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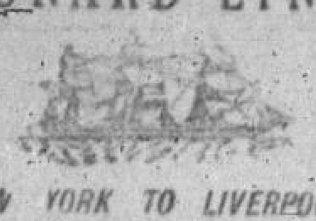

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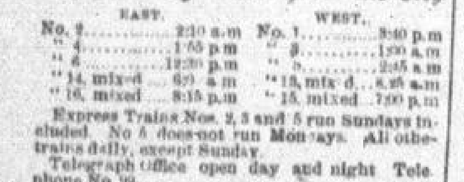

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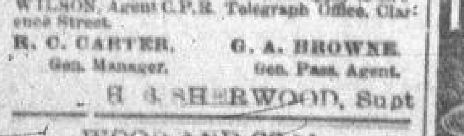

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THE MOTHER OF ALL.

DR. TALMAGE PRESENTS A NOVEL VIEW OF THE DIVINE LOVE.

The Old Standards in Grammar Have Led Too Many to Think of God as Purely Masculine—Divine Attributes Are Feminine Also and Motherly.

BROOKLYN, Dec. 11.—Rev. Dr. Talmage to-day, in selecting a subject for his sermon, chose an aspect of the divine character which is seldom considered. To an unusually large audience he discoursed on God as "The Mother of All," the text being taken from Isaiah lxvi, 13, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

The Bible is a warm letter of affection from a parent to a child, and yet there are many who see chiefly the severer passages. As there may be fifty or sixty nights of gentle dew in one summer that will not cause as much remark as one hailstorm of half an hour, so there are those who are more struck by those passages of the Bible that announce the indignation of God than by those who announce his affection. There may come to a household twenty or fifty letters of affection during the year, and they will not make as much excitement in that home as one sheriff's writ, and so there are people who are more attentive to those passages which announce the judgments of God than to those which announce his mercy and his favor.

God is a lion, John says in the book of Revelations. God is a breaker, Micah announces in his prophecy. God is a rock. God is a king. But hear also that God is love. A father and his child are walking out in the fields on a summer's day, and there comes up a thunderstorm, and there is a flash of lightning that startles the child, and the father says, "My dear, that is God's eye." There comes a peal of thunder, and the father says, "My dear, that is God's voice." But the clouds go off the sky, and the storm is gone, and light floods the heavens and floods the landscape; and the father forgets to say, "That is God's smile."

The text of this morning bends with great gentleness and love over all who are prostrate in sin and trouble. It lights up with compassion. It melts with tenderness. It breathes upon us the hush of an eternal lullaby, for it announces that God is our Mother. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I remark, in the first place, that God has a mother's simplicity of instruction. A father does not know how to teach a child the A B C. Men are not skillful in the primary department, but a mother has so much patience that she will tell a child for the hundredth time the difference between F and G and between I and J. Sometimes it is by blocks; sometimes by the worsted work; sometimes by the slate; sometimes by the book. She thus teaches the child and has no awkwardness of condescension in so doing. So God, our Mother, stoops down to our infantile minds.

Though we are told a thing a thousand times and we do not understand it, our heavenly mother goes on, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. God has been teaching some of us thirty years and some of us sixty years one word of one syllable, and we do not know it yet—faith, faith! When we come to that word we stumble, we halt, we lose our place, we pronounce it wrong. Still God's patience is not exhausted. God, our Mother, puts us in the school of prosperity, and the letters are in sunshine, and we cannot spell them. God puts us in the school of adversity, and the letters are black, and we cannot spell them. If God were merely a king he would punish us; if he were simply a father he would whip us; but God is a mother, and so we are borne with and helped all the way through.

A mother teaches her child chiefly by pictures. If she wants to set forth to her child the hideousness of a quarrelsome spirit, instead of giving a lecture upon that subject she turns over a leaf and shows the child two boys in a wrangle, and says, "Does not that look horrible?" If she wants to teach her child the awfulness of war she turns over the picture book and shows the war charger, the headless trunks of butchered men, the wild, bloodshot eye of battle rolling under lids of flame, and she says, "That is war!" The child understands it.

In a great many books the best parts are the pictures. The style may be insipid, the type poor, but a picture always attracts a child's attention. Now God, our Mother, teaches us almost everything by pictures. Is the divine goodness to be set forth? How does God, our Mother, teach us? By an autumnal picture. The barns are full. The wheat stacks are rounded. The cattle are chewing the cud lazily in the sun. The orchards are dropping the ripe pippins into the lap of the farmer. The natural world that has been busy all summer seems now to be resting in great abundance. We look at the picture and say, "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness."

