

SUNDAY'S SERMON.

ONE OF REV. DR. TALMAGE'S STERLING DISCOURSES.

Subject: "The Fire-Worshippers."

Text: "There came wise men from the East to Jerusalem."—Matthew II, 1.

These wise men were the Parsees or the so-called fire-worshippers, and I found their descendants in India last October. Their heathenism is more to be regretted than their other religions, and has more alleviations, and while in this round the world series I have already shown you the worst forms of heathenism to-day I show you the least offensive.

The prophet of the Parsees was Zoroaster, of Persia. He was not and philosopher and reformer as well as religiousist. His disciples thrived at first in Persia, but under Mohammedan persecution they retreated to India, where I met them, and in addition to what I saw of them at their headquarters in Bombay, India, I had two weeks of association with one of the most learned and genial of their people on shipboard from Bombay to Brindisi.

The Bible of the Parsees, or fire-worshippers, as they are inaccurately called, is the Gesta Avesta, a collected and revised series of books that ever came into my hands. There were originally twenty-two volumes, but Alexander the Great, in a drunken fit, set fire to a palace which contained some of them, and they were lost and forgotten. But there are now five volumes left than most people would have patience to read. There are many things in the religion of the Parsees that suggest Christianity, and some of its doctrines are in accord with our own religion. Zoroaster, who lived about 600 years before Christ, was a good man, suffered persecution for his faith and was assassinated while worshipping at an altar. He announced the theory, "He is best who is pure of heart, and that there are two great spirits in the world, Ormuzd, the good spirit, and Ahriman, the bad spirit, and that all who do right are under the influence of Ormuzd, and all who do wrong are under Ahriman; that the Parsee must be born on the ground, die on the ground, and be buried on the ground; that the dying man must have prayers said over him and a sacred juice given him to drink; that the good at their deaths go into eternal light and the bad into eternal darkness; that, having passed out of this life, the souls of the good dwell in paradisaic states, enjoying more than all the nations of earth put together could enjoy or in a paradisaic state, suffering more than all the nations put together could possibly suffer, but that three days after departing for its final destiny, and that there will be a resurrection of the body. They are more careful than any other people about their abutions, and they wash and wash and wash. They pay great attention to physical health, and it is a rare thing to see a sick Parsee. They do not smoke tobacco, for they consider that a misuse of fire.

At the close of mortal life the soul appears at the bridge Chinvat, where an angel presides and questions the soul about the things it has done in this life. If the soul is good, nothing, however, is more intense in the Parsee faith than the theory that the dead body is impure. A devil is supposed to take possession of the dead body. All who touch it are unclean, and hence the strange idea of the Parsees that they must give three or four questions and answers from one of the Parsee catechisms:

Question—Who is the most fortunate man in the world?

Answer—He who is the most innocent.

Q.—Who is the most innocent man in the world?

A.—He who walks in the path of God and shuns that of the devil.

Q.—Which is the path of God and which that of the devil?

A.—Virtue is the path of God and vice that of the devil.

Q.—What constitutes virtue and what vice?

A.—Good thoughts, good words and good deeds constitute virtue, and evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds constitute vice.

Q.—What constitutes good thoughts, good words and good deeds?

A.—Honesty, charity and truthfulness constitute the former, and dishonesty, want of charity and falsehood constitute the latter.

And now the Parsee asks you these questions, and I tell you of two who answered them in a short time in Bombay, India. It was an afternoon of contrast.

We started for Malabar hill, on which the wealthy Parsees have their embowered homes and the Parsees their strange temple of the gods. As we rode up the hill, and as the sun was descending the sky, and a disciple of Zoroaster, a Parsee, was in lowly posture and with reverential gaze looking into the sky. He would have been said to have been worshipping the sun, as all Parsees are said to worship the fire. But the intelligent Parsee does not worship the fire. He looks upon the sun as the emblem of the warmth and light of the Creator. Looking at a haze of light, whether on earth, on mountains or in the sky, he can see the glory of God—at least so the Parsee tells me. Indeed they are the pleasantest heaven I have met. They treat their wives as equals, while the Hindus and Buddhists treat them as cattle, although the Parsee and sheep are a better off than most of the women of India.

