THE LAME TOOK THE PREY

LAST SUNDAY'S SERVICES IN THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

Dr. Talmage Says That in the Army of Christ Too Many Want to Be Commanders—The Church Needs More Earnest Workers in the Ranks.

BROOKLYN, May 27.—At the Tabernacle this morning the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., read the account of the man helpless at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. He then gave out the hymn beginning:

A cloud of witnesses around
Hold thee in full survey:
Forget the steps already trod,
And onward urge thy way

The subject of the eloquent doctor's discourse was: "Disabled Hunters Bringing Down the Most Game." His text was from Is. xxxiii, 23, "The lame take the prey." Following is the sermon:

The utter demolition of the Assyrian host was here predicted. Not only robust men should go forth and gather the spoils of conquest, but even men crippled of arm and crippled of foot should go out and capture much that was valuable. Their physical disadvantages should not hinder their great enrichment. So it has been in the past, so it is now, so it will be in the future. So it is in all departments. Men labor under seemingly great disadvantages, and amid the most unfavorable circumstances, yet making grand achievements, getting great blessing for themselves, great blessing for the world, great blessing for the church, and so "the lame take the prey."

Do you know that the three great poets of the world were totally blind? Homer, Ossian, John Milton. Do you know that Mr. Prescott, who wrote that enchanting book, "The Conquest of Mexico," never saw Mexico, could not even see the paper on which he was writing? A framework across the sheet, between which, up and down, went the pen immortal. Do you know that Gambassio, the sculptor, could not see the marble before him, or the chisel with which he cut it into shapes bewitching? Do you know that Alexander Pope, whose poems will last as long as the English language, was so much of an invalid that he had to be sewed up every morning in rough canvas in order to stand on his feet at all?

Do you know that Stuart, the celebrated painter, did much of his wonderful work under the shadow of the dungeon, where he had been unjustly imprisoned for debt? Do you know that Demosthenes by almost superhuman exertion first had to conquer the lisp of his own speech before he conquered assemblages with his eloquence? Do you know that Bacon struggled all through innumerable sicknesses, and that Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott went limping on clubfoot through all their life, and that many of the great poets and painters and orators and historians and heroes of the world had something to keep them back, and pull them down, and impede their way, and cripple their physical or their intellectual movement, and yet that they pushed on and pushed up until they reached the spoils of worldly success, and amid the huzza of nations and centuries, "the lame took the prey?"

You know that a vast multitude of these men started under the disadvantage of obscure parentage. Columbus, the son of the weaver. Ferguson, the astronomer, the son of the shepherd. America the prey of the one, worlds on worlds the prey of the other. But what is true in secular directions is more true in spiritual and religious directions, and I proceed to prove it.

There are in all communities many invalids. They never know a well day. They adhere to their occupations, but they go panting along the streets with exhaustion, and at eventime they lie down on the lounge with achings beyond all medicament. They have tried all prescriptions, they have gone through all the cures which were proclaimed infallible, and they have come now to surrender to perpetual ailments. They consider they are among many disadvantages; and when they see those who are buoyant in health pass by they almost envy their robust frames and easy respiration.

But I have noticed among that invalid class those who have the greatest knowledge of the Bible, who are in nearest intimacy with Jesus Christ, who have the most glowing experiences of the truth, who have had the most remarkable answers to prayer, and who have the most exhilarant anticipations of heaven. The temptations which weary us who are in robust health they have conquered. They have divided among them the spoils of the conquest. Many who are alert and athletic and swarthy loiter in the way. These are the lame that take the prey. Robert Hall an invalid, Edward Payson an invalid, Richard Baxter an invalid, Samuel Rutherford an invalid. This morning, when you want to call to mind those who are most Christlike, you think of some darkened room in your father's house from which there went forth an influence potent for eternity.

A step further: Through raised letters the art of printing has been brought to the attention of the blind.

You take up the Bible for the blind, and you close your eyes, and you run your fingers over the raised letters, and you say: "Why, I never could get any information in this way What a slow, lumbrous way of reading! God help the blind."

And yet I find among that class of persons, among the blind, the deaf and the dumb, the most thorough acquaintance with God's word. Shut out from all other sources of information, no sooner does their hand touch the raised letter than they gather a prayer. Without eyes, they look off upon the kingdom of God's love. Without hearing, they catch the minstrelsy of the skies. Dumb, yet with pencil, or with irradiated countenance, they declare the glory of God.