Our family comes around the breakfast table. It has been a very cold night, but the children are all bright because they slept under thick coverlets, and they are now in the warm blast of the open register, and their appetites make luxuries out of the plainest fare, and we look at the picture and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

God wishes to set forth the fact that in the judgment the good will be divided from the wicked. How is it done? By a picture, by a parable—a fishing scene. A group of hardy men, long bearded, geared for standing to the waist in water, sleeves rolled up. Long oar, sun gilt; boat battered as though it had been a playmate of the storm. A full net thumping about with the fish, which have just discovered their captivity, the worthless mossbunkers and the useful flounders all in the same net. The fisherman puts his hand down amid the squirming fins, takes out the mossbunkers and throws them into the water and gathers the good fish into the pail. So, says Christ, it shall be at the end of the world. The bad he will cast away, and the good he will keep. Another picture.

God, our Mother, wanted to set forth the duty of neighborly love, and it is done by a picture. A heap of wounds on the road to Jericho. A traveler has been fighting a robber. The robber stabbed him and knocked him down. Two ministers came along. They look at the poor fellow, but do not help him. A traveler comes along—a Samaritan. He says "Whoa!" to the beast he is riding and dismounts. He examines the wounds; he takes out some wine, and with it washes the wounds, and then he takes some oil and puts that in to make the wounds stop smarting, and then he tears off a piece of his own garment for a bandage. Then he helps the wounded man upon the beast and walks by the side, holding him on until they come to a tavern. He says to the landlord, "Here is money to pay the man's board for two days; take care of him; if it costs anything more charge it to me, and I will pay it." Picture—"The Good Samaritan, or Who Is Your Neighbor?"

Does God, our Mother, want to set forth what a foolish thing it is to go away from the right, and how glad divine mercy is to take back the wanderer? How is it done? By a picture. A good father. Large farm with fat sheep and oxen. Fine house with exquisite wardrobe. Discontented boy. Goes away. Sharpers fleece him. Feeds hogs. Gets homesick. Starts back. Sees an old man running. It is father! The hand, torn of the husks, gets a ring. The foot, inflamed and bleeding, gets a sandal. The bare shoulder, showing through the tatters, gets a robe. The stomach, gnawing itself with hunger, gets a full platter smoking with meat. The father cannot eat for looking at the returned adventurer. Tears running down the face until they come to a smile—the night dew melting into the morning.

No work on the farm that day, for when a bad boy repents and comes back promising to do better, God knows that is enough for one day. "And they began to be merry." Picture—"Prodigal Son Returned from the Wilderness." So God, our Mother, teaches us everything by pictures. The sinner is a lost sheep. Jesus is the bridegroom. The useless man a barren fig tree. The Gospel is a great supper. Satan, a sower of tares. Truth, a mustard seed. That which we would not have understood in the abstract statement God, our Mother, presents to us in this Bible album of pictures. God engraved. Is not the divine Maternity ever thus teaching us?

I remark again that God has a mother's favoritism. A father sometimes shows a sort of favoritism. Here is a boy—strong, well, of high forehead and quick intellect. The father says, "I will take that boy into my firm yet," or, "I will give him the very best possible education." There are instances where for the culture of the one boy all the others have been robbed. A sad favoritism, but that is not the mother's favorite. I will tell you her favorite.

There is a child who at two years of age had a fall. He has never got over it. The scarlet fever muffled his hearing. He is not what he once was. The child has caused the mother more anxious nights than all the other children. If he coughs in the night she springs out of a sound sleep and goes to him. The last thing she does when going out of the house is to give a charge in regard to him. The first thing on coming in is to ask in regard to him.

Why, the children of the family all know that he is the favorite, and say, "Mother, you let him do just as he pleases and you give him a great many things which you do not give us. He is your favorite." The mother smiles; she knows it is so. So he ought to be, for if there is any one in the world that needs sympathy more than another it is an invalid child, weary on the first mile of life's journey, carrying an aching head, a weak side, an irritated lung. So the mother ought to make him a favorite.

God, our Mother, has favorites. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth"—that is, one whom he especially loves he chasteneth. God loves us all, but is there one weak and sick and sore and wounded and suffering and faint? That is the one who lies nearest and more perpetually on the great loving heart of God. Why, it never coughs but our Mother—God—hears it. It never stirs a weary limb in the bed but our Mother—God—knows of it. There is no such a watcher as God. The best nurse may be overborn by fatigue and fall asleep in the chair; but God, our Mother, after being up a year of nights with a suffering child, never slumbers nor sleeps.

