

TALMAGE AT ANN ARBOR

AN ELOQUENT SERMON PREACHED
BY THE BROOKLYN DIVINE.

A Magnificent Discourse on the Temptations to Which Young Men Are Subjected—An Exhortation to Hold Fast to the Bible's Truths.

ANN ARBOR, Mich., Dec. 18.—Our citizens in large numbers have availed themselves of the opportunity of hearing Dr. Talmage, who is visiting the city by invitation of the students of the university. Last night a vast audience greeted the famous Brooklyn preacher at his lecture, and this evening, when he was announced to preach a special sermon to young men, there was no building in the city that would accommodate all who wanted to hear him. His text was Proverbs 4, 17, "Surely, in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird."

Early in the morning I went out with a fowler to catch wild pigeons. We had passed through the mountain gorge and into the forest. We spread out the net, and covered up the edges of it as well as we could. We arranged the call bird, its feet fast and its wings flapping, in invitation to all fowls of heaven to settle down there. We retired into a booth of branches and leaves and waited. After awhile, looking out of the door of the booth, we saw a flock of birds in the sky. They came nearer and nearer, and after awhile were about to swoop into the net, when suddenly they darted away. Again we waited. After a while we saw another flock of birds. They came nearer and nearer until just at the moment when they were about to swoop they darted away.

The fowler was very much disappointed as well as myself. We said to each other, "What is the matter?" and "Why were not these birds caught?" We went out and examined the net and by a flutter of a branch of a tree part of the net had been conspicuously exposed, and the birds coming very near had seen their peril and darted away. When I saw that I said to the old fowler, "That reminds me of a passage of Scripture: 'Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.' Now the net in my text stands for temptation."

The call bird of sin tempts men on from point to point and from branch to branch until they are about to drop into the net. If a man finds out in time that it is the temptation of the devil, or that evil men are attempting to capture his soul for time and for eternity, the man steps back. He says, "I am not to be caught in that way; I see what you are about; surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird."

VARIOUS TEMPTATIONS.

There are two classes of temptations—the superficial and the subterraneous—those above ground, those under ground. If a man could see sin as it is, he would no more embrace it than he would embrace a leper. Sin is a daughter of hell, yet she is garlanded and robed and trinketed. Her voice is a warble. Her cheek is the setting sun. Her forehead is an aurora. She says to men: "Come, walk this path with me. It is thymed and primrose, and the air is bewitched with the odors of the hanging gardens of heaven. The rivers are rivers of wine, and all you have to do is to drink them up in chalices that sparkle with diamond and amethyst and chrysoprasus. See! It is all bloom and roseate cloud and heaven."

Oh, my friends, if for one moment the chiding of all these concerted voices of sin could be hushed, we should see the orchestra of the pit with hot breath blowing through fiery flute, and the skeleton arms on drums of thunder and darkness beating the chorus, "The end thereof is death."

I want to point out the insidious temptations that are assailing more especially our young men. The only kind of nature comparatively free from temptation, so far as I can judge, is the cold, hard, stony, mean temperament. What would Satan do with such a man if he got him? Satan is not anxious to get a man who after awhile may dispute with him the realm of everlasting meanness.

It is the generous young man, the ardent young man, the warm hearted young man, the social young man that is in especial peril. A pirate goes out on the sea, and one bright morning he puts the glass to his eye and looks off, and sees an empty vessel floating from port to port. He says, "Never mind; that's no prize for us." But the same morning he puts the glass to his eye, and he sees a vessel coming from Australia laden wit' gold, or a vessel from the Indies laden with spices. He says, "That's our prize; bear down on it!" Across that unfortunate ship the grapping hooks are thrown. The crew are blindfolded and are compelled to walk the plank.

It is not the empty vessel, but the laden merchantman that is the temptation of the pirate. And a young man empty of head, empty of heart, empty of life—you want no Young Men's Christian association to keep him safe; he is safe. He will not gamble unless it is with somebody else's stakes. He will not break the Sabbath unless somebody else pays the horse hire. He will not drink unless some one else treats him. He will hang around the bar hour after hour waiting for some generous young man to come in. The generous young man comes in and accosts him and says, "Well, will you have a drink with me today?" The man, as though it were a sudden thing for him, says, "Well—well, if you insist on it, I will—I will."

