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SERMON BY DR. TALMAGE

"THE WIDE OPEN DOOR" THE TITLE OF AN EXCELLENT DISCOURSE.

The Memorable Words of Revelation, "And Behold a Door Was Opened in Heaven," the Text—Every One May Enter Into the Kingdom if He Will.

BROOKLYN, July 30.—The title of Dr. Talmage's sermon today was "The Wide Open Door," and his text is found in Rev. iv, 1: "And, behold, a door was opened in heaven."

John had been the pastor of a church in Ephesus. He had been driven from his position in that city by an indignant populace. The preaching of a pure and earnest gospel had made an excitement dangerous to every form of iniquity. This will often be the result of pointed preaching. Men will flinch under the sword strokes of truth. You ought not to be surprised that the blind man makes an outcry of pain when the surgeon removes the cataract from his eye. It is a good sign when you see men uneasy in the church pew, and exhibiting impatience at some plain utterance of truth which smites a pet sin that they are hugging to their hearts. After the patient has been so low that for weeks he said nothing and noticed nothing, it is thought to be a good sign when he begins to be a little cross. And so I notice that spiritual invalids are in a fair way for recovery when they become somewhat irascible and choleric under the treatment of the truth. But John had so mightily inculcated public iniquity that he had been banished from his church and sent to Patmos, a desolate island, only a mile in breadth, against whose rocky coasts the sea rose and mingled its voice with the prayers and hymnings of the heroic exile.

TWO EXILES CONTRASTED. You cannot but contrast the condition of this banished apostle with that of another famous exile. Look at the apostle on Patmos and the great Frenchman on St. Helena. Both were suffering among desolation and barrenness because of offenses committed. Both had passed through lives eventful and thrilling. Both had been honored and despised. Both were imperial natures. Both had been turned off to die. Yet mark the infinite difference—one had fought for the perishable crown of worldly authority, the other for one eternally lustrous. The one had marked his path with the bleached skulls of his followers, the other had introduced peace and good will among men. The one had lived chiefly for self aggrandizement and the other for the glory of Christ. The successes of the one were achieved amid the breaking of thousands of hearts and the acute, heaven rending cry of orphanage and widowhood, while the triumphs of the other made joy in heaven among the angels of God.

The heart of one exile was filled with remorse and despair, while the other was lighted up with thanksgiving and inextinguishable hope. Over St. Helena glared the blackness of darkness, clouds lighted up by no sunning, but rent and fringed and heaving with the lightning of a wrathful God, and the spray flung over the rocks seemed to hiss with the condemnation. "The way of the ungodly shall perish." But over Patmos the heavens were opened, and the stormy sea beneath was forgotten in the roll and gleam of waters from under the throne like crystal; and the barrenness of the ground under the apostle was forgotten as above him he saw the trees of life all bending under the rich glow of heavenly fruitage, while the hoarse blast of contending elements around his suffering body was drowned in the trumpeting of trumpets and the harping of harps, the victorious cry of multitudes like the voice of many waters and the hosanna of hosts in number like the stars.

A DULL SPOT FOR A GLOOMY VISION. What a dull spot upon which to stand and have such a glorious vision! Had Patmos been some tropical island, arched with the luxuriance of perpetual summer, and drowsy with breath of cinnamon and cassia, and tesselated with long aisles of geranium and cactus, we would not have been surprised at the splendor of the vision. But the last place you would go to if you wanted to find beautiful visions would be the island of Patmos. Yet it is around such gloomy spots that God makes the most wonderful revelation. It was looking through the awful shadows of a prison that John Bunyan saw the gate of the celestial city. God there divided the light from the darkness. In that gloomy abode, on scraps of old paper picked up about his room, the great dream was written.

It was while John Calvin was a refugee from bloody persecution, and was hid in a house at Angouleme, that he conceived the idea of writing his immortal "Institutes." Jacob had many a time seen the sun breaking through the mists, and kindling a beam into shafts and pillars of fiery splendor that might well have been a ladder for the angels to tread on, but the famous ladder which he saw soared through a gloomy night over the wilderness. The night of trial and desolation is the scene of the grandest heavenly revelations. From the barren, surf beaten rock of Patmos John looked up and saw that a door was opened in heaven.

