

Talmage's Sermon

Employments of Heaven. . . .

Washington, D. C., Dec. 6, 1896.—Dr. Talmage's sermon to-day gives a very unusual view of the celestial world, and is one of the most unique discourses of the great preacher. The text is Ezekiel 1: 1: "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives on the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened."

Ezekiel, with others, had been ex-patriated and while in foreign slavery, was standing on the banks of the royal canal which he and other serfs had been condemned to dig by the order of Nebuchadnezzar—this royal canal in the text called the river of Chebar—the illustrious exile had visions of heaven. Indeed, it is almost always so, that the brightest visions of heaven come not to those who are on mountain-top of prosperity, but to some John on desolate Patmos, or to some Paul in Mamertine dungeon, or to some Ezekiel standing on the banks of a ditch he had been compelled to dig—yea, to the weary, to the heart-broken, to those whom sorrow has banished. The text is very particular to give us the exact time of the vision. It was in the thirtieth year, and in the fourth month, and in the fifth day of the month. So you have had visions of earth you shall never forget. You remember the year, you remember the month, you remember the day, you remember the hour. Why may we not have some such vision now, and it be in the twelfth month, and in sixth day of the month?

The question is often silently asked, though perhaps never audibly propounded, "What are our departed Christian friends doing now?" The question is more easily answered than you might perhaps suppose. Though there has come no recent intelligence from the heavenly city, and we seem dependent upon the story of eighteen centuries ago, still I think we may from strongest inference decide what are the present occupations of our transferred kinsfolk. After God has made a nature he never eradicates the chief characteristic of its temperament. You never knew a man phlegmatic in temperament to become sanguine in temperament. You never knew a man sanguine in temperament to become phlegmatic in temperament. Conversion plants new principles in the soul, but Paul and John are just as different from each other after conversion as they were different from each other before conversion. If conversion does not eradicate the prominent characteristics of temperament, neither will death eradicate them. Paul and John are as different from each other in heaven as they were different from each other in Asia Minor.

You have then only by a sum in subtraction and a sum in addition to decide what are the employments of your departed friends in the better world. You are to subtract from them all earthly dressness and add all earthly goodness, and then you are to come to the conclusion that they are doing now in heaven what in their best moment they did on earth. The reason why so many people never start for heaven is because they could not stand it if they got there it should turn out to be the rigid and formal place some people photograph it. We like to come to church, but we would not want to stay here till next summer. We like to hear the "Hallelujah Chorus," but we would not want to hear it all the time for fifty centuries. It might be on some great occasion, it would be possibly comfortable to wear a crown of gold weighing several pounds, but it would be an affliction to wear such a crown forever. In other words, we run the descriptions of heaven into the ground while we make that which was intended as especial and celebrative to be the exclusive employment in heaven. You might as well, if asked to describe the habits of American society, describe a Decoration Day, or a Fourth of July, or an autumnal Thanksgiving, as though it were all the time that way.

I am not going to speculate in regard to the future world, but I must, by inevitable laws of inference and deduction and common sense, conclude that in heaven we will be just as different from each other as we are now different, and hence that there will be at least as many different employments in the celestial world as there are employments here. Christ is to be the great love, the great joy, the great rapture, the great worship of heaven, but will that abolish employments? No more than love on earth—paternal, filial, fraternal, conjugal love, abolishes earthly occupation.

In the first place, I remark that all those of our departed Christian friends, who on earth, found great joy in the fine arts, are now indulging their tastes in the same direction. On earth they had their gladdest pleasures amid pictures and statuary, and in the study of the laws of light and shade and perspective. Have you any idea that that affluence of faculty at death collapsed and perished? Why so, when there is more for them to look at and they have keener appreciation of the beautiful, and they stand amid the very looms where the sunsets and the rainbows and the spring mornings are woven? Are you so obtuse as to suppose that because the painter drops his easel and the sculptor his chisel, and the engraver his knife, that therefore that taste, which he was enlarging and in-

