THE DISCOURAGED MAN

Sunday Discourse by Dr. Chapman, the Noted Pastor-Evangelist.

Most People Dissatisfied Because They Lead Too Artificial a Life.

[The Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, D. D., is now the most distinguished and best known evangelist in the country. He was second only to Dr. Talmage, but since the death of that famous preacher Dr. Chapman has the undisputed possession of the Pulpit as the preacher to influence the plain people. His services as an evangelist are in constant demand. His sermons have stirred the hearts of men and women to a degree unapproached by any latter-day divine. J. Wilbur Chapman was born in Richmond, Ind., June 17, 1859. His mother died when he was but twelve years of age, and his father died seven years afterward. Consequently he was not only deprived of a mother's care at the formative age of boyhood, but he was thrown upon his own resources before he had reached early manhood. He was educated at Oberlin College and Lake Forest University, and graduated for the ministry from the Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1882. While there he manifested the character and the spirit which have followed him as an evangelist all over the country. They have made his ministry a continual success as pastor and as a revivalist. His sermons are simple and direct, so that their influence is not so much due to exciting the emotions as to winning the hearts and convincing the minds of those who hear him. Dr. Chapman is now in charge of the Fourth Presbyterian Church, New York City.]

NEW YORK CITY.—The Rev. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, America's most famous pastor-evangelist, who took charge of a moribund church in this city several years ago, and is now preaching to an overflowing congregation, has furnished the following eloquent sermon to the press. It was preached from the text: I Kings, 19: 4, "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree, and he requested for himself that he might die."

The history of Elijah begins with the seventeenth chapter of I Kings and starts with the word "and." The preceding chapter tells us of the idolatry of the people of the reign of lawlessness and the apparent triumph of iniquity. It seemed as if the end of all things had come, and I suppose everybody living in that time thought so, but if this was the impression, the fatal mistake had been made because God is left out of all consideration. It is well for us to remember that He is never at a loss. The land may be overrun with iniquity, His witnesses may be silenced, but all the time He is preparing a man in some quiet village as He prepared Elijah, and at the right time He will send him forth with no uncertain testimony! There is really no place for pessimism in the kingdom of God. He has never made a failure in the past, He never will in the future. "If God be for us, who can be against us." It is literally true that when the enemy comes in like a flood this spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

The story of Elijah is most interesting, and we trace him from his sudden appearance here flashing like a meteor upon the scene of action, down to Cherith, where he is fed by the ravens, over to Zarephath, where he relieves the distress of the woman who meets him, but the most remarkable scene in his life is on Mt. Carmel, where, facing the prophets of Baal, after their inability to call down fire from heaven he produces the fire from the very hand of God, which consumed the sacrifice, licks up the water in the trenches and gives him victory of a most remarkable kind. The prophets of Baal are distressed, and the news concerning their defeat is carried to Jezebel. She is intensely angry, and declares that Elijah shall be as her prophets are at a certain hour of the day. Instead of looking up to God and triumphing over this wicked woman Elijah does quite the opposite, and thus it is that the text is written to describe his sad fall.

How are the mighty fallen? It would be difficult to imagine a man in whose life there was more of real contrast; now he is master in prayer and the pendulum which swings one way toward glory swings in his life in the other direction toward despair, and the prayer for victory becomes a wail of distress; now he is locking up the heavens and holding the key and apparently at his own will the rain tarries or falls, and now utterly dismayed he is rushing to the wilderness and wishing that he might die, but Elijah is not alone in this desire. The most of men have at one time or another wished that they might end all. Moses did, "And if Thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in Thy sight, and let me not see my wretchedness." Numbers 11: 15. So also did Jonah, "Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live." Jonah 4: 3. And even the great Apostle Paul said, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ," but the trouble with the most of us is we want to die our own way. Elijah was not willing to die at the hand of Jezebel, but he was quite ready to sleep himself away into insensibility under the juniper tree in the desert. Elijah made a great mistake in running away. If he had stood his ground he might have saved his country, prevented the captivity of the people, for I doubt not the 7000 that had not bowed the knee to Baal would have come forth, and they would have rushed forward conquering and to conquer, but Elijah is a picture of ourselves, and we all like him have been times without number under the juniper tree. The object of this sermon is to ask the question, "Why we are thus discouraged," and then to determine if possible what the difficulty was with Elijah.

