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TROUBLE ON BOTH SIDES.

REV. DR. TALMAGE RETURNS TO THE TABERNACLE.

The Combined Shadow of Invalidism and Financial Embarrassment—The World Fattens the Horse It Wants to Drive. Home Troubles—Outside Persecution.

BROOKLYN, Aug. 19.—The Rev. Dr. T. De Witt Talmage's subject today was "Trouble on Both Sides," and his text: "There was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side," I Sam., xiv, 4.

The cruel army of the Philistines must be taken and scattered. There is just one man, accompanied by his bodyguard, to do that thing. Jonathan is the hero of the scene. I know that David cracked the skull of the giant with a few pebbles well slung, and that 300 Gibeonites scattered 10,000 Amalekites by the crash of broken crockery; but here is a more wonderful conflict. Yonder are the Philistines on the rocks. Here is Jonathan with his bodyguard in the valley. On the one side is a rock called Bozez; on the other side is a rock called Seneh. These two were as famous in olden times as in modern times are Plymouth Rock and Gibraltar. They were precipitous, unscalable and sharp. Between these two rocks Jonathan must make his ascent. The day comes for the scaling of the height. Jonathan, on his hands and feet, begins the ascent. With strain, and slip, and bruise, I suppose, but still on and up, first goes Jonathan, and then goes his bodyguard. Bozez on one side, Seneh on the other. After a sharp tug, and push, and clinging, I see the head of Jonathan above the hole in the mountain; and there is a challenge, and a fight, and a supernatural consternation. These two men, Jonathan and his bodyguard, drive back and drive down the Philistines; over the rocks, and open a campaign which demolishes the enemies of Israel. I suppose that the overhanging and overshadowing rocks on either side did not balk or dishearten Jonathan or his bodyguard, but only roused and filled them with enthusiasm as they went up. "There was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side."

My friends, you have been, or are now, some of you, in this crisis of the text. If a man meets one trouble, he can go through with it. He gathers all his energies, concentrates them upon one point, and in the strength of God, or by his own natural determination, goes through it. But the man who has trouble to the right of him and trouble to the left of him is to be pitied. Did either trouble come alone, he might endure it, but two troubles, two disasters, two overshadowing misfortunes, are Bozez and Seneh. God pity him! "There is a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side."

In this crisis of the text is that man whose fortune and health fail him at the same time. Nine-tenths of all our merchants capsize in business before they come to forty-five years of age. There is some collision in commercial circles, and they stop payment. It seems as if every man must put his name on the back of a note before he learns what a fool a man is who risks all his own property on the prospect that some man will tell the truth. It seems as if a man must have a large amount of unsalable goods on his own shelf before he learns how much easier it is to buy than to sell. It seems as if every man must be completely burned out before he learns the importance of always keeping fully insured. It seems as if every man must be wrecked in a financial tempest before he learns to keep things snug in case of a sudden crocodylion. When the calamity does come, it is awful. The man goes home in despair, and he tells his family: "We'll have to go to the poorhouse." He takes a dolorous view of everything. It seems as if he never could rise. But a little time passes, and he says: "Why, I am not so badly off after all; I have my family left."

Before the Lord turned Adam out of Paradise he gave him Eve, so that when he lost Paradise he could stand it. Permit one who has never read but a few novels in all his life, and who has not a great deal of romance in his composition, to say, that if, when a man's fortunes fail, he has a good wife—a good Christian wife—he ought not to be dejected. "Oh," you say, "that only increases the embarrassment, since you have her also to take care of." You are an ingrate, for the woman as often supports the man as the man supports the woman. The man may bring all the dollars, but the woman generally brings the courage and the faith in God.

Well, this man of whom I am speaking looks around, and he finds his family to his left, and the smile to his face, and the courage to his heart. In two years he is quite over it. He makes his financial calamity the first chapter in a new era of prosperity. He met that one trouble while under the grim shadow of the rock Bozez, yet he soon rose, and he ran, like Jonathan, to climb. But how often it is that physical ailment comes with financial embarrassment. When the fortune failed it broke the man's spirit. His nerves were shattered. His brain was stunned. I can show you hundreds of men in New York whose fortune and health failed at the same time. They came prematurely to the staff. Their hand trembled with incipient paralysis. They never saw a well day since the hour when they crled their creditors together for a compromise. If such men are impatient, and peculiar, and irritable, excuse them. They had two troubles either one of which they could have successfully. If, when the health

of the fortune had been retained, it would not have been so bad. The man could have bought the very best medical advice and he could have had the very best attendance, and long lines of carriages would have stopped at the front door to inquire as to his welfare. But poverty on the one side and sickness on the other are Bozez and Seneh, and they interlock their shadows and drop them upon the poor man's way. God help him! "There is a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side."