This Parsee on the roadside on our way to Malabar hill was the only one of that religion I had ever seen engaged in worship.

Who knows but that beyond the light of the sun on which we gaze he may catch glimpses of the God who is light and in whom there is no darkness at all?

We passed on up through gates into the garden that surrounds the place where the Parsees dispose of their dead. This garden was given by Jamshidji Jijabai and is beautiful with flowers of all hues and all foliage of all styles of vein and notch and stature. There is on all sides great opulence of fern and of fern. The garden is 100 feet above the level of the sea, not far from the entrance is a building, where the members of the funeral procession go in to pray. A light is here kept burning year in and year out.

We ascended the garden by some eight stone steps. The body of a deceased aged woman was being carried toward the altar tower of silence. There are five of these towers of silence, and there have not been used for a long while. Four persons, whose business it is to do this, carry the corpse. They are followed by two men with long beads. The beads are twenty-five feet long and are made of wood and without a roof. The two bearded men come to the door of the tower, enter and leave the dead. There are three rows of these towers of silence. The middle row is for the men, the inside row for the women, the inside row for the children. The bodies are left exposed in the open air, as soon as the tower of silence is reached they are covered with a white cloth. They are

STORIES OF INTERESTING OCCASIONS.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

MOUNTAIN climbing is a great sport and a dangerous one. According to the Appenzeller Zeitung the past year alone, seventy-three tourists and guides met with violent death in the Alps, while twenty others received serious injuries, and four more were lost, never to be heard of again.

The United States now have about forty vessels engaged in whaling—the remnant of a fleet which, once numbered 500 ships. The demand for whale oil has so greatly decreased that the industry has dwindled away. It is now supported chiefly by the demand for whalebone.

The newspapers refer to the fact that the late Czar of Russia was an enthusiastic stamp collector," remarked a New Yorker who is interested in the stamp-selling business. "Some years ago I received an order from the Czar for a complete assortment of United States stamps. I sent them to him and received a very large sum of money in return."

"LONDON ENGINEERING" says: "The heavy naval fighting in the far East has given not a few opportunities of gathering valuable information about the behavior of guns and armor, which no doubt will be available at a later date. It is stated, on what appears to be reliable authority, that the fate of the Chinese ironclad Ping-Yuen was decided by one round from a Canon 12.60-inch gun, the heaviest weapon in both fleets. The shell which sunk the Ping-Yuen weighed 150 kilogrammes, nearly 1,000 pounds, and was one of Holtzner make; it crashed through the after-part of the vessel's armored deck, the ship sinking by the stern almost immediately."

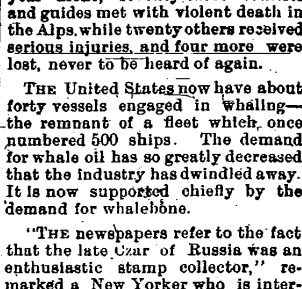
The First Parish in Dorchester, Mass., over which the Rev. Eugene R. Shippen was recently installed as pastor, is the oldest church or religious society in Boston. It is Unitarian, although in one usually well-informed religious weekly it is set down as Congregational. It is more than 250 years old and has had only eleven pastors in its history. The invariable custom has been to install a young man, and not to call a minister from another church. Mr. Shippen is the son of Rev. Rush R. Shippen, pastor of the Unitarian Church in Washington. He is a graduate of Harvard, and for the last year has been studying at Oxford. Previous to that, however, he was settled over a Congregational Church in Wichita, Kan. The Rev. R. R. Shippen preached the sermon at the installation of his son.