I.

Why are we? There are thousands of people to-day who are utterly dissatisfied with life because they are living too artificial an experience. We have very many things that our ancestors did not possess. The possession of these things ought to bring to us great blessings in every way, but as a matter of fact it is true that neither happiness, nor brotherly love, nor power nor good have been increased in the least. We have indeed gone in the opposite direction, and many of us are of all men most miserable. We are discontented because we are trying to be something that we are not. The business man thinks he must keep pace with his competitor whatever the cost to himself, and in a little time he finds himself out of his latitude. In society thousands of people are aping the customs and manners of those who are in an entirely different set from themselves, by whose side they can never stand, and if they did they would be only the more unhappy, and there are thousands of homes where instead of living a simple life the members of the household are living at a pace that is terrific, and all this is killing the business man, the society woman, the parents and the children, and instead of possessing joy and peace we are under the juniper tree. The thirst for pleasure in these days is so great that we have become absolutely unscrupulous in our attempts to gain the objects of our desires. We ought to be satisfied with just what we are and in the most natural way. We have come into the world with different gifts, some one with gold, others with silver, still others with marble and many with only clay, and our task is to fashion these things into the strongest manhood and the truest womanhood, and to do it in the most simple and unaffected manner. We are too selfish in our living, we long to satisfy our appetites, our passions and our desires. This longing has become uppermost in our living, and the man who makes it so makes his appetite stronger than himself, and his need is dreadful, for he who lives simply to eat, to drink, to sleep and to dress, whether he be pauper or prince, is on the downward grade to despair.

Contentment is one of the greatest blessings in the world. It is not a question of the possession of either poverty or riches. He who knows how to be content possesses the secret, not because he is either poor or rich, but simply because he knows how to be content. The mere fact that we are Christians does not amount to much in many cases; if our religion increases our confidence, our hope, our love, it is good, but if it gives us the spirit that we are better than other people, if we seek to control the interests of other people, make them fashion their lives according to our own plan, if we are good simply that we may escape punishment, such a profession of religion is almost worthless. The difficulty is not in our surroundings, but in ourselves. "Joy is not in things, it is in us."

I met a young woman this winter in the South who told me that she was the possessor of a $10,000 violin, and with a shining face she said, "You should hear the music of that instrument," and yet in the hands of very many people it would have been just a producer of unharmonious sounds, while in the hands of this gifted young woman it was truly marvelous, and all because the music was in her, and the violin was the best movement of the expression of that music.

When Ole Bull, the great violinist, played in Princeton, one of the professors asked him if the secret of his success was in the violin or in the bow or in himself, and he said, "The violin and the bow amount to but little. I never play until I feel that there is music in me that must be expressed, and then any instrument I touch becomes remarkable." Many of us are unfitted for life because we have become too artificial, have had wrong ideals and have tried to be what we never can be.

A friend recently sent me that wonderful little book, "The Simple Life," by Charles Wagner, which every one would do well to read. To the author of this book I am indebted for some of the expressions used above, but in one of the chapters he tells us in speaking of the home life, "In the time of the Second Empire, in one of our pleasantest sub-prefectures of the provinces, a little way from some baths frequented by the Emperor, there was a mayor, a very worthy man, and intelligent, too, whose head was suddenly turned by the thought that his sovereign might one day descend upon his home. Up to this time he had lived in the house of his fathers, a son respectful of the slightest family traditions. But when once the all-absorbing idea of receiving the Emperor had taken possession of his brain he became another man. In this new light what had before seemed sufficient for his needs, even enjoyable, all this simplicity that his ancestors had loved, appeared poor, ugly, ridiculous. Out of the question to ask an Emperor to climb this wooden staircase, sit in these old armchairs, walk over such superanuated carpets. So the mayor called architect and masons, pickaxes attacked walls and demolished partitions, and a drawing-room was made out of all proportion to the rest of the house in size and splendor. He and his family retired into close quarters, where people and furniture incommoded each other generally. Then, having emptied his purse and upset his household by this stroke of genius, he awaited the royal guest. Alas, he soon saw the end of the empire arrive, but the Emperor never. The folly of this poor man is not so rare. As sottish as he are all those who sacrifice their home life to the demands of the world."

