GATE OF CARBUNCLE.

IT COMES BEFORE THE GATE OF PEARL.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Shows How Earthly Trial Comes Before Heavenly Satisfaction—A Sermon Appropriate to Individual and National Circumstances.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 27.—From a neglected text and one to most people unknown Rev. Dr. Talmage this morning produces a sermon appropriate to individual and national circumstances. The subject was "Gates of Carbuncle," the text being Isaiah liv, 12, "And I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles."

Perhaps because a human disease of most painful and ofttimes fatal character is named after it the church and the world have never done justice to that intense and all suggestive precious stone, the carbuncle. The pearl that Christ picked up to illustrate his sermon, and the jasper and the sapphire and the amethyst which the apocalyptic vision masoned into the wall of heaven have had proper recognition, but this, in all the ages, is the first sermon on the carbuncle.

This precious stone is found in the East Indies, in color is an intense scarlet, and held up between your eye and the sun it is a burning coal. The poet puts it into rhythm as he writes:

Like to the burning coal whence comes its name,
Among the Greeks as Anthrax known to fame.

God sets it high up in Bible crystallography. He cuts it with a divine chisel, shapes it with a precise geometry and kindles its fire into an almost supernatural flame of beauty. Its law of symmetry, its law of zones, its law of parallelism, something to excite the amazement of the scientist, chime the cantos of the poet and arouse the adoration of the Christian. No one but the infinite God could fashion a carbuncle as large as your thumb nail, and as if to make all ages appreciate this precious stone he ordered it set in the first row of the high priest's breastplate in olden time and higher up than the onyx and the emerald and the diamond, and in Ezekiel's prophecies concerning the splendors of the Tyrian court the carbuncle is mentioned, the brilliancies of the walls and of the tesselated floors suggested by the Bible sentence, "Thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." But in my text it is not a solitary specimen that I hand you, as the keeper of a museum might take down from the shelf a precious stone and allow you to examine it, nor is it the panel of a door that you might stand and study for its unique carvings or bronzed traceries, but there is a whole gate of it lifted before our admiring and astounded vision; aye, two gates of it; aye, many gates of it, "I will make thy gates of carbuncles." What gates? Gates of the church. Gates of anything worth possessing. Gates of successful enterprise. Gates of salvation. Gates of national achievement. Isaiah, who wrote this text, wrote also all that about Christ "as the lamb to the slaughter," and spoke of Christ as saying, "I have trod the wine press alone," and wrote, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" And do you think that Isaiah in my text merely happened to represent the gates as red gates, as carmine gates, as gates of carbuncle? No. He means that it is through atonement, through blood red struggle, through agonies, we get into anything worth getting into.

Heaven's gates may well be made of pearl, a bright, pellucid, cheerful crystallization, because all the struggles are over and there is beyond those gates nothing but raptures and cantata and triumphal procession and everlasting holiday and kiss of reunion, and so the 12 gates are 12 pearls and could be nothing else than pearls. But Christ hoisted the gates of pardon in his own blood, and the marks of eight fingers and two thumbs are on each gate, and as he lifted the gate it leaned against his forehead and took from it a crimson impress, and all those gates are deeply dyed, and Isaiah was right when he spoke of those gates as gates of carbuncle.

Suffering For Others.

What an odd thing it is, think some, this idea of vicarious suffering or suffering for others. Not at all. The world has seen vicarious suffering millions of times before Christ came and demonstrated it on a scale that eclipsed all that went before and all that shall come after. Rachel lived only long enough after the birth of her son to give him a name. In faint whisper she said, "Call him Ben-oni," which means "son of my pain," and all modern travelers on the road from Jerusalem to Bethel uncover their heads and stand reverently at the tomb of Rachel who died for her boy. But in all ages how many mothers die for their children, and in many cases grown up children, who by recreancy stab clear through the mother's heart. Suffering for others? Why, the world is full of it. "Jump!" said the engineer to the fireman on the locomotive. "One of us is enough to die. Jump!" And so the engineer died at his post, trying to save the train. When this summer the two trains crashed into each other near Atlantic City, among the 47 who lost their lives the engineer was found dead with one hand on the throttle of the locomotive and the other on the brake. Aye, there are hundreds here today suffering for others. You know and God knows that it is vicarious sacrifice. But on one limestone hill about twice the height of this church, five minutes' walk from the gates of Jerusalem, was the sublimest case of suffering for others that the world ever saw or ever will see. Christ the victim, human and satanic malevolence the executioner, the whole human race having an overwhelming interest in the spectacle. To open a way for us sinful men and sinful women into glorious pardon and high hope and eternal exaltation, Christ, with hand dripping with the rush of opened arteries, swung back the gate, and behold! it is a red gate, a gate of deepest hue, a gate of carbuncle.

