

GOD AMONG THE SHELLS.

Dr. Talmage's Discourses on "The Conchology of the Bible."

The Part Shells Have Played in the World's History—The Care of God for the Most Insignificant of His Creations.

The following discourse in continuation of his series on "God Everywhere" was delivered by Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage in the Brooklyn tabernacle, from the text:

And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte and onycha—Exodus xxx. 34.

You may not have noticed the shells of the Bible, although in this early part of the sacred book God calls you to consider and employ them, as He called Moses to consider and employ them. The onycha of my text is a shell found on the banks of the Red sea, and Moses and his army must have crushed many of them under foot as they crossed the bisected waters, onycha on the beach and onycha in the unfolded bed of the deep. I shall speak of this shell as a beautiful and practical revelation of God, and as true as the first chapter of Genesis and the last chapter of Revelations, or everything between. Not only is this shell, the onycha, found at the Red sea, but in the waters of India. It not only delectates the eye with its convolutions of beauty, white and lustrous and seriated, but blesses the nostril with a pungent aroma. The shell-fish, accustomed to feed on spikenard, is redolent with that odorous plant, redolent when alive and redolent when dead. Its shells, when burnt, bewitch the air with fragrance. In my text God commands Moses to mix this onycha with the perfumes of the altar in the ancient tabernacle, and I propose to mix some of the perfume at the altar of Brooklyn tabernacle, for having spoken to you on "The Astronomy of the Bible, or God Among the Stars;" "The Chronology of the Bible, or God Among the Centuries;" "The Ornithology of the Bible, or God Among the Birds;" "The Mineralogy of the Bible, or God Among the Amethysts;" "The Ichthyology of the Bible, or God Among the Fishes," I now come to speak of "The Conchology of the Bible, or God Among the Shells."

It is a secret that you may keep for me, for I have never before told it to anyone that in all the realms of the natural world there is nothing to me so fascinating, so completely absorbing, so full of suggestiveness as a shell. What? More entertaining than a bird, which can sing, when a shell can not sing? Well, there you have made a great mistake. Pick up the onycha from the banks of the Red sea, or pick up a bivalve from the beach of the Atlantic ocean, and listen, and you hear a whole choir of marine voices—bass, alto, soprano—in an unknown tongue, but seeming to chant, as I put it to my ear: "The sea is His and He made it;" others singing: "Thy way, oh, God, is in the sea;" others hymning: "He ruleth the raging of the sea." "What," says some one else, does the shell impress you more than the star?" In some respects, yes, because I can handle the shell and closely study the shell, while I can not handle the star, and if I study it, must study it at a distance of millions and millions of miles. "What," says some one else, "are you more impressed by the shell than the flower?" Yes, for it has far greater varieties and far greater richness of color, as I could show you in thousands of specimens, and because the shell does not fade, as does the rose leaf, but maintains its beauty century after century, so that the onycha which the hoof of Pharaoh's horse knocked aside in the chase of the Israelites across the Red sea may have kept its luster to this hour. Yes, they are parti-colored and many colored that you might pile them up until you have a wall with all the colors of Heaven, from the jasper at the bottom to the amethyst at the top.

Thank God for the wealth of mollusks all up and down the earth, whether feeding the Israelites on their way to the land flowing with milk and honey, or, as we are better acquainted with the mollusks, when flung to the beach of lake or sea. There are three great families of them. If I should ask you to name three of the great royal families of the earth, perhaps you would respond, the House of Stuart, the House of Hapsburg, the House of Bourbon, but the three royal families of mollusks are the univalve or shell of one part, the bivalve, or shell of two parts, and the multivalve, or shell in many parts, and I see God in their every hinge, in their every tooth, in their every cartilage, in their every ligament, in their every spiral ridge, and in their every color, prism on prism, and their adaptation of thin shell for still ponds and thick coatings for boisterous seas. They all dash upon me the thought that providential care of God. What is the use of all this architecture of the shell, and why is it pictured from the outside lip clear down into its labyrinth of construction? Why the infinity of skill and radiance in a shell? What is the use of the color and exquisite curve of a thing so significant as a shell-fish? Why, when the conchologist, by dredge or rake fetches the crustaceous specimens to the shore, does he find at his feet whole Alhambra and Colloseums and Parthenons and crystal palaces of beauty in miniature, and these bring to light only an infinitesimal part of the opulence in the great subaqueous world. Linnaeus counted two thousand five hundred species of shells, but conchology had then only begun its achievements. While exploring the bed of the Atlantic ocean in preparation for laying the cable, shelled animals were brought up from depths of one thousand nine hundred fathoms. When lifting the telegraph wire from the Mediterranean and Red seas shelled creatures were brought up from depths of two thousand fathoms. The English admiralty, exploring in behalf of science, found mollusks at a depth of

two thousand four hundred and thirty-five fathoms, or fourteen thousand two hundred and ten feet deep. What a realm awful for vastness!