"Oh," says one, "I cannot understand all that about affliction!" A refiner of silver once explained it to a Christian lady. "I put the silver in the fire, and I keep refining it and trying it till I can see my face in it, and then I take it out." Just so it is that God keeps his dear children in the furnace till the divine image may be seen in them; then they are taken out of the fire. "Well," says some one, "if that is the way that God treats his favorites, I do not want to be a favorite."

When I see God especially busy in troubling and trying a Christian I know that out of that Christian's character there is to come some especial good. A quarryman goes down into the excavation, and with strong handed machinery bores into the rock. The rock says, "What do you do that for?" He puts powder in, he lights a fuse. There is a thundering crash. The rock says, "Why, the whole mountain is going to pieces." The crowbar is plunged; the rock is dragged out. After awhile it is taken into the artist's studio. It says, "Well, now I have got to a good, warm, comfortable place at last."

But the sculptor takes the chisel and mallet, and he digs for the eyes, and he cuts for the mouth, and he bores for the ear, and he rubs it with sandpaper until the rock says, "When will this torture be ended?" A sheet is thrown over it. It stands in darkness. After awhile it is taken out. The covering is removed. It stands in the sunlight, in the presence of ten thousand applauding people, as they greet the statue of the poet, or the prince, or the conqueror.

"Ah," says the stone, "now I understand it. I am a great deal better off now standing as a statue of a conqueror that I would have been down in the quarry." So God finds a man down in the quarry of ignorance and sin. How to get him up? He must be bored and blasted and chiseled and scoured and stand sometimes in the darkness.

But after awhile the mantle of affliction will fall off, and his soul will be greeted by the one hundred and forty-four thousand and the thousands of thousands as more than conqueror. Oh, my friends, God, our Mother, is just as kind in our afflictions as in our prosperities. God never touches us but for our good. If a field clean and cultured is better off than a barren field, and if a stone that has become a statue is better off than the marble in the quarry, then that soul that God chastens may be his favorite.

Oh, the rocking of the soul is not the rocking of the earthquake, but the rocking of God's cradle. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." I have been told that the pearl in an oyster is merely the result of a wound or a sickness inflicted upon it, and I do not know but that the brightest gems of heaven will be found to have been the wounds of earth kindled into the jeweled brightness of eternal glory.

I remark that God has a mother's capacity for attending to little hurts. The father is shocked at the broken bone of the child, or at the sickness that sets the cradle on fire with fever, but it takes the mother to sympathize with all the little ailments and little bruises of the child. If the child have a splinter in its hand it wants the mother to take it out, and not the father. The father says, "Oh, that is nothing," but the mother knows it is something, and that a little hurt sometimes is very great. So with God, our mother, all our annoyances are important enough to look at and sympathize with.

Nothing with God is something. There are no ciphers in God's arithmetic. And if we were only good enough of sight we could see as much through a microscope as through a telescope. Those things that may be impalpable and infinitesimal to us may be pronounced and infinite to God. A mathematical point is defined as having no parts, no magnitude. It is so small you cannot imagine it, and yet a mathematical point may be a starting point for a great eternity. God's surveyors carry a very long chain. A scale must be very delicate that can weigh a grain, but God's scale is so delicate that he can weigh with it that which is so small that a grain is a million times heavier.

When John Kitto, a poor boy on a back street of Plymouth, cut his foot with a piece of glass, God bound it up so successfully that he became the great Christian geographer and a commentator known among all nations. So every wound of the soul, however insignificant, God is willing to bind up. As at the first cry of the child the mother rushes to kiss the wound, so God, our Mother, takes the smallest wound of the heart and presses it to the lips of divine sympathy. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I remark further that God has a mother's patience for the erring. If one does wrong, first his associates in life cast him off; if he goes on in the wrong way, his business partner casts him off; if he goes on, his best friends cast him off—his father casts him off. But after all others have cast him off, where does he go? Who holds no grudge and forgives the last time as well as the first? Who sits by the murderer's counsel all through the long trial? Who tarries the longest at the windows of a culprit's cell? Who, when all others think ill of a man, keeps on thinking well of him? It is his mother. God bless her gray hairs if she be still alive, and bless her grave if she be gone! And bless the rocking chair in which she used to sit, and bless the cradle that she used to rock, and bless the Bible she used to read!

So God, our Mother, has patience for all the erring. After everybody else has cast a man off God, our Mother, comes to the rescue. God leaps to take charge of a bad case. After all the other doctors have got through, the heavenly Physician comes in. Human sympathy at such a time does not amount to much. Even the sympathy of the church, I am sorry to say, often does not amount to much.

