IN THE NAME OF GOD.

DR. TALMAGE ON THE SUBLIME MOTIVES OF COLUMBUS.

The Central Fact on This Memorial Day Is That the Great Achievement Was a Religious Discovery—The Voyage Was in God's Name.

BROOKLYN, Oct. 9.—Rev. Dr. Talmage's discourse today was occasioned by the Columbus observance now taking place. In the overflowing audience were many who had come to the city to participate in the patriotic ceremonies. The subject was, "Half a Planet," the text being Deuteronomy iii, 27, "Lift up thine eyes westward."

So God said to Moses in Bible times, and so he said to Christoforo Colombo, the son of a wool comber of Genoa, more than four hundred years ago. The nations had been looking chiefly toward the east. The sculpture of the world, the architecture of the world, the laws of the world, the philosophy of the world, the civilization of the world, the religion of the world came from the east.

But while Columbus, as his name was called after it was Latinized, stood studying maps and examining globes and reading cosmography, God said to him, "Lift up thine eyes toward the west." The fact was it must have seemed to Columbus a very lopsided world—like a cart with one wheel, like a scissors with one blade, like a sack on one side of a camel, needing a sack on the other side to balance it. Here was a bride of a world with no bridegroom. When God makes a half of anything he does not stop there. He makes the other half. We are all obliged sometimes to leave things only half done. But God never stops half way, because he has the time and the power to go all the way.

I do not wonder that Columbus was not satisfied with half a world, and so went to work to find the other half. The pieces of carved wood that were floated to the shores of Europe by a westerly gale, and two dead human faces, unlike anything he had seen before, likewise floated from the west, were to him the voice of God saying, "Lift up thine eyes toward the west." But the world then, as now, had plenty of Can't-be-dones. That is what keeps individuals back, and enterprises back, and the church back, and nations back—ignominious and disgusting and disheartening Can't-be-Dones.

Old navigators said to young Columbus, "It can't be done." The republic of Genoa said, "It can't be done." Alphonso V said, "It can't be done." A committee on maritime affairs, to whom the subject was submitted, declared. "It can't be done." Venetians said, "It can't be done." But the father of Columbus' wife died, leaving his widow a large number of sea charts and maps, and as if to condemn the slur that different ages put upon mothers-in-law the mother-in-law of Columbus gave him the navigator's materials out of which he ciphered America. After awhile the story of this poor but ambitious Columbus reaches the ear of Queen Isabella, and she pays eighty dollars to buy him a decent suit of clothes, so that he may be fit to appear before royalty.

The interview in the palace was successful. Money enough was borrowed to fit out the expedition. There they are, the three ships, in the Gulf of Cadiz, Spain. If you ask me which have been the most famous boats of the world, I would say, first, Noah's ship, that wharfed on Mount Ararat; second, the boat of bulrushes, in which Moses floated the Nile; third, the Mayflower, that put out from Plymouth with the Pilgrim Fathers, and now these three vessels that, on this the Friday morning, Aug. 3, 1492, are rocking on the ripples. I am so glad it is Friday, so that the prows of those three ships shall first of all run down the superstition that things begun or voyage started on Friday must necessarily prove disastrous.

Show me any Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday or Thursday or Saturday that ever accomplished as much as this expedition that started on Friday. With the idea that there will be perils connected with the expedition, the sacrament of the Lord's supper is administered. Do not forget that this voyage was begun under religious auspices. There is the Santa Maria only ninety feet long, with four masts and eight anchors. The captain walking the deck is fifty-seven years old, his hair white, for at thirty-five he was gray, and his face is round, his nose aquiline and his stature a little taller than the average.

I know from the decided step and the set of his jaw that he is a determined man. That is Captain Christopher Columbus. Near by, but far enough off not to run into each other, are the smaller ships, the Pinta and the Nina, about large enough and safe enough to cross the Hudson river or the Thames in good weather. There are two doctors in this fleet of ships, and a few landsmen—adventurers who are ready to risk their necks in a wild expedition. There are enough provisions for a year. "Captain Columbus, where are you sailing for?" "I do not know." "How long before you will get there?" "I cannot say." "All ashore that are going!" is heard, and those who wish to remain go to the land. Now the anchors of the three ships are being weighed, and the ratlines begin to rattle and the sails to unfurl.

