

THE ESCAPE OF PAUL.

DR. TALMAGE DESCRIBES IT IN HIS MOBILE SERMON.

He Chose as His Subject "Unappreciated Services"—How Great Results Hang on Slender Threads—Many Helpful Influences Never Acknowledged.

MOBILE, March 11.—Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., who is now visiting the south, selected as the subject of today's sermon "Unappreciated Services," the text being taken from II Corinthians xi, 33, "Through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall."

Damascus is a city of white and glistening architecture—sometimes called "the eye of the east," sometimes called "a pearl surrounded by emeralds," at one time distinguished for swords of the best material, called Damascus blades, and upholstery of richest fabric, called damasks.

A horseman of the name of Paul, riding toward this city, had been thrown from the saddle. The horse had dropped under a flash from the sky, which at the same time was so bright it blinded the rider for many days, and, I think, so permanently injured his eyesight that this defect of vision became a hindrance to his work.

The mayor gives authority for his arrest, and the popular cry is: "Kill him! Kill him!" The city is surrounded by a high wall, and the gates are watched by the police lest the Cilician preacher escape. Many of the houses are built on the wall, and their balconies projected clear over and hovering above the gardens outside. It was customary to lower baskets out of these balconies and pull up fruits and flowers from the gardens.

Detectives prowled around from house to house looking for Paul, but his friends hid him now in one place, now in another. He is no coward, as 50 incidents in his life demonstrate. But he feels his work is not done yet, and so he evades assassination.

They have positive evidence that he is in the house of one of the Christians, the balcony of whose home reaches over the wall. "Here he is! Here he is!" The vociferation and blasphemy and howling of the pursuers are at the front door. They break in.

Observe first on what a slender tenure great results hang. The ropemaker who twisted that cord fastened to that lowering basket never knew how much would depend on the strength of it. How if it had been broken and the apostle's life had been dashed out? What would have become of the Christian church? All that magnificent missionary work in Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Galatia, Macedonia, would have been accomplished. All his writings that make up so indispensable and enchanting a part of the New Testament would never have been written.

Did ever ship of more than thousand tons crossing the sea have so important a passenger as had once a boat of leaves, from taffrail to stern only three or four feet, the vessel made waterproof by a coat of bitumen and floating on the Nile with the infant lawgiver of the Jews on board? What if some crocodile should crunch it? What if some of the cattle wading in for a drink should sink it? Vessels of war sometimes carry 40 guns looking through the port-holes, ready to open battle.

The parsonage at Epworth, England, is on fire in the night, and the father rushes through the hallway for the rescue of his children. Seven children are out and safe on the ground, but one remains in the consuming building. That one wakes, and finding his bed on fire and the building crumbling comes to the window, and two peasants make a ladder of their bodies, one peasant standing on the shoulder of the other, and down the human ladder the boy descends—John Wesley. If you would know how much depended on that ladder of peasants, ask the millions of Methodists on both sides of the sea.

Oh, men and women here assembled, you brag sometimes how you have fought your way through the world, but I think there have been helpful influences that you have never fully acknowledged. Has there not been some influence in your early or present home that the world cannot see? Does there not reach to you from among the New England hills, or from western prairies, or from southern plantation, or from English or Scottish or Irish home, a cord of influence that has kept you right when you would have gone astray, and which, after you had made a crooked track, recalled you? The rope may be as long as 30 years or 500 miles long or 3,000 miles long, but hands that went out of mortal sight long ago still hold the rope.

You want a very swift horse, and you need to rowl him with sharpest spurs, and to let the reins lie loose upon the neck, and to give a shout to a racer, if you are going to ride out of reach of your mother's prayers. Why, a ship crossing the Atlantic in seven days can't sail away from them! A sailor finds them on the lookout as he takes his place, and finds them on the mast as he climbs the ratlines to disentangle a rope in the tempest, and finds them swinging on the hammock when he turns in. Why not be frank and acknowledge it? The more we would long ago have been dashed to pieces had not gracious and loving hands steadily and lovingly and mightily held the rope.

But there must come a time when we shall find out who these Damascus were who lowered Paul in the basket, and greet them and all those who have rendered to God and the world unrecognized and unrecorded services. That is going to be one of the glad excitements of heaven—the hunting up and picking out of those who did great good on earth and got no credit for it. Here the church has been going on 19 centuries, and this is probably the first sermon ever recognizing the services of the people in that Damascus balcony. Charles G. Finney said to a dying Christian, "Give my love to St. Paul when you meet him." When you and I meet him, as we will, I shall ask him to introduce me to those peo-

ple who get him out of the Damascus peril.

Once for 36 hours we expected every indiment to go to the bottom of the ocean. The waves struck through the skylights and rushed down into the hold of the ship and lashed against the boilers. It was an awful time, but by the blessing of God and the faithfulness of the men in charge we came out of the peril, and we arrived at home. Each one before leaving the ship thanked Captain Andrews. I do not think there was a man or woman that went off that ship without thanking Captain Andrews, and when years after I heard of his death I was impelled to write a letter of condolence to his family in Liverpool.