A JAPANESE contributor in "The Popular Science Monthly" says: "When I was a young boy the custom of eating beef began to spread. As beef was regarded as unclean, and also as Japan had been a strong agricultural country, there was a deep-rooted disinclination to eat beef. In this, of course, one has also to recognize the influence of the vegetarian principle of Buddhism. But to anybody who had ever tasted beef, it was so delicious that he could hardly control his natural appetite by his religious scruple. My father was one of those who knew its taste, and so now and then we used to treat ourselves to beef. But where did we eat it? We did not eat it inside of the house. We cooked it and ate it in the open air, and in cooking and in eating we did not use the ordinary utensils but used the special ones kept for the purpose. Why all these things? Because beef was unclean, and we did not like to spread its uncleanness into our house wherein the 'gods-shelf' is kept, and into our ordinary utensils, which might be used in making offerings to the gods. The day when we ate beef my father did not offer lights to the gods nor say evening prayers to them, as he did usually, for he knew he was unclean and could not approach the gods."

NEVER were the physician and the chemist more dismayed by the meagerness of their knowledge—great though the results of their labors have been—than now. Taking the apparently simple question of water analysis for example an English chemist observes that "the intellect of the civilized world for fifty years or more has been unable to devise a process (physical, chemical, microscopical or biological) which will enable the operator to say with certainty, 'this water is wholesome.' There are several processes which are capable of detecting a bad water, but in many cases this cannot be done by the senses alone, so recourse must be had to indirect methods, such as ascertaining the mortality and sickness amongst the people who use the water, or examining the source as to the probabilities of pollution." A striking illustration of the uncertainty of evidence of chemical analysis alone is afforded by the history of the Hamburg cholera epidemic. The neighboring city of Altona was comparatively free from the disease, yet Hamburg's water supply came from the Elbe above the city, and that for Altona from the same river after receiving the sewage of a population of about 300,000. The Altona water was chemically more impure than that of Hamburg, but the former was filtered and the latter was not.

MY BLOOD

Became purified, cleansing system, all me, developing into nerve and blood.



Mrs. Caroline E. Fuller, Londonderry, Vt.

Running Sore, the worst on my back. Soon after I began to take Hood's Sarsaparilla, the sores healed, and the bottles entirely cured me and gave me renewed strength and health. Mrs. C. H. Fuller, Londonderry, Vermont.

Hood's Sarsaparilla Cures

Hood's Pills cure all Liver Ills, Biliousness, etc.

Virtues of Salt.

For weak eyes there is nothing better than salt and water, applied night and morning. A cloth wrung out in strong salt and water and bound round the neck when going to bed is an effective remedy for sore throats.

One of the safest emetics is a tablespoonful of salt dissolved in a tumbler of lukewarm water. Half a spoonful of salt dissolved in a tumbler of cold water with a teaspoonful of salt dissolved therein relieves heartburn.

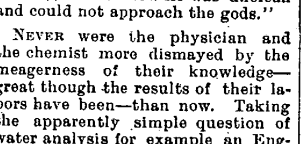
Salt, used as a dentifrice, preserves the teeth and keeps them clean, strengthens the gums and purifies the breath. A strong solution of salt and water applied regularly to the head prevents the hair from falling out.

A bag filled with very hot salt and applied to parts affected by neuralgia gives great relief. Damp salt applied to stings and bites of insects is a cure for the pain.

Discolorations may be removed by rubbing in salt. Ink stains may be removed if salt is immediately applied, and a carpet may be thoroughly cleaned by strewing over it before brushing, salt that has been well dried in the oven.

PHYSICAL STRENGTH

Cheerful spirits and the ability to fully enjoy life, come only with a healthy body and mind. The young man who suffers from nervous debility, impaired memory, low spirits, irritability, etc., should take Hood's Sarsaparilla.



EARLY to bed, Early to rise, Eat cakes made of buckwheat, To be healthy and wise.

HECKER'S BUCKWHEAT

Always Light and Fluffy.

WONDERFUL JAPANESE.

Minister Bingham Pleasures in meeting Facts.

John A. Bingham, at the age of 80, one of Ohio's grand old men. For 50 years he has held an eminent place in the making of history, and 20 years ago he began a long term of service in the Congress of the United States. He has outlived the master minds of his generation, but in his old age he retains much of his fire and eloquence.

After twenty years in Congress, during the most stirring era of this country's history, he retired in 1883. He was then fairly in his prime, rich in resources, overflowing with the inspirations gathered from his friendships and struggles of war times, and he was loath to let go his part on public life.