II.

What was the difficulty with Elijah? First his physical strength had been overtaxed. He had been laboring under the highest tension, his nerves were unstrung, and he was just in the position where Satan could tempt him the worst. There are many like him to-day. They are in despair, and they need not so much a spiritual physician as the presence of a doctor who can tell them that their bodies must have rest, their nerves must be built up, and they themselves must remember that their bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that they may sin against God just as truly when they break commands touching the body as when they commit sins touching the soul. Elijah needed rest, and instead of taking it he prayed that he might die.

Second, he looked away from God to his circumstances. Up to that time he endured as seeing Him who was invisible, then like Peter when he saw the wind that was boisterous he began to sink. I do not think that any minister could preach today if he realized the iniquity that surrounded him, the hypocrisy in many hearts, the awful sins in many lives; he would grow faint and sick at heart, and all because he looked down, while it is possible, on the other hand, for anybody to preach in the midst of all this desolation if he keeps his eyes turned up, and the difficulty with you is not that your power is dead, but that your eyes are fastened upon the ground instead of turned upward to heaven, and the cause of your distress is not that your mother has gone away from your home, but that you are standing like Mary looking in at the tomb, when you ought to be standing with upturned face looking by faith into the very midst of the angel company in heaven. What if the difficulties are great, let us look to God in it all.

The other day in my mail came a little piece of poetry from a friend in England, which has been singing its way like a bird of paradise through my soul all the week.

"When the way seems dark and dreary,
Think of Him.
Lest thy heart grow faint and weary,
Think of Him.
For He knoweth all the way,
And His strength will be thy stay;
He can cheer the darkest day,
Think of Him.

"When some sorrow sorely presses,
Think of Him.
For through trials oft He blesses,
Think of Him.
He alone can understand,
Leave it all in His dear hand;
In His love for thee He planned,
Think of Him.

"When some anxious care perplexes,
Think of Him.
Lest thy inmost soul it vexes,
Think of Him.
Bring thy care and thou shalt see,
He will bear it all for thee;
He would have thee peaceful be,
Think of Him."

III.

But there was still another difficulty with Elijah. First, he was alone. In verse 3 we read that he left his servant at Beersheba, and he himself went into the wilderness. It is a great mistake to be alone when trouble comes. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of God," gives us a picture of human fellowship, while the verse, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me," gives us an idea of that fellowship which we may have with Him.

John McNeill, the great Scotch preacher, has a fine illustration of this point in his sermon based upon I Samuel, the 27th chapter and the first verse, "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines, and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel; so shall I escape out of his hand." "David said in his heart," and John McNeill says it would have been well if instead of saying it in his heart he would have said it out loud. It is the thing we say in our heart that grows to such great proportion and leads us to believe that we are on the verge of despair. Without question the passage is true, and Mr. McNeill suggests three cures.

First—Why didn't David say it aloud to his servant and let his servant argue him out of his position, for there are many things we think we would never dare to say to our dearest friends.

Second—Why didn't David pray it. He was a master in prayer, and if he had but fallen on his knees and said it to God, at least have tried to say it, he would have found that his very tongue would have cleaved to the roof of his mouth, for there are things we think that we would blush if we dared to say them to God.

Third—Why didn't he sing it. He was much of a singer, was David, and if he had but put it in a song his face would have grown hot, and he would have ended with stammering and stumbling, and then said Mr. McNeill, "Why may we not follow this rule, and when we have a difficulty imaginary or real, let us say it, or pray it, or sing it, and if we cannot say it, and it won't pray, and will not sing there is nothing in it. It is but the devil's delusion to plunge us into despair.