As the shell is the only house and wardrobe of insignificant animals of the deep, why all that wonder and beauty of construction? God's care for them is the only reason. And if God provide so munificently for them, will He not see that you have wardrobe and shelter? Wardrobe and shelter for a periwinkle; shall there not be wardrobe and shelter for a man? Would God give a coat of mail for the defense of a nautilus and leave you no defense against the storm? Does He build a stone house for a creature that lasts a season and leave without home a soul that takes hold on centuries and aeons? Hugh Miller found "The Footprints of the Creator in the Old Red Sandstone," and I hear the harmonies of God in the tinkle of the sea shells when the tide comes in. The same Christ who drew a lesson of providential care from the fact that God clothes the grass of the field instructs me to draw the same lesson from the shells.

But while you get this pointed lesson of providential care from the shelled creatures of the deep, notice in their construction that God helps them to help themselves. This house of stone in which they live is not dropped on them and is not built around them. The material for it exudes from their own bodies and is adorned with a colored fluid from the pores of their own neck. It is a most interesting thing to see these crustacean animals fashion their own homes out of carbonate of lime and membrane. And all of this is kept its beauty for one hundred and ninety years. But, after awhile, the purple became easier to get, and that which had been a sign of imperial authority, when worn in robes, was adopted by many people, and so an emperor, jealous of this appropriation of the purple, made a law that anyone except royalty wearing purple should be put to death. Then, as if to punish the world for that outrage of exclusiveness, God obliterated the color from the earth, as much as to say: "If all can not have it, none shall have it." But, though God has deprived the race of that shell-fish which afforded the purple, there are shells enough left to make us glad and worshipful. Oh, the enthrallment of hue and shape still left all up and down the beaches of all the continents! These creatures of the sea have what roofs of enameled porcelain! They dwell under what pavilions, blue as the sky and fiery as a sunset and mysterious as an aurora! And am I not right in leading you, for a few moments, through this mighty realm of God so neglected by human eye and human footstep? It is said that the harp and lute were invented from the fact that in Egypt the Nile overflowed its banks, and when the waters retreated tortoises were left by the million on all the lands, and these tortoises died, and soon nothing was left but the cartilages and gristle of these creatures, which tightened under the heat into musical strings that, when touched by the wind or the foot of man vibrated, making sweet sounds, and so the world took the hint and fashioned the harp; and am I not right in trying to make music out of the shells, and lifting them as a harp, from which to thump the jubilant praises of the Lord and the pathetic strains of human condolence.

But I find the climax of this conchology of the Bible in the pearl, which has this distinction above all other gems that it requires no human hand to bring out its beauties. Job speaks of it and its sheen is in Christ's sermon, and the Bible, which opens with the onycha of my text, closes with the pearl. Of such value is this crustaceous product, I do not wonder that, for the exclusive right of fishing for it on the shores of Ceylon, a man paid to the English government six hundred thousand dollars for one season. So exquisite is the pearl I do not wonder that Pliny thought it made out of a drop of dew, the creature rising to the surface to take it, and the chemistry of nature turning the liquid into solid. You will see why the Bible makes so much of the pearl in its similitudes if you know how much its cost to get it. Boats with divers sail out from the island of Ceylon, ten divers to each boat. Thirteen men guide and manage the boat. Down into the dangerous depths, amid sharks that swirl around them, plunge the divers, while sixty thousand people anxiously gaze on. After three or four minutes absence from the air, the diver ascends, nine-tenths strangulated and blood rushing from ears and nostrils, and flinging his pearly treasure on the sand, falls into unconsciousness. Oh, it is an awful strain exposure and peril to fish for pearls, and yet they do so, and is it not a wonder that to get that which the Bible calls the pearl of great price, worth more than all the other pearls put together, there should be so little anxiety, so little struggle, so little enthusiasm. Would God that we were all as wise as the merchantman Christ commanded, "who, when He had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that He had and bought it."

