

HOW TO CONQUER.

SERMON BY REV. DR. TALMAGE, SUNDAY, JULY 21, 1889.

Great Crowds Present at Culver Park Assembly, Lake Maxinkuckee, Ind.—Text. "When Shall I Awake? I Will Seek It Yet Again."

Lake Maxinkuckee, Ind., July 21.—Rev. T. De Witt Talmage preached today at Culver Park assembly, this place, great crowds being present from Indianapolis, Chicago and surrounding regions. His subject was "How to Conquer." The text was: "When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." Prov. xxiii, 35. The eloquent preacher 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 said: "When shall I awake? When shall I come out of this horrid nightmare of iniquity? But, seized upon by unreluctant 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 to such. There are those in this audience who, with every passion of their agonized soul, are ready to hear such a 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 here, 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 spread a banquet at your return, and the hierarchs of heaven to fall into line of bannered 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 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—whom 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 turn the more easily? Alas! 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 POWER OF EVIL HABIT. 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 him, 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, it is so easy then to row it! As long as we yield to the evil inclinations of 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-seven years ago I quit that habit, and I find as soon as I put my right hand in the fire as to indulge in it. Why? Because it was such a terrific 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 a fretful restlessness, and he has become a complete fidget. What power is it that has rolled a wave of woe over the earth and shaken a portent in the heavens? He has tried to stop smoking or chewing! 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 my 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 sunshine into the sunset? What enchantment has lifted a world of beauty and joy on his soul? He has gone back to tobacco!

IT IS A TASKMASTER. 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 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 the moorings, it came on down through the rapids and ground over the falls. It was said to have been a scene brilliant beyond all description. Well, there are thousands of men on fire of evil habit, coming down through the rapids and through the awful might 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 at the midnight and cries, "God help me!" He bites his lips. He grinds his teeth. He clenches his fist in his determination to keep his purpose. He dare not look at the bottles in the window of a wine store. It was one long, bitter, exhaustive, hand-to-hand fight, with inflamed, tantalizing and merciless habit. When he thinks

he is entirely free, the old inclinations pounce upon him like a pack of hounds with their muzzles tearing away at the flanks of one poor wanderer. In Paris there is a sculptured monument of Bacchus, the god of revelry. He is riding on a panther at full leap. Oh, how suggestive! Let every one who is spending 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.

"WHEN SHALL I AWAKE?" How many there are who resolve on a better life and say: "When shall I awake?" But, seized on 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 rebukes 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 the 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 back on his dignity, resolved he never will enter 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, and instead of giving him a warm grip of the hand, offers him the tip end 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 handshaking! Sometimes, when you have felt the need of encouragement and some Christian man has taken you by the hand, have you not felt that thrilling through every fiber of your body, mind and soul, an encouragement that was just what you needed? You do not know anything at all about this unless you know when a man tries to return from evil courses of conduct, he runs against repulsions innumerable. We say of some man, he lives a block or two from the church or half a mile from the church. There are people in our crowded cities who live a thousand miles from the church. vast deserts of indifference lie 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 comes to the house of God a man with marks of dissipation upon him, people throw up their hands in horror, as much as to say, "Isn't it shocking?" How these dainty, fastidious Christians in all our churches are going to get into heaven I don't know, unless they have an especial train of cars, cushioned and upholstered, each one a car to himself. They cannot go without the great and the publicans and sinners. Oh, you who cut your lip of scorn at the fallen, I tell you plainly, if you had been surrounded by the same influences, instead of sitting to-day 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 parentage, 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 by immersion, and what kind of a church he is going to join. Oh, my friends! it is a poor time to talk about Presbyterian catechisms, 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 lifeboat 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 in 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 a hearty grip for every one that tries to turn from his evil way! Take hold of the same book with him, though his dissipations shake, and tell him that his habits you have, and ask him if there is any help in all the resources of omnipotent love, to give it to you. Do not go with a long rigmorale people call prayer, made up of "ohs" and "ahs" and "forever and forever 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 war I was at Antietam and I went into the hospitals after the battle, and I said to a man, "Where are you hurt?" He made no answer, but held up his arms 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 about 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."

