

NONE LIKE JESUS.

SERMON BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE AT CRETE, NEB.

Faith is the hinge on which eternity turns—the grace that can forgive small sins can forgive large ones. Outbreaks of gladness in heaven.

CRETE, Neb., July 1.—Today there is a great outdoor meeting at this place—a Chautauqua meeting—and people from all parts are present. A sermon by the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D.D., is the principal feature of the occasion. The reverend gentleman's subject was: "None Like Jesus." He took for his text: "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." I Peter ii, 7. Following is the sermon:

We had for many years in this country commercial depression. What was the matter with the stores? With the people? With the people? Lack of faith, enough, goods enough, to be bought, industrious hands enough, no faith. Now what damages the commercial world, damages the spiritual. Our great lack is faith. That is the hinge on which eternity turns. The Bible says we are saved by faith. "Oh," says some one in the audience, "I have faith. I believe that Christ came down to save the world." I reply that in worldly matters when you have faith you always act upon it. For instance, if I could show you a business operation by which you could make \$5,000, you would immediately go into it. You would prove your faith in what I tell you, by your prompt and immediate action. Now, if what you call faith in Christ has led you to surrender your entire nature to Jesus and to corresponding action in your life, it is genuine faith, and if it has not, it is not faith at all.

There are some things which I believe with the head. Then there are other things which I believe with the heart. And then there are other things which I believe both with the head and heart. I believe, for instance, that Cromwell lived. That is a matter of the head. Then there are other things which I believe with the heart and not with the head. That is, I have no especial reason for believing them, and yet I want to believe them, and the wish is the father to the expectation. But there is a very great difference between that which we believe about ourselves and that which we believe about others. For instance, you remember not a great while ago there was a disaster in Pennsylvania, amid the mines; there was an explosion and the mine was destroyed, and many were lost. In the morning you picked up your newspaper, and saw that there had been a great disaster in Pennsylvania. You said: "Ah, what a sad thing this is; how many lives lost! O, what sorrow!" Then you read a little further on. There had been an almost miraculous effort to get those men out, and a few had been saved. "O," you said, "what a brave thing, what a grand thing that was! How well it was done!" Then you folded the paper up, and sat down to your morning repast. Your appetite had not been interfered with, and during that day, perhaps, you thought only two or three times of the disaster. But suppose you and I had been in the mine, and the dying had been all around us, and we had heard the pickaxes just above us as they were trying to work their way down, and after a while we saw the light, and then the life bucket let through the shaft, and suffocated men were dead, we had just strength to throw ourselves over into it, and been hauled out into the light. Then what an appreciation we would have had of the agony and the darkness beneath, and the joy of deliverance. That is the difference between believing a thing about others and believing it about ourselves.

We take up the Bible and read that Christ came to save the world. "That was beautiful," you say, "a fine specimen of self denial." That was very grand indeed. But suppose it is found that we ourselves were down in the mine of sin and the darkness, and Christ stretched down his arm of mercy through the gloom and lifted us out of the pit and set our feet on the Rock of Ages, and put a new song into our mouth. Oh, then it is a matter of hand clapping; it is a matter of congratulation; it is a matter of deep emotions. What kind of faith have you, my brother?

It is faith that makes a Christian, and it is the proportion of faith that makes the difference between Christians. What was it that lifted Paul and Luther, and Payson and Doddridge above the ordinary level of Christian character? It was the simplicity, the brilliancy, the power and the splendor of their faith. Oh, that we had more of it! God give us more faith to preach and more faith to hear. "Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief!" "To you which believe he is precious."

First, I remark Christ is precious to the believer, as a saviour from sin. A man says: "To whom are you talking? I am one of the most respectable men in this neighborhood; do you call me a sinner?" Yes! "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." You say: "How do you know anything about my heart?" I know that about it, for God announces it in his Word; and what God says is always right. When a man becomes a Christian people say: "That man sets himself above us." Oh, no! instead of setting himself up, he throws himself down. He cries out: "I was lost once, but now I am found. I was blind once, but now I see. I prostrate myself at the feet of the cross of the Saviour's mercy."