The wind is dead east, and it does not take long to get out to sea. In a few hours the adventurers wish they had not started. The ships begin to roll and pitch. Oh, it is such a delightful sensation for landsmen! They begin to bother Captain Columbus with questions. They want to know what he thinks of the weather. They want to know when he thinks he will probably get there. Every time when he stands taking observations of the sun with an astrolabe they wonder what he sees and ask more questions. The crew are rather grouty. Some of them came on under four months' advance pay and others were impressed into the service. For sixteen days the wind is dead east and that pleases the captain, because it blows them farther and farther away from the European coast and farther on toward the shore of another country, if there is any.

After awhile there comes a calm day, and the attempt is made to fathom the ocean, and they cannot touch bottom, though the line and lead run down two hundred fathoms. More delightful sensations for those who are not good sailors! A fathom is six feet, and two hundred fathoms, one thousand two hundred feet, and below that it may be many hundred feet deeper. To add interest to the voyage, on the twentieth day out a violent storm sweeps the sea, and the Atlantic ocean tries what it can do with the Santa Maria, the Pinta and the Nina. Some of you know something of what a sea can do with the Umbria, the Majestic, the Teutonic and the City of Paris, and you must imagine what the ocean could do with those three small ships of olden time.

You may judge what the ocean was then by what it is now. It has never changed its habits. It can smile like the morning, but often it is the archangel of wrath, and its most rollicking fun is a shipwreck. The mutinous crew would have killed Columbus had it not been for the general opinion on shipboard that he was the only one that could take them back home in safety. The promise of a silk waistcoat and forty dollars in money to the man who should first discover land appeased them somewhat, but the indignation and blasphemy and threats of assassination must have been awful. Yet God sustained the great sailor commanding the Santa Maria.

Every evening on shipboard they had prayers and sung a vesper hymn. But after all the patience of those on board the ships had been exhausted, and the great captain or admiral had been cursed by every anathema that human lips could frame, one night a sailor saw a light moving along the shore, and then moving up and down, and then disappearing. On Friday morning at two o'clock, just long enough after Thursday to make it sure that it was Friday, and so give another blow at the world's idea of unlucky days—on Friday morning, Oct. 12, 1492, a gun from the Pinta signaled "land ahead."

Then the ships lay to, and the boats were lowered, and Captain Christopher Columbus first stepped upon the shore, amid the song of birds and the air a surge of redolence, and took possession in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost. So the voyage that began with the sacrament ended with "Gloria in Excelsis Deo." From that day onward you say there can be nothing for Columbus but honors, rewards, rhapsodies, palaces and world wide applause. No! no! On his way back to Spain the ship was so wrenched by the tempest and so threatened with destruction that he wrote a brief account of his discovery and put it in a cask and threw it overboard that the world might not lose the advantage of his adventures.

Honors awaited him on the beach, but he undertook a second voyage, and with it came all maligning and persecution and denunciation and poverty. He was called a land grabber, a liar, a cheat, a fraud, a deceiver of nations. Speculators robbed him of his good name, courtiers depreciated his discoveries, and there came to him ruined health and imprisonment and chains, of which he said while he rattled them on his wrists, "I will wear them as a memento of the gratitude of princes." Amid keen appreciation of the world's abuse and cruelty, and with body writhing in the tortures of gout he groaned out his last words, "In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum"—"Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

Of course he had regal obsequies. That is the way the world tries to atone for its mean treatment of great benefactors. Many a man has had a fine ride to his grave who during this life had to walk all the way. A big funeral, and instead of bread they give him a stone—that is a tombstone. But death, that brings quiet to the body of others, did not bring quiet to his. First buried in the church of Santa Maria. Seven years afterward removed to Seville. Twenty-three years afterward removed to San Domingo. Finally removed to Cuba. Four postmortem journeys from sepulcher to sepulcher.

