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## TALMAGE'S SERMON.

### HE PREACHES AN ELOQUENT DISCOURSE ON FESTIVITY.

An Entertainment Where the Lord is the Banqueter and Angels are the Cupbearers—An Effective and Earnest Gospel Plea to the Unconverted.

Ready for a Feast.  
Dr. Talmage's subject was "Festivity," and the text selected, "Come, for all things are now ready." Luke xiv, 17.

It was one of the most exciting times in English history when Queen Elizabeth visited Lord Leicester at Kenilworth Castle. The moment of her arrival was considered so important that all the clocks of the castle were stopped, so that the hands might point to that one moment as being the most significant of all. She was greeted to the gate with floating islands and torches, and the thunder of cannon, and fireworks that set the night ablaze, and a great burst of music that lifted the whole scene into perfect enchantment. Then she was introduced in a dining hall the luxuries of which astonished the world. Four hundred servants waited upon the guests. The entertainment cost \$5,000 each day. Lord Leicester made that great supper in Kenilworth Castle.

Cardinal Wolsey entertained the French ambassadors at Hampton Court. The best cooks in all the land prepared for the banquet. Purveyors went out and traveled all the kingdom over to find spoils for the table. The time came. The guests were kept during the day hunting in the King's park so that their appetites might be keen, and then in the evening, to the sound of the trumpeters, they were introduced into a hall hung with silk and cloth of gold, and there were tables aglitter with imperial plate and laden with the rarest of meats and ablaze with the costliest wines, and when the second course of the feast came it was found that the articles of food had been fashioned into the shape of men, birds and beasts, and groups dancing, and jousting parties riding against each other with lances. Lords and princes and ambassadors, out of cups filled to the brim, drank the health first of the King of England and next of the King of France. Cardinal Wolsey prepared that great supper in Hampton Court.

A Remarkable Banquet.  
But I have to tell you of a grander entertainment. My Lord the King is the banqueter. Angels are the cupbearers. All the redeemed are the guests. The halls of eternal love, frescoed with light and paved with joy and carpeted with unfading beauty, are the banquetting place. The harmonies of eternity are the music. The chalices of Heaven are the plates, and I am one of the servants coming out with both hands filled with invitations, scattering them everywhere, and, oh, that for yourselves you might break the seal of the invitation and read the words written in red ink of blood by the tremulous hand of a dying Christ, "Come now, for all things are now ready."

There have been grand entertainments where a taker-on—the wine given out, or the services were rebellious, or the light failed, but I have gone all around about this subject and looked at the redemption which Christ has provided, and I come here to tell you it is complete, and I swing open the door of the feast, telling you that "all things are now ready."

In the first place, I have to announce that the Lord Jesus Christ himself is ready. Cardinal Wolsey came into the feast after the first course. He came in booted and spurred, and the guests arose and cheered him. But Christ comes in at the very beginning of the feast—aye, he has been waiting 1,801 years for his guests. He has been standing on his mangled feet. He has had his sore hand on His punctured side, or he has been pressing His lacerated temples—waiting, waiting. It is wonderful that He has not been impatient and that He has not said, "Shut the door and let the laggard stay out," but he has been waiting.

No banqueter ever waited for his guests so patiently as Christ has waited for us. To prove how willing He is to receive us, I gather all the tears that rolled down His cheeks in sympathy for your sorrows; I gather all the drops of blood that channeled His brow, and His back, and His hands and feet, in trying to purchase your redemption; I gather all the groans that He uttered in midnight chill, and in mountain hunger, and in desert loneliness, and twist them into one cry—bitter, agonizing, overwhelming.

I gather all the pains that shot from spear and spike and cross, jolting into one pang—remorseless, grinding, excruciating. I take that one drop of sweat on His brow, and under the gospel glass that drop enlarges until I see in it lakes of sorrow and an ocean of agony. That being standing before you now, unsmiling and grieved and gory, coaxing for your love with a pathos in which every word is a heart break and every sentence a martyrdom. How can you think He trifles?

For the Delayed Guests.  
Ahasuerus prepared a feast for 180 days, but this feast is for all eternity. Lords and princes were invited to that. You and I and all our world are invited to this. Christ is ready. You know that the banqueters of olden time used to wrap themselves in robes prepared for the occasion, so my Lord Jesus hath wrapped Himself in all that is beautiful. See how fair He is! His eye, His brow, His cheek, so radiant that the stars have no gleam and the morning no brilliancy compared with it, His face reflecting all the joys of the redeemed, His hand having the omnipotent surgery with which He opened blind eyes, and straightened crooked limbs, and hoisted the pillars of Heaven, and swung the twelve gates, which are twelve pearls.

