

THE GOSPEL OF HEALTH.

DIVINE SERVICES IN THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

Dr. Talmage Rejoices That the Number of Christian Physicians is Increasing. The Wild Oats of Youth Are Generally Sown in the Liver.

BROOKLYN, Nov. 20.—The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., opened the services at the tabernacle this morning by giving out the hymn beginning:

Should coming days be cold and dark,
We need not cease our singing;
That perfect rest might come molest,
Where golden harps are ringing.

He then explained a passage in the Gospel of St. Matthew, concerning the inferior kind of salt that was cast out to make walkways of, to be trodden under foot of men. The subject of Dr. Talmage's discourse was: "The Gospel of Health," and his text from Proverbs vii, 23: "Till a dart strike through his liver." He said:

There is a fashion in sermons. A comparatively small part of the Bible is called on for texts. Most of the passages of Scripture, when announced at the opening of sermons, immediately divide themselves into old discourses that we have heard from boyhood, and the effect on us is soporific. The auditor guesses at the start just what the preacher will say. There are very important chapters and verses that have never been preached from. Much of my lifetime I am devoting to unmaking these gold chests and blasting open these quarries. We talk about the heart, and preach about the heart, and sing about the heart, but if you refer to the physical organ that we call the heart, it has not half so much to do with spiritual health or disease, moral exaltation or spiritual depression, as the organ to the consideration of which Solomon calls us in the text, when he describes sin as progressing "till a dart strike through his liver."

Solomon's anatomical and physiological discoveries were so very great that he was nearly 2,000 years ahead of the scientists of his day. He, more than 1,000 years before Christ, seemed to know about the circulation of the blood, which Harvey discovered 1,649 years after Christ, for when Solomon in Ecclesiastes, describing the human body, speaks of the pitcher at the fountain, he evidently means the three canals leading from the heart that receive the blood like pitchers. When he speaks in Ecclesiastes of the silver cord of life, he evidently means the spinal marrow, about which in our day Doctors Mayo and Carpenter, and Dalton, and Flint, and Brown-Sequard have experimented. And Solomon recorded in the Bible thousands of years before science first discovered it, that in time the spinal cord relaxed in old age, producing the tremors of hand and head: "Or the silver cord be loosed."

In the text he reveals the fact that he had studied that largest gland of the human system, the liver, not by the electric light of the modern dissecting room, but by the dim light of a comparatively dark age, and yet had seen its important function in the God built castle of the human body, its selecting and secreting power, its curious cells, its elongated, branching tubes, a divine workmanship in central and right, and left lobes, and the hepatic artery through which God conducts the crimson tides. Oh, this vital organ is like the eye of God in that it never sleeps. Solomon knew of it and had noticed either in vivisection or post mortem what awful attacks sin and dissipation make upon it, until with the fiat of Almighty God it bids the body and soul separate, and the one it commands to the grave, and the other it sends to judgment. A javelin of retribution, not glancing off or making a slight wound, but piercing it from side to side "till the dart strike through the liver." Galen and Hippocrates ascribe to the liver the most of the world's moral depression, and the word melancholy means black bile.

I preach to you this morning the Gospel of Health. In taking diagnosis of the diseases of the soul you must also take the diagnosis of the diseases of the body. As if to recognize this, one whole book of the New Testament was written by a physician. Luke was a doctor, and he discourses much of physical effects, and he tells of the good Samaritan's medication of the wounds by pouring in oil and wine, and recognizes hunger as a hindrance to hearing the Gospel, so that the 5,000 were fed, and records the sparse diet of the prodigal away from home and the emaciated aspect of the beggar army from home, and lets us know of the hemorrhage of the wounds of the dying Christ and the miraculous post-mortem resuscitation. And any estimate of the spiritual condition that does not include an estimate of the physical condition is incomplete. When the doorkeeper of congress fell dead from excessive joy because Burgoyne had surrendered at Saratoga, and Philip the Fifth of Spain dropped dead at the news of his country's defeat in battle, and Cardinal Wolsey expired as a result of Henry the Eighth's anathema, it was demonstrated that the body and soul are Siamese twins, and when you thrill the one with joy or sorrow you thrill the other. We might as well recognize the fact that there are two mighty fortresses in the human body, the heart and the liver; the heart the fortress of all the graces, the liver the fortress of all the furies. You may have the head filled with all intellectualities, and the ear with all musical appreciation, and the mouth with all eloquence, and the hand with all industries, and the heart with all generousities, and yet "a dart strike through the liver."