consistently for forty or fifty years, is entirely obliterated? These artists, or these friends of art on earth worked in coarse material and with imperfect brain and with frail hand. Now they have carried their art into larger liberties and into wider circumference. They are at their old business yet, but without the fatigues, without the limitations, without the hindrances of the terrestrial studio. Raphael could improve upon his masterpiece of "Michael the Archangel," now that he has seen him, and could improve upon his masterpiece of the "Holy Trinity," now that he has visited them. Michael Angelo could better present the "Last Judgment" after he had seen its flash and heard the rumbling battering-rams of its thunder. Exquisite colors here, graceful lines here, powerful chiaroscuro here, but I am persuaded that the grander studies and the brighter galleries are higher up, by the winding marble stairs of the sepulchre, and that Turner and Holman Hunt, and Rembrandt, and Titian, and Paul Veronese, if they exercised saving faith in the Christ whom they portrayed upon the canvas, are painting yet, but their strength of faculty multiplied ten thousandfold. Their hand has forgotten its cunning, but the spirit has faculties as far superior to four fingers and a thumb as the supernatural is superior to the human. The reason that God took away their eye and their hand and their brain was that he might give them something more limber, more wieldy, more skillful, more multiplicitous. Do not, therefore, be melancholy among the tapestries, and the bric-a-brac, and the embroideries, and the water-colors, and the works of art which your departed friends used to admire. Do not say, "I am so sorry they had to leave all these things." Rather say, "I am glad they have gone up to higher artistic opportunity and appreciation." Our friends who found so much joy in the fine arts on earth are now luxuriating in Louvres and Luxembourgs celestial.

Again, I remark that those of our departed Christian friends, who in this world had very strong military spirit, are now in armies celestial and out in bloodless battle. There are hundreds of people born soldiers. They cannot help it. They belong to regiments in time of peace. They cannot hear a drum or a fife without trying to keep step to the music. They are Christian, and, when they fight, they fight on the right side. Now, when these, our Christian friends who had natural and powerful military spirit, entered heaven, they entered the celestial army. The door of heaven scarcely opens but you hear a military demonstration. David cried out, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand." Elisha saw the mountains filled with celestial cavalry. St. John said, "The armies which are in heaven followed him on white horses." Now, when those who had the military spirit on earth sanctified entered glory, I suppose they right away enlisted in some heavenly campaign; they volunteered right away. There must needs be in heaven soldiers with a soldierly spirit. There are grand parade days when the King reviews the troops. There must be armed escort sent out to bring up from earth to heaven those who were more than conquerors. There must be crusades ever being fitted out for some part of God's dominion—battles, bloodless, groanless, painless. Angels of evil to be fought down and fought out. Other rebellious worlds to be conquered. Worlds to be put to the torch. Worlds to be saved. Worlds to be demolished. Worlds to be sunk. Worlds to be hoisted. Beside that in our own world there are battles for the right and against the wrong where we must have the heavenly military. That is what keeps us Christian reformers so buoyant. So few good men against so many bad men, so few churches against so many grossshops, so many pulp printing presses against so many polluted printing presses, and yet we are buoyant and courageous, because while we know that the armies of evil in the world are larger in numbers than the army of truth, there are celestial cohorts in the air fighting on our side. I have not so much faith in the army on the ground as I have in the army in the air. O God, open our eyes that we may see them; the military spirits that went up from earth to join the military spirits before the throne—Joshua and Caleb, and Gideon, and David, and Samson, and the hundreds of Christian warriors who on earth fought with fleshly arm, and now having gone up on high are coming down the hills of heaven ready to fight among the invisibles. Our departed Christian friends, who had the military spirit in them sanctified, are in the celestial army. Whether belonging to the artillery or the cavalry or the infantry, I know not. I only know that they have started out for fleet service, and courageous service, and everlasting service. Perhaps they may come this way to fight on our side, and drive sin, and meanness, and Satan from all our hearts. Yonder they are coming, coming. Did you hear them as they swept by?

But what are the men of the law, who in this world found their chief joy in the legal profession—what are they doing now? Studying law in a universe where everything is controlled by law from the flight of humming-bird to flight of world—law, not dry and hard and drudging, but righteous and magnificent law, before which man and cherub, and seraph, and archangel, and God himself bow. The chain of law long enough to wind around the immensities, and infinity, and eternity. Chain of law. What a place to study law, where all the links of the chain are in the hand!