I have seen the most harsh and bitter treatment on the part of those who professed faith in Christ toward those who were wavering and erring. They tried on the wanderer sarcasm and billingsgate and caricature, and they tried tittle tattle. There was one thing they did not try, and that was forgiveness. A soldier in England was brought by a sergeant to the colonel. "What," says the colonel, "bring the man here again? We have tried everything with him." "Oh, no," says the sergeant, "there is one thing you have not tried. I would like you to try that." "What is that?" said the colonel. Said the man, "Forgiveness."

The case had not gone so far but that it might take that turn, and so the colonel said: "Well, young man, you have done so and so. What is your excuse?" "I have no excuse, but I am very sorry," said the man. "We have made up our minds to forgive you," said the colonel. The tears started. He had never been accosted in that way before. His life was reformed, and that was the starting point for a positively Christian life. O church of God, quit your sarcasm when a man falls! Quit your irony, quit your tittle tattle and try forgiveness. God, your Mother, tries it all the time. A man's sin may be like a continent, but God's forgiveness is like the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, bounding it on both sides.

The Bible often talks about God's hand. I wonder how it looks. You remember distinctly how your mother's hand looked, though thirty years ago it withered away. It was different from your father's hand. When you were to be chastised you had rather have mother punish you than father. It did not hurt so much. And father's hand was different from mother's, partly because it had outdoor toil, and partly because God intended it to be different. The knuckles were more firmly set, and the palm was calloused.

But mother's hand was more delicate. There were blue veins running through the back of it. Though the fingers, some of them, were picked with a needle, the palm of it was soft. Oh, it was very soft! Was there ever any poultice like that to take pain out of a wound? So God's hand is a mother's hand. What it touches it heals. If it smite you it does not hurt as if it were another hand. Oh, you poor wandering soul in sin, it is not a bailiff's hand that seizes you to-day! It is not a hard hand. It is not an unsympathetic hand. It is not a cold hand. It is not an enemy's hand. No. It is a gentle hand, a loving hand, a sympathetic hand, a soft hand, a mother's hand. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I want to say finally that God has a mother's way of putting a child to sleep. You know there is no cradle song like a mother's. After the excitement of the evening it is almost impossible to get the child to sleep. If the rocking chair stop a moment the eyes are wide open, but the mother's patience and the mother's soothing manner keep on until after awhile the angel of slumber puts his wing over the pillow. Well, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the time will come when we will be wanting to be put to sleep. The day of our life will be done, and the shadows of the night of death will be gathering around us. Then we want God to soothe us, to hush us to sleep.

Let the music at our going not be the dirge of the organ, or the knell of the church tower, or the drumming of a "dead march," but let it be the hush of a mother's lullaby. Oh, the cradle of the grave will be soft with the pillow of all the promises! When we are being rocked into that last slumber I want this to be the cradle song, "As one whom a mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

Asleep in Jesus! Far from thee
Thy kindred and their graves may be;
But thine is still a blessed sleep,
From which none ever wake to weep.

A Scotchman was dying. His daughter Nellie sat by the bedside. It was Sunday evening, and the bell of the church was ringing, calling the people to church. The good old man, in his dying dream, thought that he was on the way to church, as he used to be when he went in the sleigh across the river, and as the evening bell struck up in his dying dream he thought it was the call to church.

He said, "Hark, children, the bells are ringing; we shall be late; we must make the mare step out quick!" He shivered and then said: "Pull the buffalo robe up closer, my lass! It is cold crossing the river, but we will soon be there, Nellie, we will soon be there!" And he smiled and said, "Just there now." No wonder he smiled. The good old man had got to church. Not the old country church, but the temple in the skies. Just across the river. How comfortably did God hush that old man to sleep! As one whom his mother comforteth, so God comforted him.

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Sick Headache and relieve all the troubles incident to a bilious state of the system, such as Dizziness, Nausea, Drowsiness, Distress after eating, Pain in the Side, &c. While their most remarkable success has been shown in curing

SICK

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HEAD

Ache they would be almost priceless to those who suffer from this distressing complaint; but fortunately their goodness does not end here, and those who once try them will find these little pills valuable in so many ways that they will not be willing to do without them. But after all sick head

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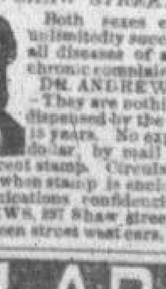

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SOMETHING TO SMILE AT

THE QUIPS AND PUNS OF THE NEWSPAPER HUMORISTS.

A Ticklish Question of Law—The Picture and the Text Will Puzzle You—The Latest and the Best Jokes of the Paragraphers.

A Question of Law.—"Is the owner of this dog liable for theft? or is the owner of this crab liable for assault and battery?"

