

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

AN INTERESTING DISCOURSE DELIVERED BY THE ABLE DIVINE.

Subject: "Light in Darkness"—A Discourse That Will Be Comforting to the Sick and Helpless—Shut In For an All-Wise Purpose.

TEXT: "The Lord shut him in."—Genesis vii, 16.

Cosmogony has no more interesting chapter than the one which speaks of that catastrophe of the ages, the submergence of our world in time of Noah, the first ship carpenter. Many of the nations who never saw a Bible have a flood story—Egyptian flood story, Grecian flood story, of which Deucalion was the Noah; Hawaiian flood story, New Zealand flood story, Chinese flood story, American Indian flood story—all of which accounts agree in the immersion of the continents under universal rains, and that there was a ship floating, with a select few of the human family and with specimens of zoological and ornithological and reptilian worlds, although I could have wished that these last had been shut out of the ark and drowned.

All of these flood stories represent the ship thus shut as finally stranded on a mountain top. Hugh Miller, in his "Testimony of the Rocks," thinks that all these flood stories were infirm traditions of the Biblical account, and I believe him. The worst thing about that great freshet was that it struck Noah's Great Eastern from above and beneath. The sea broke the chain of shells and crystal and rolled over the land, and the heavens opened their clouds for falling columns of water which roared and thundered on the roof of the great ship for a month and ten days. There was one door to the ship, but there were three parts to the door, one part for each of three stories. The Bible account says nothing about parts of the door belonging to two of the stories, and I do not know on which floor Noah and his family voyaged, but my text tells us that the part of the door of that particular floor on which Noah stayed was closed after he had entered. "The Lord shut him in." So there are many people now in the world who are as thoroughly shut in, some by sickness, some by old age, some by special duties that will not allow them to go forth, some surrounded by deluges of misfortune and trouble, and for them my sympathies are aroused, and from them I often receive messages, and this sermon, which I hope may do good to others, is more especially intended for them. To-day I address the shut in. "The Lord shut him in."

The world has no statistics as to the number of invalids. The physicians know something about it, and the apothecaries and the pastors, but who can tell us the number of blind eyes, and deaf ears, and diseased lungs, and congested livers, and jangled nerves, and neuralgic tempies, and rheumatic feet, or how many took no food this morning because they had no appetite to eat, or digestive organs to assimilate, or have lungs so delicate they cannot go forth when the wind is in the east, or there is a dampness on the ground or pavement because of the frost coming out? It would be easy to count the people who every day go through a street, or the number of passengers carried by a railroad company in a year, or the number of those who cross the ocean in ships, but who can give us the statistics of the great multitudes who are shut in? I call the attention of all such to their superior opportunities of doing good.

Those of us who are well and can see clearly, and hear distinctly, and partake of food of all sorts, and questions of digestion never occur to us, and we can wade the snowbanks and take an equinox in our faces, and endure the thermometer at zero, and every breath of air is a tonic and a stimulus, and sound sleep meets us within five minutes after our head touches the pillow, do not make so much of an impression when we talk about the consolations of religion. The world says right away: "I guess that man mistakes buoyancy of natural spirits for religion. What does he know about it? He has never been tried." But when one goes out and reports to the world that that morning on his way to business he called to see you and found you, after being kept in your room for two months, cheerful and hopeful, and that you had not one word of complaint, and asked all about everybody, and rejoiced in the success of your business friends, although your own business had almost come to a standstill through your absence from store or office or shop, and that you sent your love to all your old friends, and told them that if you did not meet them again in this world you hoped to meet them in dominions seraphic, with a quiet word of advice from you to the man who carried the message about the importance of his not neglecting his own soul, but through Christ seeking something better than this world could give him—why, all the business men in the counting room say: "Good! Now, that is religion!" And the clerks get hold of the story and talk it over, so that the weigher and cooper and hackman standing on the doorstep say: "That is splendid! Now, that is what I call religion!"