Again, the announcement of such an opened entrance suggests the truth that God is looking down upon the earth and observant of all occurrences. If we would gain a wide prospect we climb up into a tower or mountain. The higher up we are the broader the landscape we behold. Yet our most comprehensive view is limited to only a few leagues—here a river and there a lake and yonder a mountain peak. But what must be the glory of the earth in the eye of him who from the door of heaven beholds at one glance all mountains and lakes and prairies and oceans, lands bespangled with tropical gorgeousness and Arctic regions white with everlasting snows, Lebanon majestic with cedars and American wilds solemn with unbroken forests of pine, African deserts of glistening sand and wildernesses of water unbroken by ship's keel, continents covered with harvests of wheat and rice and maize, the glory of every zone, the whole world of mountains and seas and forests and islands taken in in a single glance of their great Creator.

NOTHING ESCAPES GOD'S VISION. As we take our stand upon some high point single objects dwindle into such insignificance that we cease to see them in the minutiae, and we behold only the grand points of the scenery. But not so with God. Although standing far up in the very tower of heaven, nothing by reason of its smallness escapes his vision. Every lily of the field, every violet under the grass, the tiniest heliotrope, aster and gentian are as plainly seen by him as the proudest magnolia, and not one vein of color in their leaf deepens or fades without his notice. From this door in heaven God sees all human conduct and the world's moral changes. Not one tear of sorrow falls in hospital or workshop or dungeon

but he sees it and in high heaven makes record of its fall.

The world's iniquities in all their ghastliness glower under his vision. Wars and tumults, and the desolations of famine and earthquake, whirlwind and shipwreck spread out before him. If there were no being in all the universe but God he could be happy with such an outlook as the door of heaven. But there he stands, no more disturbed by the fall of a kingdom than by the dropping of a leaf, no more excited by the rising of a throne than by the bursting of a bud, the falling of a deluge than the trickling of a raindrop. Earthly royalty clutches nervously its scepter and waits in suspense the will of inflated subjects, and the crown is tossed from one family to another. But above all earthly vicissitudes and the assault of human passions in unshaken security stands the king of kings, watching all the affairs of his empire from the production of an era to the counting of the hairs of your head.

Again, I learn from the fact that a door in heaven is opened that there is a way of entrance for our prayers and of egress for divine blessings. It does not seem that our weak voice has strength enough to climb up to God's ear. Shall not our prayer be lost in the clouds? Have words wings? The truth is plain: Heaven's door is wide open to receive every prayer. Must it not be loud? Ought it not to ring up with the strength of stout lungs? Must it not be loud as the shout of some chief in utter, or like the shout of some chief in the battle? No, a whisper is as good as a shout, and the mere wish of the soul in profound silence is as good as a whisper. It rises just as high and accomplishes just as much.

GOD HEARS THE MOST HUMBLE CRY. But ought not prayer to be made of golden words if it is to enter such a splendid door and live beside seraphim and arch-angels? Ought not every phrase be rounded into perfection, ought not the language be musical and classic and poetic and rhetorical? No; the most illiterate outery, the unjointed petition, the clumsy phrase, the sentence breaking into grammatical blunders, an unworded groan is just as effectual if it be the utterance of the soul's want. A heart all covered up with garlands of thought would be no attraction to God, but a heart broken and contrite—that is the acceptable sacrifice. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," rising up in the mighty harmony of a musical academy, may overpower our ear and heart, but it will not reach the ear of God like the broken voiced hymn of some sufferer amid rags and desolation looking up trustfully to a Saviour's compassion, singing amid tears and pangs, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

I suppose that there was more rhetoric and classic elegance in the prayers of the Pharisee than of the publican, but you know which was successful. You may kneel with complete elegance on some soft cushion at an altar of alabaster and utter a prayer of Miltonic sublimity, but nothing of your graceful posture nor the roll of your blank verse will attract heavenly attention, while over some dark cellar in which a Christian pauper is prostrate in the straw angels bend from their thrones and cry one to another, "Behold, he prays!" Through this open door of heaven what a long procession of prayers is continually passing! What thanksgivings! What confessions! What intercessions! What blessings! And behold a door was opened in heaven.

