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### TALMAGE'S SERMON.

#### HE FINDS A LESSON IN THE MIGRANT BIRDS.

Jeremiah Compared the Wisdom of the Birds With the Foolishness of His People—The Christian Should Strive for a Loftier Flight in Grace.

##### Autumn Thoughts.

Rev. Dr. Talmage, who has left India and is now on his homeward journey, selected as the subject of his sermon through the press this week, "October Thoughts," his text being Jeremiah viii. 1, "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."

When God would set fast a beautiful thought, he plants it in a tree. When he would put it about, he fashions it into a fish. When he would have it glide the air, he moulds it into a bird. My text speaks of four birds of beautiful instinct—the stork, of such strong affection that it is allowed familiarly to come in Holland and Germany and build its nests over the doorway; the sweet dispositioned turtle dove, mingling in color white and black and brown and ashen and chestnut; the crane, with voice like the clang of a trumpet; the swallow, swift as a dart shot out of the bow of Heaven, falling, nouncing, skimming, sailing four birds started by the prophet twenty centuries ago, yet flying on through the ages, with rousing truth under gossy wing and in the clutch of stout claw. I suppose it may have been this very season of the year—autumn—and the prophet out of doors, thinking of the impenitence of the people of his day, hence a great cry overhead.

##### The Messengers of the Air.

Now, you know it is no easy thing for me with ordinary delicacy of eyesight to look into the deep blue of noonday heaven, but the prophet looks up, and there are flocks of storks and turtles and cranes and swallows drawn out in long lines for flight southward. As is their habit, the cranes had arranged themselves in two lines, making an angle, a wedge, splitting the air, with wild velocity, the old crane, with commanding call, bidding them onward, while the towns, and the cities, and the continents slid under them. The prophet, almost blinded from looking into the dazzling heavens, keeps down and begins to think how much superior the birds are in sagacity about their safety than men about theirs, and he puts his hand upon the pen and begins to write, "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."

If you were in the field to-day, in the clump of trees at the corner of the field you would see a convention of birds, noisy as the American congress the last night before adjournment or as the British parliament when some unfortunate member proposes more economy in the Queen's household a convention of birds all talking at once, moving and passing resolutions on the subject of migration, some proposing to go to-morrow, some moving that they go to-day, but all unanimous in the fact that they must go soon, for they have marching orders from the Lord written on the first white sheet of the frost and in the pictorial of the changing leaves.

There is not a belted kingfisher, or a chaffinch, or a fire crested wren, or a plover, or a red legged partridge, but expects to reach the winter at the south, for the apartments have already been ordered for them in South America or in Africa, and after thousands of miles of flight they will stop in the very tree where they spent last January. Farwell, bright plumage! Until spring weather, away! Fly on, great band of heavenly muscians! Strow the continent with music, and whether from Ceylon isle or Carolinian swamps or Brazilian groves men see your wings or hear your voice may they yet believe themselves of the solemn words of the text, "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."

I propose, so far as God may help me, in this sermon, carrying out the idea of the text, to show that the birds of the air have more sagacity than men. And I begin by particularizing and saying that they mingle music with their work. The most serious undertaking of a bird's life is this annual flight southward. Naturalists tell us that they arrive thin and weary and plumage ruffled, and yet they go singing all the way—the ground the lower line of the music, the sky the upper line of the music themselves the notes scattered up and down between. I suppose their song gives elasticity to their wing and helps on with the journey, dwindling 1,000 miles into 600. Would God that we were as wise as they in mingling Christian song with our every day work! I believe there is such a thing as taking the pitch of Christian devotion in the morning and keeping it all the day. I think we might take some of the dulcet, heaviest, most disagreeable work of our life and set it to the tune of "Antioch" or "Mount Pisgah."