First, let Christian people avoid the mistake that they are all wrong with God because they suffer from depression of spirits. Many a consecrated man has found his spiritual sky befogged, and his hope of heaven blotted out, and himself plunged chin deep in the Slough of Despond, and has said: "My heart is not right with God, and I think I must have made a mistake, and instead of being a child of light I am a child of darkness. No one can feel as gloomy as I feel and be a Christian." And he has gone to his minister for consolation, and he has collected Flavel's books, and Cecil's books, and Baxter's books, and read and read and read, and prayed and prayed and wept and wept and wept and wept,

and groaned and groaned and groaned. My brother, your trouble is not with the heart, it is a gastric disorder or a rebellion of the liver. You need a physician more than you do a clergyman. It is not sin that blots out your hope of heaven, but bile. It not only yellows your eyeballs, and furs your tongue, and makes your head ache, but swoops upon your soul in dejections and forebodings. The devil is after you. He has failed to despoil your character, and he does the next best thing for him—he ruffles your peace of mind. When he says that you are not a forgiven soul, when he says that you are not right with God, when he says that you will never get to heaven, he lies. You are just as sure of heaven as though you were there already. But Satan, finding that he cannot keep you out of the promised land of Canaan, has determined that the spies shall not bring you any of the Eschol grapes before-hand, and that you shall have nothing but prickly pear and crab apple. You are just as good now under the cloud as you were when you were accustomed to rise in the morning at 5 o'clock to pray and sing "Hallelujah, tis done!" My friends, Rev. Dr. Joseph H. Jones, of Philadelphia, a translated spirit now, wrote a book entitled "Man, Moral and Physical," in which he shows how different the same thing may happen to different people. He says: "After the great battle on the Mincio in 1859, between the French and Sardinians on the one side and the Austrians on the other, so disastrous to the latter, the defeated army retreated, followed by the victors. A description of the march of each army is given by two correspondents of The London Times, one of whom traveled with the successful host, the other with the defeated. The difference in views and statements of the same places, scenes and events is remarkable. The former are said to be marching through a beautiful and luxuriant country during the day, and at night camping where they are supplied with an abundance of the best provisions and all sorts of rural dainties. There is nothing of war about the proceeding except its stimulus and excitement. On the side of the poor Austrians it is just the reverse. In his letter of the same date, describing the same places and a march over the same road, the writer can scarcely find words to set forth the suffering, irritation and disgust existing around him. What was pleasant to the former was intolerable to the latter. What made all this difference? The French are victorious; the Austrians have been defeated. The contrast may convey a distinctive idea of the extent to which moral impressions affect the efficiency of the soldier."

So, my dear brother, the road you are traveling is the same you have been traveling a long while, but the difference in your physical conditions makes it look different, and therefore the two reports you have given of yourself are as widely different as the reports in The London Times from the two correspondents. Edward Payson, sometimes so far up on the mount that it seemed as if the celestial force of earth could no longer hold him; sometimes, through a physical disorder, was so far down that it seemed as if the nether world would clutch him. Glorious William Cowper was as good as good could be, and will be loved in the Christian church as long as it sings his hymn beginning: "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood;" and his hymn beginning: "Oh, for a Closer Walk with God!" and his hymn beginning: "What Various Hindrances we Meet;" and his various beginning: "God Moves in a Mysterious Way." Yet so was he overcome of melancholy, or black bile, that it was only through the mistake of the cab driver who took him to a wrong place, instead of the river bank, that he did not commit suicide.

