or blacken after you.

Why should they point out to us on some mountain two rivulets, one of which passes down into the rivers which pour out into the Pacific ocean, and the other rivulet flowing down into the rivers which pass out into the Atlantic ocean? Every man, every woman, stands at a point where words uttered, or deeds done, or prayers offered, decide opposite destinies and opposite eternities. We see a man planting a tree and treading the soil firmly on either side of it and watering it in dry weather and taking a great care in its culture, and he never plucks any fruit from its bough, but his children will. We are all planting trees that will yield fruit hundreds of years after we are dead—orchards of golden fruit or groves of deadly apes.

I am so fascinated with the phosphorescence in the track of a ship that I have sometimes watched for a long while and have seen nothing on the face of the deep but blackness. The mouth of watery chasms that looked like gaping jaws of hell. Not a spark as big as the firefly; not a white scroll of surf; not a taper to illuminate the mighty sepulchers of dead ships; darkness 3,000 feet deep and more thousands of feet long and wide. That is the kind of wake that a bad man leaves behind him as he plows through the ocean of this life toward the vaster ocean of the great future.

FATE OF THE SCOFFER.

Now, suppose a man seated in a corner grocery or business office among cards gives himself to jolly skepticism. He laughs at the Bible, makes sport of the miracles, speaks of perdition in jokes and laughs at revivals as a frolic, and at the passage of a funeral procession, which always solemnizes sensible people, says, "Boys, let's take a drink." There is in that group a young man who is making a great struggle against temptation, and prays night and morning, and reads his Bible and is asking God for help day by day. But that guffaw against Christianity make him lose his grip of sacred things, and he gives up Sabbath and church and morals, and goes from bad to worse, till he falls under dissipations, dies in a lazar house and is buried in the potter's field.

Another young man who heard that jolly skepticism made up his mind that "it makes no difference what we do or say, for we will all come out at last at the right place," and began as a consequence to purloin. Some money that came into his hands for others he applied to his own uses, thinking perhaps he would make it straight some other time, and all would be well even if he did not make it straight. He ends in the penitentiary. That scoffer who uttered the jokes against Christianity never realized what bad work he was doing, and he passed on through life and out of it and into a future that I am not now going to depict.

I do not propose with a searchlight to show the breakers of the awful coast on which that ship is wrecked, for my business now is to watch the sea after the keel has plowed it. No phosphorescence in the wake of that ship, but behind it two souls struggling in the wave; two young men destroyed by reckless skepticism, an unfathomed ocean beneath and on all sides of them. Blackness of darkness.

You know what a glorious good man Rev. John Newton was the most of his life, but before his conversion he was a very wicked sailor, and on board the ship Harwich instilled infidelity and vice in the mind of a young man, principles which destroyed him. Afterward the two met, and Newton tried to undo his bad work, but in vain. The young man became worse and worse and died a profligate, horrifying with his profanities those who stood by him in his last moments.

Better look out what bad influence you start, for you may not be able to stop it. It does not require very great force to ruin others. Why was it that many years ago a great flood nearly destroyed New Orleans? A crawfish had burrowed into the banks of the river until the ground was saturated, and the banks weakened until the flood burst.

THE PATH THAT SHINES.

But I find here a man who starts out in life with the determination that he will never see suffering but he will try to alleviate it, and never see discouragement but he will try to cheer it, and never meet with anybody but he will try to do him good. Getting his strength from God, he starts from home with high purpose of doing all the good he can possibly do in one day.

Whether standing behind the counter, or talking in the business office with a pen behind his ear, or making a bargain with a fellow trader, or out in the fields discussing with his next neighbor the wisest rotation of crops, or in the shoemaker's shop pounding the sole leather, there is something in his face, and in his phraseology, and in his manner that demonstrates the grace of God in his heart. He can talk on religion without awkwardly dragging it in by the ears. He loves God and loves the souls of all whom he meets and is interested in their present and eternal destiny.

For 50 or 60 years he lives that kind of life and then gets through with it and goes into heaven a ransomed soul. But I am not going to describe the port into which that ship has entered. I am not going to describe the Pilot who met him outside at the "lightship."

