

THE BALANCES LIFTED.

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON PREPARED FOR OMAHA.

The Sermon is Based on These Memorable Words: "Thou Art Weighed in the Scales, and Art Found Wanting."—Daniel v. 27.

OMAHA, Sept. 1.—Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage did not preach in this city today as expected, but below is the sermon he had prepared for the day: Text—Daniel v. 27:

Babylon was the paradise of architecture, and driven out from thence the grandest buildings of modern times are only the evidence of her fall. The site having been selected for the city, two million men were employed in the rearing of her walls and the building of her works. It was a city sixty miles in circumference. There was a stretch all around the city from which the material for the building of the city had been digged.

There were twenty-five gates on each side of the city; between every two gates a tower of defense springing into the skies; from each gate on the one side, a street running straight through to the corresponding gate on the other side, so that there were fifty streets fifteen miles long. Through the city ran a branch of the River Euphrates. This river sometimes overflowed its banks, and to keep it from the ruin of the city a lake was constructed, into which the surplus water of this river would run during the time of freshets, and the water was kept in this artificial lake until time of drought, and then this water would stream down over the city. At either end of the bridge spanning this Euphrates there was a palace—the one palace a mile and a half around, the other palace seven and a half miles around.

The wife of Nebuchadnezzar had been born and brought up in the country and in a mountainous region, and she could not bear this flat district of Babylon; and so, to please his wife, Nebuchadnezzar built in the midst of the city a mountain 400 feet high. This mountain was built out into terraces supported on arches. On the top of these arches a layer of flat stones; on the top of that a layer of reeds and bitumen; on the top of that two layers of bricks, closely cemented; on the top of that a heavy sheet of lead, and on the top of that the soil—soil so deep that a Lebanon cedar had room to anchor its roots. There were pumps worked by mighty machinery, fetching up the water from the Euphrates to this hanging garden, as it was called, so that there were fountains spouting into the sky.

Standing below and looking up it must have seemed as if the clouds were in blossom, or as though the sky leaned on the shoulder of a cedar. All this Nebuchadnezzar did to please his wife. Well, she ought to have been pleased. I suppose she was pleased. If that would not please her nothing would. There was in that city also the temple of Belus, with towers—one tower the eighth of a mile high, in which there was an observatory where astronomers talked to the stars. There was in that temple an image, just one image, which cost what would be our fifty-two million dollars.

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES.

O what a city! The earth never saw anything like it, never will see anything like it. And yet I have to tell you that it is going to be destroyed. The king and his princes are at a feast. They are all intoxicated. Pour out the rich wine into the chalices. Drink to the health of the king. Drink to the glory of Babylon. Drink to a great future.

A thousand lords red intoxicated. The king, seated upon a chair, with vacant look, as intoxicated men will—with vacant look stared at the wall. But soon that vacant look takes on intensity, and it is an affrighted look; and all the princes begin to look and wonder what is the matter, and they look at the same point on the wall. And then there drops a darkness into the room and puts out the blaze of the golden plate, and out of the sleeve of the darkness there comes a finger—a finger of fiery terror circling around and striding around as though it would write; and then it comes up with sharp tip of flame it inscribes on the plastering of the wall the doom of the king: "Weighed in the balances and found wanting." The bang of heavy fists against the gates of the palace are followed by the breaking in of the doors. A thousand gleaming knives strike into a thousand quivering hearts. Now death is king, and he is seated on a throne of corpses. In that hall there is a balance lifted. God swung it. On one side of the balance are put Belshazzar's opportunities, and on the other side of the balance are put Belshazzar's sins. The sins come down. His opportunities go up. Weighed in the balances—found wanting.

There has been a great deal of cheating in our country with false weights and measures and balances, and the government, to change that state of things, appointed commissioners whose business it was to stamp weights and measures and balances, and a great deal of the wrong has been corrected. But still, after all, there is no such thing as a perfect balance on earth. The chain may break or some of the metal may be clipped, or in some way the equipoise may be a little disturbed.

GOD'S BALANCES ARE ACCURATE.