What are our departed Christian friends who in this world had their joy in the healing art doing now? Busy at their old business. No sickness in heaven, but plenty of sickness on earth, plenty of wounds in the different parts of God's domain to be healed and to be medicated. Those glorious souls coming down, not in lazy doctor's gig, but with lightning locomotion. You cannot understand why that patient got well after all the skillful doctors had said he must die. Perhaps Abercrombie touched him—Abercrombie, who, after many years doctoring the bodies and the souls of people in Scotland, went up to God in 1844. Perhaps Abercrombie touched him. I should not wonder if my old friend Dr. John Brown, who died in Edinburgh—John Brown, the author of "Rab and His Friends"—John Brown, who was a humble Christian as he was a skillful physician and world-renowned author; I should not wonder if he had been back again to see some of his old patients. Those who had their joy in healing the sickness and the woes of earth, gone up to heaven, are come forth again for benignant medication. But what are our departed Christian friends who in all departments of usefulness were busy, finding their chief joy in doing good—what are they doing now? Going right on with the work, John Howard visiting dungeons; the dead women of Northern and Southern battlefields still abroad looking for the wounded; George Peabody still watching the poor; Thomas Clarkson still looking after the enslaved—all of those who did good on earth busier since death than before. The tombstone not the terminus but the starting-post. What are our departed Christian friends who found their chief joy in studying God, doing now? Studying God yet. No need of revelation now, for unblanched they are face to face. Now they can handle the omnipotent thunderbolts, just as a child handles the sword of a father come back from victorious battle. They have no sin; no fear, consequently. Studying Christ, not through a revelation save the revelation of the scars—that deep lettering which brings it all up quick enough. Studying the Christ of the Bethlehem caravansary; the Christ of the awful massacre with its hemorrhage of head, and hand, and foot, and side; the Christ of the shattered mausoleum; Christ the Sacrifice, the Star, the Son, the Man, the God, the God-man, the man-God. But hark! the bell of the cathedral rings—the cathedral bell of heaven. What is the matter now? There is going to be a great meeting in the temple. Worshipers all coming through the aisles. Make room for the Conqueror. Christ standing in the temple. All heaven gathering around him. Those who loved the beautiful, come to look at the Rose of Sharon. Those who loved music, come to listen to his voice. Those who were mathematicians, come to count the years of his reign. Those who were explorers, come to discover the height and the depth and the length and the breadth of his love. Those who had the military spirit on earth sanctified, and the military spirit in heaven, come to look at the Captain of their salvation. The astronomers come to look at the Morning Star. The men of the law come to look at him who is the judge of quick and dead. The men who healed the sick come to look at him who was wounded for our transgressions. All different and different forever in many respects, yet all alike in admiration for Christ, in worship for Christ, and all alike in joining in the doxology: "Unto him who washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God; to him be glory in the church throughout all ages, world without end." Amen.

To show you that your departed friends are more alive than they ever were, to make you homesick for heaven, to give you an enlarged view of the glories to be revealed, I have preached this sermon.

CHILDREN'S CORNER.
GOOD READING FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.
Jolly Jack O'Lantern—The Boy and the Man—When Willie Went Walnutting—Keeping with the Gang—Good Advice for Little Readers.

The Boy and the Man.
Coleridge Patteson—a scholar at Eton, one of England's famous historic schools—was a high spirited lad, and a great favorite in the cricket eleven of the school, for he was an uncommonly good player. At the club suppers "Coley," as the boys called him, was disturbed by the questionable jests and stories of some of the members and at length declared publicly that he should protest against anything like indecency in the conversation or in the songs that were sung. Notwithstanding this, at the next meeting one of the boys began to sing a salacious ditty, and "Coley" rose indignantly to his feet. "If this sort of thing goes on I shall leave the room," he said. The singer continued, and "Coley" marched out. The next day he wrote to the captain of the eleven, and assured him that unless he received an apology he should quit the club. He was too important a man to lose, and the apology was sent. The trial of feeling to the young fellow who made it could have been no greater than the trial of demanding it and risking a refusal; for, like all enthusiastic cricket-players, "Coley" was passionately fond of the game. But he loved character better than cricket, and the outcome was a victory of principle. Here was the kind of boy of which martyrs are made. The spirit that emboldened him to resent villainous sent him afterward to present Christianity to a pagan people. A group of islands north of New Guinea in the South Pacific became the brave man's field of labor, and there he fell a victim to heathen cruelty. But death has not erased from the memory of earth his example of many courage and loyal discipleship. The story of the boy of Eton and "Martyr Bishop of Melanesia" is told here—and will be told for many a year to come—to kindle fearless virtue in other minds, and impress a noble lesson of Christ-like sacrifice.