A large audience assembled in New York at the anniversary of the Deaf and Dumb asylum, and one of the visitors, with chalk, on the blackboard wrote this question to the pupils: "Do you not find it very hard to be deaf and dumb?" And one of the pupils took the chalk and wrote on the blackboard this sublime sentence in answer: "When the song of the angels shall burst upon our enraptured ear we will scarce regret that our ears were never marred with earthly sounds." Oh! the brightest eyes in heaven will be those that never saw on earth. The ears most alert in heaven will be those that in this world heard neither voice of friend, nor thrum of harp, nor carol of bird, nor doxology of congregations.

A lad who had been blind from infancy was cured. The oculist operated upon the lad and then put a very heavy bandage over the eyes, and after a few weeks had gone by the bandage was removed and the mother said to the child: "Willie, can you see?" He said: "Oh, mamma, is this heaven?" The contrast between the darkness before and the brightness afterward was overwhelming. And I tell you the glories of heaven will be a thousandfold brighter for those who never saw anything on earth. While many with good vision closed their eyes in night, and many who had a good, artistic and cultured ear went down into discord, these afflicted ones cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he made their sorrows their advantage, and so "the lame took the prey."

In the Seventh century there was a legend of St. Modobert. It was said that his mother was blind, and one day while looking at his mother he felt so sympathetic for her blindness that he rushed forward and kissed her blind eyes, and, the legend says, her vision came immediately. That was only a legend, but it is a truth, a glorious truth, that a kiss of God's eternal love has brought to many a blind eye eternal illumination.

A step further: There are those in all communities who toil mightily for a livelihood. They have scant wages. Perhaps they are diseased, or have physical infirmities, so they are hindered from doing a continuous day's work. A city missionary finds them up the dark alley, with no fire, with thin clothing, with very coarse bread. They never ride in the street car; they cannot afford the five cents. They never see any pictures save those in the show window on the street, from which they are often jostled and looked at by some one who seemed to say in the look: "Move on! What are you doing here looking at pictures?"

Yet many of them live on mountains of transfiguration. At their rough table He who fed the five thousand breaks the bread. They talk often of the good times that are coming. This world has no charm for them, but heaven entrances their spirit. They often divide their scant crust with some forlorn wretch who knocks at their door at night, and on the blast of the night wind, as the door opens to let them in, is heard the voice of Him who said: "I was hungry and ye fed me." No cohort of heaven will be too bright to transport them. By God's help they have vanquished the Assyrian host. They have divided among them the spoils. Lame, lame, yet they took the prey.

I was riding along the country road one day, and I saw a man on crutches. I overtook him. He was very old. He was going very slowly. At that rate it would have taken him two hours to go a mile. I said: "Wouldn't you like to ride?" He said: "Thank you, I would. God bless you." When he sat beside me he said: "You see, I am very lame and very old, but the Lord has been a good Lord to me. I have buried all my children. The Lord gave them and the Lord had a right to take them away. Blessed be his name. I was very sick and I had no money, and my neighbors came in and took care of me, and I wanted nothing. I suffer a great deal with pain, but then I have so many mercies left. The Lord has been a good Lord to me." And before we had got far I was in doubt whether I was giving him a ride or he was giving me a ride! He said: "Now, if you please, I'll get out here. Just help me down on my crutches, if you please. God bless you. Thank you, sir. Good morning. Good morning. You have been feet to the lame, sir, you have. Good morning." Swarthy men had gone the road that day. I do not know where they came out, but every hobble of that old man was toward the shining gate. With his old crutch he had struck down many a Sennacherib of temptation which has mastered you and me. Lame, so fearfully lame, so awfully lame; but he took the prey.

A step further. There are in all communities many orphans. During our last war and in the years immediately following, how many children we heard say: "Oh! my father was killed in the war." Have you ever noticed—I fear you have not—how well those children have turned out? Starting under the greatest disadvantage, no orphan asylum could do for them what their father would have done had he lived. The skirmisher sat one night by the light of fagots in the swamp, writing a letter home, when a sharpshooter's bullet ended the letter, which was never folded, never posted and never read.

Those children came up under great disadvantages. No father to fight their way for them. Perhaps there was in the old family Bible an old yellow letter, pasted fast, which told the story of that's father's long march and how he suffered in the hospital, but they looked still further on in the Bible, and they came to the story of how God is the Father of the fatherless and the widow's portion, and they soon took their father's place in that household. They battled the way for their mother. They came on up, and many of them have in the years since the war taken positions in church and state. While many of those who suffered nothing during those times have had sons go out into lives of indolence and vagabondage, those who started under so many disadvantages because they were so early bereft, these are the lame who took the prey.