What a grand thing it is to feel that all the bad words I have ever uttered and all the bad deeds I have ever done, and all the bad thoughts that have gone through my mind, are as though they had never been, for the sake of what Christ has done. You know there is a difference in stains. Some can be washed out by water, but others require a chemical preparation. The sin of the heart is so black and indelible a mark that no human application can cleanse it, while the blood of Jesus Christ can wash it out forever. O, the infinite, the omnipotent chemistry of the Gospel! Some man says: "I believe all that. I believe God has forgiven the most of my sins, but there is one sin I cannot forget." What

is it? I do not want to know what it is, but I take the responsibility of saying that God will forgive it as willingly as any other sin.

O'er sins like mountains for their size, The seas of sovereign grace expand, The seas of sovereign grace arise.

There was a very good man, about seventy-five years of age, that once said: "I believe God has forgiven me, but there was one sin which I committed when I was about twenty years of age that I never forgave myself for, and I can't feel happy when I think of it." He said that one sin sometimes came over his heart and blotted out all his hope of heaven. Why, he lacked in faith. The grace that can forgive a small sin can forgive a large sin. Might to save. Mighty to save. Who is the God like unto our God, that pardoneth iniquity? Oh, what Jesus is to the soul that believes in him! The soul looks up into Christ's face and says: "To what extent wilt thou forgive me?" And Jesus looks back into his face and says: "To the uttermost." The soul says: "Will it never be brought up again?" "Never," says Christ. "Won't it be brought up again at the Judgment Day?" "No," says Christ, "never in the Judgment Day." What bread is to the hungry, what harbor is to the bestormed, what light is to the blind, what liberty is to the captive, that, and more than that, is Christ to the man who trusts him.

Just try to get Christ away from that Christian. Put on that man the thumb-screw. Twist it until the bones crack. Put that foot into the iron boot of persecution until it is mashed to a pulp. Stretch that man on the rack of the inquisition, and louder than all the uproar of the persecutors you will hear his voice, like the voice of Alexander Le Croix, above the crackling fagots, as he cried out: "Oh, Jesus! Oh, my blessed Jesus! Oh, divine Jesus! who would not die for thee?"

Again, I remark that Christ is precious to the believer, as a friend. You have commercial friends, and you have family friends. To the commercial friend you go when you have business troubles. You can look back to some day—it may have been ten or twenty years ago—when, if you had not had that friend, you would have been entirely overthrown in business. But I want to tell you this morning of Jesus, the best business friend a man ever had. He can pull you out of the worst perplexities. There are people in this audience who have got in the habit of putting down all their worldly troubles at the feet of Jesus. Why, Christ meets the business man on the street and says: "O, business man, I know all thy troubles. I will be with thee, I will see thee through." Look out how you try to corner or trample on a man who is backed up by the Lord God Almighty. Look out how you trample on him. O, there is a financier that many of our business men have not found out. Christ owns all the boards of trade, all the insurance companies, and all the banking houses. They say that the Vanderbilts own the railroads; but Christ owns the Vanderbilts and the railroads, and all the plottings of stock gamblers shall be put to confusion, and God with his little finger shall wipe out their infamous projects. How often it has been that we have seen men gather up the riches by fraud, in a pyramid of strength and beauty, and the Lord came and blew on it and it was gone; while there are those here today who, if they could speak out in this assemblage, or dared to speak out, would say: "The best friend I had in 1837; the best friend I had in 1857; the best friend I had at the opening of the war; the best friend I ever had has been the Lord Jesus Christ. I would rather give up all other friends than this one."