Now, what is such a man to do? In the name of Almighty God, I will tell him what to do. Do as Jonathan did—climb; climb up into the sunlight of God's favor and consolation. I can go through the churches and show you men who lost fortune and health at the same time, and yet who sing all day and dream of heaven all night. If you have any idea that sound digestion, and steady nerves, and clear eyesight, and good hearing, and plenty of friends are necessary to make a man happy, you have miscalculated. I suppose that these overhanging rocks only made Jonathan scramble the harder and the faster to get up and out into the sunlight; and this combined shadow of invalidism and financial embarrassment has often sent a man up the quicker into the sunlight of God's favor and the noonday of his glorious promises. It is a difficult thing for a man to feel his dependence upon God when he has \$10,000 in the bank, and \$50,000 in government securities, and a block of stores and three ships. "Well," the man says to himself, "it is silly for me to pray, 'Give me this day my daily bread,' when my pantry is full, and the canals from the west are crowded with breadstuffs destined for my storehouses." Oh, my friends, if the combined misfortunes and disasters of life have made you climb up into the arms of a sympathetic and compassionate God, through all sterility you will bless him that in this world "there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side."

Again, that man is in the crisis of the text who has home troubles and outside persecution at the same time. The world treats a man well just as long as it pays best to treat him well. As long as it can manufacture success out of his bone, and brain, and muscle, it favors him. The world fattens the horse it wants to drive. But let a man see it has duty to cross the track of the world, then every lash is full of horns and tusks thrust at him. They will belittle him. They will caricature him. They will call his generosity self aggrandizement, and his piety sanctimoniousness. The very worst persecution will some time come upon him from those who profess to be Christians.

John Milton—great and good John Milton—forgot himself as to pray, in so many words, that his enemies might be eternally thrown down into the darkest and deepest gulf of hell, and be the undermost and most dejected and the lowest of vassals of perdition! And Martin Luther so far forgot himself as to say, in regard to his theological opponents: "Put them in whatever sauce you please, roasted, or fried, or baked, or stewed, or boiled, or hashed, they are nothing but asses!" Ah, my friends, if John Milton or Martin Luther could come down to such scurrility, what may you not expect from less elevated opponents? Now, the world sometimes takes after them; the public opinion takes after them; and the unfortunate man is lied about until all the dictionary of Billingsgate is exhausted on him. You often see a man whom you know to be good, and pure, and honest, set upon by the world, and mauled by whole communities, while vicious men take on a supercilious air in condemnation of him; as though Lord Jeffrey should write an essay on gentleness, or Henry VIII talk about purity, or Herod take to blessing little children.

Now, a certain amount of persecution rouses a man's defiance, stirs his blood for magnificent battle, and makes him fifty times more a man than he would have been without the persecution. So it was with the great reformer when he said: "I will not be put down; I will be heard." And so it was with Millard, the preacher, in the time of Louis XI. When Louis XI sent word to him that unless he stopped preaching in that style he would throw him into the river, he replied: "Tell the king that I will reach heaven sooner by water than he will reach it by fast horses." A certain amount of persecution is a tonic and inspiration, but too much of it, and too long continued, becomes the rock Bozez, throwing a dark shadow over a man's life. What is he to do then? Go home, you say. Good advice, that. That is just the place for a man to go when the world abuses him. Go home. Blessed be God for our quiet and sympathetic homes. But there is many a man who has the reputation of having a home when he has none. Through unthinkingness or precipitation there are many matches made that ought never to have been made. An officiating priest cannot alone unite a couple. The Lord Almighty must proclaim banns. There is many a home in which there is no sympathy and no happiness and no good cheer. The clamor of the battle may not have been heard outside, but God knows, notwithstanding all the playing of the "Wedding March" and all the odor of the orange blossoms and the benediction of the officiating pastor, there has been no marriage.