What is true in spirituals is true in temporals. There are young men and older men who hope, through the right settlement of this acrid controversy between silver and gold, or the bimetallic quarrel, that it will become easy to make a living. That time will never come. It never has been easy to make a living. The men who have it very easy now went through hardships and self denials to which most young men would never consent. Unless they got it by inheritance you cannot mention 20 men who have come to honorable fortune that did not fight their way inch by inch and against fearful odds that again and again almost destroyed them. For some good reason God has arranged it for all the centuries that the only way for most people to get a livelihood for themselves and their families is with both hands and all the allied forces of body, mind and soul to push back and push open the red gate, the gate of carbuncle. For the benefit of all young men, if I had the time, I would call the roll of those who overcame obstacle. How many of the mighty men who went one way on Pennsylvania avenue and reached the United States senate or walked the other way on Pennsylvania avenue and reached the White House did not have to climb over political obloquy? Not one. How much scorn and scoff and brutal attack did Horace Mann endure between the time when he first began to fight for a better common school system in Massachusetts and the day when a statue in honor of him was placed on the steps of the statehouse overlooking the Commons?

Read the biography of Robert Hall, the Baptist preacher, who, though he had been pronounced a dunce at school, lived to thrill the world with his Christian eloquence, and of George Peabody, who never owned a carriage and denied himself all luxuries that he might while living and after death, through last will and testament, devote his uncounted millions to the education of the poor people in England and America, and of Bishop Janes, who in boyhood worked his passage from Ireland to America and became the joy of Methodism and a blessing to the race. Go to the biographical alcove in city, state or national library and find at least every other book an illustration of overcome obstacle and of carmine gate that had to be forced open.

Living Gates.

What is true of individuals is true of nations. Was it a mild spring morning when the pilgrim fathers landed on Plymouth rock and did they come in a gilded yacht, gay streamers flying? No. It was in cold December, and from a ship in which one would not want to cross the Hudson or the Potomac river. Scalping knives all ready to receive them, they landed, their only welcome the Indian warwhoop. Red men on the beach. Red men in the forest. Red men on the mountains. Red men in the valleys. Living gates of red men. Gates of carbuncle.

Aboriginal hostility pushed back, surely now our forefathers will have nothing to do but to take easy possession of the fairest continent under the sun. The skies so genial, the soil so fertile, the rivers so populous with finny life, the acreage so immense, there will be nothing to do but eat, drink and be merry. No. The most powerful nation, by army and navy, sounded its protest across 3,000 miles of water. Then came Lexington, and Bunker Hill, and Monmouth, and Long Island battles, and Valley Forge, and Yorktown, and starvation, and widowhood, and orphanage, and the 13 colonies went through sufferings which the historian has attempted to put upon paper and the artist to put upon canvas, but all in vain. Engraver's knife, and reporter's skill, and telegraphic wire, and daily press, which have made us acquainted with the horrors of modern battlefield, had not yet begun their vigilance, and the story of the American Revolution has never been told and never will be told. It did not take much ink to sign the Declaration of Independence, but it took a terrific amount of blood to maintain it. It was an awful gate of opposition that the men and women—and the women as much as the men—pushed back. It was a gate of self sacrifice. It was a gate of blood. It was a gate of carbuncle.

Red Letter Days.