Spiritual condition so mightily affected by the physical state, what a great opportunity this gives to the Christian physician, for he can feel at the same time both the pulse of the body and the pulse of the soul, and he can administer to both at once, and if medicine is needed he can give that—an earthly and a divine prescription at the same time—and call on not only the apothecary of earth, but the pharmacy of heaven. Ah, that is the kind of doctor I want at my bedside when I get sick, one that cannot only pour out the right number of drops, but who can also pray. That is the kind of doctor I have had in my house when sickness or death came. I do not want any of the physical or atheistic doctors around my loved ones when the balances of life are trembling. A doctor who has gone through the medical college and in dissecting room has traversed the wonders of the human mechanism, and found no God in any of the labyrinths, is a fool, and cannot doctor me or mine. But, oh, the Christian doctors! What a comfort they have been in many of our households. And they ought to have a warm place in our prayers, as well as praise on our tongues. Dear old Dr. Skillman! My father's doctor, my mother's doctor, in the village home. He carried all the confidences of all the families for ten miles around. We all felt better as soon as we saw him enter the house. His face pronounced a benediction before he said a word. He welcomed all of us children into life, and he closed the old people's eyes when they entered the last slumber. I think I know what Christ said to him when the old doctor got through his work. I think he was greeted with the words: "Come in, doctor. I was sick and ye visited me!" I trust God that the number of Christian physicians is multiplying, and some of the students of the medical colleges are here today, and I hail you, and I bless you, and I ordain you to the tender, beautiful, heaven descended work of a Christian physician, and when you take your diploma from the Long Island Medical college, to look after the perishable body, be sure also to get a diploma from the skies to look after the imperishable soul. Let all Christian physicians unite with ministers of the Gospel in persuading good people that it is not because God is against them that they sometimes feel depressed, but because of their diseased body. I suppose David, the psalmist, was no more pious when he called on everyting human and angelic, animate and inanimate, and from showlike to hurricane, to praise God, than when he said: "Out of the depths of hell have I cried unto thee, O Lord;" or that Jeremiah was any better when he wrote his prophecy than when he wrote his "Lamentations;"

or that Job was any better when he said: "I know that my Redeemer liveth," than when covered all over with the pustules of elephantiasis he sat in the ashes scratching the scabs off with a broken piece of pottery; or that Alexander Cruden, the concordist, was any better man when he compiled the book that has helped 10,000 students of the Bible, than when under the power of physical disorder he was landlocked and strait waisted in Bethnal Green Insane asylum.

"Oh," says some Christian man, "no one ought to allow physical disorder to depress his soul. He ought to live so near to God as to be always in the sunshine." Yes, that is good advice; but I warrant that you, the man who gives the advice, have a sound liver. Thank God every day for healthful hepatic condition, for just as certainly as you lose it, you will sometimes, like David, and like Jeremiah, and like Cowper, and like Alexander Cruden, and like 10,000 other invalids, be playing a dead march on the same organ with which now you play a toccata. My object at this point is not only to mollify the criticisms of the well against those in poor health, but to show Christian people who are attributing what is the matter with them. Do not charge against the heart the crimes of another portion of your organism. Do not conclude that because the path of heaven is not arched with as fine a foliage, or the banks beautifully snowed under with exquisite chrysanthemums as once, that therefore you are on the wrong road. The road will bring you out at the same gate whether you walk with the stride of an athlete or come up on crutches. Thousands of Christians, morbid about their business, and morbid about the present, and morbid about the future, need the sermon I am now preaching.

Another practical use of this subject is for the young. The theory is abroad that they must first sow their wild oats, and afterward Michigan wheat. Let me break the delusion. Wild oats are generally sown in the liver, and they can never be pulled up. They so preoccupy that organ that there is no room for the implantation of a righteous crop. You see aged men about us at 80 erect, agile, splendid, grand old men. How much wild oats did they sow between 18 and 30? None, absolutely none. God does not very often honor with old age those who have in early life sacrificed swine on the altar of the bodily temple. Remember, O young man, that while in after life, and after years of dissipation, you may perhaps have your heart changed, religion does not change the liver. Troubling and staggering along these streets today are men, all bent and decayed and prematurely old, for the reason that they are paying for lens they put upon their physical estate before they were 30. By early dissipation they put on their body a first mortgage, and a second mortgage, and a third mortgage, to the devil, and these mortgages are now being foreclosed, and all that remains of their earthly estate the undertaker will soon put out of sight. Many years ago, in fulfillment of my text, a dart struck through their liver, and it is there yet. God forgives, but outraged physical law never, never, never, that has a Simi, but no Calvary. Solomon in my text knew what he was talking about. He had in early life been a prodigal, and he rises up on his throne of worldly splendor to shriek out a warning to all the centuries. David, bad in early life, but good in later life, cries out with an agony of earnestness: "Remember not the sins of my youth."