But what thrills me with suggestiveness is the material out of which all pearls are made. They are fashioned from the wound of the shell-fish. The exudation from that wound is fixed and hardened and enlarged into a pearl. The ruptured vessels of the watery animal fashioned the gem that now adorns finger or ear-ring or sword hilt or king's crown. So, out of the wounds of earth will come the pearls of Heaven. Out of the wound of conviction the pearl of pardon. Out of the wound of bereavement the pearl of solace. Out of the wound of loss the pearl of gain. Out of the deep wound of the grave the pearl of resurrection joy. Out of the wounds of a Saviour's life and a Saviour's death, the rich, the radiant, the everlasting pearl of Heavenly gladness. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls." Take the consolation all ye who have been hurt, whether hurt in body, or hurt in mind, or hurt in soul. Get your troubles sanctified. If you suffer with Christ on earth, you will reign with Him in glory. The tears of earth are the crystals of Heaven. "Every several gate was one pearl."

In the five Swiss universities of Basel, Berne, Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich, during the past summer semester, the number of women students was 224, of whom 157 were in the medical departments, 62 in the philosophical and 5 in the law.

genial souls, and in a few moments felt exhilarant. What was the difference? It was the difference in what they burnt on their censers. The one burnt onycha; the other burnt asafoetida.

In this conchological study of the Bible, I also notice that the mollusks or shelled animals furnish the purple that you see richly darkening so many Scripture chapters. The purple stuff in the ancient tabernacle, the purple girdle of the priests, the purple mantle of Roman emperors, the apparel of Dives in purple and fine linen, ay, the purple robe which, in mockery, was thrown upon Christ, were colored by the purple of the shells on the shores of the Mediterranean. It was discovered by a shepherd's dog having stained his mouth by breaking one of the shells, and the purple aroused admiration. Costly purple. Six pounds of the purple liquor extracted from the shell-fishes was used to prepare one pound of wool. Purple was also used on the pages of books. Bibles and prayer books appeared in purple vellum, which may still be found in some of the national libraries of Europe.

Plutarch speaks of some purple which kept its beauty for one hundred and ninety years. But, after awhile, the purple became easier to get, and that which had been a sign of imperial authority, when worn in robes, was adopted by many people, and so an emperor, jealous of this appropriation of the purple, made a law that anyone except royalty wearing purple should be put to death. Then, as if to punish the world for that outrage of exclusiveness, God obliterated the color from the earth, as much as to say: "If all can not have it, none shall have it." But, though God has deprived the race of that shell-fish which afforded the purple, there are shells enough left to make us glad and worshipful. Oh, the enthrallment of hue and shape still left all up and down the beaches of all the continents! These creatures of the sea have what roofs of enameled porcelain! They dwell under what pavilions, blue as the sky and fiery as a sunset and mysterious as an aurora! And am I not right in leading you, for a few moments, through this mighty realm of God so neglected by human eye and human footstep? It is said that the harp and lute were invented from the fact that in Egypt the Nile overflowed its banks, and when the waters retreated tortoises were left by the million on all the lands, and these tortoises died, and soon nothing was left but the cartilages and gristle of these creatures, which tightened under the heat into musical strings that, when touched by the wind or the foot of man vibrated, making sweet sounds, and so the world took the hint and fashioned the harp; and am I not right in trying to make music out of the shells, and lifting them as a harp, from which to thump the jubilant praises of the Lord and the pathetic strains of human condolence.

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WORLD'S FAIR GOSSIP.

Notes on the Leading Features of Interest at Jackson Park.

The Bustle of Coming Spring Has Fairly Begun—Exhibits from All Lands Rapidly Coming In—Some Odd Displays.

[Special Chicago Correspondence.]

ALTHOUGH the unusual severity of the winter has to a great extent impeded the progress of building at the world's fair grounds, the workmen have not been idle, and the amount of labor performed has been little short of marvelous. All during the coldest weather the men have kept steadily on, although compelled to so with clothing as to be greatly hampered in their movements. They all stood the extreme cold very well except the Turks, who seem to be very sensitive to cold, and some of these children of the orient, who were sent over to work on the buildings of their countrymen, suffered so during the zero weather that they gave up the job in disgust and betook themselves

bundle themselves up so with clothing as to be greatly hampered in their movements. They all stood the extreme cold very well except the Turks, who seem to be very sensitive to cold, and some of these children of the orient, who were sent over to work on the buildings of their countrymen, suffered so during the zero weather that they gave up the job in disgust and betook themselves

back to the more congenial climate of their far eastern homes.

