

BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW

SERMON PREACHED BY THE REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

Although the Popular Divine Has Preached Twenty-four Years in Brooklyn, His Audiences Were Never Larger. "The Burden of Egypt" His Text.

BROOKLYN, Nov. 1.—The Tabernacle was thronged as usual this morning. The vast edifice filled to its utmost capacity with eager listeners shows how the popular preacher retains his power over the people. Although he has been preaching in Brooklyn for more than twenty-four years, his audiences were never so large as now, and although the largest Protestant church in America has been built for him, there never was a time when so many persons were turned away for lack of room. The subject of this morning's sermon was "Bricks Without Straw," a continuation of the series on the confirmation of Holy Scripture which Dr. Talmage found in his journey from the Pyramids to the Acropolis. His text was Isaiah xix, 1, "The burden of Egypt."

"What is all this excitement about in the streets of Cairo, Egypt, this December morning in 1888? Stand back! We hear loud voices and see the crowds of people retreating to the sides of the street. The excitement of others becomes our own excitement. Footmen come in sight. They have a rod in the hand and tasseled cap on head, and their arms and feet are bare. Their garb is black to the waist, except as threaded with gold, and the rest is white. They are clearing the way for an official dignitary in a chariot or carriage. They are swift, and sometimes run thirty or forty miles a stretch in front of an equestrian. Make way! They are the fleetest-footed men on earth, but soon die, for the human frame was not made for such endurance.

I asked all around me who the man in the carriage was, but no one seemed to know. Yet as I fell back with the rest to the wall I said, "This is the old custom found all up and down the Bible, footmen running before the rulers, demanding obeisance, as in Genesis before Joseph's chariot the people were commanded, 'How the knee!' and as I see the swift feet of the men followed by the swift feet of the horses, how those old words of Jeremiah rushed through my mind, 'If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied these, how canst thou contend with horses?'"

HE BEHIVES AS A FOOTMAN. Now, my hearers, in this course of sermons I am only serving you as footman, and clearing the way for your coming into the wonders of Egyptology, a subject that I would have you study far beyond anything that can be said in the brevity of pulpit utterance. Two hundred and eighty-nine times does the Bible refer to Egypt and the Egyptians. No wonder, for Egypt was the mother of nations. Egypt, the mother of Greece; Greece, the mother of Rome; Rome, the mother of England; England, the mother of our own land. According to that, Egypt is our great-grandmother.

On other Sabbaths I left you studying what they must have been in their glory: the Hypostyle hall of Karnak, the architectural miracles at Luxor, the Colonnade of Horemheb, the cemeteries of Memphis, the Sphinx, which with lips of stone speaks loud enough to be heard across the centuries, Heliopolis and Zoan, the conundrum of archeologists. But all that extravagance of palace and temple and monument was the cause of an oppression high as heaven and deep as hell. The weights of those blocks of stone, heavier than any modern machinery could lift, came down upon the Hebrew slaves, and their blood mixed the mortar for the trowels.

We saw again and again on and along the Nile a boss workman roughly smite a subordinate who did not please him. It is no rare occurrence to see long lines of men under heavy burdens passing by taskmasters at short distances, lashing them as they go by into greater speed, and then these workmen, exhausted with the blistering heats of the day, lying down upon the bare ground, suddenly chilled with the night air, crying out in prayer: "Ya, Allah!" "Ya, Allah!" which means O God! O God! But what must have been the olden times cruelty shown by the Egyptians toward their Israelitish slaves is indicated by a picture in the Beni-Hassan tombs, where a man is held down on his face by two men and another holds up the victim's feet while the officials beat the bare back of the victim, every stroke, I have no doubt, fetching the blood.