Stephen A. Douglas gave the name of "squatter sovereignty" to those who went west and took possession of lands and held them by right of preoccupation. Let a flock of sins settle on your heart before you get to 25 years of age, and they will in all probability keep possession of it by an infernal squatter sovereignty. "I promise to pay at the bank \$500 six months from date," says the promissory note. "I promise to pay my life thirty years from date at the bank of the grave," says every infraction of the laws of your physical being.

What? Will a man's body never completely recover from early dissipation in this world? Never. How about the world to come? Perhaps God will fix it up in the resurrection body so that it will not have to go limping through all eternity; but get the liver thoroughly damaged and it will stay damaged. Physicians call it cancer of the liver; or hardening of the liver, or cirrhosis of the liver, or inflammation of the liver, but Solomon puts all these pangs into one figure and says: "Till the dart strike through his liver."

Hesiod seemed to have some hint of this when he represented Prometheus for his crimes fastened to a pillar and an eagle feeding on his liver, which was renewed again each night, so that the devouring went on until finally Hercules slew the eagle and rescued Prometheus. And a dissipated early life assures a ferocity pecking away and clawing away year in and year out, and Death is the only Hercules who can break the power of its beak or unclench its claw. So also Virgil and Homer wrote fables about vultures preying upon the liver, but there are those here today with whom it is no fable, but a terrific reality.

That young man smoking cigarettes and smoking cigars has no idea that he is getting for himself smoked liver. That young man has no idea that he has by early dissipation so depleted his energies that he will go into the battle only half armed. Napoleon lost Waterloo days before it was fought. Had he attacked the English army before it was re-formed, and attacked it division by division, he might have won the day, but he waited until he had only 100,000 men against 200,000. And here is a young man who, if he put all his forces against the regiment of youthful temptations, in the strength of God might he drive them back, but he is allowing them to be re-enforced by the whole army of midlife temptations, and when all these forces are massed against him and no Grouchy comes to help him, and Blucher has come to help his foe, what but immortal defeat can await him?

Oh, my young brother, do not make the mistake that thousands all around you are making, in opening the battle against sin too late—for this world too late, and for the world to come too late. What brings that express train from St. Louis into Jersey City three hours late? They lost fifteen minutes early on the route, and that affected them all the way,

and they had to be switched off here and switched off there, and detained here and detained there, and the man who loses time and strength in the earlier part of the journey of life will suffer for it all the way through, the first twenty years of life damaging the following fifty years.

Some years ago a scientific lecturer went through the country exhibiting on great canvas different parts of the human body when healthy, and different parts when diseased. And what the world wants now is some eloquent scientist to go through the country showing to our young people on blazing canvas the drunkard's liver, the idler's liver, the libertine's liver, the gambler's liver. Perhaps the spectacle might stop some young man before he comes to the same catastrophe, and the dart strike through his own liver.

My hearer, this is the first sermon you have heard on the Gospel of Health, and it may be the last you will ever hear on that subject, and I charge you in the name of God, and Christ, and usefulness, and eternal destiny, take better care of your health. When some of you die, if your friends put on your tombstone a truthful epitaph, it will read: "Here lies the victim of late suppers," or it will be: "Behold what chicken salad at midnight will do for a man," or it will be: "Ten cigars a day closed my earthly existence," or it will be: "Sat down in a cold draught and this is the result," or it will be: "I died of thin shoes last winter," or it will be: "Thought I could do at 70 what I did at 20, and I am here," or it will be: "Here is the consequence of sitting half a day with wet feet," or it will be: "This is where I have stacked my harvest of wild oats," or it will be: "Here is the epitaph on the tombstone two figures; namely, a dart and a liver."

