

## OUR STORY TELLER



### THE TIVERTON BANK MYSTERY.

I've come, judge, to ask if you'll let me tell you what no one on earth don't know but me, 'bout that bank mystery.

Yes, thank you, I will sit down. A fire feels good on a night like this. 'Tain't often such as I have a chance at this kind of comfort and luxury.

What do I know about the bank mystery? Land sakes, judge, time they opened the bank that day ten years ago and found the bank vault broke into and the safe blown up and not a dollar gone, I could have told it all. The people of Tiverton ain't done talking and wondering 'bout it yet, and there ain't never been no one livin' as could tell what it all meant but me.

I brought some papers—here they are, judge—where it's all written down and I can swear to it if you like. I don't want them never used, though, unless I die and something comes up as would make it best for my family to know, though there's this in it I'd rather die than have 'em know. If it's all the same to you, judge, I'd like to tell it to you. Seems like I'd get rid of a load and would be happier and die easier feelin' I'd spoken it all out to one livin' human.

You'll be glad to listen? That's good of you, I knowed you was a kind man and a just one; that's why I come to you. No, thank you, I don't smoke; I put all that money away for my wife and children.

Do you hear that storm? Outside seems like all the evil powers was let loose. You can't judge 'bout it here. It comes kind of muffled like through those thick curtains and it don't shake this great house like it does some.

It's this kind of night that makes men huddle together, judge, and plan how to get rich and have fine things such as the likes of you. I've been through it all, I know. I've felt as if I had as good a right to 'em as anyone and I was bound to have 'em, too. I warn't brought up to no trade nor nothin' and fair means seemin' to fail, I took to the other.

Yes, judge, I started out in life a thief and a robber. I prospered fairly in a small way and no one didn't catch up with me for some time. Then I joined a gang in for everything. Lord, but it was fascinating! It was like drink; I couldn't give it up and I couldn't get enough of it. I was in prison and out then, the old story, till I married and begun to have little ones.

Then, Lord knows what helped me—something did—and for the sake of my wife and children, I broke loose from everything and came here, where no one didn't know me, to start over again. I had some money and opened the restaurant just opposite the bank.

Long as I didn't read the papers I got on well; but let me see them and I'd hunt through 'em for the robberies, and I'd be crazy, plumb crazy for a while, achin' to be in it all again. Seein' 'bout my old pals gettin' in trouble didn't make no difference.

Time come, though, when I begun to enjoy life differently, and to feel myself more respectable. The love for the old life begun ter go till I could read about it without gettin' all fired up. I thought then I was all right.

Then they come here, part of the gang I'd belonged to. First I knowed of it was seein' 'em in the restaurant. I 'spicined they warn't here for no good and it most took my breath away. They knowed me quick enough, too, and nothin' wouldn't do but I must join 'em. I was the very man they wanted, I could help 'em and I was bound to 'em. 'Twas the biggest thing they'd undertaken yet; the bank. They'd come on to examine the situation, knowing that Mr. Durkee, the new mill owner, would make a big payment soon and the money for it would be in the bank here. If there weren't anything else, that would be a big haul, worth havin' and me bein' here decided 'em.

I go think the devil brought all his friends and relations with him that night to tempt me. I forgot how to sleep and just couldn't stay in bed. I wonder I warn't in misery by mornin', with the devil raggin' at me as he did

care, judge, but we went at it with a will, and never a word. It was so still you could almost hear your heart beat, when all of a sudden came a smothered cry, loud and clear, like a woman's. We stopped work and looked at each other, Jim's face white and scared.

"Lord, what was that?" he said.

"I often hears 'em on the street like that," I said.

"That warn't on the street; it sounded close by," said Jim. "We couldn't hear nothin' outside in this place."

"Nonsense," I said, "don't you make a fool of yourself, too, and spoil it," and I went to work again.

I could see his hand tremble for a while and then got steady again.

"That must have come through the room upstairs," he said presently.

"Queer, though, it sounded so close."

Then we worked on and there warn't nothing more to be heard. Rest of the gang might all have been dead men, for all the sound they made and we didn't say nothin', and so the night went on.

At last we had it all ready and were only waiting for the signal to blow it up and then—money enough to make us all rich. 'Tain't such as you can realize the excitement and the strain of such a moment. To know it's all there, ready, and then to have to wait! It's easier walkin' over red hot coals. It's all right to go on and work, but to stay still and only breathe and listen gives a man the shivers.