HOW THEY COULD AFFORD IT. Now you see how the Pharaohs could afford to build such costly works. It cost them nothing for wages—nothing but the tears and blood of the toilers, and tears and blood are a cheap drink for devils. "Bricks without straw" may not suggest so much hardship until you know that the bricks were usually made with "crushed straw," straw crushed by the feet of the oxen in the thrashing, and this crushed straw denied to the workmen, they had to pick up here and there a piece of stubble or gather rushes from the water-side. This story of the Bible is confirmed by the fact that many of the brick walls of Egypt have on the lower layers brick made out of rough straw or rushes from the river bank, the truth of the Book of Exodus thus written in the brick walls discovered by the modern explorers.

That governmental outrage has always been a characteristic of Egyptian rulers. Taxation to the point of starvation was the Egyptian rule in the Bible times as well as it is in our own time. A modern traveler gives the figures concerning the cultivation of seventeen acres, the value of the field of the field stated in piasters: Produce.....1,802 Expenses.....903 1/2 Clear produce.....898 1/2 Taxes.....493

Amount cleared by the farmer.....315 1/2 Or, as my authority declares, seventy per cent. of what the Egyptian farmer makes is paid for taxes to the government. Now, that is not so much taxation as assassination. What think you of that, you who groan under heavy taxes in America? I have heard that in Egypt the working people have a song like this: "They starve us, they starve us, they beat us, they beat us; but there's some one above, there's some one above, who will punish them well, who will punish them well." But seventy per cent. of government tax in Egypt is a mercy as compared to what the Hebrew slaves suffered there in Bible times. The slaves were not allowed to have a dog, and their clothing was of one rag, and their roof a burning sky by day and the stars of heaven by night. You say, "Why did they stand it?" Because they had to stand it. You see along back in the world's twilight there was a famine in Canaan, and old Jacob and his

sons came to Egypt for bread. The old man's boy, Joseph, was prime minister, and Joseph—suppose the father and the brother called him Joe, for it does not make any difference how much a boy is advanced in worldly success, his father and brothers and sisters always call him by the same name that he was called by when two years old—Joseph, by Pharaoh's permission gave to his family, who had just arrived, the richest part of Egypt, the Westchester farms or the Lancaster farms of the ancients. Jacob's descendants rapidly multiplied.

After awhile Egypt took a turn at famine, and those descendants of Jacob, the Israelites, came to a great straits which Joseph had provided, and paid in money for corn. But after awhile the money gave out and then they paid in cattle. After awhile the cattle were all in possession of the government and then the Hebrews bought corn from the government by surrendering themselves as slaves.

BEGINNING OF SLAVERY IN EGYPT. Then began slavery in Egypt. The government owned all the Hebrews. And let modern lunatics who, in America, propose handing over telegraph companies and railroads and other things to be run by government see the folly of letting government get its hand on everything. I would rather trust the people than any government the United States ever had or will have. Wee worth the day when legislators and congresses and administrations get possession of anything more than it is necessary for them to have.

That would be the revival in this land of that old Egyptian tyranny for which God has never had anything but red hot thunderbolts. But through such unwise processes Israel was enslaved in Egypt, and the long line of agonies began all up and down the Nile. Heavier and sharper fell the lash, hungrier and ghastlier grew the workmen, louder and longer went up the prayer, until three millions of the enslaved were crying: "Ya, Allah! Ya, Allah!" O God! O God!

Where was help to come from? Not the throne, Pharaoh sat upon that. Not the army, Pharaoh's officers commanded that. Not surrounding nations, Pharaoh's threat made them all tremble. Not the gods Ammon and Osiris or the goddess Isis, for Pharaoh built their temples out of the groans of this diabolical servitude. But one hot day the princess Thonoris, the daughter of Pharaoh, while in her bathing house on the banks of the Nile, has word brought her that there is a baby afloat on the river in a cradle made out of big leaves.

Of course there is excitement all up and down the banks, for an ordinary baby in an ordinary cradle attracts smiling attention, but an infant in a cradle of papyrus rocking on a river arouses not only admiration, but curiosity. Who made that boat? Who made it water tight with bitumen? Who launched it? Reckless of the crocodiles, who lay basking themselves in the sun, the maidens wade in and snatch up the child, and first one carries him and then another carries him, and all the way up the bank he runs a gantlet of caresses, all Thonoris rushes out of the bathing house and says: "Beautiful founding, I will adopt you as my own. You shall yet wear the Egyptian crown and sit on the Egyptian throne."