Sometimes men have awakened to find on one side of them the rock of persecution, and on the other side the rock of domestic infelicity. What shall such an one do? Do as Jonathan did—climb. Get up the heights of God's consolation, from which we may look down in triumph upon outside persecution and home trouble. While good and great John Wesley was being silenced by the magistrates, and having his name written on the board fences of London in dozzers,

at that very time his wife was making him as miserable as she could—acting as though she were possessed of the devil, as I suppose she was; never doing him a kindness until the day she ran away, so that he wrote in his diary these words: "I did not forsake her; I have not dismissed her; I will not recall her." Planting one foot, John Wesley did, upon outside persecution, and the other foot on home trouble, he climbed up into the heights of Christian joy, and after preaching forty thousand sermons, and traveling two hundred and seventy thousand miles, reached the heights of heaven, though in this world he had it hard enough—"a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other."

Again, that woman stands in the crisis of the text who has bereavement and a struggle for a livelihood at the same time. Without mentioning names, I speak from observation. Ah, it is a hard thing for a woman to make an honest living, even when her heart is not troubled, and she has a fair cheek and the magnetism of an exquisite presence. But now the husband, or the father, is dead. The expenses of the obsequies have absorbed all that was left in the savings bank; and wan and wasted with weeping and watching, she goes forth—a grave, a hearse, a coffin, behind her—to contend for her existence and the existence of her children. When I see such a battleship that open I shut my eyes at the ghastliness of the spectacle. Men sit with embroidered slippers and write heartless essays about women's wages; but that question is made up of tears and blood, and there is more freedom than tears. Oh, give women free access to all the realms where she can get a livelihood, from the telegraph office to the pulpit. Let men's wages be cut down before hers are cut down. Men have iron in their souls and can stand it. Make the way free to her of the broken heart. May God put into my hand the cold, bitter cup of privation, and give me nothing but a windowless hut for shelter for many years, rather than that after I am dead there should go out from my home into the pitiless world a woman's arm to fight the Gettysburg, the Ansterlitz, the Waterloo of life, for bread.

And yet how many women there are seated between the rock of bereavement on the one side, and the rock of destitution on the other. Bozez and Seneh interlocking their shadow and dropping them upon her miserable way. "There is a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side." What are such to do? Somehow, let them climb up into the heights of the glorious promise: "Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me." Or get up into the heights of that other glorious promise: "The Lord preserveth the stranger and relieveth the widow and the fatherless." O ye sewing woman on starving wages. O ye widows turned out from the once beautiful home. O ye female teachers, kept on niggardly stipend. O ye despairing woman, seeking in vain for work, wandering along the docks, and thinking to throw yourself into the river last night. O ye women of weak nerves and aching sides, and short breath and broken heart, you need something more than human sympathy; you need the sympathy of God. Climb up into his arms. He knows it all, and he loves you more than father, or mother, or husband ever could or ever did; and instead of sitting down, wringing your hands in despair, you had better begin to climb. There are heights of consolation for you, though now "there is a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side."

Again, that man is in the crisis of the text who has a wasted life on the one side and an unillumined eternity on the other. Though a man may all his life have cultured deliberation and self poise, if he gets into that position all his self possession is gone. There are all the wrong thoughts of his existence, all the wrong deeds, all the wrong words—strata above strata, granitic, ponderous, overshadowing. That rock I call Bozez. On the other side are all the retributions of the future, the thrones of judgment, the eternal ages, angry with his long defiance. That rock I call Seneh. Between these two rocks Lord Byron perished, and Alcibiades perished, and Herod perished, and ten thousand times ten thousand have perished. O! man immortal, man redeemed, man blood-bought, climb up out of those shadows. Climb up by the way of the cross. Have your wasted life forgiven; have your eternal life secured. This morning just take one look to the past and see what it has been, and take one look to the future and see what it threatens to be. You can afford to lose your health, you can afford to lose your property, you can afford to lose your reputation; but you cannot afford to lose your soul. That bright, gleaming, glorious, precious, eternal possession you must carry aloft in the day when the earth burns up and the heavens burst.

You see from my subject that when a man goes into the safety and peace of the Gospel, he does not demean himself. There is nothing in religion that leads to meanness or unmanliness. The Gospel of Jesus Christ only asks you to climb as Jonathan did—climb toward God, climb toward heaven, climb into the sunshine of God's favor. To become a Christian is not to go meekly down; it is to come gloriously up—up into the communion of saints, up into the peace that passeth all understanding, up into the companionship of angels. He lives up; he dies up.

O! then, accept the wholesome invitation which I make this morning to all the people. Come up from between your invalidism and financial embarrassments, come up from between your bereavements and your destitution. Come up from between a wasted life and an unillumined eternity. Like Jonathan, climb with all your might, instead of sitting

(Continued on second page.)