But we have also family friends. They come in when we have sickness in the household. Perhaps they say nothing; but they sit down and they weep as the light goes out from the bright eyes, and the white petals of the lily are scattered in the blast of death. They watch through the long night by the dying couch, and then, when the spirit has gone, soothe you with great comfort. They say: "Don't cry. Jesus pities you. All is well. You will meet the best one again." Then, when your sorrows vent off, breaking your heart, and they not come and put the story in the very best shape, and prophesy the return of the prodigal? Were they not in your house when the birth angel flapped its wings over your dwelling? And they have been there at the baptisms and at the weddings. Family friends! But I have to tell you that Christ is the best family friend. Oh, blessed is that cradle over which Jesus weeps. Blessed is that nursery where Jesus walks. Blessed is that sick brow from which Jesus wipes the dampness. Blessed is that table where Jesus breaks the bread. Blessed is that grave where Jesus stands with his scarred feet on the upturned sod saying: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Have you a babe in the house? Put it into the arms of the great Child-Lover. "Is there a sick one in the house? Think of him who said: 'Damsel, arise.' Are you afraid you will come to want? Think of him who fed the five thousand. Is there a little one in your house that you are afraid will be blind or deaf or lame? Think of him who touched the blinded eye and snatched back the boy from epileptic convulsion. Oh, he is the best friend. Look over your family friends today and find another that can be compared to him. When we want our friends, they are sometimes out of town. Christ is always in town. We had that some will stick to us in prosperity who will not in adversity. But Christ comes through darkest night, and amid ghastliest sorrow, and across roughest sea, to comfort you. There are men and women here who would have been dead twenty years ago but for Jesus. They have gone through trial enough to exhaust ten times their physical strength. Their property went, their health went, their families were scattered. God only knows what they suffered. They are an amazement to themselves that they have been able to stand it. They look at their once happy home, surrounded by all comfort. Gone! They think of the time when they used to rise strong in the morning, and walk vigorously down the street, and had experienced a health they thought inexhaustible. Gone! Everything gone but Jesus. He has

willied them. His eye has watched them. His omnipotence has defended them. Yes, He has been with them. They have gone through disaster, and he was a pillar of fire by night. They have gone across stormy Galilee, but Christ had his foot on the neck of the storm. They felt the waves of trouble coming up around them gradually, and they began to climb into the strong rock of God's defense, and then they sang, as they looked over the waters: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in time of trouble; therefore we will not fear though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah." The other day there was a sailor came into the Bethel in New York and said: "My lads (he was standing among sailors), I don't know what's the matter with me. I used to hear a good deal about religion and about Jesus Christ. I don't know that I have any religion, or that I know anything much about Christ; but when I was in mid-Atlantic I looked up one day through the rigging, and there seemed to come a light through my soul. I have felt different ever since, and I love to see that I once hated, and I feel a joy I can't tell you. I really don't know what's the matter of me." A rough sailor got up and said: "My lad, I know what's the matter of you. You have found Jesus. It is enough to make any man happy."

His worth if all the nations knew, Sure the whole earth would love him too.

I remark again: Christ is precious to the believer as a final deliverer. You and I must after a while get out of this world. Here and there one perhaps may come on to eighty, to ninety years of age, but your common sense tells you that the next twenty-five years will land the majority of this audience in eternity. The next ten years will thin out a great many of these family circles. This day may do the work for some of us. Now, why do I say this? To scare you? No; but just as I would stand in your office, if I were a business man and you were a business man, and talk over risks. You do not consider it cowardly to talk in your store over temporal risks. Is it base in us this morning to talk a little while over the risks of the soul, that are for eternity? In every congregation death has the last year been doing a great deal of work. Where is your father? Where is your mother? Your child? Your brother? Your sister? O, how cruel does death seem to be! Will he pluck every flower? Will he poison every fountain? Will he put black on every door knob? Will he snap every heartstring? Can I keep nothing? Are there no charms to repulse with which to go out and contend against him? Give me some keen sword, suspended in God's armory, with which I may stab him through. Give me some battle ax that I may clutch it and hew him from helmet to sandal. Thank God, thank God, that he that rideth on the pale horse hath more than a match in him who rideth on the white horse. St. John heard the contest, the pawing of the steeds, the rush, the battle cry, the onset, until the pale horse came down on his haunches and his rider bit the dust, while Christ, the conqueror, with uplifted voice declared it: "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction."