Not No! No! He is to be the emancipator of the Hebrews. Tell it in all the brick kilns. Tell it among all those who are writing under the lash, tell it among all the castles of Memphis and Heliopolis and Zoan and Thebes. Before him a sea will part. On a mountain top, alone, this one will receive from the Almighty a law that is to be the foundation of all good law while the world lasts. When the dead, God will come down on Nebo and alone bury him, no man or woman or angel worthy to attend the obsequies.

The child grows up and goes out and studies the horrors of Egyptian oppression and suppresses his indignation, for the right time has not come, although once for a minute he let fly, and when he saw a taskmaster put the whip on the back of a workman who was doing his best, and heard the poor fellow cry and saw the blood spurt, Moses doubled up his fist and struck him across the temple till the cruel villain rolled over in the sand and exanitate and never swung the lash again. Served him right!

GOD WAS ON HIS SIDE. But, Moses, are you going to undertake the impossibilities? You feel that you are going to free the Hebrews from bondage. But where is your army? Where is your navy? Not a sword have you, not a spear, not a chariot, not a horse. Ah! God was on his side, and he has an army of his own. The snowstorms are on God's side; witness the snowstorms in which the French army invasion were buried on their way back from Moscow. The rain is on his side; witness the 18th of June at Waterloo, when the tempest so saturated the road that the attack could not be made on Wellington's forces until eleven o'clock, and he was strong enough to hold out until re-enforcements arrived.

Had that battle been opened at five o'clock in the morning instead of at eleven the destiny of Europe would have been decided the wrong way. The heavy rain decided the waves on God's side. Witness the Armada with one hundred and fifty ships and twenty-six hundred and fifty guns and eight thousand sailors and twenty thousand soldiers sent out by Phillip II of Spain to conquer England.

What became of those men and that shipping? Ask the wind and the waves all along the English and Irish coasts. The men and the ships all wrecked or drowned or scattered. So I expect that Moses will be helped in rescuing the Israelites by a special weapon. To the Egyptians the Nile was a deity. Its waters were then as now very delicious. It was the finest natural beverage of all the earth. We have no such love for the Hudson, and Germans have no such love for the Rhine, and Russians have no such love for the Volga as the Egyptians have love for the Nile.

But one day, when Pharaoh comes down to this river, Moses takes a stick and whips the waters, and they turn into the gore of a slaughter house, and through the sluices and fishponds the incarnadined liquid backs up into the land and the malodor whelms everything from mud hovel to throne room. Then came the frogs, with horrible croak, all over everything. Then this people, cleanly almost to fastidiousness, were infested with insects that belong to the filthy and unkempt, and the air buzzed and buzzed with flies, and then the distemper started cows to bellowing and horses to neighing, and camels to growling, as they rolled over and expired.

And then boils, one of which will put a man in wretchedness, came in clusters from the top of the head to the sole of the foot. And then the clouds dropped hail and lightning. And then locusts came in, swarms of them, worse than the grasshoppers ever were in Kansas, and then darkness dropped for three days, and the people could not see their hand before their face, great surges of midnight covering them. And last of all, on the night of the 18th of April, about eighteen hundred years before Christ, the Destroying Angel sweeps past; and hear it all night long,

the flap! flap! flap! of his wings until Egypt melted on a great hearse, the eldest son of Pharaoh expired that night in the palace and all along the streets of Memphis and Heliopolis, and all up and down the Nile there was a funeral wail that would have rent the fold of the unpenetrable darkness if it had not been impenetrable.

NOW IS ISRAEL'S CHANCE. The Israelitish homes, however, were untouched. But these homes were full of preparation, for now is your chance, O ye wronged Hebrews! Snatch up what ye pieces of food you can and to the desert! Its simooms are better than the bondage you have suffered. Its scorpions will not sting so sharply as the wrongs that have stung you all your lives. Away! The man who was cradled in the basket of papyrus on the Nile will lead you. Up! Up! This is the night of your rescue. They gather together at a signal. Alexander's armies and all the armies of olden time were led by torches on high poles, great crests of fire, and the Lord Almighty kindles a torch not held by human hands but by omnipotent hand.

