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## LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

REV. DR. TALMAGE'S DISCOURSE AT THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

Trouble Develops and Ennobles Character—The Beauty of Unflinching Friendship—A Path Which Starts Darkly Often Ends Brightly.

BROOKLYN, May 30.—The opening hymn at the Tabernacle service today begins with the words:

More love to thee, O Christ,

More love to thee.

After making a running commentary on some passages of Scripture the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., took the text: "And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech." Ruth ii, 3. He preached from these words the following sermon:

The time that Ruth and Naomi arrive at Bethlehem is the best time. It was a custom when a sheaf fell from a load in the harvest for the reapers to refuse to gather it up, that was to be left for the poor who might happen to come along that way. If there were handfuls of grain scattered across the field after the main harvest had been reaped, instead of raking it, as farmers do now, it was, by the custom of the land, left in its place, so that the poor, coming along that way, might glean it and get their bread. But you say: "What is the use of all these handfuls of grain to Ruth and Naomi? Naomi is too old and feeble to go out and toll in the sun, and can you expect that Ruth, a young girl with an epithet, or nearly a bushel of barley, goes home to Naomi to tell her the successes and adventures of the day? That Ruth, who left her native land of Moab in darkness, and traveled through an undying affection for her mother-in-law, in the harvest field of Boaz, is affianced to one of the best families in Judah, and becomes in after time the ancestress of Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. Out of so dark a night did there ever dawn so bright a morning?"

I learn in the first place from this subject how trouble develops character. It was benevolence, poverty and exile that developed, illustrated and announced to all ages the sublimity of Ruth's character. That is a very unfortunate man who has no trouble. It was sorrow that made John Bunyan the better dreamer, and Dr. Young the better poet, and O'Connell the better orator, and Bishop Hall the better preacher, and Havelock the better soldier, and Kitto the better encyclopaedist, and Ruth the better daughter-in-law.

I once asked an aged man in regard to his pastor, who was a very brilliant man: "Why is it that your pastor, so very brilliant, seems to have so little vigor and tenderness in his sermons?" "Well," he replied, "the reason is our pastor has never had any trouble. When misfortune comes upon him, his style will be different." After while the Lord took a child out of that pastor's house, and though the preacher was just as brilliant as he was before, oh, the warmth, the tenderness of his discourses. The fact is that trouble is a great educator. You see sometimes a musician sit down at an instrument, and his execution is cold and formal and unfeeling. The reason is that all his life he has been prosperous. But let misfortune or bereavement come to that man, and he sits down at an instrument, and you discover the pathos in the first sweep of the keys.

Misfortune and trials are great educators. A young doctor comes into a sick room where there is a dying child. Perhaps he is very rough in his prescription, and very rough in his manner, and very rough in the feeling of the pulse, and rough in his answer to the mother's anxious question, but years roll on, and there has been one dead in his own house, and now he comes into the sick room, and with tearful eyes he looks at the dying child, and he says: "Oh, how this reminds me of my Charlie!" Trouble, the great educator. Sorrow, I see its touch in the grandest painting, I hear its tremor in the sweetest song, I feel its power in the mightiest argument.

Greenian mythology said that the fountain of Hippocrene was struck out by the foot of the winged horse Pegasus. I have often noticed in life that the brightest and most beautiful fountains of Christian comfort and spiritual life have been struck out by the iron hoofs of disaster and calamity. I see Daniel's courage, test by the flesh of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. I see Paul's prowess, best when I find him on the foundering ship under the glare of the lightning in the breakers of Melita. God crowns his children amid the howling of wild beasts and the chopping of blood splashed guillotine and the cracking fires of martyrdom. It took the persecution of Marcus Aurelius to develop Polycarp and Justin Martyr. It took the world's anathema to develop Martin Luther. It took all the hostilities against the Scotch Covenanters and the fury of Lord Claverhouse to develop James Renwick, and Andrew Melville, and Hugh McKail, the glorious martyrs of Scotch history. It took a stormy sea, and the December blast, and the desolate New England coast, and the war whoop of savages, to show forth the prowess of the Pilgrim Fathers.

When amid the storms they sang,  
And the stars heard, and the sea,  
And the sounding asides of the dim wood  
Rang to the antiphons of the free.