There are not enough cups in Heaven to dip up this ocean of beauty. There are not ladders enough to scale this height of love. There are not enough cymbals to clap, or harps to thrum, or trumpets to peal forth the praises of this one altogether fair. Oh, thou flower of eternity, thy breath is the perfume of Heaven! Oh, blissful day-break, let all people clap their hands in thy radiance! Chorus: "Come, men and saints and cherubim and seraphim and archangel—all heights, all depths, all immensities. Chorus: Roll Him through the heavens in a chariot, of universal acclaim, over bridges of hosannas, under arches of coronation, along by the great towers chiming with eternal jubilee. Chorus: "Unto Him who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory, world without end!"

I have a word of five letters, but no sheet white enough on which to write it and no pen good enough with which to inscribe it. Give me the fairest leaf from the heavenly records—give me the pencil with which the angel records His victory—and then, with my hand stung to supernatural ecstasy, and my pen dipped in the light of the morning, I will write it out in the capitals of love, "J-E-S-U-S." It is this one, infinitely fair, to whom you are invited. Christ is waiting for you, waiting as a banqueter waits for the delayed guest, the meats smoking, the beakers brimming, the minstrels with fingers on the stiff string, waiting for the clash of the hoo! at the gateway.

Waiting for you as a mother waits for her son who went off ten years ago, dragging her bleeding heart along with him. Waiting! Oh, give me a comparison intense enough, important enough to express my meaning—something high as heaven and deep as hell and long as eternity! Not hoping that you can help me with such a comparison, I will say, "He is waiting as only the all sympathetic Christ can wait for the coming back of a lost soul."

How the knee and kiss the Son,  
Come and welcome sinner, come.

How Luther Saw the Truth.

Again, the holy spirit is ready. Why is it that so many sermons drop dead—that Christian songs do not get their wings under the people—that so often prayer goes no higher than a hunter's "holly"? It is because there is a link wanting—the work of the holy spirit. Unless that spirit give grappling hooks to a sermon and lift the prayer and wait the song, everything is a dead failure. That spirit is willing to come at our call and lead you to eternal life, or ready to come with the same power with which he unhorsed Saul on the Damascus crumple, and broke down Lydia in her fine store, and lifted that 3,000 from midnight into midnoon at the Pentecost. With that power the spirit of God now beats at the gate of your soul. Have you not noticed what homely and insignificant instrumentality the spirit of God employs for man's conversion?

There was a man on a Hudson River boat to whom a tract was offered. With indignation he tore it up and threw it overboard. But one fragment lodged on his coat sleeve, and he saw on it the word "eternity," and he found no peace until he was prepared for that great future. Do you know what passage it was that came, Martin Luther to see the truth? "The just shall live by faith." Do you know there is one—just one—passage that brought Augustine from a life of dissipation? "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." It was just one passage that converted Hedley Vickers, the great soldier, to Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

Do you know that the holy spirit used one passage of Scripture to save Jonathan Edwards? "Now, unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory." One year ago on Thanksgiving Day I read for my text, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever." And there is a young man in the house to whose heart the holy spirit took that text for his eternal redemption. I might speak my own case. I will tell you it was brought to the peace of the gospel through the Syro-Phoenician woman's cry to Christ, "Even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table."

A Glorious Chorus.

Again, the church is ready. O man, if I could take the curtain off these Christian hearts I could show you a great many anxieties for your redemption. You think that old man is asleep because his head is down and his eyes are shut. No, he is praying for your redemption and hoping that the words spoken may strike your heart. Do you know the air is full of prayer? Do you know that prayer is going up from Fulton street prayer meeting and from Friday evening prayer meeting, and going up every hour of the day for the redemption of the people? And if you should just start toward the door of the Christian church, how quickly it would fly open! Hundreds of people would say, "Give that man room at the sacrament. Bring the silver bowl for his baptism. Give him the right hand of Christian fellowship. Bring him into all Christian associations."

Oh, you wanderer on the cold mountains, come into the warm sheepfold. I let down the bars and bid you come in. With the shepherd's crook I point you the way. Hundreds of Christian hands beckon you into the church of God. A great many people do not like the church and say it is a great mass of hypocrites, but it is a glorious church with all its imperfections. Christ bought it, and hoisted the pillars, and swung its gates, and lifted its arches, and curtained it with upholstery crimson with crucifixion carnage. Come into it.