Not made out of straw or oil, but kindled out of the atmosphere, such a torch as the world never saw before and never will see again. It reached from the earth unto the heaven, a pillar of fire, that pillar practically saying "This way! March this way!" On that supernatural flambeau more than a million refugees set their eyes. Moses and Aaron lead on. Then come the herds and flocks moving on across the sands to what is the beach of waters now called Bah-el-Kulzum, but called in the Bible the Red sea. And when I dipped my hands in its blue waters, the heroics of the Mosaic passage rolled over me.

ON THE RED SEA'S SHORE. After three days' march the Israelitish refugees encamped for the night on the banks of the Red sea. As the shadows begin to fall, in the distance is seen the host of Pharaoh in pursuit. There were six hundred finest war chariots, followed by common chariots, rolling at full speed. And the glittering of the wheels and the course of the chariots came down with the darkness. But the Lord opened the crystal gates of Bah-el-Kulzum and the enslaved Israelites passed into liberty, and then the crystal gates of the sea rolled shut against the Egyptian pursuers.

It was about two o'clock in the morning when the interlocked axle trees of the Egyptian chariots could not move an inch either way. But the Red sea unhitched the horses and unhelmed the warriors, and left the proud host a wreck on the Arabian sands. Then two choruses arose, and Moses led the men in one, and Miriam led the women in the other, and the women beat time with their feet. The record says: "All the women went out after her with tambrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." What a thrilling story of endurance and victory.

The greatest triumph of Handel's genius was shown in his immortal dramatic oratorio, "Israel in Egypt." He had given to the world the oratorio of "Esther and Delilah," and Athaliah, but reserved for his mightiest exertion at the full height of his powers the marshaling of all musical instruments to the description in harmony of the scenes on which we this morning dwell. He gave twenty-seven days to this production, with its twenty-eight choruses, entraining his own time and all aftertime with his "Israel in Egypt."

So the burden of oppression is lifted, but another burden of oppression is made in the deserts. Indeed, Africa is a great continent for deserts, Libyan desert, Sahara desert, deserts here and there and yonder, condemning vast regions of Africa to barrenness, one of the deserts three thousand miles long and a thousand miles wide. But all those deserts will yet be flooded, and so made fertile. De Lesseps says it can be done, and he who planned the Suez canal, which marries the Red sea and the Mediterranean, knows what he is taking about.

The human race is so multiplied that it must have more cultivated land, and the world must abolish its deserts. Eight hundred millions of the human race are now living on lands not blessed with rains, but dependent on irrigation, and we want by irrigation to make room for eight hundred millions more. By irrigation the prophecy will be fulfilled, and "the desert will blossom as the rose." So from Egypt the burden of sin will be lifted.

THE BURDEN OF MOHAMMEDANISM. Another burden of Egypt to be lifted is the burden of Mohammedanism, although there are some good things about that religion. Its disciples must always wash before they pray, and that is five times a day. A commendable grace is cleanliness. Strong drink is positively forbidden by Mohammedanism, and though some may have seen a drunken Mohammedan, I never saw one. It is a religion of sobriety. Then there are the goodly habits of the devotees. When the call for prayers is sounded from the minarets the Mohammedan immediately unrolls the rug on the ground and falls on his knees, and crowds of spectators are to him no embarrassment—proof to many a Christian who omits his prayers if people are looking.

But Mohammedanism, with its polygamy, blights everything it touches. Mohammed, its founder, had four wives, and his followers are not ashamed of the deviations. Mohammedanism puts its curse on all Egypt, and by setting up a sinful Arab higher than the immaculate Christ, is an overwhelming blasphemy. May God help the brave and consecrated missionaries who are spending their lives in combating it.