—The scarecrow has its uses, though it doesn't aid the caws any.—Elmira Gazette.

A chopping sea doesn't seem to make much impression on the sea-board.—Boston Courier.

A tramp is always willing to receive a cold shoulder, but he prefers a porterhouse.—Binghamton Republican.

It takes two bells to start a street car, but one belle will stop it anywhere but on a crossing.—Boston Transcript.

Not Guilty.—"Johnny Jinks, did you throw that spitball?" Johnny—"No, ma'am, I ain't got mine chewed yet."—Good News.

"I'm very popular," said the chrysanthemum. "Nearly every man that sees me wants to buttonhole me."—Washington Star.

Customer.—By what do you regulate the size of your five-cent loaves? Baker—The kicks of my customers.—N. Y. Herald.

Jagson says that "never trust a man till you know him" is good advice, but you never know some men till you trust them.—Elmira Gazette.

"She is very distant in her manner." "Distant! Why, her disposition is so freezing that she is certainly taking cold from it."—Yarmouth Item.

Bertie—Why did you buy this picture? It is only a flight of sparrows. Algie—Why, they are very English, don't you know, deah boy.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Extract from a sentimental young lady's letter: "Last night I sat in a gondola on Venice's Grand Canal drinking it all in, and life never seemed so full before."—Scraps.

Edna—What do you suppose makes Tom write such awfully gushing letters? Kate—Oh, I suppose he uses a fountain pen.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

"Did you ever find a woman's letter in your husband's pocket?" "Yes, I found one of my own there the other day that I gave him to mail a week ago."—New York Press.

"Presbyterian, are you, Effie?" said the elderly relative. "United Presbyterian?" "N-not yet, auntie," whispered the blushing Effie, "but I'm engaged."—Chicago Tribune.

At Southsea.—She—Oh, James, how grand the sea is! How wonderful! I do so like to hear the roar of the ocean. He—So do I, Elizabeth; please keep quiet.—Modern Society.

Lady (to tramp)—How old are you, my man? Tramp—I don't know, ma'am; you see, I was so young the first few years of my life I couldn't count, so I lost track.—Harvard Lampoon.

"Ah! there goes Chris and his mother." "So I see." "What a popular flower they would make!" "Why so?" "Because they might be described as Chris-an'-the-mum. See?"—Chicago Mail.

"These are hard times!" sighed the young collector of bills. "Every place I went to-day I was requested to call again but one, and that was when I dropped in to see my girl."—Texas Siftings.

Little boy—Don't Quakers ever fight? Mamma—No, my dear. Little boy (after reflection)—I should think it would be awful hard for a real big Quaker to be a Quaker.—Good News.

Miss Younge—Why do you not marry, Colonel? Col. Oldboy—Oh, there are lots of good fish in the sea. Miss Y.—But don't you think the bait is a little stale?—Columbia Spectator.

His Parting Shot.—He—But couldn't you learn to love me, Ida? She—I don't think I could, George. He (reaching for his hat)—It is as I feared! You are too old to learn.—Chicago Tribune.

Not All Alike.—First boy—Do all office holders get big salaries? Second boy—No. Some hold positions of honor. "Don't they get anything?" "Only what they steal."—Good News.

The Reverse of Romance.—Publisher—Is your novel realistic? Author—It is. The hero and the heroine get married in the first chapter and are unhappy ever afterward.—New York World.

Farm Fagots.

Short legged fowls are thought by some to fatten easier than long legged.

Use a thermometer when you churn. Always know what you are doing.

Isn't there too much talk for the amount of cider turned out in these days?

The profit in feeding decreases as the weight increases. The maintenance ration grows larger.

Feeding economically does not mean stinting the ration, but just what will be eaten without waste.

We are told that the bull needs exercise, but the cow does not. Are they not of like flesh and constitution?

Farmers need to come up on a higher political level. This means a better understanding of governmental problems.

It is as much your duty to feed your plants as your pigs. The pigs can run around and to some extent help themselves, but the plants cannot.—Mirror and Farmer.

A Unique Experiment.

An experiment of Marcy's proves that mastication will accelerate the flow of blood through the carotid artery and serves to show the wisdom of an editor who used to eat figs while writing a leading article, and even of those who indulge in the practice so disagreeable to their neighbors of chewing tobacco.

Jacky's Triumph.

Jacky—We had a thirteen pound turkey at our house yesterday. Jim—Oh, that's nawthin'. We had one that weighed fifteen pounds. Jacky—I don't care if your old turkey was bigger. I'll bet you didn't have no doctor come to see you twice in the night, the way I did.—Boston Post.

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