WAR ON BAD INFLUENCES.

Too mean to go to perdition unless somebody else pays his expenses? For such young men we will not fight. We would no more contend for them than Tartary and Ethiopia would fight as to who should have the great Sahara desert; but for those young men who are buoyant and enthusiastic, those who are determined to do something for time and for eternity—for them we will fight, and we now declare everlasting war against all the influences that assail them, and we ask all good men and philanthropists to wheel into line, and all the armies of heaven to bear down upon the foe, and we pray Almighty God that with the thunderbolts of his wrath he will strike down and consume all these influences that are attempting to destroy the young men for whom Christ died.

The first class of temptations that assaults a young man is led on by the skeptic. He will not admit that he is an infidel or atheist. Oh, no! he is a "free thinker"; he is one of your "liberal" men; he is free and easy in religion. Oh, how liberal he is; he is so "liberal" that he will give away his Bible; he is so "liberal" that he will give away the throne of eternal justice; he is so "liberal" that he would be willing to give God out of the universe; he is so "liberal" that he would give up his own soul and the souls of all his friends. Now what more could you ask in the way of liberality? The victim of this skeptic has probably just come from the country. Through the intervention of friends he has been placed in a shop.

On Saturday the skeptic says to him, "Well, what are you going to do tomorrow?" He says, "I am going to church." "Is it possible?" says the skeptic. "Well, I used to do those things; I was brought up, I suppose, as you were, in a religious family, and I believed all those things, but I got over it; the fact is, since I came to town I have read a great deal, and I have found that there are a great many things in the Bible that are ridiculous. Now, for instance, all that about the serpent being cursed to crawl in the Garden of Eden because it had tempted our first parents; why, you see how absurd it is; you can tell from the very organization of the serpent that it had to crawl; it crawled before it was cursed just as well as it crawled afterward; you can tell from its organization that it crawled. Then all that story about the whale swallowing Jonah, or Jonah swallowing the whale, which was it? It doesn't make any difference, the thing is absurd; it is ridiculous to suppose that a man could have gone down through the jaws of a sea monster and yet kept his life; why, his respiration would have been hindered; he would have been digested; the gastric juice would have dissolved the fibrine and coagulated albumen, and Jonah would have been changed from prophet into chyle. Then all that story about the miraculous conception—why, it is perfectly disgraceful. Oh, sir! I believe in the light of nature. This is the Nineteenth century. Progress, sir; progress. I don't blame you, but after you have been in town as long as I have you will think just as I do."

RELIGION NECESSARY.

Thousands of young men are going down under that process day by day, and there is only here and there a young man who can endure this artillery of scorn. They are giving up their Bibles. The light of nature! They have the light of nature in China; they have it in Hindostan; they have it in Ceylon. Flowers there, stars there, waters there, winds there, but no civilization, no homes, no happiness. Lances to cut and juggernauts to fall under and hooks to swing on, but no happiness.

I tell you, my young brother, we have to choose between four or five. Shall it be the Koran of the Mohammedan, or the Shaster of the Hindoo, or the Zendavesta of the Persian, or the Confucius writings of the Chinese, or the Holy Scriptures? Take what you will; God helping me, I will take the Bible. Light for all darkness; rock for all foundation; balm for all wounds. A glory that lifts its pillars of fire over the wilderness march. Do not give up your Bibles.

Ask them what infidelity has ever done to lift the fourteen hundred millions of the race out of barbarism. Ask them when infidelity ever instituted a sanitary commission, and before you leave their society once and forever tell them that they have insulted the memory of your Christian father, and spit upon the deathbed of your mother and with swine's snout rooted up the grave of your sister, who died believing in the Lord Jesus.