But before I forget it I must put more emphasis upon the fact that the last outrage that resulted in the liberation of the Hebrews was their being compelled to make bricks without straw. That was the last straw that broke the camel's back. God would allow the despotism against his people to go no farther. Making bricks without straw!

THE OPPRESSION STILL GOES ON. That oppression still goes on. Demand of your wife appropriate wardrobe and bountiful table without providing the means necessary—bricks without straw. Cities demanding in the public school faithful and successful instruction without giving the teachers competent livelihood—bricks without straw. United States government demanding of senators and congressmen at Washington full attendance to the interests of the people, but on compensation which may have done well enough when twenty-five cents went as far as a dollar now, but in those times not sufficient to preserve their influence and respectability—bricks without straw.

In many parts of the land churches dependent on the vigorous sermons and sympathetic service on starvation salary; syncretistic Ciceros on four hundred dollars a year. Bricks without straw. That is one reason why there are so many poor bricks. In all departments, bricks not even or bricks that crumble or bricks that are not bricks at all. Work adequately

paid for is worth more than work not paid for. More straw and then better bricks. But in all departments there are Pharaohs; sometimes Capital a Pharaoh and sometimes Labor a Pharaoh. When Capital prospers, and makes large percentage on its investment, and declines to consider the needs of the operatives, and treats them as so many human machines—their nerves no more than the bands on the factory wheel—then Capital is a Pharaoh. On the other hand, when workmen, not regarding the anxieties and business struggles of the firm employing them, and at a time when the firm are doing their best to meet an important contract and need all hands busy to accomplish it, at such a time to have his employees make a strike and put their employers into extreme perplexity and severe loss—then Labor becomes a Pharaoh of the worst oppression, and must look out for the judgments of God.

THERE ARE STILL PHARAOHS. When in December of 1888, at the Museum at Boulaq, Egypt, I looked at the mummies of the old Pharaohs, the very miscreants who distillated centuries ago, I saw their teeth and hair and finger nails and the flesh drawn tight over their cheek bones, the sarcophagi of these dead monarchs side by side, and I was so fascinated I could only with difficulty get away from the spot, I was not looking upon the last of the Pharaohs. All over the world old merchants playing the Pharaoh over young merchants, old lawyers playing the Pharaoh over young lawyers, old doctors playing the Pharaoh over young doctors, old artists playing the Pharaoh over young artists, old ministers playing the Pharaoh over young ministers.

Let all oppressors whether in homes, in churches, in stores, in offices, in factories, in social life or political life, in private life or public life know that God hates oppressors, and they will all come to grief here or hereafter. Pharaoh thought he did a fine thing, a cunning thing, a decisive thing when for the complete extinction of the Hebrews in Egypt he ordered all the Hebrew boys massacred, but he did not know it so fine a thing when his own first born that night of the destroying angel dropped dead on the mosaic floor at the foot of the porphyry pillar of the palace. Let all the Pharaohs take warning. Some of the worst of them are on a small scale in households, as when a man, because his arm is strong and his voice loud, dominates his poor wife into a domestic slavery.

There are thousands of such cases where the wife is a lifetime serf, her opinion disregarded, her tastes insulted, and her existence a wretchedness, though the world may not know it. It is a Pharaoh that sits at the head of that table, and a Pharaoh that tyrannizes that home. There is no more abhorrent Pharaoh than a domestic Pharaoh. There are thousands of women to whom death is passage from Egypt to Canaan, because they get rid of a cruel taskmaster. What an accursed monster is that man who keeps his wife in dread about family expenses, and must be cautious how she introduces an article of millinery or womanly wardrobe without humiliating consultation or apology.

Who is that man acting so? For six months—in order to win that woman's heart—sent her every few days a bouquet wound with white ribbon and an endearing couplet, and took her to concerts and theaters, and helped her into carriages as though she were a princess, and ran across the room to pick up her pocket handkerchief with the speed of an antelope, and on the marriage day promised all that the liturgy required, saying "I will" with an emphasis that excited the admiration of all spectators. But now he begrudges her two cents for a postage stamp, and wonders why she rides across Brooklyn bridge when the foot passage costs nothing.