No doubt while on that voyage Noah and his three sons and all the four ladies of the antediluvian world often thought of the bright hillsides and the green fields where they had walked and of the homes where they had lived. They had had many years of experiences. Noah was 600 years old at the time of this convulsion of nature. He had seen 600 springtimes, 600 summers, 600 autumns, 600 winters. We are not told how old his wife was at this wreck of earth and sky. The Bible tells the age of a great many men, but only once gives a woman's age. At one time it gives Adam's age as 130 years and Jared's age as 162 years and Enoch's age as 365 years, and all up and down the Bible it gives the age of men, but does not give the age of women. Why? Because, I suppose, a woman's age is none of our business. But all the men and women that tossed in that oriental craft had lived long enough to remember a great many of the mercies and kindnesses of God, and they could not blot out, and I think they had no disposition to blot out, the memory of those brightnesses, though now they were shut in. Neither should the shut in of our time forget the blessings of the past. Have you been blind for ten years? Thank God for the time when you saw as clearly as any of us can see and let the pageant of all the radiant landscapes and illumined skies which you ever looked upon kindle your rapturous gratitude. I do not see Raphael's "Madonna di San Sisto" in the picture gallery of Dresden, nor Rubens' "Descent From the Cross" at Antwerp, nor Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment" on the ceiling of the Vatican nor St. Sophia at Constantinople, nor the Parthenon on the Acropolis, nor the Taj Mahal of India, but shall I not thank God that I have seen them? Is it possible that such midnight darkness shall ever blast my vision that I cannot call them up again?

Again, notice that during that forty days of storm which rocked that ship on that universal ocean of Noah's time the door which shut the captain of the ship inside the craft kept him from many outside perils. How those wrathful seas would like to have got their wet hands on Noah and pulled him out and sunk him!

And do all of you of the great army of the shut in realize that, though you have special temptations where you are now, how much of the outside style of temptation you escape? Do you, the mercantile incarcerated in the sick room, realize that every hour of the day you spend looking out of the window, or gazing at the particular figure on the wall, or listening to the clock's ticks men are being wrecked by the allurements and uncertainties of business life? How many forgeries are committed, how many trust funds are swamped, how many public moneys are being misappropriated, how many bankruptcies suffered! It may be, it is, very uncomfortable for Noah inside the ark, for the apartment is crowded and the air is vitiated by the breathing of so much human and animal life. It is not half as bad for him as though he were outside the ark. There is not an ox, or a camel, or an antelope, or a sheep inside the ark as badly off as the proudest king outside. While you are on the pillow or lounge you will make no bad bargains, you will rush into no rash investments, you will avoid the mistakes that thousands of men as good as you are every day making.

Notice also that there was a limit to the shut in experiences of those ancient mariners. I suppose the forty days of the descending and uprising floods and the 150 days before the passengers could go ashore must have seemed to those eight people in the big boat like a small eternity. "Rain, rain, rain!" said the wife of Noah. "Will it never stop?" For forty mornings they looked out and saw not one patch of blue sky. Floating around amid the peaks of mountains Shem and Ham and Japheth had to hush the fears of their wives lest they should dash against the projecting rocks. But after awhile it cleared off. Sunshine, glorious sunshine! The ascending mists were folded up into clouds, which instead of darkening the sky only ornamented it. As they looked out of the windows these worn passengers clasped their hands and rejoiced that the storm was over, and I think if God could stop such a storm as that He could stop any storm in your lifetime experience. If He can control a vulture in midsky, He can stop a summer bat that flies in at your window. At the right time He will put the rainbow on the cloud and the deluge of your misfortunes will dry up. I preach the doctrine of Hebraic relief and disenchantment. At just the right time the pain will cease, the bondage will drop, the imprisoned will be liberated, the fires will go out, the body and mind and soul will be free. Patience!

Notice also that on the cessation of the deluge the shut ins came out, and they built their houses and cultured their gardens and started a new world on the ruins of the old world that had been drowned out. Though Noah lived 350 years after this worldwide accident and no doubt his fellow passengers survived centuries I warrant they never got over talking about that voyage. Now I have seen Dore's pictures and many other pictures of the entrance into the ark, two and two, of the human family, and the animal creation into that ship which sailed between two worlds—antediluvian world and the post-diluvian world—but I never saw a picture of their coming out; yet their embarkation was not more important than their disembarkation. Many a crew has entered a ship that never landed. Witness the steamer Portland, a few days ago, with 100 souls on board, going down with all its crew and passengers. Witness the line of sunken ships, reaching like a submarine cable of anguish across the ocean depths from America to Europe. If any ship might expect complete wreckage, the one Noah commanded might have expected it. But no; those who embarked disembarked. Over the plank reaching down the side of the ark to the Armenian cliffs on which they had been stranded the procession descended. No other wharf felt so solid or afforded such attractiveness as that height of Ararat when the eight passenger put their feet on it. And no sooner had the last one, the invalid wife of Japheth, been helped down the plank upon the rock than the other apartments of the ship were opened, and such a dash of bird music never filled the air as when the entire orchestra of robin redbreast, and morning-lark, and chaffinch, and mocking bird, and house swallow took wing into the bright sky, while the cattle began to low and the sheep to bleat and the horses to neigh for the pasture, which from the awful submergence had now begun to grow green and aromatic. I tell you plainly nothing interests me more in that tragedy from the first to the last act than the "exit" and the "re-entrance," than the fact that the "shut-ins" became the "got outs." And I now cheer with this story all the inmates of the sickrooms and hospitals, and those prisons where men and women are unjustly undugged, and all the thousands who are bounded on the North and South and East and West by floods, by deluges of misfortune and disaster. The ark of your trouble, if it does not land on some earthly height of vindication and rescue, will land on the heights celestial.