The sepulcher is a lighted castle on the shore of heavenly seas, and sentinel angels walk up and down at the door to guard it. The dust and the dampness of the grave are only the spray of the white surf of celestial seas, and the long breathing of the lying Christian, that you call his gasping, is only the long inhalation of the air of heaven. O, bless God for what Christ is to the Christian soul, here and hereafter!

I heard a man say some time ago that they never laugh in heaven. I do not know where he got his authority for that. I think they do laugh in heaven. When victors come home do we not laugh? When fortunes are won in a day, do we not laugh? After we have been ten or fifteen years away from our friends, and we greet them again, do we not laugh? Yes, we will laugh in heaven. Not hollow laughter, not meaningless laughter, but a full, round, clear, deep, resonant outbreak of eternal gladness. Oh, the glee of that moment when we first see Jesus! I think we will take the first two or three years in heaven to look at Jesus; and if in ten thousand years, there should be a moment when the doxology panted, ten thousand souls would cry out: "Sing! sing!" and when the cry was: "What shall we sing?" the answer would be: "Jesus! Jesus!" Oh, you may have all the crowns in heaven; I do not care so much about them. You may have all the robes in heaven; I do not care so much about them. You may have all the scepters in heaven; I do not care so much about them. You may have all the thrones in heaven; I do not care so much about them. But give me Jesus—that is enough heaven for me. Oh, Jesus! I long to see thee. Thou "shalt among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely."

There may be some here who have come hardly knowing why they come. Perhaps it was as in Paul's time—you have come to hear what this babbler sayeth; but I am glad to meet you face to face, and to strike hands with you in one earnest talk about your deathless spirit. Do you know, my friend, that this world is not good enough for you? It cheats. It fades. It dies. You are immortal. I see it in the deathless spirit looking out from your eye. It is a mighty spirit. It is an immortal spirit. It beats against the window of the cage. I come out to feed it. During the past week the world has been trying to feed it with husks. I come out this morning to feed it with that bread of which if a man eat he will never hunger. What has the world done for you? Has it not bruised you? Has it not maltreated you? Look me in the eye, immortal man, and tell me if that is not so. And yet, will you trust it? O, I wish that you could forget me, the weak and sinful man—that I might vanish from your sight this morning, and that Jesus might come in. Aye, he comes here this morning to plead for your soul—comes in all covered with the wounds of Calvary. He says: "O, immortal man! I died for thee. I pity thee. I come to save thee. With these hands, torn and crushed, I will lift thee up into pleasures that never die." Who

will reject—who will drive him back? When Christ was slain on the cross, they had a cross, and they had nails, and they had hammers. You crucify by your sin, O impenitent soul! the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is a cross; but where are the nails? Where are the hammers? "Ah," says some one rejecting Christ—some one standing a long way off, "I will furnish the nails. I don't believe in that Jesus. I will furnish the nails." Now we have the nails; who will furnish the hammers? "Ah," says some hard heart, "I will furnish the hammers." Now we have the nails and the hammers. We have no spears; who will furnish the spears? "Ah," says some one long in the habit of sin and rejection of Christ's mercy: "I will furnish them." Now we have all the instruments: the cross, the nails, the hammers, the spears; and the crucifixion goes on. O, the darkness! O, the pang! O, the tears! O, the death! "Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world."

