

DR. TALMAGE IN THE WEST

"REFORMATION FROM EVIL HABITS," HIS SUBJECT IN CHICAGO.

Power in God's Grace to Overcome the Force of Moral Gravitation—Few People Understand the Gospel That Is in a Hearty Handshake.

CHICAGO, March 25.—The Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage, D. D., pastor of the Tabernacle, Brooklyn, N. Y., preached here this morning. His subject was, "Reformation from Evil Habits," and his text, Proverbs xxiii, 35: "When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." He said:

With an insight into human nature such as no other man ever reached, Solomon, in my text, sketches the mental operations of one who, having stepped aside from the path of rectitude, desires to return. With a wish for something better, he says: "When shall I awake? When shall I come out of this horrid nightmare of iniquity?" But seized upon by uneducated habit, and forced down hill by his passions, he cries out: "I will seek it yet again. I will try it once more."

Our libraries are adorned with an elegant literature addressed to young men, pointing out to them all the dangers and perils of life. Complete maps of the voyage, showing all the rocks, the quicksands, the shoals. But suppose a man has already made shipwreck; suppose he is already off the track; suppose he has already gone astray, how is he to get back? That is a field comparatively untouched. I propose to address myself this evening to such. There are those in this audience who, with every passion of their agonized soul, are ready to hear this discussion. They compare themselves with what they were ten years ago, and cry out from the bondage in which they are incarcerated. Now, if there be any in this house, come with an earnest purpose, yet feeling they are beyond the pale of Christian sympathy, and that the sermon can hardly be expected to address them, then at this moment I give them my right hand and call them brother. Look up. There is glorious and triumphant hope for you yet. I sound the trumpet of gospel deliverance. The church is ready to open a banquet at your return and the hierarchs of heaven to fall into line of benediction procession at the news of your emancipation. So far as God may help me, I propose to show what are the obstacles of your return, and then how you are to surmount those obstacles.

The first difficulty in the way of your return is the force of moral gravitation. Just as there is a natural law which brings down to the earth anything which you throw into the air, so there is a corresponding moral gravitation. In other words, it is easier to go down than it is to go up; it is easier to do wrong than it is to do right. Call to mind the comrades of your boyhood days—some of them good, some of them bad. Which most affected you? Call to mind the anecdotes that you have heard in the last five or ten years—some of them are pure and some of them impure. Which the more easily sticks to your memory? During the years of your life you have formed certain courses of conduct—some of them good, some of them bad. To which style of habit did you the more easily yield? Ah! my friends, we have to take but a moment of self-inspection to find out that there is in all our souls a force of moral gravitation. But that gravitation may be resisted. Just as you may pick up from the earth something and hold it in your hand toward heaven, just so, by the power of God's grace, a soul fallen may be lifted toward peace, toward pardon, toward heaven. Force of moral gravitation in every one of us, but power in God's grace to overcome that force of moral gravitation.

