

Providence and Calamity

Why Does God Permit Earthquakes,
Cyclones and Disasters?

Text: II. Corinthians, IV., 17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

If there is any question in these days, asked with more persistence than another, it is the one which we have announced for our consideration this morning, namely: "Why does God permit calamities and disasters? Startling incidents, found recorded on the pages of our daily newspapers bring the question to our lips and again. Every day furnishes disaster and every month a calamity and the heart answers "Why?" Why pain? Why disease? Why sorrow? Why trouble? Why could not the universe have been created perfect?

We begin our discourse this morning with a few general considerations. First, there is the foundation of all truth and logic, namely, God must be right and just and true. The universe is founded on law, law is an expression for order, order is founded on justice and righteousness. If God were not just, this world would not hold together for an hour. There is a profound truth expressed in the words of Paul:—"Let God be true and every man a liar." A second consideration leads us to remark that in such a universe as the one in which we live, it would be impossible for us to have love without anxiety, light without darkness, pleasure without pain, heights without depths, mountain without valley and good without evil. A material and physical universe such as ours must be marked by certain natural limitations.

Disasters Democratic

A third reflection leads us to remark that while disasters do occur nature is absolutely democratic in its mode of evolution. Floods do not skip the rich man's house, the lightning flash does not avoid the church, cyclones do not turn out in order to avoid the theological seminary, and last of all, man never loses faith in God notwithstanding all the strange incidents of this life. When the flood sweeps over the city we build a sea wall, when an earthquake shakes the neighborhood, we build an edifice which is earthquake proof. Men still build their homes at the base of Etna and Vesu-