Presently Jim caught my arm.

"Say, I thought I heard voices, did you?" he whispered.

"The men upstairs," I said.

"Sounded down here. Have your pistol ready."

I took my lantern and went round the vault again carefully, and then held it up to examine the walls. Then I shook my head. There warn't no way we could hear no one.

"It's the queerest place I ever was in," said Jim, "and by Jove I'll be glad when we are out of it. Why don't that signal come? Suppose there's any hitch? I swear I hear voices again."

Just then came the signal and Jim began to apply the dynamite, but his hands trembled so and his eyes looked so wild and excited, his own wife wouldn't know him.

"The money, the money," he whispered, "we must have it now."

We got out of the way just in time and then out came the door.

"The inside door, quick," said Jim, but the explosion had made that fall inside and we just could lift it out.

"Have the bag ready," said Jim, as he leaned forward to haul out the great piles of bank notes and silver we could see by the light of the lanterns.

"Hands off, or you are a dead man."

It was a voice that would most have waked the dead. I dropped my bag and Jim drew back his hand and caught hold of me with a grip like iron, and we began to go slowly back to the ladder.

"The combination is all right; we have them now; they can't escape us."

We were half way up the ladder when we heard the click, click of the lock, and as we drew the ladder after us we could hear the rasping of the hinges of the iron door.

"Fly, fly for your lives; we are discovered," said Jim, as he went around to warn the men; and in the darkness and the wind and the rain they went away and I ain't never seen none of 'em since. I heard, though, as when they found there warn't no one there and the bank people didn't know nothin' 'bout it till the next morning, they just believed the bank was haunted, sure.

Do I know what it was, judge? There ain't no one else as does know, that's sure. 'Tain't much, after all.

Yes, see, playin' 'round with my little ones, I found as I could make 'em hear all kinds of noises anywhere I wanted, and people cryin' and laughin'; it was fun for them and I often done it; ventriloquism, I believe you call it; but that night's the last time. Yecsee, none of the gang didn't know 'bout that, and I don't kever ever to have 'em know it now. It saved the bank without my informin', and that's all I care for.

Oh, no, judge, the bank don't owe me nothin'. You'll take care of the papers? Thank you, I'm obliged to you for listenin', too. It kind of makes me feel easier.

No, no, thank you, I won't stay and take no more of your time. Don't get up; I can find my way out.

What's that you say, judge? You honor and respect me—me? And the bank—land, judge, 'twarn't me; 'twas my wife and children saved the bank, and I'm proud of 'em—proud of 'em, judge. Good night.—Philadelphia Times.

**Eyes.**

Artificial eyes were first made in Egypt. They were of gold and silver, and subsequently of copper and ivory. Hundreds of years later, in the sixteenth century, when they were made in Europe, porcelain was the substance used, and the maker usually stamped his address on the white of the eye.

A lobster's skin when shedding splits down the back and comes off in two equal parts. The tail slips out of the shell like a finger out of a glove.

Sweden believes that the devil has power over a child until it is baptized.

## SOUL RECOGNITION.

### REV. DR. TALMAGE SAYS WE SHALL KNOW EACH OTHER.

**He Takes the Theory Out of the Realm of Speculation, and Carries It Into the Region of Positive Certainty.**

**A Glorious Faith.**

Dr. Talmage preached Sunday at Washington, upon the subject, "Heavenly Recognition," and his text was from II. Samuel, xii, 23: "I shall go to him."

There is a very sick child in the abode of David the king. Disease, which stalks up the dark lane of the poor and puts its smothering hand on lip and nostril of the wan and wasted, also mounts the palace stairs and bending over the pillow blows into the face of a young prince the frosts of pain and death. Tears are wine to the king of terrors. Alas for David the king. He can neither sleep nor eat and lies prostrate on his face weeping and wailing until the palace rings with the outcry of woe.

What are courtly attendants, or victorians armies, or conquered provinces under such circumstances? What to any parent is all splendid surrounding when his child is sick? Seven days have passed on. There is that great house two eyelids are gently closed, two little hands folded, two little feet quiet, one heart still. The servants come to hear the tidings to the king, but they cannot make up their minds to tell him, and they stand at the door whispering about the matter, and David hears them, and he looks up and says to them, "Is the child dead?" "Yes, he is dead."

