

ST. STEPHEN.

REV. DR. TALMAGE'S DISCOURSE AT THE TABERNACLE.

Five Divine Raphaels Exhibited in His Martyrdom—Gazing into Heaven—Looking at Christ—Stoned—His Dying Prayer.

Brooklyn, June 12.—This morning at the tabernacle the Rev. Dr. De Witt Talmage, D. D., expounded appropriate passages of scripture, after which the congregation sang the favorite hymn, "There is rest for the weary." The reverend doctor's text was Acts vi, 56-60: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their clothes in a young man's feet whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he knelt down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." The preacher said:

Stephen had been preaching a rousing sermon, and the people could not stand it. They resolved to take away his life. Sometimes would like to do in this day, if they dared, with some plain preacher of righteousness—kill him. The only way to silence this man was to knock the breath out of him. So they rushed Stephen out of the gates of the city, and with curse, and whoop, and bellow they brought him to the cliff, as was the custom when they wanted to take away the life of a stoning. Having brought him to the edge of the cliff they pushed him off. After he had fallen they came and looked down, and seeing that he was not yet dead, they began to drop stones upon him, stone after stone, stone after stone. Amid this horrible rain of missiles, Stephen clammers up on his knees and folds his hands, while the blood drips from his temples, and his eyes are turned to the ground; and then, looking up, he makes two prayers, one for himself and one for his murderers. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," that was for himself. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," that was for his assailants. Then, from pain and loss of blood, he swooned away and fell asleep.

Before you take a leap you want to know where you are going to land. Before you climb a ladder you want to know to what point the ladder reaches. And it was right that Stephen, within a few moments of heaven, should be gazing into it. We would all do well to be found in the same posture. There is enough in heaven to keep us gazing. A man of large wealth may have statuary in the hall, and paintings in the sitting room, and works of art in all parts of his house; but he has the chief pictures in the art gallery, and there, hour after hour, you walk with catalogue and glass and ever increasing admiration. Well, heaven is the gallery where God has gathered the chief treasures of his realm. The whole universe is his palace. In this lower room where we stop there are many adornments—tessellated floor of mosaics and blossoms, and on the winding cloud stairs are stretched out canvases on which commingle azure, and purple, and saffron, and gold. But heaven is the gallery in which the chief glories are gathered. There are the brightest robes. There are the richest crowns. There are the highest exaltations. John says of it: "The kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it." And I see the procession forming; and in the line come all empires, and the stars spring up into an arch for the hosts to march under. They keep step to the sound of earthquake and the pitch of avalanche from the mountains, and the flag they bear is the flame of a consuming world, and all heaven turns out with harps and trumpets and myriad voiced acclamations of angelic dominion to welcome them in, and so the kings of the earth bring their honor and glory into it. Do you wonder that good people often stand like Stephen, looking into heaven? We have a great many friends there. There is not a man in this house to-day so isolated in life but there is some one in heaven with whom he once shook hands. As a man gets older the number of his celestial acquaintances very rapidly multiplies. We have not had one glimpse of them since the night we kissed them goodby and they went away; but still we stand gazing at heaven. As when some of our friends go across the sea we stand on the dock or on the steaming and watch them, and after awhile the link of the vessel disappears, and then there is only a patch of sail on the sky, and soon she is gone, and they are all out of sight, and yet we stand looking in the same direction; so when our friends go away from us into the future world we keep looking down through the Narrows, and gazing and gazing, as though we expected that they would come out and stand on some evening cloud, and give us one glimpse of their blissful and transfigured faces. While you long to join their companionship, and the years and the days go with such tedious that they break your heart, and the viper of pain and sorrow and bereavement keeps gnawing at your vitals, you still stand, like Stephen, gazing into heaven. You wonder if they have changed since you saw them last. You wonder if they would recognize your face now, so changed as it been with trouble. You wonder if, amid the myriad delights they have, they care as much for you as they used to when they gave you a helping hand and put their shoulder under your burdens. You wonder if they look any older; and sometimes, in the evening, when the house is all quiet, you wonder if you should call them by their first name if they would not answer, and perhaps sometimes you do make the experiment, and when no one but God and yourself are there you distinctly call their names, and listen and wait, and sit gazing into heaven.

Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. We may be too feeble to employ either of these familiar forms; but this prayer of Stephen is so short, is so concise, is so earnest, is so comprehensive, we surely will be able to say that: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Oh, if that prayer is answered, how sweet it will be to die! This world is never enough

nobles to his table; George I entertained the lords of England at a banquet; Napoleon III welcomed the czar of Russia and the sultan of Turkey to his feast; the emperor of Germany was glad to have our minister, George Bancroft, sit down with him at his table; but tell me, ye who know most of the world's history, what other king ever asked the abandoned, and the forlorn, and the wretched, and the outcast to come and sit down beside him? Oh, wonderful intuition! You can take it that you stand at the head of the darkest alley in all this city and say: "Come! Clothes for your rags, save for your sores, a throne for your eternal reigning." A Christ that talks like that, and acts like that, and pardons like that—do you wonder that Stephen stood looking at him? I hope to spend eternity in the same thing. I must see him. I must look upon that face, once clouded with my sin, but now radiant with my pardon. I want to touch that hand that knocked off my shackles. I want to hear that voice which pronounced my deliverance. Behold him, little children, for if you live to three score years and ten you will see none so fair. Behold him, ye aged ones, for he only can slake the thirst of your failing eyesight. Behold him, earth; behold him, heaven! What a moment when all the nations of the saved shall gather around Christ! All faces that way; all throats that way, gazing on Jesus.