We are not indebted to history for our knowledge of the greatest of national crises. Many of us remember it, and fathers and mothers now living had better keep telling that story to their children, so that instead of their being dependent upon cold type and obliged to say, "On such a page of such a book you can read that," will they rather be able to say: "My father told me so," "My mother told me so." Men and women who vividly remember 1861, and 1862, and 1863, and 1864, be yourselves the historians, telling it, not with pen, but with living tongue and voice and gesture. That is the great use of Memorial decoration day, for the calla lilies on the grave tops soon become breathless of perfume, and in a week turn to dust like unto that which lies beneath them. But the story of courage and self sacrifice and patriotism told on platforms and in households and by the roadside and in churches and in cemeteries by that annual recital will be kept fresh in the memory of generations as long as our American institutions are worthy of preservation. Long after you are dead your children will be able to say, with the psalmist, "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days in the times of old." But what a time it was. Four years of homesickness. Four years of brotherly and sisterly estrangement. Four years of martyrdom. Four years of massacre. Put them in a long line, the conflagration of cities, and see them light up a whole continent. Put them in long rows, the hospitals, making a vast metropolis of pain and paroxysm. Gather them in one vast assemblage, the millions of bereft from the St. Lawrence to the gulf, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific beaches. Put the tears into lakes, and the blood into rivers, and the shrieks into whirlwinds. During those four years many good and wise men at the north and south saw nothing ahead but annihilation. With such a national debt we could never meet our obligations. With such mortal antipathies northern and southern men could never come into amity. Representatives of Louisiana and Georgia and the Carolinas could never again sit side by side with the representatives of Maine, Massachusetts and New York at the national capital.

Lord John Russell had declared that we were "a bubble bursting nationality," and it had come true. The nations of Europe had gathered with very resigned spirit at the funeral of our American republic. They had tolled the bells on parliaments and reichstags and lowered their flags at half mast, and even the lion on the other side of the sea had whined for the dead eagle on this side. The deep grave had been dug, and beside Babylon, and Thebes, and Tyre, and other dead nations of the past our dead republic was to be buried. The epitaph was all ready: "Here lies the American republic. Born at Philadelphia, July 4, 1776. Killed at Bull Run July 21, 1861. Aged 85 years and 17 days. Peace to its ashes." But before the obsequies had quite closed there was an interruption of the ceremonies, and our dead nation rose from its mortuary surroundings. God had made for it a special resurrection day, and cried: "Come forth, thou republic of Washington, and John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry, and John Hancock, and Daniel Webster, and S. S. Prentiss, and Henry Clay. Come forth!" And she came forth, to be stronger than she had ever been. Her mightiest prosperities have come since that time. Who would want to push back this country to what it was in 1860 or 1850? But, oh, what a high gate, what a strong gate, she had to push back before she could make one step in advance! Gate of flame! See Norfolk navy yard, and Columbia, and Chambersburg, and Charleston on fire! Gate of bayonets! See glittering rifles and carbines flash from the Susquehanna and the James to the Mississippi and the Arkansas! Gate of heavy artillery, making the mountains of Tennessee and Kentucky and Virginia tremble as though the earth itself were struggling in its last agony. The gate was so fiery and so red that I can think of nothing more appropriate than to take the suggestion of Isaiah in the text and call it a gate of carbuncles.

God Save the Nation.

This country has been for the most part of its history passing through crises, and after each crisis was better off than before it entered it, and now we are at another crisis. We are told on one hand that if gold is kept as a standard and silver is not elevated confidence will be restored, and this nation will rise triumphant from all the financial misfortunes that have been afflicting us. On the other hand, we are told that if the free coinage of silver is allowed all the wheels of business will revolve, the poor man will have a better chance, and all our industries will begin to hum and roar. During the last six presidential elections I have been urged to enter the political arena, but I never have and never will turn the pulpit in which I preach into a political stump. Every minister must do as he feels called to do, and I will not criticise him for doing what he considers his duty, but all the political harangues from pulpits from now until the 3d of November will not in all the United States change one vote, but will leave many ears stopped against anything that such clergymen may utter the rest of their lives. As a general rule, the laymen of churches understand politics better than the clergy, because they (the laymen) study politics more than the clergy and have better opportunity of being intelligent on those subjects. But good morals, honesty, loyalty, Christian patriotism and the Ten Commandments—these we must preach. God says distinctly in the Bible, "The silver and the gold are mine," and he will settle the controversy between those two metals. If ever this country needed the divine rescue it needs it now. Never within my memory have so many people literally starved to death as in the past few months. Have you noticed in the newspapers how many men and women here and there have been found dead, the post mortem examination stating that the cause of death was hunger?