A step further. There are those who would like to do good. They say: "Oh! if I only had wealth, or if I had eloquence, or if I had high social position, how much I would accomplish for God and the church!" I stand here today to tell you that you have great opportunities for usefulness.

Who built the Pyramids? The king who ordered them built? No; the plain workmen who added stone after stone, and stone after stone. Who built the dikes of Holland? The government that ordered the enterprise? No; the plain workmen who carried the earth and rung their trowel on the wall. Who are those who have built these vast cities? The capitalists? No; the carpenters, the masons, the plumbers, the plasterers, the tinners, the roofers dependent on a day's wages for a livelihood. And so in the great work of assuaging human suffering and enlightening human ignorance and halting human iniquity. In that great work the chief part is to be done by ordinary men, with ordinary speech, in an ordinary manner and by ordinary means. The trouble is that in the army of Christ we all want to be captains and colonels and brigadier generals. We are not willing to march with the rank and file, and to do duty with the private soldier. We want to belong to the reserve corps, and read about the battle while warming ourselves at the camp fires or on furlough at home, our feet upon an ottoman, we sagging back into an armchair.

As you go down the street, you see an excavation and four or five men are working, and perhaps twenty or thirty leaning on the rail looking over at them. That is the way it is in the church of God today; where you find one Christian hard at work, there are fifty men watching the job.

Oh! my friends, why do you not go to work and preach this Gospel? You say: "I have no pulpit." You have. It may be the carpenter's bench, it may be the mason's wall. The robe in which you are to proclaim this Gospel may be a shoemaker's apron. But woe unto you if you preach not this Gospel somewhere, somehow! If this world is ever brought to Christ, it will be through the unanimous and long continued efforts of men who, waiting for no special endowment, consecrate to God what they have. Among the most useless people in the world are men with ten talents, while many a one with only two talents, or no talent at all, is doing a great work, and so "the lame take the prey."

There are thousands of ministers of whom you have never heard—in log cabins at the west, in mission chapels at the east—who are warring against the legions of darkness—successfully warring. Tract distributors, month by month undermining the citadels of sin. You do not know their going or their coming, but the footfalls of their ministry are heard in the palaces of heaven. Who are the workers in our sabbath schools throughout this land today? Men celebrated, men brilliant, men of vast estates? For the most part, not that at all. I have noticed that the chief characteristic of most of those who are successful in the work is that they know their Bibles, are earnest in prayer, are anxious for the salvation of the young, and Sabbath by Sabbath are willing to sit down unobserved and tell of Christ and the resurrection. These are the humble workers who are recruiting the great army of Christian youth—not by might, not by power, not by profound argument, not by brilliant antithesis, but by the blessing of God on plain talk, and humble story, and silent tear, and anxious look. "The lame take the prey."

Oh! this work of saving the youth of our country—how few appreciate what it is! This generation tramping on the grave—we will soon all be gone. What next?

An engineer on a locomotive going across the western prairies day after day, saw a little child come out in front of a cabin and wave to him, so he got in the habit of waving back to the little child, and it was the day's joy to him to see this little one come out in front of the cabin door and wave to him, while he answered back.

One day the train was belated and it came on to the dusk of the evening. As the engineer stood at his post he saw by the headlight that little girl on the track, wondering why the train did not come, looking for the train, knowing nothing of its peril. A great horror seized upon the engineer. He reversed the engine. He gave it in charge of the other man on board, and then he climbed over the engine and he came down on the cowcatcher. He said, though he had reversed the engine, it seemed as though it were going at lightning speed, faster and faster, though it was really slowing up, and with almost supernatural clutch he caught that child by the hair and lifted it up, and when the train stopped and the passengers gathered around to see what was the matter, there the old engineer lay, fainted dead away, the little child alive and in his swarthy arms.

"Oh!" you say, "that was well done." But I want you to exercise some kindness and some appreciation toward those in community who are snatching the little ones from under the wheels of temptation and sin—snatching them from under thundering rail trains of eternal disaster, bringing them up into respectability in this world and into glory for the world to come. You appreciate what the engineer did, why can you not appreciate the grander work done by every Sabbath school teacher this afternoon?

Oh! my friends, I want to impress upon myself and upon yourselves that it is not the number of talents we possess, but the use we make of them.