The next thing in the way of your return is the power of evil habit. I know there are those who say it is very easy for them to give up evil habits. I do not believe them. Here is a man given to intoxication. He knows it is disgracing his family, destroying his property, ruining his body, mind and soul. If that man, being an intelligent man, and loving his family, could easily give up that habit, would he not do so? The fact that he does not give it up proves it is hard to give it up. It is a very easy thing to sail down stream, the tide carrying you with great force; but suppose you turn the boat up stream, is it so easy then to row it? As long as we yield to the evil inclinations in our hearts and our bad habits, we are sailing down stream; but the moment we try to turn, we put our boat in the rapids just above Niagara, and try to row up stream. Take a man given to the habit of using tobacco, as most of you do, and let him resolve to stop, and he finds it very difficult. Twenty-one years ago I quit that habit, and I would as soon dare to put my right hand in the fire as once to indulge in it. Why? Because it was such a terrible struggle to get over it. Now, let a man be advised by his physician to give up the use of tobacco. He goes around not knowing what to do with himself. He cannot add up a line of figures. He cannot sleep nights. It seems as if the world had turned upside down. He feels his business is going to ruin. Where he was kind and obliging, he is scolding and fretful. The composure that characterized him has given way to fretful restlessness, and he has become a complete failure. What governs it is that has rolled a wave of woe over the earth and shaken a portent in the heavens! He has tried to stop smoking. After a while he says: "I am going to do as I please. The doctor doesn't understand my case. I'm going back to the old habit." And he returns. Everything assumes its usual composure. His business seems to brighten. The world becomes an attractive place to live in. His children, seeing the difference, hail the return of their father's genial disposition. What wave of color has dashed blue into the sky, and greenness into the mountain foliage, and the glow of sapphire into the sunset? What enchantment has lifted a world of beauty and joy on his soul? He has gone back to smoking. Oh, the fact is, as we all know in our own experience, that habit is a taskmaster; as long as we obey it, it does not chastise us; but let us resist, and we find that we are to be lashed with scorpion whips, and bound with ship cable, and thrown into the track of bone-breaking juggernauts. During the war of 1812 there was a ship set on fire just above Niagara Falls, and then, cut loose from its moorings, it came on down through the night, and tossed over the falls. It was said to have been a vessel brilliant beyond all description. Well, there are thousands of men on fire of evil habit, coming down through the rapids and through the awful night of temptation toward the eternal plunge. Oh, how hard it is to arrest them. God only can arrest them. Suppose a man after five, or ten, or twenty years of evil doing resolves to do right. Why, all the forces of darkness are allied against him. He cannot sleep nights. He gets down on his knees in the midnight and cries: "God help me!" He bites his lips. He grinds his teeth. He clenches his fist in a determination to keep his purpose. He dare not look at the bottles in the windows of a wine store. It is one long, bitter, exhaustive, hard to hand fight with bitter, tantalizing, and meretricious habit. When he thinks he is entirely free the old inclina-

tions pounce upon him like a pack of hounds with their muzzles tearing away at the flanks of one poor reindeer. In Paris there is a sculptured representation of Bacchus, the god of revelry. He is riding on a panther at full leap. Oh! how suggestive. Let every one who is speeding on bad ways understand he is not riding a docile and well broken steed, but he is riding a monster wild and bloodthirsty, going at a death leap. How many there are who resolve on a better life, and say: "When shall I awake?" but, seized by their old habits, cry: "I will try it once more; I will seek it yet again!" Years ago, there were some Princeton students who were skating and the ice was very thin, and some one warned the company back from the air hole, and finally warned them entirely to leave the place. But one young man with bravado, after all the rest had stopped, cried out: "One round more!" He swept around, and went down, and was brought out a corpse. My friends, there are thousands and tens of thousands of men losing their souls in that way. It is the one round more.