Everybody recognized the goodness, the courage and the kindness of Captain Andrews, but it occurs to me now that we never thanked the engineer. He stood away down in the darkness amid the hissing furnaces doing his whole duty. Nobody thanked the engineer, but God recognized his holism, and his continuance, and his fidelity, and there will be just as high reward for the engineer who worked out of sight as the captain who stood on the bridge of the ship in the midst of the howling tempest.

A Christian woman was seen going along the edge of a wood every eventide, and the neighbors in the country did not understand how a mother with so many cares and anxieties should waste so much time as to be idly sauntering out evening by evening. It was found out afterward that she went there to pray for her household, and while there one evening she wrote that beautiful hymn, famous in all ages for cheering Christian hearts:

I love to steal awhile away From every cumbering care And spend the hours of setting day In humble, grateful prayer. Shall there be no reward for such unpretending yet everlasting service? GOD WILL INTRODUCE US.

We go into long sermon to prove that we will be able to recognize people in heaven when there is one reason we fail to present, and that is that we have not all introduced us. We shall have them all pointed out. You would not be guilty of the impoliteness of having friends in your parlor not introduced, and celestial politeness will demand that we be made acquainted with all the heavenly household. What rehearsal of old times and recital of stirring reminiscences.

If others fall to give introduction, God will take us through, and before our first 24 hours in heaven—if it were calculated by earthly timepieces—have passed we shall meet and greet all the heavenly celebrities that in our entire mortal state we met with earthly celebrities. Many who made great noise of usefulness will sit on the last seat by the front door of the heavenly temple, while right up within arm's reach of the heavenly throne will be many who, though they could not preach themselves or do great exploits for God, nevertheless held the rope.

Come, let us go right up and accost those on this circle of heavenly throne. Surely they must have killed in battle a million men. Surely they must have been buried in the sea, and all the towers of all the cities of the national grief. Who art thou, mighty one of heaven? "I lived by choice the unmarried daughter in a humble home that I might take care of my parents in their old age, and I endured without complaints all their querulousness and ministered to all their wants for 30 years."

Let us pass on round the circle of thrones. Who art thou, mighty one of heaven? "I was for 30 years a Christian invalid and suffered all the while, occasionally writing a note of sympathy for those worse off than I, and was a general confidant of all those who had trouble, and once in awhile I was strong enough to make a garment for that poor family in the back lane." Pass on to another throne. Who art thou, mighty one of heaven? "I was the mother who raised a whole family of children for God, and they are out in the world, Christian merchants, Christian mechanics, Christian wives, and I have had full reward of all my toil." Let us pass on in the circle of thrones.

Who art thou, mighty one of heaven? "I had a Sabbath school class, and they were always on my heart, and they all entered the kingdom of God, and I am waiting for their arrival." But who art thou, the mighty one of heaven on this other throne? "In time of bitter persecution I owned a house in Damascus, a house on the wall. A man who preached Christ was hounded from street to street, and I hid him from the assassins, and when I found them breaking in my house and I could no longer keep him safely I advised him to flee for his life, and a basket was let down over the wall with the maltreated man in it, and I was one who helped him the rope." And that is all.

And while I was lost in amazement I heard a strong voice that sounded as though it might once have been hoarse from many exposures and triumphant as though it might have belonged to one of the martyrs, and it said, "Not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen—yes, and things which are not to bring to naught things which are, and yea, all things should glory in his presence." And I looked to see of whose voice he had said, "Through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall."

Henceforth think of nothing as insignificant. A little thing may decide your all. A Cunarder put out from England for New York. It was well equipped, but in putting up a stove in the pilot box a nail was driven too near the compass. You know how that nail would affect the compass. The ship's compass, perturbed by the distracted compass, put the ship 300 miles off her right course, and suddenly the man on the lookout cried, "Land, ho!" and the ship was halted within a few yards of her demolition on Nantucket shoals. A sixpenny nail came near wrecking a Cunarder. Small ropes hold mighty destinies.

A minister seated in Boston at his table, lacking a word, puts his hand behind his head and tilts back his chair to think, and the ceiling falls and crushes the table and would have crushed him. A minister in Jamaica at night, by the light of an insect called the candlefly, is kept from stepping over a precipice a hundred feet. F. W. Robertson, the celebrated English clergyman, said that he entered the ministry from a train of circumstances started by the barking of a dog. Had the wind blown one way on a certain day, the Spanish inquisition would have been established in England, but it blew the other way, and that dropped the accursed institutions with 75,000 tons of shipping, to the bottom of the sea or stung the splintered logs on the rocks.

Nothing unimportant in your life or mine. Three ciphers placed on the right side of the figure 1 make a thousand, and six ciphers on the right side of the figure 1 a million, and our nothingness placed on the right side may be augmentation ilimitable. All the ages of time and eternity affected by the basket let down from a Damascus balcony.