##### Singing as They Go.

It is a good sign when you hear a workman whistle. It is a better sign when you hear him hum a roundelay. It is a still better sign when you hear him sing the words of Isaac Watts or Charles Wesley. A viola chorded and strung, if something accidentally strike it, makes music, and I suppose there is such a thing as having our hearts so attuned by divine grace that even the rough collisions of life will make a heavenly chorus. I do not believe that the power of Christian song has been fully tried. I believe that if

you could roll the "Old Hundred" melody through the street it would put an end to any panic. I believe that the discords, and the sorrows, and the sins of the world are to be swept out by heaven born halleluiahs. Some one asked Haydn, the celebrated musician, why he always composed such cheerful music. "Why," he said, "I can't do otherwise. When I think of God, my soul is so full of joy that the notes leap and dance from my pen." I wish we might all exult melodiously before the Lord. With God for our Father and Christ for our Saviour and Heaven for our home and angels for future companions and eternity for a lifetime, we should strike all the notes of joy.

Going through the wilderness of this world let us remember that we are on the way to the summery clime of Heaven and from the migratory populations flying through this autumnal air learn always to keep singing:

Children of the heavenly King,  
In the way you singers true,  
Sing your Saviour's worthy praise,  
Glorious in his works and ways.

You are traveling home to God  
In the way you singers true,  
They are happy now, and we  
Soon the r' happiness shall see.

The Church of God never will be a triumphant church until it becomes a singing church.

##### The Higher Christian Life.

I go further and say that the birds of the air are wiser than we in the fact that in their migration they fly very high. During the summer when they are in the fields they often come within reach of the gun, but when they start for the annual flight southward they take their places midheaven and go straight as a mark. The longest rifle that was ever brought to shoulder cannot reach them. Would to God that we were as wise as the stork and crane in our flight heavenward. We fly so low that we are within easy range of the world, the flesh and the devil. We are brought down by temptations that ought not to come within a mile of reaching us. Oh, for some of the faith of George Muller, of England and Alfred Cook, an officer of the British army, now of the church triumphant. So poor is the life of piety in the church of God now that men actually recapture the idea that there is any such thing as a higher life. Moses or Elijah believe in eagles. But, my brethren, because we have not reached these heights our eyes shall we deride the fact that there are such heights? A man was once talking to Brunel, the famous engineer, about the length of the railroad from London to Bristol. The engineer said, "It is not very great. We shall have a first class steamer running from London to New York." They laughed him to scorn, but we have gone so far now that we have ceased to laugh at anything as impossible for human achievement. Then I ask, is anything impossible for the Lord? I do not believe that God exhausted all his grace in Paul and Luther and Edward Payson. I believe there are higher points of Christian attainment to be reached in the far west ages of the Christian world. You tell me that Paul went up to the top of the Alps of Christian attainments. Then I tell you that the stork and crane have found above the Alps plenty of room for free flying.

##### Rising Above Temptation.

We go out, and we conquer our temptations by the grace of God and lie down. On the morrow these temptations rally themselves and attack us, and by the grace of God we defeat them again, but staying all the time in the old encampment we have the same old battles to fight over. Why not whip out our temptations and then forward march, making one raid through the enemy's country, stopping not until we break ranks after the last victory. Do, my brethren, let us have some novelty of combat at any rate by changing, by going on, by making advancement, trading off our stale prayers about sins we ought to have quit long ago, going on toward a higher state of Christian character and routing out sins that we have never thought of yet. The fact is if the church of God, if we as individuals made rapid advancement in the Christian life, these stereotyped prayers we have been making for ten or fifteen years would be as inappropriate to us as the shoes, and the hats, and the coats we wore ten or fifteen years ago. Oh, for a higher flight in the Christian life, the stork and the crane in their migration teach us the lesson:

Dear Lord, and shall we ever live,  
At this poor dying hour,  
Our life is so feeble, so cold to thee,  
And thine to us so great?

##### Dangers of Delay.

Again I remark that the birds of the air are wiser than we, because they know when to start. If you should go out now and shout, "Stop, storks and cranes, don't be in a hurry!" they would say, "No, we cannot stop. Last night we heard the roaring in the woods binding us away, and the shrill flute of the north wind has sounded the retreat. We must go. We must go." So they gather themselves into companies and turning not aside for storm or mountain top or shock of musketry, over land, sea, straight as an arrow to the mark, they go. And if you come out this morning with a sack of corn and throw it in the fields and try to get them to stop they are so far up they would hardly see it. They are on their way south. You could not stop them.