I have also to say that if a man wants to return from evil practices society repulses him. Desiring to reform, he says: "Now, I will shake off my old associates, and I will find Christian companionship." And he appears at the church door some Sabbath day, and the usher greets him with a look as much as to say: "Why, you here? You are the last man I ever expected to see at church! Come, take this seat right down by the door." Instead of saying, "Good morning; I am glad you are here. Come, I will give you a first rate seat, right up by the pulpit." Well, the prodigal, not yet discouraged, enters a prayer meeting, and some Christian man, with more zeal than common sense, says: "Glad to see you; the dying thief was saved, and I suppose there is mercy for you." The young man, disgusted, chilled, throws himself on his dignity, resolved he will never enter into the house of God again. Perhaps not quite fully discouraged about reformation, he sides up by some highly respectable man he used to know, going down the street, and immediately the respectable man has an errand down some other street. Well, the prodigal wishing to return takes some member of a Christian association by the hand, or tries to. The Christian young man looks at him, looks at the faded apparel and the marks of dissipation, instead of giving him a warm grip of the hand, offers him the tip ends of the long fingers of the left hand, which is equal to striking a man in the face! Oh! how few Christian people understand how much force and gospel there is in a good, honest hand shaking. Sometimes, when you have felt the need of encouragement, and some Christian man has taken you heartily by the hand, have you not felt thrilling through every fiber of your body, mind and soul an encouragement that was just what you needed? You do not know anything all about this unless you know what a man tries to return from evil courses of conduct he runs against repulsions innumerable. We say of some man, he lives a blank or two from the church, or half a mile from the church. There are people in our crowded cities who live 1,000 miles from church. Vast deserts of indifference between them and the house of God. The fact is we must keep our respectability, though thousands and tens of thousands perish. Christ sat with publicans and sinners. But if there came to the house of God a man with marks of dissipation upon him people almost threw up their hands in horror, as much as to say: "Isn't it shocking!" Here these dainty, fastidious Christians in all our churches are going to get into heaven I don't know, unless they have a special train of cars, cushioned and upholstered, each one a car to himself. They cannot go with the great horde of publicans and sinners. Oh! ye who curl your lip of scorn at the fallen, I tell you plainly, if you had been surrounded by the same influences, instead of sitting today amid the cultured, and the refined, and the Christian, you would have been a crouching wretch in stable or ditch, covered with filth and abomination. It is not because you are naturally any better, but because the mercy of God has protected you. Who are you, that, brought up in Christian circles and watched by Christian parents, you should be so hard on the fallen?

I think men also are often hindered from return by the fact that churches are too anxious about their membership and too anxious about their denomination, and they rush out when they see a man about to give up his sin and return to God, and ask him how he is going to be baptized, whether by sprinkling or immersion, and what kind of a church he is going to join. Oh! my friends, it is a poor time to talk about Presbyterian cathedrals, and Episcopal liturgies, and Methodist love feasts, and baptistries to a man that is coming out of the darkness of sin into the glorious light of the gospel. Why, it reminds me of a man drowning in the sea, and a life boat puts out for him, and the man in the boat says to the man out of the boat: "Now, if I get you ashore, are you going to live on my street?" First get him ashore, and then talk about the non-essentials of religion. Who cares what church he joins, if he only joins Christ and starts for heaven? Oh! you ought to have, my brother, an illumined face and hearty grip for every one that tries to turn from his evil way. Take hold of the same book with him though his dissipation shake the book, remembering that "he that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins."

Now, I have shown you these obstacles because I want you to understand I know all the difficulties in the way; but I am now to tell you how Hannibal may scale the Alps, and how the shackles may be unriveted, and how the paths of virtue forsaken may be regained. First of all, my brother, throw yourself on God. Go to him frankly, and earnestly, and tell Him these habits you have, and ask him if there is any help in all the resources of omnipotent love, to give to you. Do not go with a long rigmorole people call prayer made up of "oh's" and "ah's," and "forever and ever, amen!" Go to God and cry for help! help! help! and if you cannot cry for help, just look and live. I remember in the late war, I was at Antietam, and I went into the hospitals after the battle and said to a man: "Where are you hurt?" He made no answer but held up his arm, swollen and splintered. I saw where he was hurt. The simple fact is, when a man has a wounded soul, all he has to do is to hold it up before a sympathetic Lord and get it healed. It does not take any long prayer. Just hold up the wound. Oh, it is no small thing when a man is nervous and weak and exhausted, coming from his evil ways, to feel that God puts two omnipotent arms around him, and says: "Young man I will stand by you. The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but I will never fail you." And then as the soul thinks the news is too good to be true, and cannot believe it, and looks up in God's face, God lifts His right hand and takes an oath, an affidavit, saying: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." Blessed be God for such a gospel as this. "Cut the slices thin," said the wife to the husband, "for there will not be enough to go all around for the children; cut the slices thin." Blessed be God there is a full loaf for every one that wants it! Bread enough and to spare. No thin slices at the Lord's table. I remember when the Master Street hospital, in Philadelphia, was opened