When Willie Went Walnutting.
Wisconsin's wild winds were whistling when Willie Wade went walnutting. Warmly wrapped was Willie, with woollen wrapper, wadded waistcoat with warm wristlets. Winnie Wade wondered why Willie wouldn't wait warmer weather, when Willie would wait with Willie. Willie wandered where Walter West was wheeling wood, with wonderful wheelbarrow, wishing Walter would wait. Without wasting words, Walter whistled, "Whew! walnuts will wait, while wood won't!" Where walnuts were, woodmen were working with wabby-wheeled wagon, with worn, weary, wretched work-horse, which was wasted with weakness, which was well worn-out with work. Woodman Wheeler waggishly wrenched Willie's water-pail, whereupon water wet Willie's winkers; Willie woefully. Woodman was worried. "Why weep, Willie? Weep women weep with weep woe. Whistle, Willie!" When winkers were wiped Woodman Wheeler went with Willie where walnuts were. Willie's wooden water-pail was well-filled, while we wrens warbled, wood-pigeons whizzed. Willie warily watched while Woodman waged war with wasps—which wasn't wise. Wasps were waxing

NOTES OF THE DAY.
Matches have not yet displaced the tinder box in certain rural districts of Spain and Italy.
David Coulter, a Kansas prisoner charged with murder, has invented a corn-husking machine.
William B. Phelps, of New Madrid, Mo., is credited with a total of 1,350 squirrels in three days' hunting on Little river.
All the doors in John Kipp's house at Cedar Bayou, Harris county, Texas, were opened and a lid of the kitchen range was blown off by a bolt of lightning.
There are now 140 cooking rooms connected with the London schools, for instructing pupils, and 30,000 girls are receiving instruction in culinary and other domestic affairs.
There is no printing press large enough to print the official ballot. This leaves the newspapers out of the job, since the law declares that two in every county shall print the ballot "life size."
The longest commercial distance at which the long-distance telephone is now operated is from Boston to St. Louis, a distance of 1,400 miles. This line is more than twice as long as any European telephone line.
The net earnings of 133 railroads up to Sept. 1 show a gain of \$2,500,000 over the net earnings for the first eight months of 1895. These figures do not include the heavy cotton movement which has taken place since September.

CHILDREN'S CORNER.
GOOD READING FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.
The affair was quite brilliant, Quite sparkling, scintillant And the guests all with radiance shone;
All were heard to declare that this brilliant affair Was the finest that ever was known.
The stars were all there, and a big comet, too, And a great crowd of meteors bright; And swarms upon swarms of gay, dancing fireflies
To the lustrous scene added their mite. To the beaming and gleaming Of golden light streaming From above, in the star-bedecked skies,
Was the pale, modest glow of the glow-worm below And the glim of the dancing fireflies.
A jolly Jack Lantern appeared on the scene And his face wore a broad, happy smile; He gazed at the moon and he blinked at the stars, And then talked with the fireflies awhile;
And as morning was breaking And guests were leave-taking, While the dawn was yet fresh, new and crisp,
Jolly Jack ran away—so the gossips all say— With a wandering Will-o-the-Wisp.
ARTHUR J. BURDICK.

Seeing the Point.
A boy returned from school one day with the report that his scholarship had fallen below the usual average. "Son," said his father, "you've fallen behind this month, haven't you?" "Yes, sir." "How did that happen?" "Don't know, sir." The father knew, if the son did not. He had observed a number of dime novels scattered about the house; but had not thought it worth while to say anything until a fitting opportunity should offer itself. A basket of apples stood upon the floor, and he said: "Empty out those apples, and take the basket and bring it to me half full of chips." Suspecting nothing, the boy obeyed. "And now," he continued, "put those apples back into the basket." When half the apples were replaced, the boy said: "Father, they roll off. I can't put any more in." "Put them in, I tell you." "But, father, I can't put them in." "Put them in? No, of course you can't put them in. You said you didn't know why you fell behind at school, and I will tell you why. Your mind is like that basket. It will not hold more than so much. And here you've been the past month filling it up with cheap dirt—dime novels." The boy turned on his heel, whistled, and said: "Whew! I see the point." Not a dime novel has been seen in the house from that day to this.