Oh, that we were as wise about the best time to start for God and Heaven. We say, "Wait until it is a little later in the season of mercy. Wait until some of those green leaves of hope are dried up and have been scattered. Wait until next year." After awhile we start, and it is too late, and we perish in the way when God's wrath is kindled but a little. There are, you know, exceptional cases, where birds have started too late, and in the morning you have found them dead in the snow. And there are those who have perished half way between the world and Christ. They waited until the last

sickness, when the mind was gone, or they were on the express train going at forty miles an hour, and they came to the bridge, and the "draw was up," and they went down. How long to repent and pray? Two seconds! To do the work of a lifetime and to prepare for the vast eternity in two seconds! I was reading of an entertainment given in a king's court, and there were musicians there, with elaborate pieces of music. After awhile Mozart came and began to play, and he had a blank piece of paper before him, and the King familiarly looked over his shoulder and said, "What are you playing? I see no music before you." And Mozart put his hand on his brow, as much as to say, "I am improvising." It was very well for him; but, oh, my friends, we cannot extemporize Heaven. If we do not get prepared in this world, we will never take part in the or best harmonies of the saved. Oh, that we were as wise as the crane and the stork, flying away, flying away from the nest!

##### Sorrows of the Sinner.

Some of you have felt the pinching frost of sin. You feel it to-day. You are not happy. I look into your faces, and I know you are not happy. There are voices within you, so that you will not be silenced, telling you that you are sinners and that without the pardon of God you are undone forever. What are you going to do, my friends, with the accumulated transgressions of this lifetime? Will you stand still and let the avalanche tumble over you? Oh, that you would go away into the warm heart of God's mercy. The southern grove, redolent with magnolia and cactus, never waited for northern flocks as God has waited for you saying, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Another frost is bidding you away—it is the frost of sorrow. Where do you live now? "Oh," you say, "I have moved." Why did you move? You say, "I don't want a large house now as formerly." Why do you not want as large a house? You say, "My family is not so large." Where have they gone to? "Eternity!" Your mind goes back through that last sickness and through the almost supernatural effort to keep life, and through those prayers that seemed unavailing, and through that kiss which received no response because the lips were lifeless, and hear the bells tolling and I hear the hearse breaking—while I speak I hear them break. A heart! Another heart! Alone, alone, alone! This world, which in your girlhood and boyhood was sunshine, is cold now, and, Oh, weary dove, you fly around this world as though you would like to stay, when the wind, and the frost, and the blackemic clouds would bid you away into the heart of an all comforting God. Oh, I have noticed again and again what a touch this world makes of it when it tries to comfort a soul in trouble. It says, "Don't cry!" How can we help crying when the heart treasures are scattered, and father is gone, and mother is gone, and companions are gone, and the child is gone, and everything seems gone? It is no comfort to tell a man not to cry. The world comes up and says, "Oh, it is only the body of your loved one that you have put in the ground." But there is no comfort in that. That body is precious. Shall we never put our hand in that hand again and shall we never see that sweet face again? Away with your heartlessness, O world! But come, Jesus, and tell us that when the tears fall they fall into our loved one's dear bodies in the resurrection, and all the breakings down here shall be liftings up there, and they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, for the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes."

##### Call on All to Go.

You may have noticed that when the chaffinch, or the stork, or the crane starts on its migration it calls all these of its kind to come too. The tree tops are full of chirp and whistle and carol and the long roll call. The bird does not start off alone. It gathers all of its kind. Oh, that you might be as wise in this migration to Heaven and that you might gather all your families and your friends with you! I would that Hannah might take Samuel by the hand, and Abraham might take Isaac, and Hagar might take Ishmael. I ask you if those who sat at your breakfast table this morning will sit with you in Heaven! I ask you what influences you are trying to bring upon them—what example you are setting them. Are you calling them to go with you? Aye, aye, have you started yet?

Start for heaven and take your children with you. Come thou and all thy house into the ark. Tell your little ones that there are realms of balm and sweetness for all those who fly in the right direction. Swifter than eagle's stroke put out for heaven. Like the crane or the stork, stop not night nor day until you find the right place for stopping. Seaed to-day in Christian service, will you be seated in the same glorious service when the heavens have passed away with a great noise, and the elements have melted with fervent heat, and the redeemed are gathered around the throne of Jesus?