I am not going to say anything about the crowds of friends who met him on the chrystalline wharves up which he goes on steps of chrysoprases. For God in his words to Job calls me to look at the path of foam in the wake of that ship, and I tell you it is all aglean with splendors of kindness done and rolling with illumined tears that were wiped away and adash with congratulations, and clear out to the horizon in all directions is the sparkling, flashing, billowing phosphorescence of a Christian life. "He maketh a path to shine after him."

And here I correct one of the mean notions which at some time takes possession of all of us, and that is as to the brevity of human life. When I bury some very useful man, clerical or lay, in his thirtieth or fortieth year, I say: "What a waste of energies! It was hardly worth while for him to get ready for Christian work, for he had so soon to quit it." But the fact is that I may insure any man or woman who does any good on a large or small scale for a life on earth as long as the world lasts. Sickness, trolley car accidents, death itself, can no more destroy his life than they can tear down one of the rings of Saturn. You can start one good word, one kind act, one cheerful smile, on a mission that will last until the world becomes a bonfire, and out of that blaze it will pass into the heavens never to halt as long as God lives.

INFLUENCE OF GOOD DEEDS.

There were in the seventeenth century men and women whose names you never heard of who are today influencing schools, colleges, churches, nations. You can no more measure the gracious results of their lifetime than you could measure the length and breadth and depth of the phosphorescence last night following the ship of the White Star line 1,500 miles out at sea. How the courage and consecration of others inspire us to follow, as a general in the American army, cool amid the flying bullets, inspired a trembling soldier, who said afterward, "I was nearly scared to death, but I saw the old man's white mustache over his shoulder and went on. Aye, we are all following somebody either in right or wrong directions.

A few days ago I stood beside the garland-ed casket of a gospel minister and in my remarks had occasion to recall a snowy night in a farmhouse when I was a boy and an evangelist spending a night at my father's house who said something so tender and beautiful and impressive that it led me into the kingdom of God and decided my destiny for this world and the next. You will before 24 hours go by meet some man or woman with a big pack of care and trouble, and you may say something to him or her that will endure until this world shall have been so far lost in the past that nothing but the stretch of angelic memory will be able to realize that it ever existed at all.

I am not talking of remarkable men and women, but of what ordinary folks can do. I am not speaking of the phosphorescence in the wake of a Campania, but of the phosphorescence in the track of a Newfoundland fishing smack. God makes thunderbolts out of sparks, and out of the small words and deeds of a small life he can launch a power that will flash and burn and thunder through the eternities.

How do you like this prolongation of your earthly life by deathless influence? Many a babe that died at 6 months of age by the anxiety created in the parent's heart to meet that child in realms seraphic is living yet in the transformed heart and life of these parents and will live on forever in the history of that family. If this be the opportunity of ordinary souls, what is the opportunity of those who have special intellectual or social or monetary equipments?

Have you any arithmetic capable of estimating the influence of our good and gracious friend who a few days ago went up to rest—George W. Childs of Philadelphia? From a newspaper that was printed for 30 years without one word of defamation or scurrility or scandal and putting chief emphasis on virtue and charity and clean intelligence he reaped a fortune for himself and then distributed a vast amount of it among the poor and struggling, putting his invalid and aged reporters on pensions, until his name stands everywhere for large heartedness and sympathy and help and highest style of Christian gentleman.

In an era which had in the chairs of its journalism a Horace Greeley, and a Henry J. Raymond, and a James Gordon Bennett, and an Erastus Brooks and a George William Curtis, and an Irenaeus Prime, none of them will be longer remembered than George W. Childs. Staying away from the unveiling of the monument he had reared at large expense in our Greenwood in memory of Professor Proctor, the astronomer, lest I should say something in praise of the man who had paid for the monument. By all acknowledged representative of the highest American journalism.

If you would estimate his influence for good, you must count how many sheets of his newspapers have been published in the last quarter of a century, and how many people have read them, and the effect not only upon these readers, but upon all whom they shall influence for all time, while you add to all that the work of the churches he helped build, and of the institutions of mercy he helped found. Better give up before you start the measuring of the phosphorescence in the wake of that ship of the Celestial line. Who can tell the post mortem influence of a Savonarola, a Winkelreid, a Gutenberg, a Marlborough, a Decatur, a Toussaint, a Bolivar, a Clarkson, a Robert Raikes, a Harlan Page, who had 125 Sabbath scholars, 84 of whom became Christians and six of them ministers of the gospel.

