

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "Biblical and Modern Narrations of Dreams."

TEXT: "He took of the stores of that place and put them for his pillows and lay down in that place to sleep, and he dreamed."—Genesis xxviii, 11.

Asleep on a pillowcase filled with hens' feathers it is not strange one should have pleasant dreams, but here is a pillow of rock, and Jacob with his head on it, and lo! a dream of angels, two processions, those coming down the stairs met by those going up the stairs. It is the first dream of Bible record. You may say of a dream, that it is nocturnal fantasia, or that it is the absurd combination of waking thoughts, and with a slur of intonation you may say, "It is only a dream," but God has honored the dream by making it the avenue through which again and again He has marched upon the human soul, decided the fate of Nations and changed the course of the world's history.

God appeared in a dream to Abimelech, warning him against an unlawful marriage; in a dream to Joseph, foretelling His coming power under the figure of all the sheaves of the harvest bowing down to his sheaf; to the chief butler, foretelling his imprisonment; to the chief baker, announcing his decapitation; to Pharaoh, showing him first the seven plenty years and then the seven famine struck years, under the figure of the seven fat cows devouring the seven lean cows; to Solomon, giving him the choice between wisdom and riches and honor; to the warrior under the figure of a barley cake smiting down a warrior, encouraging Gideon in his battle against the Amalekites; to Nebuchadnezzar, under the figure of a broken image and a heaven down tree, foretelling his overthrow of power, to Joseph of the New Testament, announcing the birth of Christ in his own household, to Pilate's wife, warning him not to be complicated with the judicial Christ.

That God in ancient times dispensation addressed the dreams. The question now in our day and reveals? What is the question that this dream asks me? I do not know. I will not get are so we get as at? Do not mistake narcotic disturbances for divine revelation.

But I have to tell you that the majority of dreams are merely the penalty of outraged digestive organs, and you have no right to mistake the nightmare for heavenly revelation. Late suppers are a warranty deed for bad dreams. Highly spiced meals at 11 o'clock at night instead of opening the door heavenward open the door infernal and diabolical. You outrage natural law, and you insult the God who made these laws. It takes from three to five hours to digest food, and you have no right to tax your digestive organs in struggle when the rest of your body is in somnolence. The general rule is, nothing after 6 o'clock at night, retire at 8 o'clock, sleep on your right side, keep the window open five inches for ventilation, and your worlds will not disturb you much.

Physical maltreatment you take the under that Jacob saw in his dream and you refer it to the nether world, allowing the dream to be the demoniacal. Dreams are mid-dyspepsia. An unregulated desire for something to eat ruined the race in paradise, and an unregulated desire for something to eat keeps it ruined. The world 6000 years has tried in vain to digest the first apple. The world will not be civilized until we get rid of a dyspeptic humanity. Healthy people do not want a feverish and sleepy thing that some call religion. They want a religion that gives regularly by day and sleeps regularly by night.

Through trouble or coming on of old age, if you are exhausted of Christian service you cannot sleep well, then you may expect from "songs in the night," but there are no sacred communications to those who will surrender to indigestibles. Napoleon's army at Leipzig, Dresden and Borodino were near being destroyed through the indigestible gastric juices of its commander. That is the way you have lost some of your battles.

Another remark I make is that our dreams are apt to be merely the echo of our day thoughts.

I will give you a recipe for pleasant dreams: Fill your days with elevated thought and unselfish action, and your dreams will be set to music. If all day you are gouging and grasping and avaricious, in your dreams you will see gold that you cannot clutch and bargains in which you were outshylocked. If during the day you are irascible and pugnacious and gunpowder of disposition, you will at night have battle with enemies in which they will get the best of you. If you are all day long in a hurry, at night you will dream of rail cars that you want to catch while you cannot move one inch toward the depot. If you are always oversuspicious and ex-

pectant of assault, you will have at night hallucinations of assassins with daggers drawn. No one wonders that Richard III, the iniquitous, the night before the battle of Bosworth Field, dreamed that all those whom he had murdered stared at him, and that he was torn to pieces by demons from the pit. The scholar's dream is a philosophic echo. The poet's dream is a rhythmic echo. Coleridge composed his "Kubla Khan" asleep in a narcotic dream, and waking up wrote down 300 lines of it. Tartini, the violin player, composed his most wonderful sonata while asleep in a dream so vivid that waking he easily transferred it to paper.