We are a garden walled around,  
Chosen and made peculiar ground,  
A little spot enclosed by grace,  
Out of the world's wild wilderness.

Again, the angels of God are ready. A great many Christians think that the talk about angels is fanciful. You say it is a very good subject for theo-

logical students who have just begun so sermonize, but for older men it is improper. There is no more proof in that Bible that there is a God than that there are angels. Why, do not they swarm about Jacob's ladder? Are we not told that they conducted Lazarus upward; that they stood before the throne, their faces covered up with their wings, while they cry, "Holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty?" Did not David see thousands and thousands? Did not one angel slay 185,000 men in Sennacherib's army? And shall they not be the chief harvesters at the judgment?

Immortal Health.

There is a line of loving, holy, mighty angels reaching to Heaven. I suppose they reach from here to the very gate, and when an audience is assembled for Christian worship the air is full of them. If each one of you has a guardian angel, how many celestials there are here! They crowd the palace, they hover, they sit about, they rejoice. Look, that spirit is just come from the throne! A moment ago it stood before Christ and heard the doxology of the glorified. Look! Bright immortal, what news from the golden city? Speak, spirit, blast! The response comes melting on the air, "Come, for all things are now ready!"

Angels ready to bear the tidings, angels ready to drop the benediction, angels ready to kindle the joy. They have felt the joy that is felt where there are no tears and no graves; immortal health, but no invalidism—songs, but no groans; wedding bells, but no funeral torches; eyes that never weep, hands that never blister, heads that never faint, hearts that never break, friendships that are never weakened.

Ready, all of them! Ready, thrones, principalities and powers! Ready, seraphim and cherubim! Ready, Michael the Archangel!

Again, your kindred in glory are all ready for your coming. I pronounce modern spiritualism a fraud and a sham. If John Milton and George Whitehead have no better business than to crawl under a table and rattle the leaves, they had better stay at home in glory. While I believe that modern spiritualism is bad, because of its mental and domestic ravages, common sense, enlightened by the word of God, teaches us that our friends in glory sympathize with our redemption.

This Bible says plainly there is joy in Heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, and if angels rejoice and know of it shall not our friends standing among them know it? Some of these spirits in glory told for your redemption. When they came to see their chief grief was that you were not a Christian. They said, "Meet me in Heaven," and put their hands out from the cover and said, "Good-by." Now, suppose you should cross over from a sinful life to a holy life. Suppose you should be born into the Kingdom. Suppose you should say, "Farewell, O deceitful world! Get thee gone, my sin! Be upon all the follies! O Christ, help me or I perish! I take Thy promise, I believe Thy word. I enter Thy service."

Suppose you should say and do this? Why, the angel sent to you would shout upward, "He is coming!" and the angel rising higher in the air would shout it upward, "He is coming!" and it would run all up the line of light from wing to wing and from trumpet to trumpet until it reached the gate, and then it would flash to "the house of many mansions," and it would find out your kindred there, and before your tears of repentance had been wiped from the cheek and before you had finished your first prayer your kindred in glory would know of it, and another Heaven would be added to their joy, and they would cry, "My prayers are answered; another loved one saved. Give me a harp with which to strike the joy. Saved! Saved! Saved!"

A Final Exhortation.

I have shown you that "all things are ready," that Christ is ready, that the Holy Spirit is ready, that the church is ready, that the angels in glory are ready, that your glorified kindred are ready, that with all the concentrated emphasis of my soul I ask you if you are ready? You see my subject throws the whole responsibility upon yourself. If you do not get into the King's banquet, it is because you do not accept the invitation. You have the most important invitation. Two arms stretched down from the cross-soaked in blood from elbow to finger tip, two lips quivering in mortal anguish, two eyes gleaming with infinite love, saying, "Come, come, for all things are now ready!"

I told you that when the Queen came to Kenilworth Castle they stopped all the clocks, that the finger of time might be pointed to that happy moment of her arrival. Oh, if the King would come to the castle of your soul, you might well afford to stop all the clocks, that the hands might forever point to this moment as the one most bright, most blessed, most tremendous. Now, I wish I could go around from circle to circle and invite every one of you, according to the invitation of my text, saying, "Come!"

I would like to take every one of you by the hand and say, "Come!" Old man, who has been wandering 60 or 70 years, thy sun has almost gone down. Through the dust of the evening stretch out your withered hand to Christ. He will not cast thee off, old man. Oh, that one tear of repentance might trickle down thy wrinkled cheek! After Christ has fed thee all thy life long, do you not think you can afford to speak one word in his praise?