David rouses himself up, washes himself, puts on new apparel and sits down to food. What power hushed that tempt? What strength was it that lifted up that king, whom grief had dethroned? Oh, it was the thought that he would come again into the possession of that darling child. No grave-digger's spade could hide him. The wintry blasts of death could not put out the bright light. There would be a forge somewhere that with silver hammer would weld the broken links. In a city where the hoofs of the pale horse never strike the pavement he would clasp his lost treasure. He wipes away the tears from his eyes, and he clears the choking grief from his throat and exclaims, "I shall go to him."

**The Heavenly Thron.**

Was David right or wrong? If we part on earth, will we meet again in the next world? "Well," says some one, "that seems to be an impossibility. Heaven is so large a place we never could find our kindred there." Going into some city, without having appointed a time and place for weeks and for months, and perhaps for years, and never see each other, and heaven is vaster than all earthly cities together. And how are you going to find your departed friend in that country? It is so vast a realm. John went up on one mountain of inspiration, and he looked off upon the multitude, and he said, "Thousands of thousands." Then he came upon a greater altitude of inspiration and looked off upon it again, and he said, "Ten thousand times ten thousand." And then he came to a higher mount of inspiration and looked off again, and he said, "A hundred and forty and four thousand and thousands of thousands." And he came on a still greater height of inspiration, and he looked off again and exclaimed, "A great multitude that no man can number."

Now, I ask, how are you going to find your friends in such a throng as that? Is not this idea we have been entertaining, after all, a falsity? Is this doctrine of future recognition of friends in heaven a guess, a myth, a whim, or is it a granite foundation upon which the soul pierced of all ages may build a glorious hope? Intense question! Every heart in this audience throbs right into it. There is in every soul here the tomb of at least one dead. Tremendous question! It makes the lip quiver, and the cheek flush, and the entire nature thrill. Shall we know each other there? I get letters almost every month asking me to discuss this subject. I get a letter in a bold, scholarly hand, on gilt edged paper, asking me to discuss this question, and I say, "Ah, that is a curious man, and he wants a curious question solved." But I get another letter. It is written with a trembling hand and on what seems to be a torn-out leaf of a book, and there and here is the mark of a tear, and I say, "Oh, that is a broken heart, and it wants to be comforted!"

The object of this sermon is to take this theory out of the region of surmise and speculation into the region of positive certainty. People say: "It would be very pleasant if that doctrine were true. I hope it may be true. Perhaps it is true. I wish it were true." But I believe that I can bring an accumulation of argument to bear upon this matter which will prove the doctrine of future recognition as plainly as that there is any heaven at all, and that the kiss of reunion at the celestial gate will be as certain as the dying kiss at the door of the sepulcher.

**Facts for Proof.**

What does my text imply? "I shall go to him." What consolation would it be to David to go to his child if he would not know him? Would David have been allowed to record this anticipation for the inspection of all ages if it were a groundless anticipation? We read in the first book of the Bible: Abraham died and was gathered to his people. Jacob died and was gathered to his people. Moses died and was gathered to his people. What people? Why, their friends, their comrades, their old companions. Of course it means that. It cannot mean anything else. So in the very beginning of the Bible four times that is taken for granted. The whole New Testament is an arbor over which this doctrine creeps like a luxuriant vine full of the purple clusters of consolation. James, John and Peter followed Christ into the mountain. A light falls from heaven on that

mountain and lifts us into the glories of the celestial. Christ's garments glow and his face shines like the sun. The door of heaven swings open. Two spirits come down and alight on that mountain. The disciples look at them and recognize them as Moses and Elias. Now, if those disciples standing on the earth could recognize these two spirits who had been for years in heaven, do you tell me that we, with our heavenly eyesight, will not be able to recognize those who have gone out from among us only five, ten, twenty, thirty years ago?

The Bible indicates over and over again that the angels know each other, and then the Bible says that we are to be higher than the angels, and if the angels have the power of recognition, shall not we, who are to be higher than they in the next realm, have as good eyesight and as good capacity? What did Christ mean in his conversation with Mary and Martha when he said, "Thy brother shall rise again?" It was as much as to say: "Don't cry. Don't wear yourselves out again. Thy brother shall rise again."

The Bible describes heaven as a great home circle. Well, now, that would be a very queer home circle where the members did not know each other. The Bible describes death as a sleep. If we know each other before we go to sleep, shall we not know each other after we wake up? Oh, yes. We will know each other a great deal better than now. "For now," says the apostle, "we see through a glass darkly," but then face to face. It will be my purified, enthroned and glorified body gazing on your purified, enthroned and glorified body.