With gratitude and penitence and worship I mention the grandest life that was ever lived. That ship of light was launched from the heavens nearly 1,900 years ago, angelic hosts chanting, and from the celestial wharves the ship sprang into the roughest sea that ever tossed. Its billows were made up of the wrath of men and devils, Heredic and sanhedrinic persecutions stirring the deep with red wrath, and all the hurricanes of woe smote it until on the rocks of Golgotha that life struck with a resound of agony that appalled the earth and the heavens. But in the wake of that life what a phosphorescence of smiles on the cheek of souls pardoned, and lives reformed, and nations redeemed. The millennium itself is only one roll of that irradiated wave of gladness and benediction. In the sublimest of all senses it may be said of him, "He maketh a path to shine after him."

GOD IS NOT A HARSH CRITIC.

But I cannot look upon that luminosity that follows ships without realizing how fond the Lord is of life. That fire of the deep is life, myriads of creatures all a swim and a-play and a-romp in parks of marine beauty laid out and parterred and roseated and blossomed by omnipotence. What is the use of those creatures called by the naturalists "crustaceans" and "copepods," not more than one out of hundreds of billions of which are ever seen by human eye? God created them for the same reason that he creates flowers in places where no human foot ever makes them tremble, and no human nostril ever inhales their redolence, and no human eye ever sees their charm. In the botanical world they prove that God loves flowers, as in the marine world the phosphori prove that he loves life, and he loves life in play, life in brilliancy of gladness, life in exuberance.

And so I am led to believe that he loves our life if we fulfill our mission as fully as the phosphori fulfill theirs. The Son of God came "that we might have life, and have it more abundantly." But I am glad to tell you that our God is not the God sometimes described as a harsh critic at the head of the universe, or an infinite scold, or a God that loves funerals better than weddings, or a God that prefers tears to laughter, an omnipotent Nero, a ferocious Nana Sahib, but the loveliest Being in the universe, loving flowers and life and play, whether of phosphori in the wake of the Majestic or of the human race keeping a holiday.

HELP THE UNFORTUNATE.

But mark you that the phosphorescence has a glow that the night monopolizes, and I ask you not only what kind of influence you are going to leave in the world as you pass through it, but what light are you going to throw across the world's night of sin and sorrow? People who are sailing on smooth sea and at noon do not need much sympathy, but what are you going to do for people in the night of misfortune? Will you drop on them shadow, or will you kindle for them phosphorescence?

At this moment there are more people crying than laughing; more people on the round world this moment hungry than well fed; more households bereft than homes unbroken. What are you going to do about it? "Well," says yonder soul, "I would like to do something toward illumining the great ocean of human wretchedness, but I cannot do much."

Can you do as much as one of the phosphori in the middle of the Atlantic ocean, creatures smaller than the point of a sharp pin? "Oh, yes," you say. Then do that. Shine! Stand before the looking glass and experiment to see if you cannot get that scowl off your forehead, that pervish look out of your lips. Have at least one bright ribbon in your bonnet. Embroider at least one white cord somewhere in the midnight of your apparel. Do not any longer impersonate a funeral. Shine! Do say something cheerful about society and about the world. Put a few drops of heaven into your disposition. Once in awhile substitute a sweet orange for a sour lemon.

Remember that pessimism is blasphemy, and that optimism is Christianity. Throw some light on the night ocean. If you cannot be a lantern swinging in the rigging, be one of the tiny phosphori back of the keel. Shine! "Let your light so shine before men that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Make one person happy every day and do that for 20 years, and you will have made 7,300 happy. You know a man who has lost all his property by an unfortunate investment, or by putting his name on the back of a friend's note? After you have taken a brief nap, which every man and woman is entitled to on a Sunday afternoon, go and cheer up that man. You can, if God helps you, say something that will do him good after both of you have been dead a thousand years.