during the war, a telegram came, saying: "There will be 20 wounded men to-night; be ready to take care of them," and from my church there went in some twenty or thirty men and women to look after those poor wounded fellows. As they came, some from one part of the land, some from another, one asked whether this man was from Oregon, or from Massachusetts, or from Minnesota, or from New York. There was a wounded soldier, and the only question was how to take off the rags the most gently, and put on the bandage, and administer the cordial. And when a soul comes to God, He does not ask where you came from or what your ancestry was. Healing for all your wounds. Pardon for all your guilt. Comfort for all your troubles.

Then, also, I counsel you, if you want to get back, to quit all your bad associations. One unwholly intimate will fill your soul with moral distemper. In all the ages of the church there has not been an instance where a man kept one evil associate and was reformed. Go home today, open your desk, take out letter paper, stamp and envelope, and then write a letter something like this: "My Old Companions—I start this day for heaven. Until I am persuaded you will join me in this, farewell." Then sign your name and send the letter by the first post. Give up your bad companions or give up heaven. It is not ten bad companions, nor three bad companions, nor two bad companions, but one. What chance is there for that young man I saw along the street, four or five young men with him, halting in front of a grogshop, urging him to go in, he resisting, violently resisting, until after a while they force him to go in? It was a summer night and the door was left open, and I saw the process. They held him fast, and they put the cap to his lips, and they forced down the strong drink. What chance is there for such a young man!

I counsel you, also, seek Christian advice. Every Christian man is bound to help you. If you find no other human ear willing to listen to your story of struggle, come to me, and every prayer, and every sympathy of my heart, stand beside you in the struggle for reformation; and as I hope to have my own sins forgiven, and hope to be acquitted at the judgment seat of Christ, I will not betray you. First of all, seek God; then seek Christian counsel. Gather up all the energies of body, mind and soul, and, appealing to God for success, declare this day everlasting war against all drinking habits, all gaming practices, all houses of sin. Half and half work will amount to nothing; it must be a Waterloo. Shrink back now and you are lost. Push on and you are saved. A Spartan general fell at the very moment of victory, but he dipped his finger in his own blood, and wrote the word "never" which he was dying. "Sparta has conquered!" Through your struggle to get rid of sin may seem to be almost to death struggle, you can dip your finger in your own blood, and write on the Rock of Ages: "Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh! what glorious news it would be for some of these young men to send home to their parents in the country. They go to the post-office every day or two to see if there are any letters from you. How anxious they are to hear! Nothing would please them half so much as the news you might send home tomorrow that you had given your heart to God. I know how it is in the country. The night comes on. The cattle stand under the trees through which bursts the trusses of hay. The horses just having frisked up through the meadow at the bright fall, stand knee deep in the bright straw they invite them to lie down and rest. The perch of the hovel is full of fowl, their feet warm under the feathers. In the old farm house at night no candle is lighted, for the flames clap their hands about the great backlog, and shake the shadow of the group up and down the wall. Father and mother sit there for half an hour, saying nothing. I wonder what they are thinking of. After a while the father breaks the silence and says: "Well, I wonder where our boy is in town to-night," and the mother answers: "In no bad place, I warrant you; we always could trust him when he was home, and since he has been away there have been so many prayers offered for him we can trust him still." Then at 8 o'clock—for they retire early in the country—at 8 o'clock they kneel down and commend you to that God who watches in country and in town, on the land and on the sea.