I wish his bones might be moved just once more, and now that they have come so near to America as Cuba they might during the great Columbian year be transported to our own shores, where they belong, and that in the fifth century after his decease the American continent might build a mausoleum worthy of him who picked this jewel of a hemisphere out of the sea and set it in the crown of the world's geography.

But the bright noonday sun of that old sailor's prosperity went down in thickest night, and though here and there a monument has been lifted in his memory, and here and there a city called after him, the continent that he was the means of founding was named after another name, and no fitting commemoration of his work has been proposed until nearly four hundred years after his body turned to dust. May the imposing demonstration now being made in his honor on the Atlantic coast and to be made next year in his honor midcontinent, be brilliant enough and far resounding enough and Christian enough and magnificent enough to atone for the neglect of centuries! May the good Lord allow that most illustrious sailor of all time to look over the amethystine battlements long enough to see some of the garlands wreathed around his name and hear something of the hemispheric shout that shall greet his memory!

What most impresses me in all that wondrous life, which for the next twelve months we will be commemorating by sermon and song and military parade and World's fair and congress of nations, is something I have never heard stated, and that is that the discovery of America was a religious discovery and in the name of God. Columbus, by the study of the prophecies and by what Zechariah and Micah and David and Isaiah had said about the "ends of the earth," was persuaded to go out and find the "ends of the earth," and he felt himself called by God to carry Christianity to the "ends of the earth." Then the administration of the last supper before they left the Gulf of Cadiz, and the evening prayers during the voyage, and the devout ascriptions as soon as they saw the New World, and the doxologies with which they landed confirm me in saying that the discovery of America was a religious discovery.

Atheism has no right here; infidelity has no right here; vagabondism has no right here. And as God is not apt to fail in any of his undertakings (at any rate I have never heard of his having anything to do with a failure), America is going to be Gospelized, and from the Golden Gate of California to the Narrows of New York harbor, and from the top of North America to the foot of South America, from Behring straits to Cape Horn, this is going to be Immanuel's land. All the forms of irreligion and abomination that have cursed other parts of the world will land here—yea, they have already landed—and they will wrangle for the possession of this hemisphere, and they will make great headway and feel themselves almost established.

But God will not forget the prophecies which encouraged Columbus about the "ends of the earth seeing the salvation of God," nor the Christian anthem which Columbus led on the morning of the 12th of October, 1492, on the coast of San Salvador. Like that flock of land birds which met the Santa Maria and the Pinta and the Nina far out at sea, indicating to the commanders of that fleet that they were approaching some country, so a whole flock of promises and hopes, golden winged and songful, this morning alight around us, assuring us that we are approaching the glorious period of American evangelization.

A divine influence will yet sweep the continent that will make iniquity drop like slacked lime, and make the most blatant infidelity declare it was only joking when it said the Bible was not true, and the worst atheism announce that it always did believe in the God of nations. Let others call for requiem and dead march. I call for George Frederick Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." There has been much talk of late about communication with other worlds. Mars has come so near we can see its canals, and it has been hoped that by signals after awhile we may communicate with other stars. Ah, that will not be possible until our world has been reformed and evangelized!

It would not do for our world in its lost and ruined state to have communication with other worlds. It would spoil their morals. But wait until this world is fully redeemed, as it will be, and then perhaps interstellar correspondence may be opened. Till then this smitten and sickened world of ours must be quarantined from coming too near the unfallen worlds. But, thank God, the prophecies which cheered Columbus in his great undertaking cheer us. America for God! Yea, the round world for God! There can be no doubt about it!

That great Italian navigator also impresses me with the idea that when one does a good thing he cannot appreciate its ramifications. To the moment of his death Columbus never knew that he had discovered America, but thought that Cuba was a part of Asia. He thought the island Hispaniola was the Ophir of Solomon. He thought he had only opened a new way to old Asia. Had he known what North and South America were and are, and that he had found a country three thousand miles wide, ten thousand miles long, of seventeen million square miles, and four times as large as Europe, the happiness would have been too much for mortal man to endure.