Again, the door of heaven is opened to allow us the opportunity of looking in. Christ when he came from heaven to Beth-lehem left it open, and no one since has dared to shut it. Matthew threw it still wider open when he came to write, and Paul pushed the door further back when he spoke of the glory to be revealed, and John in Revelation actually points us to the thrones, and the waters, and the crowns, and the thrones. There are profound mysteries about that blessed place that we cannot solve. But look through this wide open door of heaven and see what you can see. God means us to look and catch up now something of the rapture and attune our hearts to its worship.

THE DOOR OF HEAVEN IS WIDE. It is wide open enough to see Christ. Behold him, the chief among ten thousand, all the bannered pomp of heaven at his feet. With your unkenked faith look up along these ranks of glory. Watch how their palms wave, and hear how their voices ring. Floods clapping their hands, streets gleaming with gold, uncounted multitudes ever accumulating in number and ever rising up into gladder hosannas. If you cannot stand to look upon that joy for at least one hour how could you endure to dwell among it forever? You would wish yourself out of it in three days, and choose the earth again or any other place where it was not always Sunday.

My hearer in worldly prosperity, affluent, honored, healthy and happy, look in upon that company of the redeemed and see how the poor soul in heaven is better off than you are, brighter in apparel, richer in estate, higher in power. Hearers, afflicted and tried, look in through that open door, that you may see to what gladness and glory you are coming, to what life, to what riches, to what royalty. Hearers pleased to fascination with this world, gather up your souls for one appreciative look upon riches that never fly away, upon health that never sickens, upon scepters that never break, upon expectations that are never disappointed. Look in and see if there are not enough crowns to pay us for all our battles, enough rest to relieve all our fatigues, enough living fountains to quench all our thirst, enough glory to dash out for ever and ever all earth's sighing and restlessness and darkness. Battles ended, tears wiped away, thorns plucked from the bosoms, stabs healed, the tomb riven—what a scene to look upon!

IT IS OPEN FOR FINAL ENTRANCE. Again, the door of heaven stands open for the Christian's final entrance. Death to the righteous is not climbing high walls or fording deep rivers, but it is entering an open door. If you ever visit the old homestead where you were born, and while father and mother are yet alive, as you go up the lane in front of the farm house, and put your hand on the door and lift the latch, do you shudder with fear? No, you are glad to enter. So your last sickness will be only the lane in front of your Father's house, from which you hear the voice of singing before you reach the door. And death, that is the lifting of the latch before you enter, the greetings and embraces of the innumerable family of the righteous. Nay, there is no latch, for John says the door is already open. What a company of spirits have already entered those portals, bright and shining! Souls released from the earthly prison house, how they shouted as they went through! Spirits that sped up from the flames of martyr's bonfires, from which you hear the voice of singing before you reach the door. And death, that is the lifting of the latch before you enter, the greetings and embraces of the innumerable family of the righteous. Nay, there is no latch, for John says the door is already open. What a company of spirits have already entered those portals, bright and shining! Souls released from the earthly prison house, how they shouted as they went through! Spirits that sped up from the flames of martyr's bonfires, from which you hear the voice of singing before you reach the door.

And that door has not begun to shut. If redeemed by grace we all shall enter it. This side of it we have wept, but on the other side of it we shall never weep. On this side we may have grown sick with

weariness, but on the other side of it we shall be without fatigue. On this side we bleed with the warrior's wounds, on the other side we shall wave the victor's palm. When you think of dying what makes your brow contract, what makes you breathe so deep and sigh? What makes you gloomy in passing a graveyard? Sorrower of Christ, you have been thinking that death is something terrible, the measuring of lanes with a powerful antagonist, the closing in of a conflict which may be your everlasting defeat. You do not want much to think of dying. The step beyond this life seems so mysterious you dread the taking of it. Why, who taught you this lesson of horrors? Heaven's door is wide open, and you step out of your sick room into those portals.

Not as long as a minute will elapse between your departure and your arrival there. Not half so long as the twinkling of an eye. Not the millimoth part of an instant. There is no stumbling into darkness. There is no plunging down into mysterious depths. The door is open. This instant you are here, the next you are there. When a vessel struck the rocks of the French coast, while the crew were clambering up the beach a cove of birds in the ship's cabin, awakened, began to sing most sweetly, and when the last man left the vessel they were singing yet. Even so in the last hour of our dissolution, when driven on the coast of the other world, may our disembarkation from this rough, tossing life be amid the eternal singing of a thousand promises of deliverance and victory!