It took all our past national distresses to lift our nation on that high career where it will march along after the foreign tyrannies that have mocked and the tyrannies that have jeered shall be swept down under the omnipotent wrath of God, who hates despotism, and who, by the strength of his own red right arm, will make all men free. And so it is individually, and in the family, and in the church, and in the world, that through darkness and storm and trouble men, women, churches, nations are developed.

II. Again, I see in my text the beauty of unflinching friendship. I suppose there were plenty of friends for Naomi while she was in prosperity, but of all her acquaintances, how many were willing to tudge off with her toward Judah when she had to make that lonely journey? One—the heroine of my text. One—absolutely one. I suppose when Naomi's husband was living, and they had plenty of money, and all things went well, they had many callers, but I suppose that after her husband died, and her property went, and she got old and poor, she was not troubled very much with callers. All the birds that sang in the bower while the sun shone have gone to their nests, now that the night has fallen.

Oh, these beautiful sunflowers that spread

out their color in the morning hour, but are always asleep when the sun is going down. Job's friends were his friends when he was the richest man in Uz, but when his property went and the trials came, then there were none so much that pestered as Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

Life often seems to be a mere game, where the successful player pulls down all the other men into his own lap. Let suspicious arise about a man's character, and he becomes like a bank in a panic, and all the imputations rush on him and break down in a day that character which in due time would have had strength to defend itself. There are reputations that have been half a century in building which go down under some moral exposure, as a vast temple is consumed by the touch of a sulphurous match. A hog can uproot a century plant.

In this world, so full of heartlessness and hypocrisy, how thrilling it is to find some friend as faithful in days of adversity as in days of prosperity. David had such a friend in Hushai; the Jews had such a friend in Mordecai, who never forgot their cause; Paul had such a friend in Onesiphorus, who visited him in jail. Christ had such a friend in the Marys who were adhered to on the cross. Naomi had such a one in Ruth, who cried out: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge, thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God; where thou dost die, I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

III. Again, I learn from this subject that paths which open in hardship and darkness often come out in pieces of joy. When Ruth started from Moab toward Jerusalem to go along with her mother-in-law, I suppose the people said: "Oh, what a foolish creature to go away from her father's house, to go off with a poor old woman toward the land of Judah! They won't live to get across the desert. They will be drowned in the sea, or the jackals of the wilderness will destroy them." It was a very dark morning when Ruth started off with Naomi, but behold her in my text in the harvest field of Boaz, to be affianced to one of the lords of the land and become one of the grandmothers of Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. And so it often is that a path which starts very darkly ends very brightly.

When you started out for heaven, oh, how dark was the hour of conviction—how Sinai thundered, and devils tormented, and the darkness thickened! All the sins of your life pounced upon you, and it was the darkest hour you ever saw when you first found out your sins. After awhile you went into the harvest field of God's mercy; you began to glean in the fields of divine promise, and you had more sheaves than you could carry as the voice of God addressed you, saying: "Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. A very dark starting in conviction, a very bright ending in the pardon and the hope and the triumph of the Gospel."

So, very often in our worldly business or in our spiritual career, we start off on a very dark path. We must go. The flesh may shrink back, but there is a voice within, or a voice from above, saying: "You must go; and we have to drink the gall, and we have to carry the cross, and we have to traverse the desert, and we are pounded and failed of misrepresentation and abuse, and we have to urge our way through ten thousand obstacles of fire and sword, and the right arm of God. We have to ford the river, we have to climb the mountain, we have to storm the castle, but, blessed be God, the day of rest and reward will come. On the tip top of the captured battlements we will shout the victory; if not in this world, then in that world where there is no gall to drink, no burdens to carry, no battles to fight. How do I know it? Know it! I know it because God says so: "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."

It was very hard for Noah to endure the scoffing of the people in his day, while he was trying to build the ark, and was every morning quizzed about his old boat that would never be of any practical use, but when the deluge came, and the tops of the mountains disappeared like the backs of sea monsters, and the elements, lashed up in fury, clapped their hands over a drowned world, then Noah in the ark rejoiced in his own safety and in the safety of his family, and he looked out on the wreck of a ruined world.