Lord Jesus, help that man. He sits far back in that man. He sits far back in that man. He does not like to go forward. He feels strange in a religious assemblage. He thinks, perhaps, we do not want him. Oh, Jesus, take that trembling hand. Put thine ear to that agitated heart and hear how it beats. Oh, lift the iron gate of that prison house and let that man go free. Lord Jesus, help that woman. She is a wanderer. No tears can she weep. See, Lord Jesus, that polluted soul, see that blighted foot. No church for her. No good cheer for her. No hope for her. Lord Jesus, go to that soul. Thou wilt not stone her. Let the red hot chain, that burns to the bone, and the bloody scar blossoms in the heat, snap at thy touch. Oh, have mercy on Mary Magdalene.

Lord Jesus, help that young man. He took money out of his employer's till. Didst thou see it? The clerks were all gone. The lights were down. The shutters were up. Didst thou see it? O, let him not fall into the pit. Rememberest thou not his mother's prayers? She can pray for him no more. Lord Jesus, touch him on the shoulder. Touch him on the heart. Lord, save that young man. There are many young men here. I got a letter from one of them who is probably here today, and I shall have no other opportunity of answering that letter. You say you believe in me. O, do you believe in Jesus? I cannot save you, my dear brother. Christ can. He wants and waits to save you, and he comes today to save you. Will you have him? I do not know what our young men do without Christ—how they get on amid all the temptations and trials to which they are subjected. O, young men, come to Christ today, and out your soul and your interest for this life and for the next into his keeping. In olden times, you know, a cub bearer would bring wine or water to the king, who would drink it, first tasting it himself, showing there was no poison in it, then passing it to the king, who would drink it. The highest honor I ask is that I may be cup bearer today to your soul. I bring you this water of everlasting life. I have been drinking of it. There is no poison in it. It has never done me any harm. It will do you no harm. O, drink it, and live forever. And let that aged man put his head down on the staff, and let that poor widowed soul bury her worried face in her handkerchief, and these little children fold their hands in prayer, while we commend you to him who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; for to you which believe he is precious.

A Tinge of Heartlessness.

Residents of the city naturally acquire the habit of minding their own business and knowing almost nothing of that of their neighbors. They affect great pride in this matter, and are often heard to remind visitors from the country that they do not know the names of the families living on either side of them. This is all very well for certain well-to-do localities, perhaps. Even then, however, it has more than a tinge of heartlessness in it. This fact comes home to every true-hearted man and woman when they perceive a bit of black craps on an adjacent door, and feel that only a narrow partition has separated their happiness and unconsciousness from intense suffering and grief. Nobody is too rich not to feel the need of sympathy at times, and nobody too poor not to be able to give it.

The time when so many are leaving the city is appropriate to suggest that a little more neighborliness might be encouraged. Many kind women have spent their time during the winter among the poor and sick, but they are going now into the country. The opportunity is afforded, therefore, to others who, perhaps, have as yet done nothing outside their immediate family circle, to take an interest in a very urgent work, and perhaps fill a place which without them would remain vacant. A case came to our knowledge recently of the illness of an old lady whose daughter was obliged to leave her alone for the entire day, and day after day. It would seem as if a little neighborly attention in such an emergency would not be construed into intrusiveness. It would, no doubt, be received in the friendly spirit dictating it. All the world is not going to the seashore or the mountains, let it be remembered.—Boston Herald.

A Proud Little Gotham Bride.

Guests invited to one of the prettiest weddings of the week were surprised to read in one corner of the dainty wedding cards: "No gifts," engraved in a quaint arabesque scroll, which perforce attracted attention. It requires some independence of character and some self denial to go counter to established custom in such a matter, but the dimpled little bride, who looks more like a sweet, plump, pink and white, grown up baby than a person of strong minded proclivities, announced to her friends when they questioned her decision: "I won't make my marriage to Archie a donation party where all the parish bring in this, that and the other to patch up the salary. We have a circle of three or four hundred friends, and everybody knows that a great many of them would buy presents for us not at all because they love us, but because it is the proper thing, and even if they can't afford the outlay they mustn't be outdone by rich Mrs. A. or Mrs. B."—New York Mail and Express.

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