The saviour calls,  
Ye wanderers come,  
Oh, ye benighted souls  
Why loiter roam?  
The spirit calls to-day,  
Yield to his power,  
Oh, give him not away,  
This mercy's hour.

NEARLY every liar out West has promised to send us a mess of young prairie chickens.

No woman deserves a new cloak who didn't put up a least two gallons of fruit.

Did any person ever thoroughly understand another?

### CHINESE SLAVERY.

Many Children Stolen Yearly by Pirates and Sold.

Slavery exists in China to-day as it has done from the beginning of history. Children have their regular market price, which varies according to the prosperity or adversity of the times. In general, a small boy below the age of 10 will bring from \$5 to \$25, while a little girl of the same age will command from \$10 to \$100. In warm climates little folks do much of their playing after the sun has gone down and the intense heat of the day is over. Then is the time for the pirate child staler. The trade flourishes chiefly on the larger streams and rivers where the children are stolen, and in the great cities, where they are sold.

The fate of these poor little captives is not so bad as might be supposed. Most of the boys are bought for adoption by Chinese families who have no son, and who, in adopting them, give them all the rights which a natural son would have. Others are sold as man servants, who, in the main, are very well treated.

The female children do not have as happy a lot. One-third are sold to become ladies' maids and house slaves, one-third to be brought up as concubines, and one-third for the most immoral purposes. There is hardly an abandoned woman in all of China but what owns one or more of these so-called "pocket daughters."

The penalty for child stealing is deprecation, but it is very seldom inflicted. The pirates who are arrested generally get on upon the plea that the child was lost or sold to them by some impoverished parent. This, with the addition of a handsome sum paid to the magistrate, together with the lack of positive proof on the part of the prosecution, usually insures their actual and honorable discharge.

Now and then they run across an upright judge who cannot be corrupted nor intimidated, and then it fares hard with them. One of this sort is the present Hai-lang-tin of Amoy city, who on one occasion beheaded five pirates found guilty of child stealing, notwithstanding they were men of considerable influence and wealth. After they were beheaded their features were placed in public view on the city gate across one of the great thoroughfares of the place, with the simple statement beneath, on a red placard, reciting their names and offenses.

Another inexorable judge was the late Admiral Fung of Swatow Fokien. On one occasion his men raided an establishment in which there were thirty inmates, men and women, and twelve or fifteen little children. The Admiral tried the case with unusual celerity, and the moment that the testimony for the prosecution was in he turned to the captain of his guard and said: "Take all these people out in the back yard and chop their heads off. I see they all want to talk to me but my time is so important to the State that I cannot afford to waste any of it in listening to their remarks."

##### Affection of Animals.

At Beyreuth was noticed for some time that two goats always kept close together, one being especially watched and guarded by the other. On inspection it was shown that one goat was blind, and its companion, evidently knowing this, attached itself to its poor, afflicted friend and acted as its guide, showing untiring watchfulness and care. If any difficulties had to be overcome, or any precautions to be avoided, the faithful friend was certain to be seen at the side of the blind goat, tenderly guiding it. This went on for several months. But one day it was noticed that the blind goat was left to its own devices and quite forsaken by its former companion. How was this? Had the faithful friend in a fit of pique grown weary of its self-imposed charge? No, the blind goat had recovered its sight, and therefore aid was unnecessary.

In the same neighborhood trout were reared, and they were transferred, according to their age, from smaller reservoirs refreshed by a running stream. A naturalist took great interest in these fish and fed them from a long handled spoon. Soon all the trout regularly waded their arrival and stormed the eagerly looked-for spoon. But there was one poor fish which was either pushed aside or misled its way to the point of attraction. It was blind. At last one of its companions took pity on it, led it up to the ladle, and saw that it obtained a share of the feast.—Great Thoughts.

##### Light Wood.

Light wood is one of the most useful Southern products, especially in Florida, where it is used by all sorts of country folk, and particularly by the hunters. A cordwood stick carried into the wilderness will cut up into fragments with which a dozen meals may be cooked. The rich, resinous pine makes a quick hot fire, especially suited to open air cooking.

A new scrubbing machine is whirled over the floor like a lawn mower. It soaps, wets, rubs, and dries the floor, and two or three movements of the machine make the boards shine.

The best way to convert a prodigal son is to give him leave to go.