Some one said to a Grecian general: "What was the proudest moment of your life?" He thought a moment and said: "The proudest moment of my life was when I sent word home to my parents that I had gained the victory." And the proudest and most brilliant moment in your life will be the moment when you can send word to your parents in the country by the grace of God, and your evil habits, by the grace of God, and become eternal victors. Oh! despite not parental anxiety. The time will come when you will have neither father nor mother, and you will go round the place where they used to watch and find them gone from the house, and gone from the field, and gone from the neighborhood. Cry as loud for forgiveness as you may over the mound in the churchyard, they will not answer. Dead! Dead! And then you will take out the white lock of hair that was cut from your mother's brow just before they buried her, and you will take the cane with which your father used to walk, and you will kneel just as they wanted you to, and you had done just as they wanted you to, and you will give the world if you had never thrust a pang through their dear old hearts. God pity the young man who has brought disgrace on his father's name. God pity the young man who has broken his mother's heart. Better if he had never been born—better if, in the first hour of his life, instead of being laid against the warm bosom of maternal tenderness, he had been confined and sepulchred. There is no balm powerful enough to heal the heart of one who has brought parents to a sorrowful grave and who wanders about through the dismal cemetery, rubbing the hair and wringing the hands, and crying: "Mother! mother!" Oh, that today, by all the memories of the past, and by all the hopes of the future, you would yield your heart to God. May your father's God and your mother's God be your God forever.

Artificial Flowers Going Out. It is said that artificial flowers are going out of use in England and are coming in at about equal ratio. In 1882 the value of flowers imported reached the enormous sum of \$2,500,000 while in 1886 this fell off to \$1,350,000. The increase in the importation of lace meanwhile has amounted to more than all these figures of artificial flowers together. But the odd feature of this is that while this increase goes on in importation from the continent, England seems bound to let her own lace industries languish. The beautiful lace work, with its branching sprays so suggestive of hawthorne blooms, still goes on, but the rich and great of Britain do not patronize it enough to encourage its increase.—Public Opinion.

Sleigh Races in Russia. The ladies of the aristocracy of St. Petersburg have organized a series of sleigh races in which they are to be the drivers. Each will have her own color, and the competitors must be not less than 20 years of age, nor more than 40. Entries are limited to the aristocracy, and the prizes are very magnificent.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

Racing in England. Racing in England is rather a profitable business for those who are fortunate enough to win. Two million two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars are to be expended on the British turf during the present season in stakes alone.—Chicago Herald.

Oil for the Lakes. Seas on the lakes being as rough as on the ocean, and just as destructive of life and property, it would seem the part of wisdom for the lake marines to make trial of oil protection in times of blow.—Buffalo Courier.

NEWSPAPER NOTORIETY

What the Paragraph Writers Have Jotted Down Concerning People of Note. Queen Margherita, of Italy, is a capital Hebrew scholar and has a large library of Hebrew works.

Dr. Ass Gray left his copyrights and his valuable collections of photographs to Harvard university. While Banker Corcoran was on his death-bed he drew a check for \$500 for the widow of a young man who had committed suicide.

Michael Teller, of Philadelphia, has not slept in a bed for twenty-seven years. He is a victim of chronic asthma, and cannot sleep in a recumbent position. At 80 years old the Hon. Hugh McCulloch retains his brown hair and whiskers, only slightly touched with gray, and does not use eyeglasses more than half the time.

Mrs. Allen, wife of Dr. Allen, of the Korean legation, is a pretty little American woman, who married her husband in China. She has two little sons with her, one of whom was born in China and the other in Korea, and on this account they have been nicknamed "Little China" and "Little Korea." M. Bouqueron has one of the plainest studios in Paris: a big room with a window and a skylight, a clock, some old tapestry, a bronze statue, three or four easels, and a lot of unfinished pictures and blank canvases leaning against the wall.

Albert Frazer, a convict in the Michigan penitentiary, escaped, and a reward was offered for his capture. He communicated with his wife, who was having a hard struggle with poverty, and induced her to deliver him up and get the reward. So she did, and Frazer is happier than he has been for years. Like all actors and actresses of foreign birth and education, Miss Modjeska shows her native unfamiliarity with the English tongue much more strongly off the stage than on it. It is in the little ordinary converse of every day life that one's native tongue asserts itself the most strongly in both idiom and accent.