Waking thoughts have their echo in sleeping thoughts. If a man spends his life in trying to make others happy and is heavenly minded, around his pillow he will see cripples who have got over their crutch and processions of celestial imperials and hear the grand march roll down from drums of heaven over jasper parapets. You are very apt to hear in dreams what you hear when you are wide awake.

Now, having shown you that having a Bible we ought to be satisfied not getting any further communication from God, and having shown you that all dreams have an important mission, since they show the comparative independence of the soul from the body, and having shown you that the majority of dreams are a result of disturbed physical condition, and having shown you that our sleeping thoughts are apt to be an echo of our waking thoughts, I come now to my fifth and most important remark, and that is to say that it is capable of proof that God does sometimes in our day, and has often since the close of the Bible dispensation, appeared to people in dreams.

All dreams that make you better are from God. How do I know it? Is not God the source of all good? It does not take a very logical mind to argue that out. Tertullian and Martin Luther believed in dreams. The dreams of John Huss are immortal. St. Augustine, the Christian father, gives us the fact that a Carthaginian physician was persuaded of the immortality of the soul by an argument which he heard in a dream.

The night before his assassination the wife of Julius Cæsar dreamed that her husband fell dead across her lap. It is possible to prove that God does appear in dreams to warn, to convert and to save men.

My friend, a retired sea captain and a Christian, tells me that one night while on the sea he had dreamed that a ship's crew were in great suffering. Waking up from his dream, he put about the ship, tacked in different directions, surprised everybody on the vessel—they thought he was going crazy—sailed on in another direction hour after hour, and for many hours until he came to the perishing crew and rescued them and brought them to New York. Who conducted that dream? The God of the sea.

In 1695 a vessel went out from Spithead for the West Indies and ran against the ledge of rocks called the Caskets. The vessel went down, but the crew clambered up on the Caskets to die of starvation, as they supposed. But there was a ship bound for Southampton that had the captain's son on board. This lad twice in the night dreamed that there was a crew of sailors dying on the Caskets. He told his father of his dream. The vessel came down by the Caskets in time to find and to rescue those poor dying men. Who conducted that dream? The God of the rocks, the God of the sea.

The Rev. Dr. Bushnell, in his marvelous book entitled, "Nature and the Supernatural," gives the following fact that he got from Captain Yount in California, a fact confirmed by many families. Captain Yount dreamed twice one night that 150 miles away there was a company of traders fast in the snow. He also saw in the dream rocks of peculiar formation, and telling his dream to an old hunter the hunter said, "Why, I remember those rocks; those rocks are in the Carson Valley pass, 150 miles away."

Captain Yount, impelled by this dream, although laughed at by his neighbors, gathered men together, took mules and blankets and started out on the expedition, traveled 150 miles, saw those very rocks which he had described in his dream, and finding the suffering ones at the foot of those rocks brought them back to confirm the story of Captain Yount. Who conducted that dream? The God of the snow, the God of the Sierra Nevadas.

God has often appeared in dreams to rescue and comfort. You have known people—perhaps it is something I state in your own experience—you have seen people go to sleep with bereavements inconsolable, and they awakened in perfect resignation because of what they had seen in slumber. Dr. Cranage, one of the most remarkable men I ever met—remarkable for benevolence and great philanthropies—at Welling-ton, England, showed me a house where the Lord had appeared in a wonderful dream to a poor woman. The woman was rheumatic, sick, poor to the last point of destitution. She was waited on and cared for by another poor woman, her only attendant.

Word came to her one day that this poor woman had died, and the invalid of whom I am speaking lay helpless upon the couch wondering what would become of her. In that mood she fell asleep. In her dreams she said the angel of the Lord appeared and took her into the open air and pointed in one direction, and there were mountains of bread, and pointed in another direction, and there were mountains of butter, and in another direction, and there were mountains of all kinds of worldly sunny. The angel of the Lord said to her, "Woman, all these mountains belong to your Father, and do you think that He will let you, His child, hunger and die?"

Dr. Cranage told me by some divine impulse he went into that destitute home, saw the suffering there and administered unto it, caring for her all the way through. Do you tell me that that dream was woven out

of earthly anodynes? Was that the phantasmagoria of a diseased brain? No, it was an all sympathetic God addressing a poor woman through a dream.

