

MEMORIAL ON H. W. GRADY

DR. TALMAGE EULOGIZES THE DECEASED JOURNALIST.

Isiah, with rightness of the pen of a Man an Appeal for Righteousness, and So Should the Modern Editor—Grady's Noble Life and Great Work for the Nation.

BROOKLYN, Feb. 28.—The Great Academy of Music, its main floor and its two galleries and platform and all approaches to the building were, as usual, thronged at the preaching service of the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., today. Many hundreds of persons did not gain admittance. After an exposition by Dr. Talmage of passages of Scripture descriptive of the influence of the pen, James Montgomery's hymn was sung:

Who are these in bright array, This innumerable throng, Borne the other night and day, Tuning one triumphant song?

The subject of Dr. Talmage's sermon was, "The Life and Death of Henry W. Grady, the Editor and Orator." He took for his text Isaiah viii, 1: "Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen." The preacher said:

To Isiah, with royal blood in his veins and a habitant of palaces, does this divine order come. He is to take a roll, a large roll, and write on it with a pen, not an angel's pen, but a man's pen. So God honored the pen and so he honored man's pen. In our day the mightiest roll is the roll of the secular newspaper and the mightiest pen is the editor's pen, whether for good or evil. And God says now to every literary man and especially to every journalist: "Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen."

Within a few weeks one of the strongest, most vivid and most brilliant of those pens was laid down on the editorial desk in Atlanta, never again to be resumed. I was far away at the time. We had been sailing up the Mediterranean sea, through the Dardanelles, which region is unlike anything I ever saw for beauty. There is not any other water scenery on earth where God has done so many picturesque things with islands. They are somewhat like the Thousand Islands of our American St. Lawrence, but more like heaven. Indeed, we had just passed Patmos, the place from which John had his apocalyptic vision. Constantinople had seemed to come out to greet us, for your approach to that city is different from any other city. Other cities as you approach them seem to retire, but this city, with its glittering minarets and pinnacles, seems almost to step into the water to greet you. But my landing there, that would have been to me an exhilaration was suddenly stymied with the tidings of the death of my intimate friend, Henry W. Grady. I could hardly believe the tidings, for I had left on my study table at home letters and telegrams from him, those letters and telegrams having a warmth and geniality and a wit such as he only could express. The departure of no public man for many years has so affected me. For days I walked about as in a dream, and I resolved that, getting home, I would, for the sake of his bereaved household and for the sake of what he had been to me and shall continue to be as long as memory lasts, I would speak a word in appreciation of him, the most promising of Americans, and learn some of the salient lessons of his departure.

SPEAK WELL OF THE LIVING ALSO. I have no doubt that he had enemies, for no man can live such an active life as he lived or be so far in advance of his time without making enemies—some because he defeated their projects and some because he outshone them. Owls and bats never did like the rising sun. But I shall tell you how he appeared to me, and I am glad that I told you while he is still in the world, what I thought of him. Memorial orations and gravestone epitaphs are often mean enough, for they say of a man after he is dead that which ought to have been said of him while living. One garland for a living brow is worth more than a mountain of japonica and calla lilies heaped on a funeral casket. By a little blank volume of fifty pages, containing the eulogiums and poems uttered and written at the demise of Clay and Webster and Calhoun and Lincoln and Sumner, the world tried to pay for the forty years of obliquity it heaped upon those living giants. If I say nothing in praise of a man while he lives I will keep quiet when he is dead. Myrtle and weeping willow can never do what ought to have been done by amarantus and palm branch. No amount of "Dead March in Saul" rumbling from big organs at the obsequies can atone for non-appreciation of the man before he fell on sleep. The hearse cannot do what ought to have been done by chariot. But there are important things that need to be said about our friend, who was a prophet in American journalism and who only a few years ago heard the command of my text: "Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen."

His father, dead, Henry W. Grady, a boy fourteen years of age, took up the battle of life. It would require a long chapter to record the names of orphans who have come to the top. When God takes away the head of the household he very often gives to some lad in that household a special qualification. Christ remembers how that his own father died early, leaving him to support himself and his mother and his brothers in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, and he is in sympathy with all boys and all young men in the struggle. You say, "Oh, if my father had only lived I would have had a better education, and I would have had a more promising start, and there are some wrinkles on my brow that would not have been there." But I have noticed that God makes a special way for orphans. You would not have been half the man you are if you had not been obliged from your early days to fight your own battles. What other boys got out of Yale or Harvard you got in the University of Hard Knocks. Go among successful merchants, lawyers, physicians and men of all occupations and professions, and there are many of them who will tell you, "At ten, or twelve, or fifteen years of age, I started for myself; father was sick, or father was dead." But somehow they got through and got up. I account for it by the fact that there is a special disposition of God for orphans. All hail the fatherless and the motherless! The Lord Almighty will see you through. Early obstacles for Mr. Grady were only the means for development of his intellect and heart. And lo! when at thirty-nine years of age he put down his pen and closed his lips for the perpetual silence, he had done a work which many a man who lives on to sixty and seventy and eighty years never accomplishes.

GREAT WORK OF SHORT LIVED MEN. There is a great deal of senseless praise of longevity, as though it were a wonderful achievement to live a good while. Ah, my friends, it is not how long we live, but how well we live and how useful we live. A man who lives to eighty years and accomplishes nothing for God or humanity might better have never lived at all. Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and what did it amount to? In all those more than nine centuries he did not accomplish anything which seemed worth record. Paul

lived only a little more than sixty, but how many Methuselahs would it take to make one Paul? Who would not rather have Paul's sixty years than Methuselah's nine hundred and sixty-nine? Robert McChoyne died at thirty years of age and John Bunmerfield at twenty-seven years of age, but neither earth nor heaven will ever hear the end of their usefulness. Longevity! Why, an elephant can live at that, for it lives a hundred and fifty and two hundred years. Gray hairs are the blossoms of the tree of life if found in the way of righteousness, but the frosts of the second death if found in the way of sin.