THANK GOD FOR THE GOSPEL. Blessed be God for such a Gospel as this.

"Cut the slices thin," said the wife to the husband, "or 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. So this slice 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 three hundred 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 these poor wounded fellows. As they came, some from one part of the land, some from another, no 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 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 unholy intimacy will fill your soul with moral dizziness. In all the ages of the church there has not been an instance where a man kept one evil associate and was reformed. Among the fourteen hundred million of the race not one instance. 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."

YOU MUST RENOUNCE ONE OF THE OTHER. Then sign your name and send the letter to-day. Give up your bad associations, companions or give up heaven. It is not a bad companion that destroys a man, nor five bad companions, nor three 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 grog shop, urging him to go in, he resisting, violently resisting, until after a while they forced 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 strong drink up 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. 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 gambling 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 on a rock near which he was dying, "Sparta has conquered." Though your struggle to get rid of sin may seem to be almost a 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. They go to the postoffice every day or two to see whether there are any letters from you. How anxious they are to hear.

SEND THE GOOD NEWS HOME. Some one said to a Grecian general, "What was the proudest moment in your life?" He thought a moment, and said: "The proudest moment in 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 that you have conquered your evil habits by the grace of God and become eternal victors. Oh, despise not parental anxiety! The time will come when you will have neither father nor mother, and you will go around the place where they used to watch you 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 lock and become eternal victors. Oh, that you had done just as that woman did, and would give the world if you had never thrust a pang through their dear old hearts. God pity the poor 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 sequestered. There is no balm-garden enough to heal the heart of one who has brought parents to a sorrowful grave, and who wanders about through the dismal cemetery, rending 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!

Fine Writing. There is a great deal of fine writing done on some of the New York dailies. A reporter on one occasion wishing to state that Joe Coburn, the ex-convict and prize fighter, struck his benefactor, the eccentric millionaire, Law, a blow on the face for refusing to advance a loan, uses the following language: "The story goes that Coburn asked for \$1,000 on the spot, that Law didn't see it, and that Coburn promptly landed the particular amerling fowl of auriferous tendencies on whom he has constantly backed, a swat" which tumbled him in the sawdust. This is positively an improvement on the words of the fastidious clergyman who altered a well known text to, "It is the prerogative of innocence to project the initiatory bowlder."—Texas Sittings.

A Long Journey for Six Cents. Two weeks ago George, the 13-year-old son of Mr. Herbert, of the city engineer's office, ran away from home and was not heard of again until yesterday, when his father received a letter from him announcing his safe arrival in San Francisco, where he is camped with relatives. When he returned to his home, George had faded away from Denver his financial assets aggregated six cents in postage stamps. At the close of a 1,300 mile journey he had an accounting and found himself the proud possessor of 25. Should he continue his journey around the world it is apprehended that he will return to Denver in possession of a handsome competence.—Denver Republican.

A Chapter of Calamities. A southern merchant had a chance the other day to find the first cause of an accident which happened in his store. A rattlesnake frightened a cat, that scared a dog, which knocked a jar of jam from a shelf, which hit the faucet of a barrel of molasses, which turned the faucet, causing the loss of a barrel of molasses. But the man who sends a body which supports the man who never intends to pay for what he received is often more expensive than this rattlesnake.—Northwest Trade.

THE CIRCUS.

What the Bill Boards Display—The Truth About It.

The man who designs the works of art that decorate the bill boards throughout the United States at this season of the year should have been consulted before the first menagerie was made to order for Adam and Eve and turned loose in the garden of Eden.



LEWY STRONG-HOLD IN HIS NOSE BALANCING ACT.

He could have given valuable pointers about the proper proportions of the various animals, and would have added to the collection beasts and birds and reptiles which could now be used to advantage.