You cannot always depend upon earthly balances. A pound is not always a pound, and you pay for one thing and you get another; but in the balance which is suspended to the throne of God, a pound is a pound, and right is right, and wrong is wrong, and a soul is a soul, and eternity is eternity. God has a perfect bushel and a perfect peck and a perfect gallon. When merchants weigh their goods in the wrong way, then the Lord weighs the goods again. If from the imperfect measure the merchant pours out what pretends to be a gallon of oil and there is less than a gallon, God knows it, and he calls upon his recording angel to mark it: "So much wanting in that measure of oil." The farmer comes in from the country. He has apples to sell. He has an imperfect measure. He pours out the apples from this imperfect measure. God recognizes it. He says to the recording angel: "Mark down so many apples too few—an imperfect measure." We may cheat ourselves and we may cheat the world, but we cannot cheat God, and in the great day of judgment it will be found out that what we learned in boyhood, at school, is correct; that twenty hundred weight make a ton, and one hundred and twenty solid feet make a cord of wood. No more, no less. And a religion which does not take hold of this life as well as the life to come is no religion at all. But, my friends, that is not the kind of balances I am to speak of today, that is not the kind of weights and measures I am to speak of that kind of balances which can weigh principles, weigh churches, weigh nations, weigh nations, and weigh worlds. "What!" you say, "is it possible that our life is to be weighed?" Yes. Why, you would think if God put on one side the balances suspended from the throne of the Alps, and the Pyrenees, and the Himalayas, and Mount Washington, and all the cities of the earth, they would crush it. No, no. The time will come when God will sit down on the white throne to see the

world weighed, and on one side will be the world's opportunities, and on the other side the world's sins. Down will go the sins and away will go the opportunities, and God will say to the messengers with the torch: "Burn that world! Weighed and found wanting!"

SOME PERSONAL QUESTIONS.

God will weigh churches. He takes a great church. That great church, according to the worldly estimate, must be weighed. He puts it on one side the balances, and the minister and the choir and the building that cost its hundreds of thousands of dollars. He puts them on one side the balances. On the other side of that scale he puts what that church ought to be, what its consecration ought to be, what its sympathy for the poor ought to be, what its devotion to all good ought to be. That is on one side. That side comes down, and the church, not being able to stand the test, rises in the balances. It does not make any difference about your magnificent machinery. A church is built for one thing—to save souls. If it saves a few souls when it might save a multitude of souls, God will spew it out of his mouth. Weighed and found wanting! So God estimates nations. How many times he has put that Spanish nation into the scales, and found it insufficient and condemned it! The French empire was placed on one side the scales, and God weighed the French empire, and Napoleon said: "Have I not enlarged the boulevards? Did I not kindle the glories of the Champs Elysees? Have I not adorned the Tuileries? Have I not built the gilded Opera house?" Then God weighed that nation, and he put on one side of the scales the emperor, and the boulevards, and the Tuileries, and the Champs Elysees, and the gilded Opera house, and on the other side he put that man's ambition, that man's libertinism, that man's selfishness, that man's godless ambition. This last came down, and all the brilliancy of the scene vanished. What is that voice coming up from Sedan? Weighed and found wanting! But I must become more individual and more personal in my address. Some people say they do not think clergymen ought to be personal in their religious addresses, but ought to deal with subjects in the abstract. I do not think that way. What would you think of a hunter who should go to the woods to shoot deer in the abstract? Ah! no. He loads the gun, he puts the butt of it against the breast, he runs his eye along the barrel, he takes sure aim, and then crash go the antlers on the rocks. And so, if we want to be hunters for the Lord, we must take sure aim and fire. Not in the abstract are we to treat things in religious discussions. If a physician comes into a sick room does he treat disease in the abstract? No; he feels the pulse, takes the diagnosis, then he makes the prescription. And if we want to heal souls in this life and the life to come, we do not want to treat them in the abstract. The fact is, you and I have a malady which, if unrequited by grace, will kill us forever. Now, I want an abstraction. Where is the malady? Where is the physician?

WE MUST ALL BE WEIGHED.