ODDS AND ENDS. The loud talker is seldom a strong thinker. Spain is one of the principal copper producing countries. A man never looks to see if there is a woman under the bed. The estimated death rate of the world is 24 per 1,000 per annum. How to make money out of Wall Street—keep out.—Newport News. Ancient spinsterhood is the flirt's punishment for contempt of court. Croesus' wealth was derived from the placer gold mines of the river Pactolus. Because misfortunes never come singly should be no argument against marriage. British vessels do nearly all the carrying trade of Great Britain and nearly half that of all the rest of Europe. The New Nation, which was started some time ago by Mr. Bellamy, the author of "Looking Backward," has suspended publication. A Berlin bird fancier died lately of a peculiar form of consumption contracted in consequence of receiving into his nostrils parasites common to canary birds. A university institute of physiology and an institute designed especially for carrying on electrobiological researches have been founded at Brussels by M. Salva, a wealthy Belgian. A granite fountain is to be erected in front of Cooper Union, New York city, the gift of Mrs. Marie Guise Newcomb, the artist, who raised the necessary money by selling one of her works. The pretor was a magistrate elected for the purpose of administering justice when the consuls were absent from Rome. There were two pretors—one for the city, one for places at a distance. In a Scotch asylum there is a woman one form of whose insanity before she was incarcerated consisted in having her horses' shoes of solid gold, with gold nails, each set of shoes and nails costing £500. Recent estimates show that about 40,000,000 pounds of candy are sold in this country during the year, or a fraction over 109,589 pounds a day. At an average of 20 cents a pound, that would be \$12,971.80 paid out every day in the year for candy. Baron Edmond de Rothschild's colony in Palestine shows such promise of success that he has purchased more land. In accordance with the baron's request the colonists have all abandoned the use of Yiddish and now speak nothing but Hebrew. Had Her New Shoes Shined. Two modest young women, quickly dressed, crossed Broadway. The young women had very rosy cheeks. They may have been from the country, or they may live in a remote suburb of Brooklyn. One wore gold rimmed eyeglasses. As her toes peeped in and out from under her dress every body could see that she wore brand new shoes. She could see them through her eyeglasses, and they worried her. They were the effect of her fine dress and coat and bonnet. The shoes were entirely in- nocent of polish. Dull black, they had never been shined. On the north side of Park place, near Broadway, stood a bootblack's chair. Of a sudden impulse the girl with the eyeglasses jumped into the chair and seated herself. She put her feet—very pretty little feet—on the pedals, and the matter of fact bootblack set to work to shine her shoes. The other girl stood bravely by. A great many people passed, and the unusual sight affected them differently. Some of the women turned up their noses when they saw the girl in the chair. The thoughtless men who passed grinned. One man scowled and said, "Humph! they'll be in the barber chairs next." Another looked on admiringly and complimented the young woman thus: "There's a girl with good sense."

When the two young women saw they were attracting attention, they blushed until their cheeks were even redder. Then the girl with the glasses recovered her self possession and stared stonily at those who stared at her. It was noticeable that the bootblack, perhaps from sheer force of habit, turned up the hem of his customers' dress about an inch. When he had put a "patent leather shine" on her shoes, the young woman jumped down from the chair, paid him and walked away with her friend, looking at her shoe tips with the greatest satisfaction.—New York World.

Primitive Locomotion. Professor Stewart's lecture at the Royal institute on the subject of primitive locomotion reminds one that the gift of mobility is not confined only to those that are possessed of legs and wings. Even plants and such primitive organizations as the rudimentary zoophytes, who appear to be all stomach, yield to the imperious dictates of overcrowding and change their local habitations by unseen and mysterious means. Indeed in the struggle for existence the race is not always to the swift, and the slow snail, hampered by the burden of his dwelling house and dependent upon the contraction of his muscles for the sole means of locomotion, may outstay the centipede with its multitude of legs.

Overcrowding, as the professor remarked, is a strong incentive to movement. Like the Yankee's rabbit who had to climb a tree because the dog "crowded him so," even the most unprovided organism finds legs when its existence is at stake. It is only in the case of civilized humanity that overcrowding does not bring about its own cure. Man, who has subdued all the forces of nature to his beast of burden, still clings helplessly to the overfull centers in which he finds himself.—London Graphic.

A Harvester of Death. Military authorities at Vienna are extremely reticent concerning the mechanism of that harvester of death, the Salvo-mitrailleuse, but they have been unable to conceal their satisfaction over its wonderful capabilities. The great advantage possessed by this weapon over existing rapid fire guns is found in its ability to sustain a moderately heavy discharge of from 30 to 100 rounds per minute, and this can be increased to 300 or more per minute when a dangerous phase has been developed by the attack of an enemy. The mechanism for this purpose is very simple and consists of an oscillating pendulum which regulates the speed of firing.—Charleston News and Courier.

Is a Railroad the Railroad? A peculiar lawsuit is pending up in Aroostook county. A nurseryman of Houlton sold a lot of apple trees about five years ago to a man in Patten, agreeing to take his pay when the railroad was built to Patten. The road then spoken of was the Northern Maine, which was not built. Now that the Bangor and Aroostook is completed, the nurseryman wants pay for his trees, but the farmer contends that he is not to pay until the Northern Maine is built.—Augusta (Me.) Journal.

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