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## TALMAGE'S SERMON.

### THE GREAT PREACHER SPEAKS THROUGH THE PRESS.

He Takes For His Subject "The Excited Governor" - Why Felix Postponed Accepting the Gospel - Now is the Time to Embrace the Offer of Salvation.

#### A Dangerous Delay.

Rev. Dr. Talmage, who is now speeding across the Pacific to Honolulu on his round the world journey, selected as the subject for sermonic discourse through the press last Sunday "The Excited Governor," the text being taken from Acts xxiv, 25: Felix trembled, and answered: "Go thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

A city of marble was Caesarea—wharves of marble, houses of marble, temples of marble. This being the ordinary architecture of the place, you may imagine something of the splendor of Governor Felix's residence. In a room of that palace, floor tessellated, windows curtained, ceiling frosted, the whole scene illumined with Tyrian purple and statues and pictures and carvings, sat a very dark complexioned man of the name of Felix, and beside him a woman of extraordinary beauty, whom he had stolen by breaking up another domestic circle. She was only 18 years of age, a princess by birth and unwittingly waiting for her doom—that of being buried alive in the ashes and scoria of Mount Vesuvius which in sudden eruption one day put an end to her abominations.

Well, one afternoon Drusilla, seated in the palace, weary with the magnificent stupor of the place, says to Felix: "You have a very distinguished prisoner, I believe, of the name of Paul. Do you know he is one of my countrymen? I should very much like to see him, and I should very much like to hear him speak, for I have heard so much about his eloquence. Besides that the other day, when he was being tried in another room of this place and the windows were open, I heard the applause that greeted the speech of Lawyer Tertullus as he denounced Paul. Now I very much wish I could hear Paul speak. Won't you let me hear him speak?" "Yes," said Felix, "I will. I will order him up now from the guardroom." Clank, clank, comes a chain up the marble stairway, and there is a shuffle at the door, and in comes Paul, a little old man, prematurely old through exposure—only 40 years of age, but looking as though he were eighty. He bows very courteously before the Governor and the beautiful woman by his side. They say: "Paul, we have heard a great deal about your speaking. Give us now a specimen of your eloquence."

Oh, if there ever was a chance of a man to show off, Paul had a chance there! He might have harangued them about Grecian art, about the wonderful waterworks he had seen at Corinth, about the Acropolis by moonlight, about prison life in Philippi, about "what I saw in Thessalonica," about the old mythologies, but "No!" Paul said to himself, "I am now on the way to martyrdom, and this man and woman will soon be dead, and this is my only opportunity to talk to them about the things of eternity."

And just there and then there broke in upon the scene a peal of thunder. It was the voice of a judgment day speaking through the words of the decrepit apostle. As that grand old missionary proceeded with his remarks the stoop begins to go out of his shoulders, and he rises up, and his countenance is illumined with the glories of a future life, and his shackles rattle and grind as he lifts his fettered arm, and with it hurls upon his abashed auditors the bolts of God's indignation. Felix grew very white about the lips. His heart beat unevenly. He put his hand to his brow, as though to stop the quickness and violence of his thoughts. He drew his robe tighter about him as under a sudden chill. His eyes glare, and his knees shake, and as he clutches the side of his chair in a very paroxysm of terror he orders the sheriff to take Paul back to the guardroom. Felix trembled and said: "Go thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." A young man came one night to our services, with pencil in hand, to caricature the whole scene and make mirth of those who should express any anxiety about their souls, but I met him at the door, his face very white, tears running down his cheek, as he said, "Do you think there is any chance for me?" Felix trembled, and so may God grant it may be so with others.

#### Three Reasons.

I propose to give you two or three reasons why I think Felix sent Paul back to the guardroom and adjoined this whole subject of religion. The first reason was he did not want to give up his sins. He looked around. There was Drusilla. He knew that when he became a Christian he must send her back to Azizus, her lawful husband, and he said to himself: "I will risk the destruction of my immortal soul sooner than I will do that."