Christ, hounded of persecutors, denied a pillow, worse maltreated than the thieves on either side of the cross, manna-hate smacking his lips in satisfaction after it had been draining his last drop of blood, the sheeted dead bursting from the sepulchers at his crucifixion. Tell me, O Getismane and Golgotha! were there ever darker times than those? Like the booming of the midnight sea against the rock, the surges of Christ's anguish beat against the gates of eternity, to be echoed back by all the thrones of heaven and all the fountains of glory. But the day of reward comes for Christ all the pomp and dominion of this world are to be hung on his throne, uncrowned heads are to bow before him on whose head are many crowns, and all the celestial worship is to come up at his feet, like the humming of the forest, like the rushing of the waters, like the thundering of the seas, while all heaven, rising on their thrones, beat time with their scepters. "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Hallelujah, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

That song of love, now low and far,  
That light, the breaking day which tips  
The golden spired Apocalypse.

IV. Again, I learn from my subject that events which seem to be most insignificant may be momentous. Can you imagine anything more unimportant than the coming of a poor woman from Moab to Judah? Can you imagine anything more trivial than the fact that this Ruth just happened to alight—as they say—just happened to alight on that field of Boaz? Yet all ages, all generations, have an interest in the fact that she was to become an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all nations and kingdoms must look at that little incident with a thrill of unspoken and eternal satisfaction. So it is in your history and mine, events that you thought of no importance at all have been of very great moment. That casual conversation, that accidental meeting—you did not think of it again for a long while, but how it changed all the phase of your life!

It seemed to be of no importance that Jubal invented rude instruments of music, calling them harp and organ, but they were the introduction of all the world's minstrelsy, and as you hear the vibration of a stringed instrument, even after the fingers have been taken away from it, so all music now of lute and drum and cornet is only the long continued strains of Jubal's harp and Jubal's organ. It seemed to be a matter of very little importance that Tubal Cain learned the uses of copper and iron, but that rude foundry of ancient days has its echo in the rattle of Birmingham machinery, and the roar and bang of factories on the Merrimac. It seemed to be a matter of no importance that Luther found a Bible in a monastery,

but as he opened that Bible, and the brass bound lids fell back, they jarred every thought from the Vatican to the furthest convent in Germany, and the rustling of the worn leaves was the sound of the wings of the angel of the Reformation. It seemed to be a matter of no importance that a woman, whose name has been forgotten, dropped a tract in the way of a very bad man by the name of Richard Baxter. He picked up the tract and read it, and it was the means of his salvation.

In after days that man wrote a book called "The Call to the Unconverted," that was the means of bringing a multitude to God, among others Philip Doddridge. Philip Doddridge wrote a book called "The Rise and Progress of Religion," which has brought thousands and tens of thousands into the kingdom of God, among others the great Willberforce. Willberforce wrote a book called "A Practical View of Christianity," which was the means of bringing a great multitude to Christ, among others Leigh Richmond. Leigh Richmond wrote a tract called "The Dairyman's Daughter," which has been the means of the salvation of uncounted multitudes. And that tide of influence started from the fact that one Christian woman dropped a Christian tract in the way of Richard Baxter—the tide of influence rolling on through Richard Baxter, through Philip Doddridge, through the great Willberforce, through Leigh Richmond, on, on, on, forever, forever. So the insignificant events of this world seem, after all, to be most momentous. The fact that you came up that street or this street seemed to be of no importance to you, and the fact that you went inside of some church may seem to be a matter of very great insignificance to you, but you will find it the turning point in your history.

V. Again, I see in my subject an illustration of the beauty of female industry. Behold Ruth toiling in the harvest field under the hot sun, or at noon taking plain bread with the reapers, or eating the parched corn which Boaz handed to her. The customs of society, of course, have changed, and without the hardships and exposure to which Ruth was subjected every intelligent woman will find something to do.

I know there is a sickly sentimentality on this subject. In some families there are persons of no practical service to the household or community, and though there are so many who are all around about them in the world they spend their time languishing over a new pattern, or bursting into tears at midnight over the story of some lover who shot himself! They would not deign to look at Ruth carrying back the barley on her way home to her mother-in-law, Naomi. All this fastidiousness may seem to do very well while they are under the shelter of their father's house, but when the sharp winter of misfortune comes what of those butterfly-folk? Persons under indulgent parents may get upon themselves habits of indolence, but when they come out into practical life their soul will recoil with disgust and chagrin. They will feel in their hearts what the poet so severely satirized when he said:

Folks are so awkward, things so impolite,  
They're elegantly pained from morning until night.

