CURSING AND SWEARING.

Dr. Talmage's Discourse on the Habit of Profanity.

BROOKLYN, April 8.—One of the hymns sung at the Tabernacle this morning, begins with the words:

"As on our lips and lives express
The Holy Gospel we profess."

After reading appropriate passages of Scripture, Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., preached on the habit of cursing and swearing. His text was from the Book of Job, chapter 1, 4 and 5: "So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die."

A story oriental and marvelous. Job was the richest man in all the East. He had camels and oxen and sheep and asses and, what would have made him rich without anything else, seven sons and three daughters. It was the habit of these children to gather together for family reunions. One day, Job is thinking of his children as gathered together at a banquet at the elder brother's house.

While he is musing, a servant in a ten-door, he sees some one running, evidently from his manner bringing bad news. What is the matter now? "Oh," says the servant, "a foraging party of Sabeans have fallen up on the oxen and the asses, and destroyed them, and butchered all the servants except myself." Job turns aside. Another messenger running. What is the matter now? "Oh," says the man, "the lightning has struck the house where the sheep were, and all the shepherds are destroyed except myself." Stand aside. Another messenger running. What is the matter now? "Oh," says the man, "the Chaldeans have captured the camels, and slain all the camel-drivers except myself." Stand aside. Another messenger running. What is the matter now? "Oh," says the man, "a hurricane struck the four corners of the tent where your children were assembled at the banquet, and they are all dead."

But the chapter of calamity was not ended. Job was smitten with elephantiasis or black leprosy. Tumors from head to foot—forehead ridged with tumors, eyelids tumors, nose and nostrils everlasted—voice destroyed—intolerable exhalations from the whole body. Now with none to dress his sores, he sits down in the ashes with nothing but pieces of broken pottery to scrape the surgery of his wounds. At this moment, when he needed all encouragement and consolation, his wife comes in, in a fret and a rage, and says: "This is intolerable. Here is property gone, our children slain, and now you covered up with this loathsome and disgusting disease. Why don't you die? Curse God, and die."

Ah, Job knew right well that swearing would not cure one of the tumors of his aggrieved body, would not bring back one of his destroyed camels, would not restore to life a dead children. He knew that profanity would only make the pain more unbearable, and the property more distressing, and the bereavement more excruciating. But judging from the profanity abroad in the earth you might come to the conclusion that there was some great advantage to be reaped from profanity.

Blasphemy is all abroad. You hear it in every conveyance. If the fireman or engineer his cart, the sewing girl impreceating the tangled sewing machine, carpenter cursing the long line of troublesome figures, swearing at the store assistant, the boy swearing in the cellar, swearing on the street, swearing in the factory. Children swear. Men swear. Women swear. Swearing from the rough calling on the Almighty in the low restaurant, clear up to the reckless use of God of a glittering drawing room; and the one is as much to be shunned as the other.

There are times when we must cry out to the Lord by reason of our phenomenal agony or our mental distress, and that cry is not profanity, but our weak kind to the strong arm of a father. A man was driving a span of horses on Garfield, shed in the Washington depot, cried out, "Oh, my God!" and was fined \$10. There is no profanity in calling out upon God in the day of trouble, in the day of darkness, in the day of pecuniary anguish, in the day of bereavement; but I am speaking now of the irreverent use of the name of God with only the name of God sometimes manging. The whole land is cursed because of it.

A gentleman coming from the far west sat in the car day after day behind two persons who were talking in profane language, and he made up his mind that he would make a record of the profanity, and at the end of the two days several sheets of paper were covered with these irreligious expressions, and the author of the journey he handed the manuscript to one of the persons in front of him. "Is this profane?" said the man, "that you have listened to many profanities the last few days?" "It is," replied the gentleman. "Well," said the man who had taken the manuscript, "I will never swear again."

But it is a comparatively unimportant thing if a man makes record of our imperfections if somebody else makes memorable consideration is that every improper word we utter is taken down by angels in the book of God's remembrance and that the day will come when all our profane and impure speech, if unrepented of, will be our condemnation. I shall not bother to deal in abstractions. I hate abstractions. I am going to have a plain talk with you, my brother, about a habit that you admit to be your sin.

The habit grows in the community in the fact that the first time you hear it it startles you. It mastly to anger. Little children, hardly able to walk, coming out in the street, yet have enough distinctness of utterance to let you know that they are damning their own souls, or damning the souls of others. It is an awful thing the first time the little feet are lifted on the downward road on the burning pavement of hell!

Before sixteen and twenty years of age, there is apt to come a time when a boy or a man is as much ashamed of not being able to swear correctly as he is to talk grammar on his first rogue. He has his hat, his boot, and his coat of the right fashion, but he feels that he can only swear without awkwardness, and as well as his companions, by practice. He is in the fashion. There are young men who are ambitious of imprecation—oaths on their lips, under their breath, to startle you by the shock of hair. They abstain from it in the street cars and the room, but on the street and the club-house ring with their profanities. They have no regard for God, although they have great respect for the ladies! My young brother, there is no mad mess in that. The most ungentlemanly thing a man can do is to swear.

Fathers foster this great crime. There are parents who are cautious not to swear before the presence of their children; in a moment of sudden anger, they look around to see if the children are present when they indulge in the habit. Do you not know, O father, that your child is learning it? that when you are in the room overhead you to the next room, or someone has informed you of it, and he is practicing now. In ten years he will swear as well as you do. Do not, O father, be under the delusion that you have not a right to swear on not know it. It is an awful thing to start the habit in a family. It is a curse to the race, and then to have the echo of his example come back from other generations and other generations after the generation.

The crime is fostered by master mechanics, boss carpenters, those who are the head of men in fat factories, and in dockyards, and at the wharves, and on the great railroad abutments. When you go down to look at the work of the scaffolding, and you find it is not done right, what do you say? It is not the habit in a fine manner to step to the man, and then to have the echo of his example come back from other generations after generations after generations.

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