How many there are now who cannot get to be Christians because they will not abandon their sins in vain all their prayers and all their church-going. You cannot keep these darling sins and win Heaven, and now some of you will have to decide between the wine cup and unlawful amusements and lascivious gratifications on the one hand, and the locks of Samson; Salome danced Herod into the pit; Drusilla blocked up the way to Heaven for Felix. Yet when I present the subject now, I fear that some of you will say: "Not quite yet. Don't be so precipitate in your demands. I have a few tickets yet that I have to use. I have a few engagements that I must keep. I want to stay a little longer in the whirl of conviviality—a few more guffaws of unclean laughter,

a few more steps on the road to death, and then, sir, I will listen to what you say. Go thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

#### A Convenient Season.

Another reason why Felix sent Paul back to the guardroom and adjoined this subject was he was so very busy. In ordinary times he found the affairs of State absorbing, but those were extraordinary times. The whole land was ripe for insurrection. The Sicarii, a band of assassins, were already prowling around the palace, and I suppose he thought: "I can't attend to religion while I am pressed by affairs of State. It was business, among other things, that ruined his soul, and I suppose there are thousands of people who are not children of God because they have so much business."

It is business in the store-keepers, gains, unfaithful employees. It is business in your law office—subpoenas, writs you have to write out, papers you have to file, arguments you have to make. It is your medical profession with its broken nights, and the exhausted anxieties of life hanging upon your treatment. It is your real estate office, your business with landlords and tenants, and the failure of men to meet their obligations with you. Aye, with some of those who are here, it is the annoyance of the kitchen, and the sitting room, and the parlor—the wearing economy of trying to meet large expenses with a small income. Ten thousand voices of "business, business, business" drown the voice of the eternal Spirit, silencing the voice of the advancing judgment day, overcoming the voice of eternity, and they cannot listen. They say, "Go thy way for this time."

Some of you look upon your goods, look upon your profession, you look upon your memorandum books, and you see the demands that are made this very week upon your time, and your patience, and your money, and while I am entreating you about your soul and the danger of procrastinating on you say: "Go thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." O Felix, why be bothered about the affairs of this world so much more than about the affairs of eternity? Do you know that when death comes you will have to stop business, though it be in the most exacting period of it—between the payment of the money and the taking of the receipt? The moment he comes and the death is high, however low, will you put your office, will you put your shop in comparison with the affairs of an eternal world, affairs that involve thrones, palaces, dominions eternal? Will you put 200 acres of ground against immortality? Will you put forty or fifty years of your life against millions of ages?

O Felix, you might better postpone everything else. For do you not know that the upholstering of Tyrian purple in your palace will fade, and the marble blocks of Caesarea will crumble, and the breakwater at the beach, made of great blocks of stone 60 feet long, must give way before the perpetual wash of the sea, but the redemption that Paul offers you will be forever? And yet and yet and yet you wave him back to the guardroom, saying: "Go thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

#### Honors of the World.

Again Felix adjoined this subject of religion and put off Paul's argument because he could not give up the honors of the world. He was afraid somehow that he would be compromised himself in this matter. Remarks he made afterward showed him to be intensely ambitious. Oh, how he hugged the favor of men!

I never saw the honors of this world in their hollowness and hypocrisy so much as in the life and death of that wonderful man, Charles Sumner. As he went toward the place of burial even Independence Hall in Philadelphia asked that his remains stop there on their way to Boston. The flags were at half-mast, and the minute guns on Boston common throbbed after his heart ceased to beat. Was it always so? While he lived, how censured of legislative resolutions, how caricatured of the pictorial; how charged with every motive mean and ridiculous; how all the urns of scorn and hatred and billing-gate emptied upon his head; how, when struck down in the Senate Chamber, there were hundreds of thousands of people who said, "Good for him; sorry he's right!" how he had put the ocean between him and his maligners, that he might have a little peace, and how, when he went off sick, they said he was broken hearted because he could not get to be President or Secretary of State.

O Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who is that man that sleeps in your public hall, covered with garlands and wrapped in the stars and stripes? Is that the man who, only a few months before, you denounced as the foe of republican and democratic institutions? Is that the same man? Ye American people, ye could not, by one week of funeral eulogium and newspaper leaders, which the dead Senator could neither read nor hear, atone for twenty-five years of maltreatment and caricature. When I see a man like that, pursued by all the hounds of the political kennel so long as he lives and then buried under a great pile of garlands and amid the lamentations of a whole nation, I say to myself: "What an unutterably hypocritical thing is all human applause and all human favor! You took twenty-five years in trying to pull down his fame and then take twenty-five years in trying to build his monument."