People say there is a day of judgment coming. My friends, every day is a day of judgment, and you and I today are being weighed, inspected, weighed. Here are the balances of the sanctuary. They are lifted, and we must all be weighed. Who will come and be weighed first? Here is a moralist who volunteers. He is one of the most upright men in the country. He comes. Well, my brother, get in—get into the balances now, and be weighed. But as he gets into the balances, I say: "What is that bundle you have along with you?" "Oh," he says, "that is my reputation for goodness, and kindness, and charity, and generosity, and kindness generally." "O my brother! we cannot weigh that; we are going to weigh you—your soul, stand in the scales—your soul, the moralist. Paid your debts?" "Yes," you say, "paid all my debts." "Have you acted in an upright way in the community?" "Yes, yes." "Have you been kind to the poor? Are you faithful in a thousand relations in life?" "Yes." "So far, so good. But now, before you get out of this scale, I want to ask you two or three questions. Have your thoughts always been right?" "No," you say, "no." Put down one mark. "Have you loved the Lord with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength?" "No," you say. Make another mark. "Come now, be frank, and confess that in ten thousand things you have come short—have you not?" "Yes." Make ten thousand marks. Come now, get me a book large enough to make the record of that moralist's deficits. My brother, stand in the scales, do not fly away from them. I put on your side the scales all the good deeds you ever did, all the kind words you ever uttered; but on the other side the scales I put this weight, which I say I must put there—on the other side the scales and opposite to yours I put this weight: "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified." Weighed and found wanting.

Still, the balances of the sanctuary are suspended and we are ready to weigh any who come. Who shall be the next? Well, here is a formalist. He comes and he gets into the balances, and as he gets in I see that all his religion is in genuflections and in outward observances. As he gets into the scales I say: "What is that you have in this pocket?" "Oh," he says, "that is Westminster Assembly Catechism." I say: "Very good. What have you in that other pocket?" "Oh," he says, "that is the Heidelberg Catechism." "Very good. What is that you have under your arm, standing in this balance of the sanctuary?" "Oh," he says, "that is a church record." "Very good. What are all these books on your side the balances?" "Oh," he says, "those are Calvin's Institutes." "My brother, we are not weighing books; we are weighing you. It cannot be that you are depending for your salvation upon your orthodoxy. Do you not know that the creeds and the forms of religion are merely the scaffolding for the building? You certainly are not going to mistake the scaffolding for the temple. Do you not know that men have gone to perdition with a catechism in their pocket?" "But," says the man, "I cross myself often." "Ah! that will not save you." "But," says the man, "I am sympathetic for the poor." "That will not save you." Says the man, "I sat at the communion table." "That will not save you." "But," says the man, "I have had my name on the church records." "That will not save you." "But I have been a professor of religion forty years." "That will not save you. Stand there on your side the balances and I will give you the advantage—I will let you have all the creeds, all the church records, all the Christian conventions that were ever held, all the communion tables that were ever built, on your side the balances. On the other side the balances I must put what God says I must put there. I put this million pound weight on the other side the balances: "Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. From such turn away." Weighed and found wanting.

WHO IS TO BE WEIGHED NEXT?

Still the balances are suspended. Are there any others who would like to be weighed or who will be weighed? Yes, here comes a worldling. He gets into the scales. I can very easily see what his whole life is made up of. Stocks, dividends, percentages, "buy ten days," "buy ten days." Get in, my friend; get into these balances and be weighed—weighed for this life and weighed for the life to come. He gets in. I find that in two great questions in his life are: "How cheaply can I buy these goods?" and "How

cheaply can I sell them?" I find he admires heaven because it is a land of gold and money must be "easy."

I find from talking with him that religion and the Sabbath are an interruption, a vulgar interruption, and he hopes on the way to church to drum up a new customer. All the week he has been weighing fruits, weighing meats, weighing ice, weighing coal, weighing confections, weighing worldly and perishable commodities, not realizing the fact that he himself has been weighed. On your side the balances, O worldling! I will give you full advantage. I put on your side all the banking houses, all the storehouses, all the cargoes, all the insurance companies, all the factories, all the silver, all the gold, all the money vaults, all the safety deposits—all on your side. But it does not add one ounce, for at the very moment we are congratulating you on your fine house and upon your princely income God and the angels are writing in regard to your soul, "Weighed and found wanting."

But I must go faster and speak of the final scrutiny. The fact is, my friends, we are marching to an awful and dreadful reality. These pulses which now are drumming the march of life may, after a while, call a halt. We walk on a hair-bug bridge over chasms. All around us are dangers lurking ready to spring on us from ambush. We lie down at night, not knowing whether we shall arise in the morning. We start out on our occupations, not knowing whether we shall come back. Crowns being burned for thy brow or bolts forged for thy prison. Angels of light ready to shout at thy deliverance, or bands of darkness stretching up skeleton hands to fling thee down into ruin consummate. Suddenly the judgment will be here. The angel, with one foot on the sea and the other foot on the land, will swear by him that liveth forever and ever that time shall be no longer: "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." Hark to the jarring of the mountains. Why, this is the setting down of the scales, the balance. And then there is a flash as from a cloud, but it is the glitter of the shining balances, and they are hoisted, and all nations are to be weighed. The forgotten get in on this side the balances. They may have weighed themselves and pronounced a flattering decision. The world may have weighed them and pronounced their moral. Now they are being weighed in God's balances—the balances that can make no mistake. All the property gone, all the titles of distinction gone, all the worldly successes gone; there is a soul, absolutely nothing but a soul, an immortal soul, a never-lying soul, a soul stripped of all worldly advantage, a soul—on one side of the scales.