Ernst von Wechmar, of Berlin, claims to have invented a flying machine that will make it perfectly possible for humanity to compete with the birds. The apparatus is ugly, the wings being about thirty feet by two, and the body supported by air cushions as well as by the wings themselves. Frank Stockton is not satisfied with the ordinary fame of a clever story teller. He wants to become a benefactor and philanthropist, and has invented an illuminated key hole that will enable men to go home at any hour of the night and be able to get in without rousing the neighborhood.

When the late D. R. Locke, "Nashby," of the Toledo Blade, was alive, he took particular pride in the fact that none of his buildings had ever been damaged by fire. It is a singular fact that since his death three of his best edifices erected by him in Toledo have caught fire, and in each instance at the top of the building. Three years ago a harsh voiced man, John Steiner by name, stood on State street, Chicago, offering "Twenty-four sheets of note paper for a nickel." Today, it is stated, he is the owner of the leading stationery store in a town of 15,000 inhabitants in Iowa; and he made his start selling a quire of writing paper for five cents on one of the busiest streets in Chicago.

Samuel J. Tilden never spoke of his wealth, but it was variously estimated all the way from \$4,000,000 to \$10,000,000. His executors have lately stated in court that his assets have totaled up \$5,225,000 in real and personal property. It was also admitted that after the legacies provided for in the will are paid over \$4,000,000 will remain for the erection of three public libraries contemplated by Mr. Tilden in New York, Yonkers and New Lebanon, where he was born.

The postmistress of the Iowa assembly is Mrs. Hunter; her assistant is Miss Murray. The enrolling and engrossing clerks in the senate are Miss Stuttsman and Mrs. Stull. In the house the enrolling clerk is Nettie E. Lorimer; the engrossing clerk, Mrs. Heist. A woman has the position of doorkeeper in the ladies' gallery of the house, and Little Miss Wright is one of the house pages. A number of women serve as committee clerks.

In writing of Mrs. Potter, one is called upon to treat of a strange mixture of pretty womanhood and bad art. Mrs. Potter has a most pleasing person, and she would seem to have been endowed with what Balzac termed the gift of charm. She had in abundance the golden brown hair which Apuleius, telling of Fotis, has immortalized; her eyes are furtive, and furtive eyes have always a strange fascination; her figure is slight almost to girlishness. Without wishing to appear in the role of an interpreter of the designs of divinity, we cannot forbear suggesting that it must appear to all who have seen Mrs. Potter and have sat under her acting that Mrs. Potter was created to adorn a domestic circle.

Activity of London Vegetarians. Vegetarian propagandists were unusually active in London last summer. There is a society devoted to this "ism," and during the season vegetarian dinners were given to city missionaries and their wives, members of leading professions, clergy, physicians, farmers and others. At one dinner 600 guests were entertained. Vegetarian dinners were given to the Salvation Army, Congregational clergymen, Baptists, Unitarians, Wesleyans, Positivists, Quakers, Good Templars and the poor at city missions. There are twenty-three vegetarian restaurants in London, exclusive of vegetarian "homes," where vegetarian travelers are accommodated. Several seaside vegetarian homes have been established, and one of them is called "Cerenia."—Good Housekeeping.

The Arkansas Traveler Man. Do you know Ope Read when you see him? If you do not, you would never suspect that he was he. Tall, big boned, rambling gaited, and careless of personal appearance, you would say he is a big, honest faced and wholesome looking—what? Not quite a farmer, not a rafterman, hardly a river captain, certainly not an author. But talk with him half an hour! He has had his eyes open a good deal in his life, and while he has not paid much attention to putting on style himself, he has seen how other people do it and has figured out the way of it. In other words, he knows, as a creative novelist must know, what constitutes a symmetrical consistent human character.—Willis B. Hawkins in Chicago Times.

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