There is a kind of sickness that is beautiful when it comes from over work for God, or one's country, or one's own family. I have seen wounds that were glorious. After the battle of Antietam in the hospital a soldier in reply to my question: "Where are you hurt?" uncovered his bosom and showed me a gash that looked like a badge of eternal nobility. I have seen an empty sleeve that was more beautiful than the most muscular forearm. I have seen a green shade over the eye shot out in battle that was more beautiful than any two eyes that had passed without injury. I have seen an old missionary worn out by the malaria of African jungles who looked to me more radiant than a rubicund gymnast. I have seen a mother after six weeks watching over a family of children down with scarlet fever, with a glory around her pale and wan face that surpassed the angelic. It all depends on how you got your sickness and in what battle your wounds. Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, the pride of New Jersey—aye of the nation—and one of the pillars of the Christian church, and for nearly four years practically president of the United States, although in the office of secretary of state, in his determination to make peace with all the governments on this American continent, wore himself out, and while his brain was as keen as it ever did, he was according to the bulletin of his physicians at Washington and Newark, dying of hardening of the liver. Satan, who does not like good men, sent a dart through his liver. The last my dear friend—for he was my friend and my father's friend before me—the last he was seen in Washington was in the president's carriage, leaning his head against the shoulder of the president on his way to the depot to take the train to go home to die. Martyr of the public service, he died for his country, though he died in time of peace. In his earlier life he was called the nephew of his uncle, Theodore Frelinghuysen, but he lived to render for God and his country a service that will make others proud to be his nephew, and which will keep his name on the scroll of history as the highest style of Christian statesman that this century or any other century has produced. My Lord and my God! if we must get sick and worn out, let it be in the service and in the effort to make the world good and happy. Not in the service of sin. No! No! One of the most pathetic scenes that I ever witness, and I often see it, is that of men or women converted in the fifties or sixties or seventies wanting to be useful, but they so served the world and Satan in the earlier part of their life that they have no physical energy left for the service of God. They sacrificed nerves, muscles, lungs, heart and liver on the wrong altar. They fought on the wrong side, and now when their sword is all backed up and their ammunition all gone, they enlist for Emmanuel. When the high mettled cavalry horse which that man spurred into many a cavalry charge with clamping bit and flaming eye and neck clothed with thunder, is worn out and spavined and ring boned and spring halt, he rides up to the great Captain of our salvation on the white horse and offers his services. When such persons might have been through the good habits of a lifetime crashing the battle ax through helmeted iniquities, they are spending their days and nights in discussing the best way of breaking up their indigestion, and quieting their jangling nerves, and rousing their laggard appetite, and trying to extract the dart from their outraged liver. Better converted late than never! Oh, yes; for they will get to heaven. But they will go afoot when they might have wheeled up the steep hills of the sky in Elijah's chariot. There is an old hymn that we used to sing in the country meeting house when I was a boy, and I remember how the old folks' voices trembled with emotion while they sang it. I have forgotten all but two lines, but those lines are the peroration of my sermon:

"Twill save us from a thousand snares
To mind religion young."

Drawing a Sleigh.
There is no service to which a horse can be put that wears him out so quickly as drawing a sleigh. He is used to the resistance of a buggy's weight, and when he finds that he has nothing, so to speak, behind him, he runs through himself. People suppose that because a liver-crippled man charges \$3 an hour for a sleigh during the few days of the sleighing season he is paying himself for storage of the cutter during the rest of the year. That is not the case.—Chicago News.

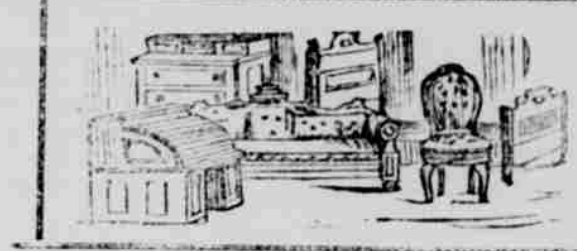
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