On the other side the balances are wasted Sabbaths, disregarded sermons, ten thousand opportunities of mercy and pardon that were not used. They are on the other side the scales, and there God stands, and in the presence of men and devils, cherubim and angels, he announces, while groaning earthquakes, and crackling conflagration, and judgment trumpet, and everlasting storm repeat it: "Weighed in the balance and found wanting."

Now, for some who are Christians: "Certainly you don't mean to say that we will have to get into the balances! Our sins are all pardoned, our title to heaven is secure. Certainly you are not going to put us in the balances!" Yes, my brother. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and on that day you are certainly going to be weighed.

ALL MUST BE WEIGHED.

O follower of Christ, you get into the balances. The bell of the judgment is ringing. You must get into the balances. You get in on this side. On the other side the balances we will place all the opportunities of good which you did not improve, all the attainments in piety which you might have had, but which you refused to take. We place them all on the other side. They go down, and your soul rises in the scale. You cannot weigh against all those imperfections.

Well, then, we must give you the advantage, and on your side of the scales we will place all the good deeds you have ever done, the kind words you have ever uttered. Too light yet! Well, we must put on your side all the consecration of your life, all the holiness of your life, all the prayers of your life, all the faith of your Christian life. Too light yet! Come, mighty men of the past, and get in on that side the scales. Come, Payson, and Doddridge, and Baxter, get in on that side the scales and make them come down that that righteous one may be saved. They come and they get in the scales. Too light yet! Come, the martyrs, the Latimers, the Wickliffs, the men who suffered at the stake for Christ. Get in on that side the Christian's balances, and see if you cannot help him weigh it right. They come and get in. Too light yet! Come, angels of God on high. Let not the righteous perish with the wicked. They get in on this side the balances. Too light yet!

I put on this side the balances all the scepters of light, all the thrones of power, all the crowns of glory. Too light yet. But just at that point Jesus, the Son of God, comes up to the balances, and he puts one of his scarred feet on your side, and the balances begin to quiver and tremble from top to bottom. Then he puts both of his scarred feet on the balances, and the Christian's side comes down with a stroke that sets all the bells of heaven ringing. That Rock of Ages heavier than any other weight.

But, says the Christian, "Am I to be allowed to get off so easily?" Yes. If some one should come and put on the other side the scales all your imperfections, all your envies, all your jealousies, all your inconsistencies of life, they would not judge the scales with Christ on your side the balances. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Chains broken, prison houses opened, sins pardoned. Go free! Weighed in the balances, and nothing, nothing wanting.

YOU MUST HAVE CHRIST WITH YOU.

Oh! what a glorious hope. Will you accept it this day? Christ making up for what you lack, Christ the atonement for all your sins. Who will accept him? Will not this whole audience say: "I am insufficient, I am a sinner, I am lost by reason of my transgression, but Christ has paid it all. My Lord, and my God, my life, my pardon, my heaven, Lord Jesus, I hail thee." Oh! if you could only understand the worth of that sacrifice which I have represented to you under a figure—if you could understand the worth of that sacrifice, this whole audience would this moment accept Christ and be saved.

We go away off, or back into history, to get some illustration by which we may set forth what Christ has done for us. We need not go so far. I saw a vehicle behind a runaway horse dashing through the street, a mother and her two children in the carriage. The horse dashed along as though to hurt them to death, and a mounted policeman with a shout clearing the way, and the horse at full run, attempted to seize those runaway horses and to save a calamity, when his own horse fell and rolled over him. He was picked up half dead. Why were our sympathies so stirred? Because he was badly hurt, and hurt for others. But I tell you today of how Christ, the Son of God, on the blood red horse of sacrifice came for our rescue, and rode down the sky and rode unto death for our rescue. Are not your hearts touched? That was a sacrifice for you and for me. O they who ride on the red horse of sacrifice every day and ride through this world on the white horse of victory.

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