President Grant appointed him Minister to Japan, and to the surprise of those who knew the old man, his eloquent and his desire for distinction at home, he accepted. To their great surprise he remained in Japan for five years.

In a recent interview Mr. Bingham referring to the present war I can give only one underlying design, and that is the infamous design of European powers to finally seize and parcel out among themselves the whole of China and eventually Japan. I say infamous because I have always objected to Europeans, particularly to England, interfering with the governments of both nations, especially Japan.

There is something else which may be a prime cause of this overwhelming desire of China and Japan to regain the mastery of Korea. The trap-door goes that in one secluded and densely guarded province of the peninsula there are extensive gold and silver mines—a veritable Golconda, which supplies Japan with precious metals. I say a tradition because nothing absolutely correct could ever be learned about that wonderful province, so carefully is the approach to it guarded.

The Japanese are a wonderful people. They are generous, brave, happy people. As soldiers they are ferocious fighters, especially in hand-to-hand conflicts. The history of their wars in the days of bludgeons and swords records awful carnage and terrific contests of man against man.

When given civilized means of warfare their skill and ingenuity will avail most tremendously against the ancient and obsolete fighting methods of the Chinese.

Minister Bingham delights to talk of Japan, and is eloquent in praise of the Emperor. "He was a young man when he came to the throne," said Mr. Bingham. "And he is now but forty-one. I found him exceedingly modest, almost retiring and very devoted to his people. He is a man of splendid education and, though he speaks our language—or rather understands it—he never chose to converse with me in English. No he considers it dishonorable and unparliamentary to speak in any language but the language of Japan. But that he understands English and that he reads it I had ample means of knowing."

As another illustration of his noble character, let me refer to the splendid system of free schools in Japan. The Mikado issued the edict that all children of the Empire should be taught free, and he saw that the provisions of his edict were carried out, until to-day the school system of Japan is equal to ours. The Japanese are not a rich people. They are really poor, but it is wonderful to see the contributions to the school fund by those who could afford it. The rich proclaimed themselves in accord with the Mikado's edict, and gave generously that the system of schools might be gloriously protected.

When my term of office had expired the Emperor was loath to see me depart, and the Empress, good little woman, made a speech in which she thanked us for goodness unto her people.

"We are sorry you are leaving Japan," she said. "Only one ocean divides Japan from the United States. We wish you would come and visit us."

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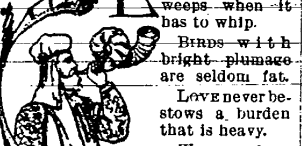
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RAM'S HORN BLENDS

Warning Note Calling the Wicked to Repentance.



LOVE always weeps when it has to whip. Brags with bright plumage are seldom fat. Love never bestows a burden that is heavy. We are fearful of God when we fear to do wrong. FAITH in Christ changes the coffin into a chariot.

In the true fold of Christ there are no black sheep. BELIEVE the devil is to lose the peace of Christ. It takes more courage to endure than it does to act. LAW wears iron shoes, and don't care where it steps.

ONE symptom of blacksliding is a lack of thankfulness. RELIGION pure and undefiled never works by the month. THERE are no real strong people in this world but good people. THE truth we hate the most is the truth that hits us the hardest.

GO WTH in grace is never promoted of watching for faults in others. THE road to Heaven seems to become steeper every time we look back. WHEN you can't find anything else to do for God try to make a child happy.

PEOPLE who make crooked paths never get in earnest about following Christ. THE closer the competition, the more God is needed for a business partner.

TO LOVE an enemy is the most important service a Christian can render Christ. THE sins that pay their rent promptly are the last ones we want to give up.

WHEN unselfish love is asking for a place in your heart, God is knocking at the door. You can generally tell what a man thinks of God by the way he talks about his neighbors. THE only thing a Christian can do for any enemy that is a worldly thing, is to love him.

ONE trouble with the church is that there are too many babies in it from five to six feet high. A LIE is often told without saying a word, by putting the rotten apples in the bottom of the basket. If you let the devil go home to dinner with you, you will have to take him for a regular boarder. THE sky, unlike man, is most cheerful when blue.

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