He has taken the last insult from his enemies. The last stone to whose crushing weight he is susceptible has been hurled. Stephen is dead! The disciples come. They take him up. They wash away the blood from the wounds. They straighten out the bruised limbs. They brush back the tangled hair from the brow, and then they pass around to look upon the calm countenance of him who had lived for the poor and died for the truth. Stephen asleep! I have seen the sea driven with the hurricane until the tangled foam caught in the rigging, and wave rising above wave seemed as if about to storm the heavens, and then I have seen the tempest drop, and the waves crouch, and everything become smooth and burnished as though a camping place for the glories of heaven. So I have seen a man, whose life had been tossed and driven, coming down at last to an infinite calm, in which there was the hush of heaven's lullaby. Stephen asleep! I saw such an one. He fought all his days against poverty and against abuse. They traduced his name. They rattled at the door knob while he was dying, with duns for debts and curses for his name. And though he could not pay; yet the peace of God he could not lose, and while the world faded, heaven dawned, and the deepening twilight of earth's night was only the opening twilight of heaven's morn. Not a sign. Not a tear. Not a struggle. Hush! Stephen asleep!

I have not the faculty to tell the weather. I can never tell by the setting sun whether there will be a dropping of rain, or a clearing of the blowing of the wind whether it will be fair weather or foul on the morrow. But I can prophesy, and I will prophesy what weather it will be when you, the Christian, come to die. You may have it very rough now. It may be this week one annoyance, the next another annoyance. It may be this year one bereavement, the next another bereavement. Before this year has passed you may have to beg for bread, or ask for a scuttles of coal or a pair of shoes; but spread your death couch amid the leaves of the forest or make it out of the straw of a pauper's hut, the wolf in the jungle howling close by, or inexorable creditors jerking the pillow from under your dying head, Christ will come in and darkness will go out. And though there may be no hand to close your eyes and no breast to which to rest your dying head and no candle to light the night, the odors of God's hanging garden will regale your soul and at your bedside will halt the chariots of the king. No more rents to pay, no more agony because flour has gone up, no more struggle with "the world, the flesh and the devil," but peace—long, deep, everlasting peace. Stephen asleep!

"Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep, From which none ever wake to weep; A calm and undisturbed repose, Uninjured by the last of foes. "Asleep in Jesus, far from thee Thy kindred and their graves may be; But more is still in Jesus' sleep, From which none ever wake to weep." You have seen enough for one morning. No one can successfully examine more than five pictures in a day. Therefore we stop, having seen this cluster of divine Raphaels—Stephen gazing into heaven; Stephen looking at Christ; Stephen stoned; Stephen in his dying prayer; Stephen asleep.

The Pigmey and the Giant. That the world will turn, under certain provocation, is an undisputed axiom, but to what avail it has ever been difficult to discover. The Volks Zeitung is a plucky, outspoken journal, and in many instances Prince Bismarck caused the editor to be proceeded against, but failed in the undertaking. Now the proprietor has turned plaintiff and has prosecuted the German chancellor for parliamentary offenses against the paper and its editor. The public prosecutor, however, has given it as his decision that, as Prince Bismarck is a general of cavalry, he can only be made answerable to a military court.

To this The Volks Zeitung retorts that the prince has never commanded with the colors and that his rank of general is purely honorary. In support of this view it draws attention to the fact that only the other day the chancellor exercised, as he always has done, his right of voting for a parliamentary candidate, although soldiers on active service enjoy no electoral privileges. The Volks Zeitung announces quite seriously that it intends to carry the case through all the civil courts, and, if necessary, before a military tribunal, which will have one effect, that of worrying the chancellor to desperate resorts, as he has a strong aversion to a military court. This contest between the pigmy and the giant will arouse a great deal of interest in the fatherland.

Victoria Morosini's Husband. I met Mr. Huelscamp the other day on a Sixth avenue car, industriously collecting fares, and do you know I begin to admire the patient and uncomplaining manner in which he has gone on earning a decent and humble livelihood in the face of the largest possible provocation from the other side of the Huelscamp question? Not a word seems ever to have passed his lips against the wife who deserted him, but at her side was his wife and married him with her eyes open, not even against the relatives who have endeavored to cover him with a coating of mud several feet thick. I am not an admirer of coachmen who run away with their master's daughters, but this thing having been done by Mr. Huelscamp, has he not since acted with remarkable discretion and common sense? Truth.

David Hunter Strother. Readers of Harper's Magazine of thirty years ago will be glad to know that "Porte Crayon," whose pen and pencil sketches of life in the south in those days were so charming, is passing a peaceful and prosperous old age in his native state, Virginia. His real name is David Hunter Strother, and his service in the Union army during the war of the rebellion entitles him to the title of "general." Gen. Strother is 70 years old and in perfect health.

Perhaps it has treated us a great deal better than we deserved to be treated; but if on the dying pillow there shall break the light of that better world, we shall have no more regret about leaving a small, dark, damp house for one large, beautiful and capacious. That dying minister in Philadelphia, some years ago, beautifully depicted it when, in the last moment, he threw up his hands and cried out: "I move into the light!"

Pass on now and I will show you one more picture, and that is Stephen asleep. With a pathos and simplicity peculiar to the Scriptures, the text says of Stephen: "He fell asleep." "Oh," you say, "what a place that was to sleep! I have seen a man, whose life had been tossed and driven, coming down at last to an infinite calm, in which there was the hush of heaven's lullaby. Stephen asleep! I saw such an one. He fought all his days against poverty and against abuse. They traduced his name. They rattled at the door knob while he was dying, with duns for debts and curses for his name. And though he could not pay; yet the peace of God he could not lose, and while the world faded, heaven dawned, and the deepening twilight of earth's night was only the opening twilight of heaven's morn. Not a sign. Not a tear. Not a struggle. Hush! Stephen asleep!"

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