Fourth—He sat down. That was a great mistake. He never should have given up. If he had only kept going he would have found victory. There are so many people in the church to-day who have done just exactly what Elijah did. They have sat down. The man who once taught a Sunday-school class is now doing nothing and fast slipping away from Christ. The member of the church who used to be faithful at the prayer meeting is now absent and sitting down in his home he is of all men most miserable. That man who was once in the church and loved the church has sat down in the world, and he questions if he ever knew Christ, so let us keep going. It is when a man is idle that Satan trips him up.

Fifth—He wanted to dictate to God when he said to Him "Let me die." It is a good thing that God did not take him at his word, for he would have died under a cloud, and would have been buried in the desert. What a mercy it is that God does not give us all we ask for. And my own experience I doubt not is yours, the things that God has refused to me have been my greatest blessings. Then let us remember that "no" is just as much of an answer as "yes," and your experience in your home has been that no for your children usually is the better answer. But how gracious God is in His dealings with those who are out of the way. He calls Adam in tenderness when He says, "Where art thou?" He woos David back again to virtue in the story of the ewe lamb, and gives us a picture of Himself in the seeking love of the father of the prodigal for his boy, lets us understand something of His forgiveness when He sends in the person of His Son to write upon the sand His disposition to remember no more the sin of a guilty woman, and then whispered to Elijah as he is under the juniper tree in a still small voice, and continues to whisper until at last Elijah is on his feet and fleeing for his life back again into the light. Oh, let us come out from under the juniper tree. It is a sad place to find a Christian and a good place to keep away from.

The Blushing Tree.

Among the many wonders of the vast Florida swamps there is nothing more surprising than the blushing tree. It actually blushes when the rain falls upon it. The mysterious and beautiful glow of color which it assumes in a rain storm baffles description. As the rain drenches a tree, gradually, yet unmistakably, the green hue gives way to pink. In a few minutes the green fades from sight. Only in a few half-hidden spots, beneath broad branches and on its trunk, is there a tinge of green to be seen. The tree is as pink as the cheeks of a healthy girl. After an hour or more, when the shower is over, the tree assumes its familiar green once more. As it is changing back, the spectator suddenly realizes the secret of the phenomenon. Certain tiny insects, and not the tree itself, change color. These peculiar parasites are possessed of the power of chameleons. In the bright warm sunshine they are greener than the tree on which they live, but when the chilly rain falls upon them they contract their tiny backs and become a pretty pink tint. Millions of those change the color of the tree, and make it appear to be blushing.

LONGEST SUIT ON RECORD.

Thirty Years of Litigation in the German Courts.

One of the longest lawsuits on record, and one which involved millions of dollars, has just been decided in Germany after thirty years of litigation. Strange to say, there is still something left of the estate fought over—it was so large that the courts and the lawyers did not get it all in spite of the long time the case was in court. They got a good share, however. The family of Arenberg live in Belgium, but they own a snug little duchy in Germany. The Duke of Arenberg used to impose a toll of 20 cents on every ton of coal mined by the Westphalia Coal company, whose mines were in his domains. In the general shape-up of the Franco-Prussian war and the re-formation of the German empire which followed, the Duke of Arenberg and his duchy got lost in the shuffle, and the coal company ceased its tribute. Then the Duke went to law.

In the good old days the robber baron ancestors of the Duke would have called out their men-at-arms, swooped down on that coal company and hanged the president and board of directors to the castle gates. But the coal baron having succeeded the robber baron in these days, the Duke went to law, and after thirty years he has won his case.

For once the coal baron has been downed by the descendant of the robber baron, and the Westphalian Coal company will have to pay arrearages of tribute to the Duke mounting to $36,000,000. The annual income of the Arenbergs from the mines is about $1,200,000! So now they are rich, but if the suit had gone against them they would have been practically ruined. That lawsuit was getting to be their principal asset. As for the coal barons, they are in a "state of mind" and will probably try to arrange a compromise.

A Y. M. C. A. Suggestion.