**Reasons for Belief.**

Now, I demand, if you believe the Bible, that you take this theory of future recognition out of the realm of speculation and surmise into the region of positive certainty, and no more keep saying: "I hope it is so. I have an idea it is so. I guess it is so." Be able to say, with all the concentrated energy of body, mind and soul, "I know it is so!"

There are in addition to these Bible arguments other reasons why I accept this theory. In the first place, because the rejection of it implies the entire obliteration of our memory. Can it be possible that we shall forget forever those with whose walk, look, manner we have been so long familiar? Will death come and with a sharp, keen blade hew away this faculty of memory? Abraham said to Dives, "Son, remember." If the exiled and the lost remember, will not the enthroned remember?

When John Evans, the Scotch minister, was seated in his study his wife came in and said to him, "My dear, do you think we will know each other in heaven?" He turned to her and said, "My dear, do you think we will be bigger fools in heaven than we are here?"

Again, I accept this doctrine of future recognition because the world's expectancy affirms it. In all lands and ages this theory is received. What form of religion planted it? No form of religion, for it is received under all forms of religion. Then, I argue, a sentiment, a feeling, an anticipation, universally planted, must have been God implanted, and if God implanted it, is it rightly implanted. Socrates writes: "Who would not part with a great deal to purchase a meeting with Orpheus and Homer? If it be true that this is to be the consequence of death, I could even be able to die often."

The Norwegian believes it. The Indian believes it. The Greenlander believes it. The Swiss believe it. The Turks believe it. Under every sky, by every river, in every zone, the theory is adopted, and so I say a principle universally implanted must be God implanted, and hence a right belief. The argument is irresistible.

**Soul Features.**

Again, I think that one reason why we ought to accept this doctrine is because we never in this world have an opportunity to give thanks to those to whom we are spiritually indebted. The joy of heaven, we are told, is to be inaugurated by a review of life's work. These Christian men and women who have been toiling for Christ, have they seen the full result of their work? Oh, no!

In the church at Somerville, N. J., John Vredenburg preached for a great many years. He felt that his ministry was a failure, although he was a faithful minister preaching the gospel all the time. He died, and died amid discouragements, and went home to God, for no one ever doubted that John Vredenburg was a good Christian minister. A little while after his death there came a great awakening in Somerville, and one Sabbath 200 souls stood up at the Christian altar espousing the cause of Christ, among them my own father and mother. And what was peculiar in regard to nearly all of those 200 souls was that they dated their religious impressions from the ministry of John Vredenburg. Will that good never meet man before the throne of Christ through his instrumentality? Oh, of course he will know them. I remember one Sabbath afternoon, home down with the sense of my sins and knowing not God, I took up Doddridge's "Rise and Progress." Oh, what a dark afternoon it was, and I read the chapters, and I read the prayers, and I tried to make the prayers my own. Oh, I must see Philip Doddridge. A glorious old book he wrote! It is out of fashion now.

There is another before the throne of God. You say her joy is full. Is it? You say there can be no augmentation of it. Cannot there be? Her son was a wanderer and a vagabond on the earth when that good mother died. He broke her old heart. She died leaving him in the wilderness of sin. She is before the throne of God now. Years pass, and that son repents of his crimes and gives his heart to God and becomes a useful Christian and dies and enters the gates of heaven. You tell me that that mother's joy cannot be augmented? Let them comfort each other, the son and the mother. "Oh," she says to the angels of God, "rejoice with me! The dead is alive again, and the lost is found. Hallelujah! I never expected to see this lost one come back." The Bible says nations are to be born in a day. When China comes to God, will it not know Dr. Abel? When India comes,

will it not know Dr. John Scudder? When the Indians come to God, will they not know David Brainerd?

**Soul Modesty.**

I see a soul entering heaven at last, with covered face at the idea that it has done so little for Christ and feeling borne down with unworthiness, and it says to itself, "I have no right to be here." A voice from a throne says: "Oh, you forget that Sunday school class you invited to Christ! I was one of them." And another voice says: "You forget that poor man to whom you gave a loaf of bread and told of the heavenly bread. I was that man." And another says: "You forget that sick one to whom you gave medicine for the body and the soul. I was that one." And on Christ, from a throne overtopping all the rest, will say, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me." And then the seraphs will take their harps from the side of the throne and cry, "What song shall it be?" And Christ, bending over the harpers, shall say, "It shall be the harvest home!"