There is not a day that we do not hear the crash of some great commercial establishment, and as a consequence many people are thrown out of employment. Among what we considered comfortable homes have come privation and close calculation and an economy that kills. Millions of people who say nothing about it are at this moment at their wits' end. There are millions of people who do not want charity, but want work. The cry has gone up to the ears of the "Lord of Sabaoth," and the prayer will be heard and relief will come. If we have nothing better to depend on than American politics, relief will never come. Whoever is elected to the presidency, the wheels of government turn so slowly, and a caucus in yonder white building on the hill may tie the hands of any president. Now, though we who live in the District of Columbia cannot vote, we can pray, and my prayer day and night shall be: "O God, hear the cry of the souls from under the altar! Thou who has brought the wheat and corn of this season to such magnitude of supply, give food to man and beast. Thou who hadst not where to lay thy head, pity the shelterless. Thou who has brought to perfection the cotton of the south and the flax of the north, clothe the naked. Thou who hast filled the mine with coal, give fuel to the shivering. Bring bread to the body, intelligence to the mind, and salvation to the soul of all the people! God save the nation!"

But we must admit it is a hard gate to push back. Millions of thin hands have pushed at it without making it swing on its hard hinges. It is a gate made out of empty flour barrels, and cold fire grates, and worn out apparel, and cheerless homes, and unmedicated sickness, and ghastliness, and horror. It is a gate of struggle. A gate of penury. A gate of wan. A gate of disappointment. A red gate, or what Isaiah would have called a gate of carbuncles.

A Life of Struggle.

Now, as I have already suggested, as there are obstacles in all our paths, we will be happier if we consent to have our life a struggle. I do not know any one to whom it is not a struggle. Louis XIV thought he had everything fixed just right and fixed to stay, and so he had the great clock at Bordeaux made. The hours of that clock were struck by figures in bronze representing the kings of Europe, and at a certain time of day William III of England and other kings were made to come out and bow to Louis XIV. But the clock got out of order one day and just the opposite of what was expected occurred; as the clock struck a certain hour Louis XIV was thrown to the feet of William III. And so the clock of destiny brings many surprises, and those go down that you expected to stand, and at the foot of disaster most regal conditions tumble. In all styles of life there come disappointment and struggle. God has for some good reason arranged it so. If it is not poverty, it is sickness If it is not sickness, it is persecution. If it is not persecution, it is contest with some evil appetite. If it is not some evil appetite, it is bereavement. If it is not one thing, it is another. Do not get soured and cross and think your case is peculiar. You are just like the rest of us. You will have to take the bitter draft whether it be handed to you in golden chalice or pewter mug. A man who has a thousand dollars a year income sleeps sounder and has a better appetite than the man who has five millions. If our life were not a struggle, we would never consent to get out of this world, and we would want to stay here, and so block up the way of the advancing generations. By the time that a man gets to be 70 years of age, and sometimes by the time he gets to be 50 years of age, he says, "I have had enough of this, and when the Lord wills it I am ready to emigrate to a country where there are no taxes, and the silver of the trumpet put to one's lips has no quarrel with the gold of the pavement under his feet." We have in this world more opportunity to cultivate patience than to cultivate any other grace. Let that grace be strengthened in the royal gymnasium of obstacle and opposition, and by the help of God, having overcome our own hindrances and worriments, let us go forth to help others whose struggle is greater than our own.

A Story.