Shine! You know of a family with a bad boy who has run away from home. Go before night and tell that father and mother the parable of the prodigal son, and that some of the illustrious and useful men now in church and state had a silly passage in their lives and ran away from home. Shine! You know of a family that has lost a child, and the silence of the nursery glooms the whole house from cellar to garret. Go before night and tell them how much that child has happily escaped, since the most prosperous life on earth is a struggle. Shine! You know of some invalid who is dying for lack of an appetite. She cannot get well because she cannot eat. Broil a chicken and take it to her before night, and cheat her poor appetite into keen relish. Shine! You know of some one who likes you, and you like him, and he ought to be a Christian. Go tell him what religion has done for you, and ask him if you can pray for him. Shine! Oh, for a disposition so charged with sweetness and light that we cannot help but shine!

Remember if you cannot be a leviathan lashing the ocean into fury you can be one of the phosphori, doing your part toward making a path of phosphorescence. Then I will tell you what impression you will leave as you pass through this life and after you are gone. I will tell you to your face and not leave it for the minister who officiates at your obsequies.

The failure in all eulogium of the departed is that they cannot hear it. All hear it except the one most interested. This, in substance, is what I or some one else will say of you on such an occasion: "We gather for offices of respect to this departed one. It is impossible to tell how many tears he wiped away, how many burdens he lifted, or how many souls he was, under God, instrumental in saving. His influence will never cease. We are all better for having known him.

"That pillow of flowers on the casket was presented by his Sabbath school class, all of whom he brought to Christ. That cross of flowers at the head was presented by the orphan asylum which he befriended. Those three single flowers—one was sent by a poor woman for whom he bought a ton of coal, and one was by a waif of the street whom he rescued through the midnight mission, and the other was from a prison cell which he had often visited to encourage repentance in a young man who had done wrong.

"Those three loose flowers mean quite as much as the costly garlands now breathing their aroma through the saddened home crowded with sympathizers. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.'"

Or if it should be the more solemn burial at sea let it be at the sun has gone down, and the captain has read the appropriate liturgy, and the ship's bell has tolled, and you are let down from the stern of the vessel into the resplendent phosphorescence at the wake of the ship. Then let some one say in the words of my text, "He maketh a path to shine after him."

An Amusing Fire.

Barnum's museum, destroyed July 13, 1865, was one of the most amusing fires that ever occurred in New York city. It occurred in the daytime. Chief John Decker was in charge, assisted by Orr, Bates, Lamb, Cleary, Everett and Sullivan. Thousands crowded Broadway clear up to Park place as well as Park row, while the jack in front was black with people. It was fun to see the boys at the outset of the fire bringing out Barnum's old stuffed images and wax figures. One fellow ran out with Henry Clay under one arm and General Winfield Scott under the other. Queen Victoria was dragged out by the hair of her head. Mary, queen of Scots, was tossed out of the second story window, followed by Hicks, the pirate. Head Carpenter Walker of the theater, who was also a member of Engine No. 38, that lay in Ann street, got so excited that he fell headlong down the main entrance stairway with Napoleon in one hand and Walker, filibuster, in the other. Andy Purten, the old foreman of Engine No. 14, brought out two monkeys, one that gave him a mark that he carries to this day.

The happy family that attracted so much attention in those days were determined not to leave the cage door was thrown wide open and the birds and animals punched with sticks to drive them out, but few would accept their liberty and were burned to death. All of the 100,000 curiosities were destroyed.—Western Fireman.

A Coward.

"Have you had your new house insured, Mrs. Dwight?"

"Yes."

"Your husband is afraid of fire, then?"

"Mercy, yes! He will leave the house any time before he will make one."—Chicago Inter Ocean.

An Agricultural Success.

"How is Dyams getting along with the farm he bought?"

"Pretty well. He tells me he saved money on it last year."

"How?"

"Rented it to another man."—Washington Star.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON VIII, FIRST QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, FEB. 25.

Text of the Lesson, Gen. xxii, 1-13—Memory Verses, 11-13—Golden Text, Heb. xi, 17—Commentary by the Rev. D. M. Stearns.