By a strange providence, for which I shall be forever grateful, circumstances with which I think you are all familiar, I have admission through the newspaper press week by week to tens of thousands of God's dear children who cannot enter church on the Sabbath and hear their excellent pastors because of the age of the sufferers, or their illness, or the lameness of foot, or their incapacity to stay in one position an hour and a half, or their poverty, or their troubles of some sort will not let them go out of doors, and to them as much as to those who hear me I preach this sermon, as I preach many of my sermons, the invisible audience always vaster than the visible, some of them tossed on wilder seas than those that tossed the eight members of Noah's family, and instead of forty days of storm and five months of being shut in, as they were, it has been with these invalids five years of "shut in," or ten years of "shut in," or twenty years of "shut in." Oh, comforting God! Help me to comfort them! Give me two hands full of salve for their wounds. When we were 300 miles out at sea, a hurricane struck us, and the lifeboats were dashed from the davits and all the lights in the cabin were put out by the rolling of the ship and the water which through the broken skylights had poured in.

And as I now find many in hurricanes of trouble, though I cannot quiet the storm, I can strike a match to light up the darkness, and I strike a match. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." I strike another match. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." I strike another match. "We have a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and He was in all points tempted like as we are." Are you old? One breath of heaven will make you everlastingly young again. Have you aches and pains? They insure Christ's presence and sympathy through the darkest December nights, which are the longest nights of the year. Are you bereft? Here is a resurrected Christ whose voice is full of resurrectionary power. But do not think that heaven is made up of any indiscriminate population. Some of my friends are so generous in their theology that they would let everybody in without reference to condition or character. Do not think that libertines or blasphem-

ers and rejecters of God and His gospel have "letters of credit" that will draw anything from the bank of heaven. Pirates craft will not be permitted to go up that harbor. If there are those who as to heaven are to be "shut ins," there are those who will belong to the "shut outs." Heaven has twelve gates, and while those twelve gates imply wide open entrance for those who are properly prepared to enter them they imply that there are at least twelve possibilities that many will be shut out, because a gate is of no use unless it can sometimes be closed. Heaven is not an unwashed mob. Show your tickets or you will not get in—tickets that you may get without money and without price tickets with a cross and a crown upon them. Let the unrepentant and the vile and the offscourings of earth enter heaven as they now are, and they would deprecate and demoralize it so that no one of us would want to enter, and those who are there would want to move out. The Bible speaks of the "withouts" as well as the "withins." Revelation xvii, 15, "Without are dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers and idolaters and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Through the converting, pardoning, sanctifying grace of God may we at last be found among the shut ins and not among the shut outs!

A Gigantic Flour Syndicate.

A \$150,000,000 flour trust, which includes a combination of all the leading mills in this country, has been formed.

THE SPARROW AND THE TROUT

Concerning the English Bird and the English Imported Fish.