Young men living in London on small means—and they are almost numberless—are likely to hear good news before long. The scheme for providing a central residential club, which has been under the consideration of a special committee of the Young Men's Christian Association at Exeter hall for some time, is now practically settled. It is proposed to provide a superior kind of Rowton House, with about 400 separate bedrooms and let them at the modest rate of 3 shillings a week This will give the resident the free run of the institution, including library, recreation room, baths and gymnasium, together with the use of storage accommodations for bicycles. Meals will be supplied in a comfortable and commodious dining room at a mere fraction above cost price, and even the laundry will be economically run. It is likely that this hotel for studious youth may cost £25,000 and will soon pay for itself.

Not Hard to Please.

A Washington woman who has a home that is in reality a small farm, in the suburbs close by this city, employs a colored youth as a man-of-all-work around the place. He attended divine services recently and was evidently very much impressed with what he heard at church in reference to religious requirements during Lent. Returning home from the house of worship he literally took away the breath of his employer by announcing, in all seriousness:

"You needn't bother about me during Lent. Just give me a dozen eggs for breakfast every morning, and plenty of oysters and fish and I'll manage to get along very well without meat."

LEMNOS 29828.

Standard and Registered Vol. XV.

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FIRST DAM ;—Mintaka, half sister to Refina, 2.08¾ ; by Chichester 6247 (2.25¼), sire of Luxon 2.11¼ ; Stornaway 2.19, and eight others.

SECOND DAM :— Mina Wilkes, dam of Refina 2.08¾, and sister to Kentucky Wilkes 2.21¼ ; by George Wilkes 519 (2.22), sire of '38.

THIRD DAM :—Minna, dam of Kentucky Wilkes 2.21¼ ; Madison Wilkes 2.24¾, grandam of Refina 2.08¾, etc., by Red Jacket (inbred Morgan.)

FOURTH DAM :—Undine by Grey Eagle ; Lancelot 6860, (2.23) is young at the stud and is the sire of seven, including Lyric 2.14¼, Malvolis 2.17¼, and Unhamen 2.22¼ ; by Messenger Duroc 106 ; dam Green Mountain Maid, dam of nine; by Harry Clay 45

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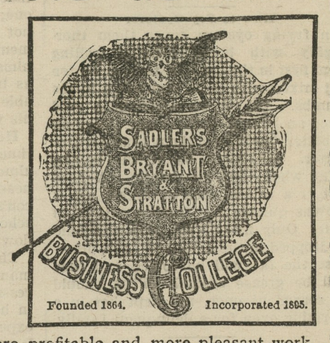

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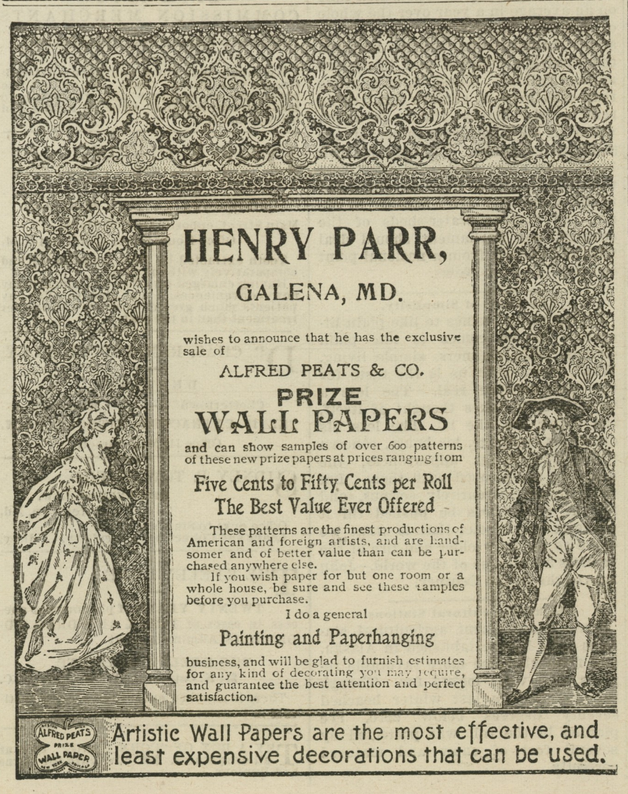

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