1. "And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Behold, here I am!" In due time the promised son was given and was named Isaac as God had commanded (xvii, 19). Abraham was now living at Beersheba in the extreme south, and Isaac had grown to boyhood when this proving (R. V.) or trying came upon him. Consider how God proved Israel (Deut. viii, 2, 16). These are the trials that are precious and in which we are by grace to rejoice (Jas. i, 2, 12; I Pet. i, 7). Abraham's "Behold me!" (margin) is the same word used by Samuel and Isaiah (I Sam. iii, 4; Isa. vi, 8).

2. "And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." If Abraham's heart centered in Isaac, then this would crush him, but if in God, who gave Isaac, then he would see God and still live. Heb. xi, 17-19, tells the story. The ability of God is the resting place. Compare Rom. iv, 21. On this mountain the Lord afterward appeared to David, and there Solomon built the temple (II Chron. iii, 1).

3. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass and took two of his young men with him and Isaac, his son, and went unto the place of which God had told him." Here is the prompt obedience of faith. Trials are God's vote of confidence in us and are our opportunities for manifesting Christ. Abraham's life was from one trial to another, lesser ones preparing for greater, and from one separation to another until he was separated from earth to heaven, there to rest and wait for the complete fulfillment of every promise in God's good time.

4. "Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off." It was on this same day that he received him from the dead in a figure, and from the third day of the creation story when the land rose up out of the waters and became covered with grass, herbs and trees—the third day seems to speak of resurrection. Think of Jonah and the Lord Jesus. The third day marriage in Cana (John ii, 1), suggesting another when all cups of water service shall be changed to the wine of the kingdom at the marriage of the Lamb. See also Hos. vi, 2.

5. "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you." See his faith—he and the lad will come again. That is true worship which carries with it an obedience that costs something. David said he would not offer unto the Lord that which cost him nothing (II Sam. xxiv, 24), but David's was nothing as compared with this, and what is this when compared with God giving his only begotten?

6. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac, his son, and he took the fire in his hand and a knife, and they went, both of them together." This father and son were perfectly agreed (verse 8 and Amos iii, 3). Gaze upon this picture until it becomes real to you, and you can enter somewhat into their feelings. Then look forever on that other Son bearing His cross, whom it pleased His Father to bruise for our sakes (Isa. liii, 10).

7. "And Isaac spake unto Abraham, his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" What a sword to the father's heart! What grace to enable him to answer as he does in the next verse! Was ever a father brought so near to the heart of God as this father?

8. "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together." And He has provided the costliest in the universe, even His own Son, of whom John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John i, 29), and whom the beloved John saw in glory "a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. v, 6). When God provides, He does so abundantly. Are you satisfied with His provision?

9. "And they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood." Isaac now understands about the Lamb, but he murmurs not—he is a willing sacrifice. Wondrous son of a wonderful father! But turn to Him whose name is Wonderful and hear Him, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." "I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (Ps. xl, 8; John x, 17, 18).

10. "And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son." The promise centered in Isaac (xvii, 19), and through him was the nation to come, and it was God's part to see it through. It was Abraham's part to obey and let God arrange the difficulties. It was for Abraham to see God and not Isaac—the giver rather than the gift. Until our Isaac is on the altar we cannot know God as fully as we might.

11. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I." Every movement had been watched in heaven, every heart pang and sigh had been noted there. The limit had been reached; it is enough. Why do we not believe that every step and act and word and thought is seen by Him who understandeth even the imaginations of the thoughts?

12. "And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me." The Bible has much to say about the fear of the Lord. Is this, then, the meaning of it? Such unbounded confidence in Him that we fear not to do anything He tells us, sure that He will keep His promises though everything may seem against it. Such an entire surrender to Him of all His gifts to us that we enjoy the Giver in the gift and not the gift apart from Him.

13. "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him, a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." Isaac was spared, but God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all (Rom. viii, 32). Just as truly as the ram died in the stead of Isaac so Jesus died in my stead. He was delivered for my offenses and raised again for my justification (Rom. iv, 25). And the gift of Himself to us must include all else. Therefore my soul should ever sing Jehovah jireh. See margin of verse 14.