Hold on to the Bible. Young man, hold on to your Bible. It is the best book you ever owned. It will tell you how to dress, how to bargain, how to walk, how to act, how to live, how to die. Glorious Bible! Whether you purchase or paper, in octavo or duodecimo, on the center table of the drawing room or in the counting room of the banker. Glorious Bible! Light to our feet and lamp to our path. Hold on to it!

THE SECOND CLASS OF INSIDIOUS TEMPTATIONS THAT COMES UPON OUR YOUNG MEN IS LED ON BY THE DISHONEST EMPLOYER. Every commercial establishment is a school. In nine cases out of ten the principles of the employer become the principles of the employee. I ask the older merchants to bear me out in these statements. If, when you were just starting in life—in commercial life—you were told that honesty was not marketable; that, though you might sell all the goods in the shop, you must not sell your conscience; that, while you were to exercise all industry and tact, you were not to sell your conscience; if you were taught that gains gotten by sin were combustible, and at the moment of ignition would be blown on by the breath of God until all the splendor of the estate would vanish into white ashes scattered in the whirlwind, then that instruction has been to you a precept and a help ever since.

There are hundreds of commercial establishments in our great cities which are educating a class of young men who will be the honor of the land, and there are other establishments which are educating young men to be nothing but sharpers. What chance is there for a young man who was taught in an establishment that it is right to lie, if it is smart, and that a French label is all that is necessary to make a thing French, and that you ought always to be honest when it pays, and that it is wrong to steal unless you do it well?

Suppose, now, a young man just starting in life enters a place of that kind where there are ten young men, all drilled in the infamous practices of the establishment. He is ready to be taught. The young man has no theory of commercial ethics. Where is he to get his theory? He will get the theory from his employers. One day he pushes his wit a little beyond what the establishment demands of him, and he flees a customer until the clerk is on the verge of being seized by the law. What is done in the establishment? He is not arraigned. The head of the establishment says to him, "Now, be careful; be careful, young man, you might be caught; but really that was splendidly done; you will get along in the world, I warrant you." Then that young man goes up until he becomes head clerk. He has found there is a premium on iniquity.

One morning the employer comes to the establishment. He goes into his counting room and throws up his hands and shouts, "Why, the safe has been robbed!" What is the matter? Nothing, nothing; only the clerk who has been practicing a good while on customers is practicing a little on the employer. No new principle introduced into that establishment. It is a poor rule that will not work both ways. You must never steal unless you can do it well. He did it well. I am not talking an abstraction; I am talking a terrible and a crushing fact.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE.

Now here is a young man. Look at him today. Look at him five years from now, after he has been under trial in such an establishment. Here he stands in the shop today, his cheeks ruddy with the breath of the hills. He unrolls the goods on the counter in a gentlemanly style. He commands them to the purchaser. He points out all the good points in the fabric. He effects the sale. The goods are wrapped up, and he dismisses the customer with a

cheerful "good morning," and the country merchant departs so impressed with the straightforwardness of the young man that he will come again and again, every spring and every autumn, unless interfered with.

The young man has been now in that establishment five years. He rolls the goods on the counter. He says to the customer, "Now these are the best goods we have in our establishment." They have better on the next shelf. He says, "We are selling these goods less than cost." They are making 20 per cent. He says,

"There is nothing like them in all the city." There are fifty shops that want to sell the same thing. He says, "Now, Yes, it is a durable article; it will wash." Yes, it will wash out.

The sale is made, the goods are wrapped up, the country merchant goes off feeling that he has an equivalent for his money, and the sharp clerk goes into the private room of the counting house, and he says: "Well, I got rid of those goods at last. I really thought we never would sell them. I told him we were selling them less than cost, and he thought he was getting a good bargain. Got rid of them at last." And the head of the firm says, "That's well done, splendidly done!" Meanwhile God had recorded eight lies—four lies against the young man, four lies against his employer, for I undertake to say that the employer is responsible for all the iniquities of those who are clerks, and all the iniquities of those who are clerks of these clerks, down to the tenth generation, if those employers inculcated iniquitous and damning principles.