Come, those of you who are farthest away from God. Drunkard, Christ can put out the fire of thy thirst. He can break that shackle. He can restore thy blasted home. Go to Jesus, libertine! Christ saw thee where thou wert last night. He knows of thy sin. Yet if thou wilt bring thy polluted soul to Him this moment, He will throw over the mantle of His pardon and love. Mercy for thee, oh, thou chief of sinners! Harlot, thy feet foul with hell and thy laughter the horror of the street! Oh, Mary Magdalene, look to Jesus! Mercy for thee, poor lost

wolf of the street! Self-righteous man, thou must be born again, or thou canst not see the kingdom of God!

Do you think you can get into the feast with those rags? Why, the King's servant would tear them off and leave you naked at the gate. You must be born again. The day is far spent. The cliffs begin to slide their long shadows across the plain. Do you know the feast has already begun—the feast to which you were invited—and the King sits with His guests, and the servant stands with his hand on the door of the banquetting room, and he begins to swing it shut? It is half way shut. It is only just ajar. Soon it will be shut. It is only just ajar. Soon it will be shut.

"Come, for all things are now ready." Have I missed one man? Who has not felt himself called this hour? Then I call him now. This is the hour of thy redemption.

Walls God invites, how blest the day,  
How sweet the gospel's cheering sound!  
Come, sinner, haste, oh, haste away,  
While yet a pardoning God is found.

A Successful Experiment.

For three years a Bellamy cooking and eating club has existed in a Kansas town, proving so successful that it seems likely to have a long life before it. The club is under the management of women. A large residence was rented for the headquarters and therein were installed a matron, cooks and table waiters. It is one of the inflexible rules of the club that there shall be no debts incurred, and everything is purchased for cash. Not less than twenty families have been in the club, and often times there have been more. Three ladies constitute an executive committee, with full power to purchase material, levy assessments, hire servants, hear grievances, etc. This committee meets every Saturday afternoon, lays out the work for the coming week, estimates the expense and levies the assessment on the members, who must be paid promptly Monday morning. The marketing is then done, and everything is paid for the week. The dining rooms are set with a number of tables, so that each family has all the privacy of home life. Complaints to any one except to the committee are absolutely forbidden, and mean exclusion, as it is considered that no one should stay in the ranks who is not fully satisfied with existing conditions. The expense has proved to be moderate and the results satisfactory. Allowances are made for absence if notice is given, and guests are charged at a pro-rata of the expense per member for the week. The freedom from worry and work has appealed strongly to the ladies of the neighborhood, and the servant girl question has been solved for them. The girls at the house like their work, as it is systematized, and they have a social enjoyment in the presence of the other domestics.

Pennies and Pounds.  
What may come of small economies, when once they are begun, is shown by the interesting work of the Penny Provident Fund. This society, which has only been in existence about four years, has received over \$100,000 in deposits, and now has on its books over \$20,000, all deposited in sums of from 1 to 10 cents. The idea of the organizers was to afford a chance for children and very poor people to lay by even the smallest sums, and further than that, to encourage and urge the saving. Saving for specific objects is always encouraged, and this plan yields good results.

When a deposit reaches a comparatively large amount, the owner is advised to open a regular savings-bank account. There is no rivalry between the Fund and the savings-banks; indeed, some savings-banks have established in their offices stations for selling the stamps which the Fund furnishes, in denominations from 1 to 10 cents, to be affixed to the cards and serve as vouchers for the deposits.

On the other hand, the bitterest enemies of the Fund have been keepers of small candy shops, who have even sent agents to schools where the cards are given out, in order to persuade the children that they would lose their money if they entrusted it to the fund.

This general plan is so excellent and so greatly deserves permanent success that it is pleasant to add that it is self-supporting and rapidly extending its operations.—Youth's Companion.

Saving Pretty Pictures.

A pretty nursery screen is made by covering the panels with any solid background desired, black, dark red, or brown, and pasting pictures cut from nursery tales upon them.

One panel can be handsomely decorated with the pictures that made last year's calendar such a thing of beauty—illustrating, as many of them do—in such lovely fashion the procession of the months.

The plethora, indeed, in these days of really exquisite specimens of the lithographer's art makes a disposition of them after they have survived their brief present in current weekly, monthly, or annual, a real problem to those who dislike to discard them wholly or keep them forever out of sight.

Hospital scrap albums are a good solution of the dilemma up to a certain point, but there are more than enough in many households for ever two or three of these.

GRAVE-DIGGERS do a great deal of work that is beneath them.

---THE---

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