He had no idea that the time would come when a nation of sixty million people on this side of the sea would be joined by all the intelligent nations on the other side the sea for the most part of a year reciting his wonderful deeds. It took centuries to reveal the result of that one transatlantic voyage. So it has always been. Could Paul on that June day when he was decapitated have had any idea of what effect his letters and the account of his life would have on Christendom? Could Martin Luther have had any idea of the echoes that would ring through the ages from the bang of his hammer nailing the Latin theses against a church door at Wittenberg?

Could Eli Whitney have realized the continents of wealth that would be added to the south by the invention of his cotton gin? Could John Gutenberg, toiling year after year making type and laboriously setting them side by side, and with presses changed now this way and now that, and sued by John Faust for money loaned, and many of the people trying to cheat Gutenberg out of his invention, he toiling on until he produced what is known as the Mazarin Bible, have any idea that as a result of his invention there would be libraries that placed side by side would again and again engirdle the earth, or the showers of newspapers that snow the world under?

When Manhattan island was sold to the Dutch for twenty-four dollars, neither they who sold or bought could have foreseen New York, the commercial metropolis of America that now stands on it. Can a man who preaches a sermon, or a woman who distributes tracts, or a teacher who instructs a class, or a passer-by who utters encouraging words realize the infinitudes of useful result? The teacher at Harrow school who toiled with William Jones, the most stupid boy in school and at the foot of his class, did not know that he was fitting for his work the greatest oriental scholar of modern times—his statue now in St. Paul's cathedral, London. Every move you make for God, however insignificant in your own eyes or in the eyes of others, touches worlds larger than the one Columbus discovered.

Why talk about unimportant things? There are no unimportant things. Infinity is made up of infinitesmals. On a clear night the smallest dewdrop holds a star. Each one of you is at the center of a universe, and all you say and do somehow vibrates to the extreme of that universe in all directions. I promise everlasting renown to those who will go forth with Christian and sympathetic words. After the battle of Copenhagen, Nelson, the admiral, went into a hospital and halted at the bed of a wounded sailor, who had lost his arm, and said, "Well, Jack, what is the matter with you?" and the sailor replied, "Lost my right arm, your honor," and Nelson looked down at his own empty sleeve and said: "Well, Jack, then you and I are both spoiled for fishermen. Cheer up, my brave fellow!" And that sympathetic word cheered the entire hospital.

Before you die you can, out of your own misfortunes, cheer a hundred souls and start unending echoes. You can no more appreciate the farreaching results of your life than Columbus could see this continent from arctic to antarctic. I say this not to make you proud and arrogant, but to make you tremble with your responsibilities, and put you on your guard as to what you do and what you say.

While studying the life of this Italian navigator I am also reminded of the fact that while we are diligently looking for one thing we find another. Columbus started to find India, but found America. Go on and do your duty diligently and prayerfully, and if you do not find what you looked for you will find something better. Saul was hunting for the strayed animals of his father's barnyard, but met Samuel, the prophet, who gave him a crown of dominion. Nearly all the great inventions and discoveries were made by men who at the time were looking for something else. Professor Morse gone to Europe to perfect himself in chemistry, on returning happens to take the packet ship Sully, from Havre, and while in conversation with a passenger learns of some experiments in France which suggest to him the magnetic telegraphy.

He went to Europe to learn the wisdom of others and discovered the telegraph. Hargreaves, by the upsetting of a machine and the motion of its wheels while upset, discovered the spinning jenny. So, my friend, go on faithfully and promptly with your work, and if you do not get the success you seek, and your plans upset, you will get something just as good and perhaps better. Sail ahead on the voyage of life, keep a correct logbook, brave the tempest, make the best use of the east wind, keep a sharp lookout, and I warrant you, in the name of the God of Columbus, that if you do not find just what you want of an earthly nature you will find heaven, and that will be better.