ALL ARE WELCOME. For all repenting and believing souls the door of heaven is now wide open, the door of mercy, the door of comfort, for the poorest as well as the wealthiest, for the outlaw as well as for the moralist, for the Chinese coolie as well as his emperor, for the Russian hoo as well as the czar, for the Turk as well as the sultan. Richer than all wealth, more refreshing than all fountains, deeper than all depths, higher than all heights, and broader than all breadths is the salvation of Jesus Christ which I press upon your consideration. Come all ye travelers of the desert under these palm trees. Oh, if I could gather before you that tremendous future upon which you are invited to enter—dominions and principalities, day without night, martyrs under the throne, and the four-and-twenty elders falling before it, stretching out in great distances the hundred and forty and four thousand and thousands of thousands, host beside host, rank beyond rank, in infinite distance, nations of the saved beyond nations of the saved, until angelic visions cease to catch anything more than the faint outline of whole empires yet-outstretching beyond the capacity of any vision save the eye of God Almighty. Then, after I had finished the sketch, I would like to ask you if that place is not grand enough and high enough, and if anything could be added, any purity to the whiteness of the robes, any power to the acclaiming thunders of its worship. And all that may be yours.

Clear Through His Head. "You have heard the saying, 'In one ear and out the other,'" said a young Boston specialist. Of course the adage was familiar, and without waiting for a reply the doctor continued, "I've seen many strange things in my practice, but the most startling was a practical demonstration of that ancient saw. 'About two years ago a boy came to me for treatment for a disease of the head. All the openings in his head were of unusual size. His mouth and eyes were large, he had a big nose, with wide nostrils, and his ears were in proportion. I performed the necessary operation and cleared out the air cavity. With a strong blast from my air pump over the ear I blew a powder into his left ear. He interrupted me in this by saying that the medicine seemed to be coming out on the other side. I smiled indulgently at what I told him was his imagination, and at first paid no further attention to the matter. He persisted in his assertion, however, and to satisfy him that he was wrong I examined his right ear. He was right. There was no doubt of it. The powder was going clear through his head. It was going in one ear and out the other. 'What is the explanation?' It is simple enough. The large openings in the boy's head permitted the powder, driven by the powerful blast, to traverse the channel from his left ear to the upper part of his nose, through his nose, and thence by the corresponding channel on the right side of his ear. All the powder did not get through, but a considerable portion of it did."—Boston Herald.

Literature in Schools. The notion that literature can be taken up as a branch of education and learned at the proper time and when other studies permit, is one of the most farcical in our scheme of education. It is only matched in absurdity by the other current idea that literature is something separate and apart from general knowledge. Here is the whole body of accumulated thought and experience of all the ages, which indeed forms our present life and explains it, existing partly in tradition and training, but more largely in books; and most teachers think, and most pupils are led to believe, that the most important former of the mind, maker of character and guide to action can be acquired in a certain number of lessons out of a text book.

Because this is so young men and young women come up to college almost absolutely ignorant of the history of their race and of the ideas that have made our civilization. Some of them have never read a book, except the text books on the specialties in which they have prepared themselves for examination.

We have a saying concerning people whose minds appear to be made up of dry, isolated facts, that they have no atmosphere. Well, literature is the atmosphere. In it we live and move and have our being, intellectually. The first lesson read to or by the child should begin to put him in relations with the world and the thought of the world.—Atlantic Monthly. French Possessions in Africa. The French possessions on the slave coast have an ocean frontage of about 150 kilometers, and are bounded westward by the German settlement of Togo and eastward by the English one of Lagos. Having acquired a protectorate over some inland tribes, the French expect to find outlets for their commerce toward the middle course of the Niger. The entire coast is but a low sand bank, broken by nothing taller than some coco palms and by the low tower of the Church of Agoue. Between this sand bank and the mainland is a series of lagoons, the chief of which are those of Agoue and Grand Popo, both entering the sea at the Bouche du Roi, and those of Porto Novo and Lake Douha, which enter the sea by the Kotouou channel. The Oueme, or Wheni, forms the boundary between Porto Novo and Dabomey.—New York Independent.

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