God has a royal family in the world. Now, if I should ask: "Who are the royal families of history?" you would say: "House of Hapsburg, house of Stuarts, house of Bourbons." They lived in palaces, and had great equipage. But who are the Lord's royal family? Some of them may serve you in the household, some of them are in unlighted garrets, some of them will walk this afternoon down the street, on their arm a basket of broken food, some of them are in the almshouse, despised and rejected of men, yet in the last great day, while it will be found that some of us who fared sumptuously every day are hurled back into discomfiture, there are the lame that will take the prey.

One step further: There are a great many people discouraged about getting to heaven. You are brought up in good families, you had Christian parentage, but you frankly tell me that you are a thousand miles away from the right track.

My brother, you are the one I want to preach to this morning. I have been looking for you. I will tell you how you got astray. It was not maliciousness on your part. It was perhaps through the geniality and sociality of your nature that you fell into sin. You wandered away from your duty, you unconsciously left the house of God, you admit the Gospel to be true, and yet you have so grievously and prolongedly wandered, you say rescue is impossible.

It would take a week to count up the names of those in heaven who were on earth worse than you tell me you are. They went the whole round of iniquity, they disgraced themselves, they disgraced their household, they despaired of return because their reputation was gone, their property was gone, everything was gone, but in some hour like this they heard the voice of God and threw themselves on the divine compassion, and they rose up more than conquerers. And I tell you there is the same chance for you. That is one reason why I like to preach this Gospel, so free a Gospel, so tremendous a Gospel. It takes a man all wrong and makes him all right.

In a former settlement where I preached, a member of my congregation quit the house of God, quit respectable circles, went into all styles of sin, and was slain of his iniquity. The day for his burial came, and his body was brought to the house of God. Some of his comrades who had destroyed him were overheard along the street, on the way to the burial, saying: "Come, let us go and hear Talmage damn this old sinner!" Oh! I had nothing but tears for the dead, and I had nothing but invitations for the living. You see I could not do any otherwise. "Christ Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost." Christ in his dying prayer said: "Father, forgive them," and that was a prayer for you and for me. Oh, start on the road to heaven today. You are not happy. The thirst of your soul will never be slaked by the fountains of sin. You turn everywhere but to God for help. Right where you are, call on him. He knows you, he knows all about you, he knows all the odds against which you have been contending in life. Do not go to him with a long rigmarole of a prayer, but just look up and say: "Help! help!"

But you say: "My hand trembles so from dissipations, I can't even take hold of a hymn book to sing." Do not worry about that, my brother; I will give out a hymn at the close so familiar you can sing it without a book. But you say: "I have such terrible habits on me, I can't get rid of them." My answer is, Almighty grace can break up that habit, and will break it up. But you say: "The wrong I did was to one dead and in heaven now, and I can't correct that wrong." You can correct it. By the grace of God, go into the presence of that one, and the apologies you ought to have made on earth make in heaven.

"Oh!" says some man, "if I should try to do right, if I should turn away from my evil doing unto the Lord, I would be jostled, I would be driven back, nobody would have any sympathy for me." You are mistaken. Here, in the presence of the church on earth and in heaven, I give you today the right hand of Christian fellowship. God sent me here today to preach this, and he sent you here to hear this: "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thought, and let him return unto the Lord, who will have mercy, and unto our God, who will abundantly pardon." Though you may have been the worst sinner, you may become the best saint, and in the great day of judgment it will be found that "where sin abounded, grace does much more abound," and while the spoils of an everlasting kingdom are being awarded for your pursuit it will be found that the lame took the prey. Blessed be God that we are this Sabbath, one week nearer the obliteration of all the inequalities of this life and all its disquietudes.

Years ago, on a boat on the North river the pilot gave a very sharp ring to the bell for the boat to slow up. The engineer attended to the machinery, and then he came up with some alarm on deck to see what was the matter. He saw it was a moonlight night and there were no obstacles in the way. He went to the pilot and said: "Why did you ring the bell in that way? Why do you want to stop? there's nothing the matter." And the pilot said to him: "There is a mist gathering on the river; don't you see that? and there is night gathering darker and darker, and I can't see the way." Then the engineer, looking around and seeing it was a bright moonlight, looked into the face of the pilot, and saw that he was dying, and then that he was dead.

God grant that when our last moment comes we may be found at our post doing our whole duty, and when the mists of the river of death gather on our eyelids, may the good Pilot take the wheel from our hands and guide us into the calm harbor of eternal rest!

Drop the anchor, furl the sail;
I am safe within the vale.

CLIPPINGS OF ALL SORTS.

The red carnation is now regularly recognized as the representative Boulanger flower.