He thinks now she is awful plain, and he acts like the devil, while he thunders out: "Where did you get that new hat from? That's where my money goes. Where's my breakfast? Do you call that coffee? Didn't I tell you to sew on that button? Want to see your mother, do you? You are always going to see your mother! What are you whimpering about! Hurry up now and get my slippers! Where's the newspaper?" The tone, the look, the impatience—the cruelty of a Pharaoh. That is what gives so many women a cowed down look. Pharaoh! you had better take your iron heel off that woman's neck or God will help you remove your heel.

She says nothing. For the sake of avoiding scandal she keeps silent, but her tears and wrongs have gone into a record that you will have to meet as certainly as Pharaoh had to meet hail and lightning and darkness and the death angel. God never yet gave to any man the right to tyrannize a woman, and what a sneek you are to take advantage of the marriage vow, and because she cannot help herself, and under the shelter of your own home out-Pharaoh the Egyptian oppressor. There is something awfully wrong in a household where the woman is not considered of as much importance as the man. No room in this world for more Pharaohs!

SIN HAS BEEN OUR TASKMASTER. But it rolls over on me with great power the thought that we have all been slaves down in Egypt, and sin has been our taskmaster, and again and again we have felt its lash. But Christ has been our Moses to lead us out of bondage, and we are forever free. The Red sea of a Saviour's sacrifice rolls deep and wide between us and our aforesaid bondage, and though there may be deserts yet for us to cross, we are on the way to the Promised Land. Thanks be unto God for this emancipating Gospel! Come up out of Egypt all ye who are yet enslaved. What Christ did for us he will do for you. "Exodus!" is the word. Exodus! Instead of the brick kilns of Egypt come into the emerald vineyards of God, where one cluster of grapes is bigger than the one that the spies brought to the Israelites by the Brook Eshcol, though that cluster was so large that it was borne "between two upon a staff."

Welcome all by sin oppressed, Welcome to his sacred rest; Nothing brought him from above, Nothing but redeeming love.

A Churchgoing Grasshopper. Some little amusement was created in one of the leading Presbyterian churches of this city by the antics of a grasshopper, which rode triumphantly into church perched upon the shoulder of a staid and worthy member. As the gentleman sat down the insect, to avoid being crushed, hopped up nearer his coat collar, and at once engaged the attention of two little girls who were sitting in the pew behind, and who found the hopper infinitely more lively than anything from the pulpit. Several quiet but ineffectual attempts to catch the little fellow from the country resulted in making him skip twice, once into the lace at the back of the neck of a spinner, who would have shrieked had she known it, and once somewhere out of sight. His reappearance was the signal for a hearty and irrepressible giggle on the part of the little girls, for he being to the possessors of the elder, who took up the collection, riding the whole length of the church twice, and then sought safety in the lowers grouped about the pulpit.—Roche's Herald.

NEW STOCK OF FURNITURE

—VAN AND OHIO— Steel Ranges BEST IN THE WORLD.



Art Garland Base Burners. Hot Air Furnaces.

RUDGE & MORRIS, 1122 N STREET.

Nebraska's Leading Hotel. THE MURRAY Cor. 13th and Harney Sts., OMAHA, IOWA. STRICTLY FIRST-CLASS All Modern Improvements and Conveniences B. SILLOWAY, Proprietor, IRA HIGBY, Principal Clerk

ACORN HEATERS ACORN RANGES Dangler Gas Heating and Cooking STOVES. W. B. WOLCOTT, Telephone 273, 230 South Eleventh St.

G. A. RAYMER & CO. COAL BEST GRADE OF HARD COAL. Telephone 390. Office 1134 O Street.

THE OLD RELIABLE CARPET HOUSE Is now ready to show the Latest Fall Styles in CARPETINGS From the Best Manufacturers' Standard Makes and Fine Work Guaranteed. A. M. DAVIS & SON. Phone 219, 1112 O Street.