Furthermore, I have to say that there are people in this house who were converted to God through a dream. The Rev. John Newton, the fame of whose piety fills all Christendom, while a profligate sailor on shipboard, in his dream, thought that a being approached him and gave him a very beautiful ring and put it upon his finger and said to him, "As long as you wear that ring you will be prosperous; if you lose that ring, you will be ruined."

In the same dream another personage appeared, and by a strange infatuation persuaded John Newton to throw that ring overboard, and it sank into the sea. Then the mountains in sight were full of fire, and the air was lurid with consuming wrath. While John Newton was repenting of his folly in having thrown overboard the treasure, another personage came through the dream and told John Newton he would plunge into the sea and bring the ring up if he desired it.

He plunged into the sea and brought it up and said to John Newton, "Here is that gem, but I think I will keep it for you, lest you lose it again," and John Newton consented, and all the fire went out from the mountains, and all the signs of lurid wrath disappeared from the air, and John Newton said that he saw in his dream that that valuable gem was his soul, and that the being who persuaded him to throw it overboard was Satan, and that the one who plunged in and restored that gem, keeping it for him, was Christ. And that dream makes one of the most wonderful chapters in the life of that most wonderful man.

A German was crossing the Atlantic ocean, and in his dream he saw a man with a handful of white flowers, and he was told to follow the man who had that handful of white flowers. The German, arriving in New York, wandered into the Fulton street prayer meeting, and Mr. Lamphier—whom many of you know—the great apostle of prayer meetings, that day had given to him a bunch of tuberoses.

They stood on his desk, and at the close of the religious services he took the tuberoses and started homeward, and the German followed him, and through an interpreter told Mr. Lamphier that on the sea he had dreamed of a man with a handful of white flowers and was told to follow him.

Suffice it to say, through that interview and following interviews he became a Christian and is a city missionary preaching the Gospel to his own countrymen. God in a dream! John Hardock, while on shipboard, dreamed one night that the day of judgment had come, and that the roll of the ship's crew was called, except his own name, and that these people, this crew, were all banished, and in his dream he asked the reader why his own name was omitted, and he was told it was to give him more opportunity for repentance. He woke up a different man. He became illustrious for Christian attainment. If you do not believe these things, then you must discard all testimony and refuse to accept any kind of authoritative witness. God in a dream!

Rev. Herbert Mendes was converted to God through a dream of the last judgment, and I doubt if there is a man or woman in this house to-day that has not had some dream of that great day of judgment which shall be the winding up of the world's history. If you have not dreamed of it, perhaps to-night you may dream of that day.

There are enough materials to make a dream. Enough voices, for there shall be the roaring of the elements and the great earthquake. Enough light for the dream, for the world shall blaze. Enough excitement, for the mountains shall fall. Enough water, for the ocean shall roar. Enough astronomical phenomena, for the stars shall go out. Enough populations, for all the races of all the ages will fall into line of one of two processions, and the one ascending and the other descending, the one led on by the rider on the white horse of eternal victory, the other led on by Apollyon on the black charger of eternal defeat.

The dream comes on me now, and I see the lightnings from above answering the volcanic disturbances from beneath, and I hear the long reverberating thunders that shall wake up the dead, and on one side I see the opening of a gate into scenes golden and amethystine, and on the other side I hear the clanging back of a gate into bastiles of eternal bondage, and all the seas, lifting up their crystal voices, cry, "Come to judgment!" and all the voices of the heaven cry, "Come to judgment!" and crumbling mausoleum and Westminster abbeys and pyramids of the dead with marble voices cry, "Come to judgment!"

And the archangel seizes an instrument of music which has never yet been sounded, an instrument of music that was made only for one sound, and thrusting that mighty trumpet through the clouds and turning it this way he shall put it to his lip and blow the long, loud blast that shall make the solid earth quiver, crying, "Come to judgment."

Then from this earthly grossness quit, Attired in stars we shall forever sit.

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Boil Your Water.

The popular idea that water is purified by freezing has been again disproved by recent careful experiments, which show that the average amount of impurity retained by the ice is 34.3 per cent. of organic matter. As organic matter is the more objectionable of the two, the case is worse than was formerly supposed.