Through that gate of indolence how many men and women have marched, useless on earth, to a destroyed eternity! Spinoza said to Sir Horace Vere: "Of what did your brother die?" "Of having nothing to do," was the answer. "Ah," said Spinoza, "that's enough to kill any general of us." Oh, can it be possible in this world, where there is so much suffering to be alleviated, so much darkness to be enlightened, and so many burdens to be carried, that there is any person who cannot find anything to do? Mme. de Staël did a world of work in her time, and one day, while she was seated amid instruments of music, all of which she had mastered, and amid manuscript books which she had written, some one said to her: "How do you find time to attend to all these things?" "Oh," she replied, "these are not the things I am proud of. My chief boast is in the fact that I have seventeen trades, by any one of which I could make a livelihood necessary." And if in secular spheres there is so much to be done, in spiritual work how vast the field! We want more Abigails, more Hannahs, more Rebekas, more Marys, more Deborahs, consecrated—body, mind, soul—to the Lord who bought them.

VI. Once more, I learn from my subject the value of gleanings. Ruth going into that harvest field might have said: "There is a straw, and there is a straw, but what is a straw? I can't get any barley for myself or my mother-in-law out of these separate straws." Not so said beautiful Ruth. She gathered two straws and she put them together, and more straws, until she got enough to make a sheaf, and another, and another, and another, and then she brought them all together, and she threshed them out, and she had an epithet of barley, nigh a bushel. Oh, that we might all be gleaners!

Edna Burritt learned many things while toiling in a blacksmith's shop. Abercrombie, the world-renowned philosopher, was a philosopher in Scotland, and he got his philosophy, or the chief part of it, while, as a physician, he was waiting for the door of the sick room to open. Yet how many there are in this day who say they are so busy they have no time for mental or spiritual improvement, the great duties of life cross the field like strong reapers, and carry off all the hours, and there is only here and there a fragment left that is not worth gleaning. Ah, my friends, you could go into the busiest day and busiest week of your life and find golden opportunities, which, gathered, might at least make a whole sheaf for the Lord's garner. It is the stray opportunities and the stray privileges which, taken up and bound together and beaten out, will at last fill you with abounding joy.

There are a few moments left worth the gleaning. Now, Ruth, to the field! May each one have a measure full and running over! Oh, you gleaners, to the field! And if there be in your house an aged one or a sick relative that is not strong enough to come forth and toil in this field, then let Ruth take home to feeble Naomi this sheaf of gleanings. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." May the Lord God of Ruth and Naomi be our portion forever!

## The Throat Trouble Scare.

I was talking to a physician the other day about the Kaiser's throat. In that connection he told me of a serious effect it is having in this country. He said that the constant publication concerning the emperor's trouble, coming after all the talk the illness of Gen. Grant provoked, has caused a general fear among public men who do much talking that they may have the same trouble. He told me that since this matter has been so much agitated he has had a score of members of congress and senators come to him to have their throats examined for cancer. None have actually been threatened with that dread disease, but he has had difficulty to convince some of them that they were not already beyond cure. Some have stopped smoking for fear that might produce the disease, and they consult the doctor very often. As a matter of fact, throat trouble is very common among the orators in congress, but it is not of a cancerous character.—Washington Cor. Philadelphia Telegraph.

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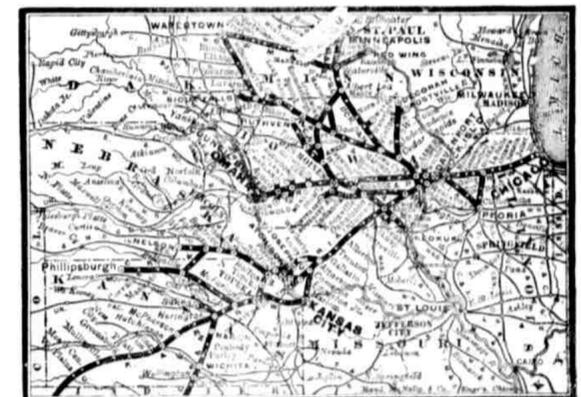
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