I stand before young men this morning who are under this pressure. I say, come out of it. "Oh!" you say, "I can't; I have my wedded mother to support, and if a man loses a position now he can't get another one." I say, come out of it. "Well, then, go! Go now." The boy to his mother and say to her, "Mother, I can't stay in that shop and be upright; what shall I do?" and if she is worthy of you she will say, "Come out of it, my son—we will just throw ourselves on him who hath promised to be the God of the widow and the fatherless; he will take care of us." And I tell you no young man ever permanently suffered by such a course of conduct.

In Philadelphia, in a drug shop, a young man said to his employer, "I want to please you, really, and I am willing to sell medicines on Sunday, but I can't sell this patent shoe blacking on Sunday." "Well," said the head man, "you will have to do it, or else you will have to go away." The young man said, "I can't do it; I am willing to sell medicines, but not shoe blacking." "Well, then, go! Go now." The boy went away. The Lord looked after him. The hundreds of thousands of dollars he won in this world were the smallest part of his fortune. God honored him. By the course he took he saved his soul as well as his fortunes in the future.

A man said to his employer, "I can't wash the wagon on Sunday morning; I am willing to wash it on Saturday afternoon, but, sir, you will please excuse me, I can't wash the wagon on Sunday morning." His employer said, "You must wash it; my carriage comes in every Saturday night, and you have got to wash it on Sunday morning." "I can't do it," the man said. They parted. The Lord looked after him—grandly looked after him. He is worth today a hundred fold more than his employer ever was or ever will be, and he has saved his soul. Young men, it is safe to do right. There are young men in this house today who, under this storm of temptation, are striking deeper and deeper their roots and spreading out broader their branches. They are Daniels in Babylon, they are Josephs in the Egyptian court, they are Pauls amid the wild beasts of Ephesus. I preach to encourage them. Lay hold of God and be faithful.

UNTEARABLE PROPOSITIONS.

There is a mistake we make about young men. We put them in two classes; the one class is moral, the other is dissolute. The moral are safe. The dissolute cannot be reclaimed. I deny both propositions. The moral are not safe unless they have laid hold of God, and the dissolute may be reclaimed. I suppose there are self-righteous men in this house who feel no need of God, and will not seek after him, and they will go out in the world, and they will be tempted, and they will be flung down by misfortune, and they will go down, down, down, until some night you will see them going home hooting, raving, shouting blasphemy—going home to their mother, going home to their sister, going home to the young companion to whom, only a little while ago, in the presence of a brilliant assembly, flashing lights and orange blossoms, and censers swinging in the air, they promised fidelity and purity, and kindness perpetual. As that man reaches the door, she will open it, and you will find her dead. She had at that time four young puppies. While they were admiring the little mother and her babies on the night of their arrival, the assistant herder came in to say that there were more than twenty sheep missing.

Two male dogs, both larger than the little mother, were standing about, but the herder said neither Tom nor Dick would find them; Flora must go. It was urged by the assistant that her foot was sore, that she had been hard at work all day, was nearly worn out and must give her puppies their supper. The master insisted that she must go.

The sun was setting and there was no time to lose. Flora was called and told to hunt for lost sheep, while her master pointed to the great forest through the edge of which they had just passed. She raised her head, but seemed very loath to leave her babies. The master called sharply to her. She rose, looked tired and low-spirited, and with head and tail down trotted wearily off toward the forest.

"That is too bad," said I.

"Oh, she'll be right back," was the assured answer. "She's lightning on stray sheep."

The next morning I went over to learn whether Flora had found the sheep. While we were speaking, the sheep returned, driven by the little dog, who did not raise her head nor wag her tail, even when spoken to, but crawled to her puppies and lay down by them. She had been out all night, and scarcely able to notice her babies, she fell asleep.

How often that scene comes back to me! The vast, gloomy forest, and that little creature with the sore foot and her heart crying for her babies, limping and creeping about in the wild canyon, all through the long, dark hours, finding and gathering in the lost sheep.

BELLBOYS IN NEW YORK HOTELS.