The most hardy and patient plodders at the fair grounds are the Japanese.

Nothing seems to daunt them in their work. They are incapable of even a near approach to haste, yet in their leisurely, haphazard way of doing things they accomplish wonders. These people will undoubtedly have some of the most curious and interesting displays to be seen at the fair. Among them will be a Japanese well at the Horticultural building, constructed from material taken from one of the oldest wells in Japan, which will show the primitive method of drawing water in use in that country. The stone used in the construction of this well is a kind of red sandstone neatly put together by the deft fingers of these skillful artisans. This well and a rustic bridge constructed by the Japanese gardeners will undoubtedly prove of great interest to visitors from all parts of the western world. Some very neat and handsome work in hand-carved native hard-woods, metal orna-

ments and bronzes for their pavilion in the Liberal Arts building has just been received by the Japs, and their exhibit in that department promises to be very attractive.

There is much mourning among these people just now on account of the death of the famous Japanese dwarf cedar, which was one of the greatest curiosities they possessed. This tree was only three feet in height, although it was three hundred years old, and was thought to be the finest specimen in existence. It was sent to the fair by the emperor of Japan, and every precaution was taken to preserve it from harm, but all efforts were unavailing, and the only use it can now be put to will be to serve as a relic of its former self.

Another unique exhibit will be a mountain of rock and sand, with forests, caves, streams of water, etc., erected by the state of Pennsylvania. Upon this mountain in various attitudes will be found a stuffed specimen of every beast and bird that is to be

found in that state, and of every fish that frequents its waters. Among the animals represented will be a huge lion that was shot in the Quaker state in 1856.

This mountain will be one of the finest and most striking natural history displays ever made, and it is given out that the state is ambitious to surpass anything of the kind to be seen at the fair. As a work of

art it will most likely outclass anything of the kind ever produced and will prove a very interesting feature of the great exposition.

Among other oddities which will be seen at the fair are a lot of mummies

from South America, of which there

are more than a hundred at present

stored away on the grounds. These

decayed members of a race that once

roamed the forests of the great land

below the equator are thickly swathed

in straw and sewed up snugly in canvas bags and are piled up in long rows in one of the warehouses, where they will remain for several weeks, then they will be shucked and removed to the department of ethnology and

archaeology, under the charge of Prof. Putnam, of Harvard. The professor and his assistants have for several years past been ransacking the earth for mummies, and the lot now at the fair grounds is but a first installment.

There are many more coming from different parts of the world.

The professor says that mummy hunting is quite a fad among American tourists in Peru.

They go out and pry up the stony remains of respectable old-time

Peruvians just as they would dig fossils out of a shell bank or chip chunks off from some sacred or historic pile.

There may be some profit or amusement in thus grubbing up the caput mortuum of ancient humans, but it seems like ghoulish business at best.

From British Guiana there has been sent for exhibition at the fair specimens of native woods and other

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Two old people in the seventies, residing in Fresno county, Cal., have had a consuming desire to see the world's fair.

They have read with great interest all news of its growth, and have so fed their enthusiasm, and saved their dimes, that the problem of railway tickets is well-nigh solved.

Some of the money has been earned by chopping wood, and all of it by hard work.

The ladies of the Family Dormitory association, hearing of the old folks' ambition, sent them as a present a share of dormitory stock.

This insures lodgings for ten days, and will probably make it possible for them to come.

Exhibits Coming In.

The installation of exhibits in the various buildings of the world's fair is now actively in progress. Scores of freight cars loaded with exhibits are being run into the grounds and switched to the different buildings. Wagons loaded with packing cases are to be seen going in all directions. Soon these busy scenes will be multiplied many times over, for hundreds of cars of exhibits will arrive where now there are scores.

The majority of exhibits which have arrived thus far are

of interest from that country will be

shown a charcoal kiln such are used by the Chinese coal-burners of the Demarara river, and a "rice husker," modeled from those employed by the Mongolians