Oh, have you never sat by a death-bed? In that hour you hear the departing soul cry, "Hark! Look!" You hearkened and you looked. A little child, pining away because of the death of its mother, getting weaker and weaker every day, was taken into the room where hung the picture of her mother. She seemed to enjoy looking at it, and then she was taken away, and after a while died. In the last moment that wan and wasted little one lifted her hands, while her face lighted up with the glory of the next world and cried out, "Mother!" Do you tell me she did not see her mother? She did. So in my first settlement at Bellevue a plain man said to me: "What do you think I heard last night? I was in the room where one of my neighbors was dying. He was a good man, and he said he heard the angels of God singing before the throne. I haven't much poetry about me, but I listened and I heard them, too." Said I, "I have no doubt of it." Why, we are to be taken up to heaven at last by ministering spirits. Who are they to be? Souls that went up from Madras, or Antioch, or Jerusalem? Oh, no, our glorified kindred are going to troop around us!

**An Idea of Heaven.**

Heaven is not a stately, formal place, as I sometimes hear it described, a very frigidly of splendor, where people stand on cold formalities and go around about with heavy crowns of gold on their heads. No, that is not my idea of heaven. My idea of heaven is more like this: You are seated in the evening tide by the fireplace, your whole family there, or nearly all of them there. While you are seated talking and enjoying the evening hour there is a knock at the door and the door opens, and there comes in a brother that has been long absent. He has been absent, for years you have not seen him, and no sooner do you make up your mind that it is certainly he than you leap up, and the question is who shall give him the first embrace. That is my idea of heaven—a great home circle where they are waiting for us.

**Before the Throne.**

How much you have been through since you saw them last. On the shining shore you will talk it all over. The heartaches, the loneliness, the sleepless nights, the weeping until you had no more power to weep, because the heart was withered and dried up. Story of vacant chair and empty cradle and little shoe—only half worn out, never to be worn again, just the shape of the foot that once pressed it. And dreams when you thought that the departed had come back again, and the room seemed bright with their faces, and you started up to greet them, and in the effort the dream broke and you found yourself standing amid room in the midnight—alone. Talking it all over, and then, hand in hand, walking up and down in the light. No sorrow, no tears, no death. Oh heaven! beautiful heaven—heaven where our friends are! Heaven where we expect to be! In the east they take a cage of birds and bring it to the tomb of the dead, and then they open the door of the cage, and the birds, flying out, sing. And I would to-day bring a cage of Christian consolation to the grave of your loved ones, and I would open the door and let them fill all the air with the music of their voices.

Oh, how they bound in these spirits before the throne! Some shout with gladness. Some break forth into uncontrollable weeping for joy. Some stand speechless in their shock of delight. They sing. They quiver with excessive gladness. They gaze in the temples, on the palaces, on the waters, on each other. They weave their joy into garlands, they spring it into triumphal arches, they strike on timbrels, and then all the loved ones gather in a great circle around the throne of God—fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, lovers and friends, hand to hand around about the throne—the circle, hand to hand, joy to joy, jubilee to jubilee, victory to victory, "until the day break and the shadows flee away." Turn, my beloved, and be like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel.

Oh, how different it is on earth from the way it is in heaven when a Christian dies! We say, "Close his eyes." In heaven they say, "Give him a palm." On earth we say, "Let him down in the ground." In heaven they say, "Hail him on a throne." On earth it is, "Farewell, farewell." And so I see a Christian soul coming down to the river of death, and he steps into the river, and the water comes up to the ankle. He says, "Lord Jesus, is this death?" "No," says Christ, "this is not death." And he wades still deeper down into the waters until the flood comes to the knee, and he says, "Lord Jesus, tell me, tell me, is this death?" "No," says Christ, "this is not death." And he wades still farther down until the wave comes to the girdle, and the soul says, "Lord Jesus, is this death?" "No," says Christ, "this is not death." And deeper in wades the soul till the billow strikes the lip, and the departing one cries, "Lord Jesus, is this death?" "No," says Christ, "this is not death." But when Christ had lifted the soul on a throne of glory, and all the pomp and joy of heaven came surging to its feet, then Christ said, "This, O transported soul, this is death!"