It is not generally known that the bellboys at the first class hotels make more money than mechanics, while the earnings of some of them will far exceed those of many professional men. The pay is small, seldom amounting to over twenty or twenty-five dollars a month and board, but the tips are what count. There is one bellboy, or rather bellman, for he is over thirty years of age, who has been at the Fifth Avenue hotel for years. He says himself that his income is a good \$20 a month, in addition to which he gets his meals at the hotel.

"A bellboy, to be successful, has to remember several things," remarked this party the other night. "For one thing, he needs to be polite and respectful, but never familiar. Further than that, he must be careful in his dress. A slovenly or poorly dressed bellboy will disgust the fastidious patrons of the house, who are our chief standbys. On the other hand, it does not do to be too stylishly dressed, as then the guest will imagine that the boy is so well fixed that he would scorn to receive a tip. Attention to these two rules will generally bring success to a bright bellboy."—New York Letter.

But I may be addressing some who have gone astray, and so I assault that other proposition that the dissolute cannot be reclaimed. Perhaps you have only gone a little astray. While I speak are you troubled? Is there a voice within you saying: "What did you do that for? Why did you go there? What did you mean by that?" Is there a memory in your soul that makes you tremble? God only knows all our hearts. Yes, if you have gone so far as to commit iniquities and have gone through the whole catalogue, I invite you back this hour. The Lord waits for you.

"Rejoice! O young man, in thy days of thy youth; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Come home, young man, to your father's God. Come home, young man, to your mother's God. Oh! I wish that all the batteries of the Gospel could today be unlimbered against all those influences which are taking down so many of our young men. I would like to blow a trumpet of warning, and recruit until this whole audience would march out on a crusade against the evils of society. But let none of us be disheartened.

Oh, Christian workers, my heart is high with hope. The dark horizon is blooming into the morning of which prophets spoke, and of which poets have dreamed, and of which painters have sketched. The world's bridal hour advances. The mountains will

kiss the morning radiant and effulgent, and all the waves of the sea will become the crystal keys of a great organ, on which the fingers of everlasting joy shall play the grand march of a world redeemed. Instead of the thorn there shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar there shall come up the myrtle tree, and the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the wood shall clap their hands!

After Many Years.

When Captain Alva Bradley was twenty years old he heard of a circus at Elvira and desired to go. Money was scarce, but the temptation was so very strong that young Alva determined to go if he had to walk all the way. He went by a side pass, but when he reached his Mecca he found the admission to be fifty cents, and he had twenty-five. He was too big to be admitted as a boy and too proud to sneak his way in, so he stood outside disconsolately and looked at the flaming posters prodigally displayed about the grounds. While walking aimlessly about he was found by an old farmer, a neighbor of his at home.

"Well, Alvy, my boy," said the farmer. "ain't you going in?"

"No," he answered, "I just came to look at the pictures."

But the old man was lonesome and wanted company, and on that plea succeeded in inducing the young man to enter the enchanted place. So "Alvy" saw the show and carried his quarter back home with him.

Long afterward, one winter evening, when the boy Alvy had grown to be a wealthy shipping merchant, he sat in his study in deep conversation with Captain Stone. The door bell rang and the servant admitted to the presence an old, white-haired, stoop-shouldered man.

"I wanted to see my boy Alvy once again," he began, "but you don't know me, do you, boy: you don't remember the old man who took you to the circus once?"

The tears came to the captain's eyes as he recognized in the aged man the kind benefactor of his youth. He extended to him a cordial welcome, and they sat to gather all the evening reviewing the years since last they met, for fortune had not been kind to the old man; his home had been removed to the far west and he had found it a hard struggle to get the necessities of life. As he was about to leave an envelope was thrust into his hands and he heard the words in the captain's trembling voice, "Here's the money you took me to the circus with when I was a boy, and a little more as interest which it has gathered all the years."

The old man was overcome with surprise and could not express his thanks, but when he reached home he opened the paper and found it contained a check for \$50—\$50 cents for the circus ticket and the rest for interest.—Cleveland Plaindealer.

Story of a Dog Mother