What was wornout India, crouching under a tropical sun, compared with salubrious and radiant and almost illimitable America, and what is all that this little world in which we live can afford you compared with that supernal realm whose foliage, and whose fruits, and whose riches, and whose population, and whose grandeurs, and whose worship, and whose Christ make up an affluence that the most rapturous vocabulary fails to utter?

Another look at the career of that admiral of the Santa Maria persuades me that it is not to be expected that this world will do its hard workers full justice. If any man ought to have been treated well from first to last it was Columbus. He had his faults. Let others depict them. But a greater soul the centuries have not produced. This continent ought to have been called Columbia, after the hero who discovered it, or Isabelliana, after the queen who furnished the means for the expedition. No. The world did not do him justice while he was alive, and why should it be expected to do him justice after he was dead? Columbus in a dungeon! What a thought! Columbus in irons? What a spectacle!

The wife of Robert Murray, after whom Murray hill, New York, was named, never has received proper credit for detaining at a very rich luncheon the officer of the opposing army until Washington and his army could escape. Mrs. Murray saved American independence. How the wrong men and the wrong women get credit that does not belong to them, while God's heroes and God's heroines go ungarlanded! You have heard of the brave words of dying chieftains, but you probably never heard of what a private soldier said, fallen at Resaca and bleeding under a shell wound in his mouth, and who, though suffering dreadfully from thirst, when a cup of water was offered him declined to drink, saying, "My mouth is all bloody, sir, and it might make the tin cup bad for others!"

The world knows nothing of the bravest words and the bravest deeds. In one of the last letters which Columbus sent to his son, he wrote this lamentation: "I receive nothing of the revenue due me. I live by borrowing. Little have I profited by twenty years of service with such toils and perils, since at present I do not own a roof in Spain. If I desire to eat or sleep, I have no recourse but the inn, and for the most times have not wherewithal to pay my bill."

Be not surprised, my hearer, if you suffer injustice. You are in the best of company—the men and women who wrought mightily for God and the world's improvement, and got for it chiefly misrepresentation and abuse while they lived, although afterward they may have had a long row of carriages at the obsequies and a gilt edged set of resolutions unanimously adopted for the consolation of the bereft household. Do your full duty, expecting no appreciation in this world, but full reward in the world to come.

And now, while I am thinking of this illustrious ship captain of Genoa, let me bespeak higher appreciation for the ship captains now in service, many of them this moment on the sea, the lives of tens of thousands of passengers in their keeping. What an awful responsibility is theirs! They go out through the Narrows or start from Queenstown or Southampton or Glasgow not knowing what cyclone or collisions or midnight perils are waiting for them. It requires bravery to face an army of men, but far more bravery to face an army of Atlantic surges led on by hurricanes.

A more stupendous scene is not to be witnessed than that of a ship captain walking the bridge of a steamer in the midst of a cyclone. Remember those heroes in your prayers, and when worn out in the service, and they have to command inferior craft or return to the land and go out of service, do them full honor for what they once were. Let the ship companies award them pensions worthy of what they endured until they start on their last voyage from this world to the next.

Aye, that voyage we must all take, landsmen as well as seafarers. Let us be sure that we have the right pilot, and the right chart, and the right captain, and that we start in the right direction. It will be to each of us who love the Lord a voyage more wonderful for discovery than that which Columbus took, for after all we have heard about that other world we know not where it is or how it looks, and it will be as new as San Salvador was to the glorious captain of the Santa Maria. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." May the light from that golden beach flash on the darkness, and we be able to step ashore amid groves and orchards and aromas such as this world's atmosphere never ripened or breathed!

Aye, fellow mariners, over the rough sea of this life, through the fogs and mists of earth, see you not already the outline of the better country? Land ahead! Land ahead! Nearer and nearer we come to heavenly wharfage. Throw out the planks and step ashore into the arms of your kindred, who have been waiting and watching for the hour of your disembarkation. Through the rich grace of Christ, our Lord, may we all have such blissful arrival!

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