My friends, was there ever a better commentary on the holiness of all earthly favor? If there are young men who read this who are postponing religion in order that they may have the favors of this world, let me persuade them of their complete folly. If you are looking forward to gubernatorial, senatorial, or presidential chair, let me show you your great mistake. Can't be that there is now any young man saying: "Let me have political

office, let me have some of the high positions of trust and power, and then I will attend to religion, but not now. Go thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

#### A Dangerous Delay.

And now my subject takes a deeper tone, and it shows what a dangerous thing is this deferring of religion. When Paul's chains rattled down the marble stairs of Felix, that was Felix's last chance for Heaven. Judging from his character afterward, he was reprobate and abandoned. And so was Drusilla.

One day in Southern Italy there was a trembling of the earth, and the air got black with smoke intershot with liquid rocks, and Vesuvius rained upon Drusilla and upon her son a horrible tempest of ashes and fire. They did not reject religion; they only put it off. They did not understand that that day that that hour when Paul stood before them, was the pivotal hour upon which everything was poised, and that it tipped the wrong way. Their convenient season came when Paul and his guardsman entered the palace—it went away when Paul and his guardsman left. Have you never seen men waiting for a convenient season? There is such a great fascination about it that, though you may have great respect to the truth of Christ, yet somehow there is in your soul the thought: "Not quite yet. It is not time for me to become a Christian." I say to a boy, "Seek Christ." He says, "No; wait until I get to be a young man." I say to a young man, "Seek Christ." He says, "Wait until I come to middle life." I meet the same person in middle life, and I say, "Seek Christ." He says, "Wait until I get old." I meet the same person in old age and say to him, "Seek Christ." He says, "Wait until I am on my dying bed." I am called to his dying couch. His last moments have come. I bend over the couch and listen for his last words. I have partially to guess what they are by the motion of his lips, he is so feeble, but rallying himself, he whispers, until I can hear him say: "I am waiting—for—a—more—convenient—season," and he is gone!

#### Now Is the Accepted Time.

I can tell you when your convenient season will come. I can tell you the year it will be 1894. I can tell you what kind of a day it will be—it will be the Sabbath day. I can tell you what hour it will be—it will be between 8 and 10 o'clock. In other words, it is now. Do you ask me how I know this is your convenient season? I know it because you are here, and because the Holy Spirit is here, and because the elect sons and daughters of God are praying for your redemption. Ah, I know it is your convenient season because some of you, like Felix, treat as if all your past life comes upon you with its sins and all the future life comes upon you with its terror. This night air is aglare with torches to show you up or to show you down. It is rustling with wings to lift you into light or smite you into despair, and there is a rushing to and fro and a beating against the door of your soul as with a great thunder of emphasis, telling you, "Now, now is the best time, as it may be the only time."

May God Almighty forbid that any of you, my brethren or sisters, set the part of Felix and Drusilla and put away this great subject. If you are going to be saved ever, why not begin to-night? Throw down your sins and take the Lord's pardon. Christ has been tramping after you many a day. An Indian and a white man became Christians. The Indian, almost as soon as he heard the gospel, believed and was saved, but the white struggled on in darkness for a long while before he found light.

After their peace in Christ the white man said to the Indian, "Why was it that I was kept so long in the darkness and you immediately found peace?" The Indian replied: "I will tell you. A prince comes along, and he offers you a coat. You look at your coat, and you say, 'My coat is good enough,' and you refuse his offer, but the prince comes along and he offers me the coat, and I look at my old blanket and I throw that away and take his offer. You, sir," continued the Indian, "are clinging to your own righteousness, you think you are good enough, and you keep your own righteousness, but I have nothing, nothing, and so when Jesus offers me pardon and peace I simply take it."

My reader, why not now throw away the worn-out blanket of your sin and take the robe of a Saviour's righteousness—a robe so white, so fair, so lustrous, that no fuller on earth can whiten it? O shepherd, to-night bring home the lost sheep! O Father, to-night give a welcoming kiss to the wan prodigal! O friend of Lazarus, to-night break down the door of the sepulcher and say to all these dead souls as by irresistible fiat: "Live! Live!"