The circus artist is a wonderful man, with a phenomenal size of imagination and a supreme contempt for fact. He looks with disdain upon the modern realistic school of art. He has no use for realism. The circus artist probably knows his business. For many, many years he has been drawing pictures of elephants forty feet high tramping their way majestically through scenes of Oriental splendor. Five generations have stood with glaring eyes and open mouths before these great works of the lithographer's art. They have patronized each succeeding circus, and swallowed the rising lump of disappointment occasioned by the discovery that the seven-foot giraffe could stand erect in a seventy-foot cage. One hundred years from now it will be the same.

No man looks at the bill boards after the circus has left town. As he passes by he looks the other way. It is a matter of regret that the circus is so far behind the progress made by the artist and the advance agent. The advance agent is a talented gentleman, with an enthusiastic temperament. As the circus becomes more and more antiquated the advance agent grows more eloquent. He announces that all former achievements will be cast in the shade; that the colossal aggregation is grander than ever and that the price of admission will not be increased. The circus artist is equal to the occasion. He designs a new elephant, with a trunk thirty feet in length, and draws a vivid representation of a life and death fight between the wild yag of Patagonia and a company of sailors who have stepped ashore from a man-of-war.



"LA TASCOT," THE HUMAN FLY, DIVING INTO "LA NET."

The Chicago Herald presents a series of pictures, reduced from photographs, depicting actual scenes in one of the greatest aggregations ever exhibited beneath canvas. Their accuracy will not be questioned by those who have visited the circus recently. Reference is made to the spirited drawing of "La Tascot, the Human Fly," in her daring act of diving into a net. The artist has evidently made a mistake in his perspective, for as the picture is drawn the suggestion that the stakes are too short forces itself upon all who make a critical analysis of this spirited sketch. The "La Tascot" on the bill boards is a far prettier female, but her face lacks the decision and character portrayed in the original. Many are disappointed that the dive is not made head first, as per advertisement, but this feeling soon passes away.

The artist has shown Signor Kelly in the star act of the evening. Signor Kelly is the champion "bear-buck" rider of the world. Those not acquainted with the dangers which surround the life of a circus performer may fail to properly appreciate the risk taken by Signor Kelly in the feat undertaken by him as shown in the sketch. There is a chance that the upright so firmly grasped by the rider may break or pull out. What would become of the unfortunate man? He would be dashed to the sawdust track. Then, again, the horse might drop dead. Those not in the business have no right to criticize, but it is hard to keep out of one's mind the recollection of a scene shown on the bill boards, where a flying horse dashes around the great ring, carrying on his back a graceful rider, whose toes seem hardly to touch the galloping steed.



SIGNOR KELLY, THE BEAR-BUCK RIDER.

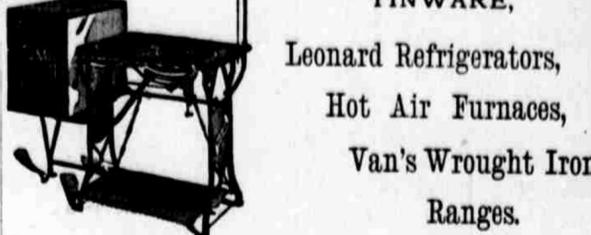
There is no joy in kicking because the man who was advertised to turn thirty times over twelve large elephants simply jumps off of a springboard and turns a somersault over one solitary, melancholy pachyderm with a far away look in his off eye. Not half of the people in the vast audience would dare to perform that act.

But in spite of all these petty disappointments it is everlasting fun to see the circus.

A Sister in Name Only. Mrs. Parvenu—Mr. Travis, you know everybody. Who is that pretty girl over there, sitting on the divan? Mr. Travis—That is one of my sisters, Mrs. Parvenu. Mrs. Parvenu—Indeed! You don't look as if you belonged to the same family. Mr. Travis sadly—No, and we never shall.—Burlington Free Press.

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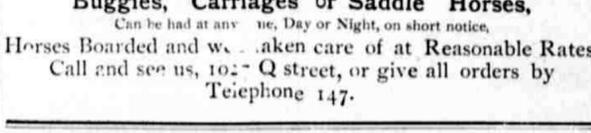
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