A friend told me the other day of a shoemaker in a Russian city whose bench was in the basement of a building and so far underground that he could see only the feet of those who went by on the sidewalk. Seated on his bench, he often looked up, and there went the swift and skipping feet of children, and then the slow and uniform step of the aged, and then feet with shoes old and worn out, and then crippled feet, and he resolved he would do a kindness to each one who needed it. So when the foot with the old and worn out shoe was passing, he would hail it and make for it a comfortable covering, for he had the hammer, and the pegs, and the shoe lasts, and the lap stone, and the leather to do it. And when he saw the invalid foot pass, he would hail it and go out and offer medicine and crutch and helpfulness. And when he saw the aged foot pass he hailed it and told the old man of heaven, where he would be young again. When he saw the foot of childhood pass on the sidewalk, he would go out with good advice and a laugh that seemed like an echo of the child's laugh. Well, time went on, and as the shoemaker's wants were very few he worked but little for himself and most of the time for others, and in the long evenings, when he could not so well see the feet passing on the sidewalk, he would make shoes of all sizes and stand them on a shelf, ready for feet that would pass in the daytime. Of course, as the years went on, under this process the shoemaker became more and more Christian until one day he said to himself: "I wish among all those feet passing up there on the sidewalk I could see the feet of the dear Christ passing. Oh, if I could only see his feet go by I would know them because they are scarred feet!" That night the shoemaker dreamed, and in the dream he saw the glorious Christ, and he said, "O Christ, I have been waiting for thee to pass on the sidewalk, and I have seen lame feet, and wounded feet, and aged feet, and poor feet, but in vain have I looked for thy scarred feet." And Christ said to the shoemaker: "Man, I did pass on the sidewalk, and you did see my feet, and you did come out and hail me, and bless me, and help me. You thought it was the foot of a poor old man that went shuffling by; that was my foot. You thought it was the foot of a soldier that went limping past; that was my foot. You thought that shoeless foot was the foot of a beggar; that was my foot. The shoes, the clothing, the medicines, the cheering words that you gave to them you gave to your Lord. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto me.'" My hearers, with the humble spirit of that Russian mechanic, let us go forth and help others. Having shoved back the carbuncle gate for yourself to pass in and pass on and pass up, lend a hand to others, that they also may get through the red gate, and pass in, and pass on, and pass up.

Before Gate of Pearl.

But mark well and underscore with heavy dashes of the pen the order of the gates. Gate of carbuncle before gate of pearl. Isaiah the prince saw the one gate centuries before St. John the exile saw the other. The one you must push open. The other stands open. Gate of a Saviour's atonement before the gate of divine pardon. Gate of poverty before gate of affluence. Gate of earthly trial before gate of heavenly satisfaction. Through much tribulation you enter the kingdom of God if you ever enter it at all. But heaven will not be so much of a heaven to those who had everything in this world. A man who had everything in this world enters heaven, and the welcoming angel appoints such a newly arrived soul to a mansion, and says: "Go in and live there. That mansion is yours forever." That man thinks to himself, "Why, I have for many years lived in a mansion; a mansion is no novelty to me." The welcoming angel appoints some one prospered of earth to the honors of heaven, the coronets and thrones. The soul thinks to itself, "I had more honors on earth than I could appreciate, and crowns are heavy things to wear, anyhow." The welcoming angel appoints some prospered soul of earth to a fine landscape in the heavenly country and says, "Walk there and enjoy yourself." The soul thinks to itself, "The place I owned on the Hudson" or "the castle I had on the Rhine was almost as picturesque, and then I cannot see the sunset on the river, for it is here everlasting day and the sun never sets." The welcoming angel says to some newly arrived soul, "Listen now to the music; the orchestra of heaven is about to render one of the best oratorios." The soul would think: "Why, I have been hearing the best music for 30 years on earth. Almost every winter I heard in the Academy of Music the 'Creation,' the 'Messiah,' and 'Jephthah.' I have heard all the great living prima donnas and some who are dead." Let the welcoming angel then say to a prospered soul of earth, "Go now and rest; this is the everlasting rest." "Why," the soul would think, "I am not tired; why do I want rest? I have not done a stroke of work for the last 20 years. I spent my winters in Florida and my summers in the Adirondacks, and I am not in need of rest."

The Closing Picture.

My hearers, heaven will not be so much of a heaven for those who had no

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