This season they are netting shad on the Pacific coast, thanks to Uncle Sam's hatcheries.

The first crusade ended by the taking of Jerusalem, July 15, 1099, and Godfrey De Bouillon made king.

A peasant has just died in Austria-Hungary who was 142 years of age. He left a son aged 115 years and a grandson of 85.

"The Black Sea and Azof Canal company," with a capital of $17,000,000, are about to begin cutting a canal across the Crimean isthmus.

The New York fire department spent $2,700 for sleighs on which to transport the trucks and engines during the three days of the blizzard.

A parrot that was valued at $300 died in Poughkeepsie recently. It could sing, talk and swear in the English, Dutch and Portuguese languages.

The English government offers to owners of over twenty horses an annual retainer of $2.50 for each horse for the option of purchasing them in time of war.

Some California land owners have been extensively grafting chestnut and wild oak trees and are sanguine of very profitable returns from their enterprise.

Locomotive 24, of the Cumberland Valley railroad, is noted down there because, during the war, it was bought for $23,000. You can buy a better one now for $5,000.

The Sweetwater dam just completed at San Diego, Cal., at a cost of $800,000, is said to be twenty feet higher than any dam in the United States. It is ninety feet from its base to its crest.

Parisians have been amusing themselves with a "ham fair," at which booths were filled with sausages, hams and lard, and are now enjoying a "gingerbread fair," say the correspondents.

Ten tons of canceled tickets that accumulated during the past two years at the office of the Boston and Albany railroad in Springfield, Mass., are being cut up, preparatory to selling them as old paper.

A Methodist church at Augusta held a "hard boiled egg festival" for the purpose of raising money. Each lady attending was expected to bring a hard boiled egg, the proceeds to go to the purchase of an organ.

The chief magistrate of a justice court in Jasper county, Ga., sits on a nail keg when dealing out justice, and when a case is given to a jury the "good men and true" are turned in a horse lot to make up their verdict.

An Austrian baron who desired to commit suicide consulted a physician about a complaint about his heart in order to find out exactly where it was. He then fired five shots into his body, aiming at his heart, and they being unsuccessful, he blew his brains out with one shot.

"Uncle Remus'" General Appearance.

Mr. Joel Chandler Harris, "Uncle Remus," was discussed by a literary club in Atlanta, Ga., the other evening, and was described by one of his friends as the plainest of all plain men. He is never untidy, but "his trousers always bag at the knee, and if he didn't have at least one button off his coat he would not be happy. In justice to his head gear, let me say that he always wears the nobbiest derby and red hair, and carries a rustic hickory cane. It was cut from the virgin forest near his West End home, and he was never known to be without it. He is not lame, but the hickory cane is as necessary to his make up as the red cravat that ever adorns his shirt front to keep up a kind of harmonious blending with his stubby mustache and hair. In his general appearance, therefore, it may be accepted that if he be not unique, he is at least old fashioned."—Detroit Free Press.

A New Sort of Earring.

Parisians are wearing a new sort of earring, to which they have taken kindly—an arrow or a feather fixed almost horizontally across the lobe. The arrow is generally enriched with a single pearl. The feather has a cluster of small colored stones. Long drop earrings have also come in again, to the delight of the women who possessed such trinkets, and have hastened to exhume them from the cases in which they have lain so long.—Chicago Herald.

Died with Her Children.

At the recent fire at Vassar, Mich., a thoroughbred female pointer, owned by John Loss, had her kennel, in which were eight puppies, under one of the burning buildings. With mother instinct the poor thing ran back and forth from under the burning building, mutely appealing for help, but none could be given, and rather than desert her brood she died with them.—Chicago Herald.

The Salon's Sensational Picture.

The Paris Salon this year exhibits 2,536 pictures. One of the most sensational pictures is Albert Maignan's "Tocsin," which represents a huge uplifted bell, out of which all sorts of frantic, somber figures of men and women are tumbling, typifying the various phases of fire, attack, flood and disaster, of which they scream warning cries.—Frank Leslie's.

Clippings for P. T. Barnum.

P. T. Barnum is on the books of a London agency which furnishes clippings from newspapers, for notices of any "extraordinary curiosities alive or extraordinary performance or exhibitions which can be placed in our large exhibition tents."—New York Sun.

White Sand from Palestine.

A Hebrew at Athens, Ga., has received a gift of six ounces of white sand from Palestine. It is said to be the belief of some Hebrews that this sand, if placed under the head of a corpse, insures the return of the spirit to Jerusalem.—New York Graphic.

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