One of our able New York journals last spring printed a question and sent it to many people, and among others to myself: "Can the editor of a secular journal be a Christian?" Some of the newspapers answered, No. I answered, Yes; and let you may not understand me. I say, Yes, again. Summer before last, riding with Mr. Grady from a religious meeting in Georgia, on Sunday night, he said to me some things which I now reveal for the first time because it is appropriate now that I reveal them. He expressed his complete faith in the Gospel and expressed his astonishment and his grief that in our day so many young men were rejecting Christianity. From the earnestness and the tenderness and the confidence with which he spoke on these things I concluded that when Henry W. Grady made public profession of his faith in Christ and took his place at the holy communion in the Methodist church, he was honest and truly Christian. That conversation that Sunday night, first in the carriage and then in the hotel, impressed me in such a way that when I simply heard of his departure, without any of the particulars, I concluded that he was ready to go. I warrant there was no fright in the last exigency, but that he found what is commonly called "the last enemy" a good friend, and from his home on earth he went to a home in heaven. Yes, Mr. Grady not only demonstrated that an editor may be a Christian, but that a very great intellect may be gospelized. His mental capacity was so wonderful it was almost startling. I have been with him in active conversation, while at the same time he was dictating to a stenographer editorials for The Atlanta Constitution. But that intellect was not ashamed to bow to Christ. Among his last dying utterances was a request for the prayers of the churches in his behalf.

GLADSTONE'S WONDERFUL TESTIMONY. There was that particular quality in him that you do not find in more than one person, out of hundreds of thousands, namely, personal magnetism. People have tried to define that quality and always failed, yet we have all felt its power. There are some persons who have only to enter a room or step upon a platform or into a pulpit, and you are thrilled by their presence and when they speak your nature responds and you cannot help it. What is the peculiar influence with which such a magnetic person takes hold of social groups and audiences? Without attempting to define this which is indefinable I will say it seems to correspond to the waves of air set in motion by the voice or the movements of the body. Just like that atmospheric vibration which rolls out from the soul of what we call a magnetic person. As there may be a cord or rope binding bodies together there may be an invisible cord or binding souls. A magnetic man throws it over others as a hunter throws a lasso. Mr. Grady was surcharged with this influence, and it was employed for patriotism and Christianity and elevated purposes.

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HOW THE JOURNAL AIDS THE PREACHER. And then look at the opportunities of journalism. I praise the pulpit and magnify my office, but I state a fact which you all know when I say that where the pulpit touches one person the press touches five hundred. The vast majority of people do not go to church, but all intelligent people read the newspapers. While, therefore, the responsibility of the ministers is great, the responsibility of editors and reporters is greater. Come, brother journalists, and get your ordination not by the laying on of human hands, but by the laying on of the hands of the Almighty. To you is committed the precious reputation of men and the more precious reputation of women. Spread before our children an elevated literature. Make sin appear disgusting and virtue admirable. Believe good rather than evil. While you show up the hypocrisies of the church, show up the stuporous hypocrisies outside of the church. Be not, as some of you are, the mere echoes of public opinion; make public opinion. Let your great roll on which you write with a man's pen be a message of light and liberty and kindness and an availing moral power. But who is sufficient for these things? Not one of you without divine help. But get that influence and the editors and reporters can go up and take this world for God and the truth. The mightiest opportunity in all the world for usefulness today is open before editors and reporters and publishers, whether of knowledge on foot as in the book, or knowledge on the wing as in the newspaper. I pray God, men of the newspaper press, whether you hear or read this sermon, that you may rise up to your full opportunity, and that you may be divinely helped and rescued and blessed. Some one might say to me: "How can you talk thus of the newspaper press, when you yourself have sometimes been unfairly treated and misrepresented?" I answer that in the opportunity the newspaper press of this country and other countries have given me week by week to preach the Gospel to the nations, I am put under so much obligation that I defy all editors and reporters, the world over, to write anything that shall call forth from me before last, riding with Mr. Grady from a religious meeting in Georgia, on Sunday night, he said to me some things which I now reveal for the first time because it is appropriate now that I reveal them. He expressed his complete faith in the Gospel and expressed his astonishment and his grief that in our day so many young men were rejecting Christianity. From the earnestness and the tenderness and the confidence with which he spoke on these things I concluded that when Henry W. Grady made public profession of his faith in Christ and took his place at the holy communion in the Methodist church, he was honest and truly Christian. That conversation that Sunday night, first in the carriage and then in the hotel, impressed me in such a way that when I simply heard of his departure, without any of the particulars, I concluded that he was ready to go. I warrant there was no fright in the last exigency, but that he found what is commonly called "the last enemy" a good friend, and from his home on earth he went to a home in heaven. Yes, Mr. Grady not only demonstrated that an editor may be a Christian, but that a very great intellect may be gospelized. His mental capacity was so wonderful it was almost startling. I have been with him in active conversation, while at the same time he was dictating to a stenographer editorials for The Atlanta Constitution. But that intellect was not ashamed to bow to Christ. Among his last dying utterances was a request for the prayers of the churches in his behalf.

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