#### Thin Skating for Bachelor Fillets.

The declaration of marriage in Siam is simpler even than it used to be in Scotland. You ask a lady to marry you by merely offering her a flower, or taking a light from a cigarette if it happens to be in her mouth; and your family and the bride's family have to put up at least \$200 apiece for a dowry. The principal impediment in the way of marriage is that each year is named after an animal, and only certain animals are allowed to intermarry; for instance, a person born in the year of the cat cannot marry with a person born in the year of the dog, or a person born in the year of the cow with a person born in the year of the tiger; and there are similar embargoes about months and days, akin, perhaps, to the old superstitions in this country that a marriage will be unlucky if the birth months of the bride and groom are far apart. April should not wed with November, nor January with June.—Boston Post.

## UNDAUNTED BY POLAR COLD.

The Pursuit of Food Tempts Birds to Brave the Most Rigid Climate.

In the countries bordering on the Polar seas, where the changing seasons bring alternately the two extremes of dearth and plenty birds are more numerous in the short summer than anywhere else all the world over and in winter are absent altogether. All the emigrants there by force of circumstance in like manner the birds of temperate climates are affected by the seasonal changes, though in a less degree, through the influence of cold and heat upon their food supplies, rather than effect of cold upon their well-protected bodies. According to Little's Living Age, a coat of mail is not to be compared to a coat of feathers for safety, so far as a bird's life is concerned. Layer upon layer of feathers can withstand any amount of water or any degree of cold. In proof of this, see how the delicate tern, after wintering in comparatively mild weather, go back to the ice floes of the Polar Sea and lay their eggs on the bare ice. For two or three weeks the tender breast of the sea swallow is pressed against a cold block of ice. Again, as another example of the influence of food rather than climate in governing bird action, take the colony of beccaficos. The beccafico is a Mediterranean bird common on the southern shores of Spain and Italy, in the Grecian Islands, Sicily and Malta, and on the northern shores of Africa. Formerly it was quite unknown in the British Isles, but some years ago a large orchard of the trees was planted near Brighton, and the beccafico have discovered the fact and come over to share the spoil. Doubtless the nightingales told them the story of English figs and showed them the way over. Be this as it may, the little birds from the warm shores of the Mediterranean bid fair to become established as naturalized British subjects.

#### Well Done, John!

J. A. Owen tells a touching story of shameful wrong done in a moment of passion to a faithful dog. The incident is given in the words of a friend of old John, the keeper. "He was a rare 'un for snootin' was the Squire, an' the best pointer that could be had for money he'd have in his kennels. But Cyrus was the finest dog of the lot both as regards size an' looks an' work in the field. 'He'd never made a miss, all the time the Squire shot over him. Well, one day when they was pa'tridge-shootin', the birds went out o' one field and dropped over a bank into another. There was a gate at one end o' the bank, an' 'twas half-way open like.

"On they comes after the dog, the Squire an' ohn. An' how it come about no one knows; the dog might ha' been jealous, for there was another dog out with 'em, an' he might ha' been thinkin' about him. Anyway instead o' drawin' though as usual, he cante ed though, jest as if he'd been rangin'.

"Up got the covey; they was behind that bank. Cyrus turned round an' stopped dead still. He knowed, poor feller, he'd made a blunder for once in his life, an' old John told me he looked up at him real pitiful like. Befe e he could say a word, the Squire swung his gun up to his shoulder, an' shot Cyrus dead, an' then turnin' ound to old John, he says to him quiet, very quiet, though his face was white with temper.

"You b oke that dog in, or tried to; now break me in another that will not make a mistake."

"It was quite enough for the old feller, an' too much. Layin' the gun down, an' takin' the game bag from his shoulders, he says: 'Squire, I've been in your father's service an' yours for many years, an' I've ved ye faithful to the best o' my means an' ways, such as they a e, but as long as I live, I'll never break another dog for you.'

#### The Silk Spider.

The silk spider of Madagascar spins threads of a golden color, and strong enough, according to Maindron, to hang a cork helmet by. The female spider may attain a length of 15 cm., while the male does not exceed 3 cm. A single female individual, at the breeding season, gave M. Camboue, a French missionary, some 8,000 m. of a fine silken thread during a period of about twenty-seven days. The thread was examined with a view to creating a new industry. Small textures woven of these threads are actually used by the natives for fastening flowers on sunshades and for other purposes.

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