Keep Thyself Pure.
Satan tempts the young man with this plausible yet meretricious argument: "The desires of the flesh are natural and God-given. It cannot be wrong to gratify an instinct or appetite implanted by the Creator." Having lodged this thought in the untutored mind, the devil inflames the imagination with false pictures of pleasures and glosses sin over with the glittering expectations, until a pure youth, from a pure home, is willing to venture on unknown and forbidden paths, and then all too late, says Rev. D. M. Pratt, awakes to the awful fact that the slime of the pit has entered his soul; that he is no longer innocent, and can never escape from the consciousness of the fact that he is a moral blot on the pure life about him, is a contaminating influence in the refined home of his childhood, is a moral leper everywhere, and holds under cover a secret which he dare not expose.

Love's Sweet Work.
A London paper, according to the Central Baptist, tells this touching story of Prof. Herkmer. His aged father, who lives with him in his splendid home at Bushney, used to model in clay in his early life. He has recently taken to it again, but his fear is that soon his hands will lose their skill, and his work will show the marks of imperfection. It is his early rest and when he goes to his early rest and when he has gone his talented son goes into the studio, takes up his father's feeble attempts, and makes the work as beautiful as art can make it. When the old man comes down in the morning he takes his hands and looks at it, and rubs his hands and says: "Ha! I can do as well as ever I did!" May we not believe that the hands of divine love will thus make over our feeble work for God till it shall bear the light of day and be perfect to all eternity?

warmer, whereupon Willie, with water-pail, went where Widow Walman, Winnie's washer-woman, was, who well-washed woollens with warm water, with washing-machine, wringing with wringer.
Willie went with wash-room, where Widow Walman welcomed Willie with warm wheat waffles, with wholesome whortle-berries washed well with water.
When well-warmed Willie wandered where water was, willows waved, where, when weather was warmer, white waxen water-lilies were witnessed.
Willie waded where web-footed water-fowl wouldn't wait Willie's welcome.
Winnie was window-watching, wondering where Willie was, whereupon Willie, with wellfilled water-pail, was witnessed.
Winnie warily welcomed Willie. When woods witten with winter, when windows wear wonderful white-frost works, Winnie, with Willie, will welcome walnuts, will want warm walnut-cake
W. W. W.

Keeping with the Gang.
Just keeping with the gang and its results is well exemplified in the following story from the Western Recorder:
"The first glass of beer I ever drank was like taking a dose of medicine," said a young man who bore the nose and flesh-marks of a regular old toper. "But it is no dose now," continued he, with a chuckle.
"May I ask," said I, "since beer was so distasteful to you at first, why did you persist in cultivating a taste for it?"
"Oh, just to keep with the gang," was the laconic reply.
"Just to keep with the gang," that was all. And yet, says W. M. Gilman, in Western Recorder, what a terrible penalty—a physical wreck, a moral leper, manhood sapped, fond hopes blasted, mother's heart bleeding, friends disappointed, despair and death, eternal death, approaching. But that is just the way most drunkards are made. Eliminate the saloons of their social features, and you have crippled them of boys. Few men, I fancy, ever took their first drink of liquor when alone. Without congenial and sympathizing companions, there is little fascination in the cup for the beginner.

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Palminists say that long fingers are a sign of refinement. A short, stubby hand argues a lack of sensibility; a thin thumb, rather small, denotes weakness. Strength of character is shown by the thumb exerting itself over the other fingers. If the thumb curves backward the owner is obstinate.—Ladies' Home Journal.
The season is rapidly approaching when people lie about doing better next year.
I know that my life was saved by Pilsner's Cure for Consumption.—John A. Miller, At. Sable, Mich., April 21, 1895.
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