The English sparrow is one of the most unattractive birds—we should say the most unattractive were it not that pictures of the apteryx and the fodo suggest that it is possible that the avian family may contain specimens more ill-bred and generally disreputable in appearance than he, says the Hartford Courant. Both these, however, we believe are extinct, having perished like the Ichthyosaurus of "innate homeliness, and have been set aside in the scheme of evolution as imperfect and mistaken conceptions." The English sparrow, therefore, remains the most ill-conditioned, disagreeable-looking and unpleasant member of all the birds. It would be unfair to compare him with our song sparrow, for he makes no pretensions to musical skill and frankly admits that his voice is harsh and strident and fit for scoldings, bickerings and insults only, but compare him to our familiar "chippy." The feathers of the English bird—it is not possible, conscientiously, to use the word "plumage" in connection with him—the feathers of the English bird are of a dull color and look dirty and faded, his clothes have never been brushed. His heavy bill, coarse head, hunched-up shoulders, pugnacious tail, with two feathers pulled out and one turned sidewise, suggest that the pronunciation of his name, "sparrrer," is correct, for like a professional prize fighter, he is always quarreling out loud and practicing "the preliminary objurgations." Compare all this to our chippy, whose plumage is neat, but not gaudy, whose form is the refinement of elegance and whose air and manner are the perfection of unobtrusive cheerful courtesy. His outline is the perfection of grace and adjusted proportion. Observe him as he goes systematically through the woodbine on the piazza in search of noxious insects—how thoroughly and neatly he works, neither inviting nor soliciting your observation. There is no "lost motion" about the chippy, but all the movements of the English sparrow are jerky and aimless as of something that has no definite place in the scheme of creation and is working for one. Much the same contrast holds between our brook trout and the imported English trout known as the "brown trout." Of course all trout are beautiful, but the English fish is chunkier and blunter, the curve of the back, which in the American is said by artists to be the most beautiful line in animate nature, is flattened slightly by the increased size of the head. The colors are all toned down and subdued by the slight but all-important degradation which marks the line between the work of the great colorist and the successful imitators. In disposition the English trout is at once sullen and voracious, and is an insatiable cannibal. The American trout, it is true, is not wholly free from blame in this regard, but he does not devour the young of his own race in the wholesale and promiscuous way that marks the feeding of his English cousin. The contrast between the typical caricatures of John Bull and Uncle Sam is not altogether without justification in fact. There is a tendency in this country to produce a slimmer, more active and elegantly formed animal than the English prototype. We have no wish to lessen the international good feeling between the two great branches of the English-speaking people, but we must say firmly that the pugnacious and procreative English sparrow is an ugly looking bird and an unmitigated nuisance, without brains enough to teach him to go south in winter or breast enough to make him worth eating.

But the old colored woman did not even look at her tormentor. She bent and quietly poked up her apples. There was not even an expression of resentment upon her face. She bent here and stooped there, and when she had recovered her last apple she turned upon the astonished man with a pathetic dignity that forced respect, and aid, in tones of simple kindness:

1898 Fall and Winter 1898.

My Fall and Winter Stock of Fine Goods are Now Arriving and you are cordially invited to examine same.

I employ none but skilled workmen and every garment is properly shrunk before it is made therefore I guarantee all work.

IF YOU WANT THE BEST COME TO ME.

A. ZORN,

"THE OLD RELIABLE" MERCHANT TAILOR.

Encourage Competition by Patronizing

Andrew Querbes,

The Independent Wholesale Grocer

Commerce St., Cor. Milam, SHREVEPORT, LA.

Wortman & Adams,

THE TINNERS.

NO. 514 MARSHALL STREET, SHREVEPORT, LA.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS,

Roofing, Guttering and all kinds of Tin, Copper and Sheet Iron Work. All kinds of work at reasonable rates.

VICTORIA LUMBER COMPANY, Limited,

MANUFACTURERS OF

Strictly Long Leaf Yellow Pine Lumber,

Cypress Shingles, Laths, Pickets, Mouldings, Sash, Doors and Blinds.

Build Stairs, Mantels, Counters

And all kinds of special work of hard or soft wood. Telephone No. 247.

S. G. Dreyfus & Co.

Wholesale Dealers In

DRY GOODS, BOOTS, SHOES, HATS.

Corner Spring and Crockett Streets.

Prompt Attention Paid to Country Orders.

HERMAN LOEB,

COTTON BROKER,

ALSO DEALER IN

HIDES, WOOL, BEESWAX, TALLOW, Etc., Etc.

700, 702, 704, and 706 Commerce St., Cor. Crockett St.

I guarantee to the seller the net price obtained in Vicksburg, St. Louis, New Orleans, Galveston and Houston markets. Prompt returns made on receipt of shipments. I solicit the consignment of

Cotton and all Goods in my Line.

Subscribe Now

F. M. HICKS, Pres. S. B. HICKS, V-Pres. W. F. CHASE, Sec.-Treas.

DIRECTORS:

F. M. Hicks, S. B. Hicks, F. H. Gosman, W. F. Chase, T. I. Soovel, J. C. Drew.

The Hicks Company,

(LIMITED.)

Wholesale Grocers and Cotton Factors,

1511 TEXAS ST., SHREVEPORT, LA.

Warehouse corner Spring and Travis and Commerce St.