THE SWEET INFLUENCES.

Dr. Talmage Says We Are Affected for Good or Evil By Forces That We Seldom Recognize.

The Importance of Good Actions—God Helps Us to Live Right.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.—In this discourse Dr. Talmage demonstrates that we are affected by forces that we seldom recognize and enlarges upon human accountability. The text is Job xxxviii, 31, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?"

What is the meaning of that question which God put to Job? Have we all our lives been reading it, and are most of us ignorant of its beauty and power and practical suggestiveness? A meaningless passage of Scripture many thought it to be, but the telescopes were busy age after age, and astronomical observations kept on questioning the skies until the meaning of my text comes out lustrously. The Pleiades is a constellation of seven stars appearing to the naked eye, but scientific instruments reveal more than 400 properly belonging to the group. Alcyone is the name of the brightest star of that group called the Pleiades. A Russian astronomer observed that Alcyone is the centre of gravitation of our solar system. Hugh Macmillan says that the sun and its planets wheel around that centre at the rate of 422,000 miles a day in an orbit which it will take 19,000,000 years to complete. The Pleiades appear in the springtime and are associated with flowers and genial warmth and good weather. The navigation of the Mediterranean was from May to November, the rising and the setting of the Pleiades. The priests of Belus noticed that rising and setting 2000 years before Christ.

Now, the glorious meaning of my text is plain as well as radiant. To give Job the beautiful grace of humility God asked him, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?" Have you any power over the laws of gravitation? Can you modify or change an influence wielded by a star more than 400,000 miles away? Can you control the winds of the springtime? Can you call out the flowers? How little you know compared with omniscience? How little you can do compared with omnipotence!

The probability is that Job had been tempted to arrogance by his vast attainments. He was a metallurgist, a zoologist, a poet, and shows by his writings he had knowledge of hunting, of music, of husbandry, of medicine, of mining, of astronomy and perhaps was so far ahead of the scholars and scientists of his time that he may have been somewhat puffed up; hence this interrogation of my text. And there is nothing that so soon takes down human pride as an interrogation point rightly thrust. Christ used it mightily. Paul mounted the parapet of his great arguments with such a battery. Men of the world understand it. Demosthenes began his speech to the crown and Cicero his oration against Catiline and Lord Chatham his most famous orations with a question. The empire of ignorance is so much vaster than the empire of knowledge that after the most learned and elaborate disquisition upon any subject of sociology or theology the plainest man may ask a question that will make the wisest speechless. After the profoundest assault upon Christianity the humblest disciple may make an inquiry that would silence a Voltaire.

Called upon, as we all are at times, to defend our holy religion, instead of argument that can always be answered by argument let us try the power of interrogation. We ought to be loaded with at least half a dozen questions and always ready, and when Christianity is assailed, and we are told there is nothing in it and there is no God and there never was a miracle and that the Scriptures are unreasonable and cruel and that there never will be a judgment day, take out of your portable armory of interrogation something like this: What makes the condition of woman in Christian lands better than in heathen lands? Do you think it would be kind in God to turn the human race into a world without any written revelation to explain and encourage and elevate and save? And if a revelation was made, which do you prefer—the Zenda-Vesta of the Persian or the Confucian writings of the Chinese or the Koran of Mohammed or our Bible?

If Christ is not a divine being, what did He mean when He said, "Before Abram was, I am?" If the Bible is a bad book, what are the evil results of reading it? Did you see any degrading influence of the book in your father or mother or sister who used to read it?

Do you not think that a judgment day is necessary in order to explain and fix up things that were never explained or fixed up? If our religion is illogical and an imposition upon human credulity, why were Herschel and Washington and Gladstone and William McKinley its advocates?

How did it happen that our religion furnished the theme for the greatest poem ever written, "Paradise Lost," and to the painters their greatest themes in the "Adoration of the Magi," "The Transfiguration," "The Last Supper," "The Crucifixion," "The Entombment," "The Last Judgment," and that all the schools of painting put forth their utmost genius in presenting "The Madonna?"

Why was it that William Shakespeare after amazing the world as he will amaze the centuries with the splendor and power of "The Merchant of Venice," and "Coriolanus," and "Richard III.," and "King Lear," and "Othello," and "Macbeth," and "Hamlet" wrote with his own hand his last will and testament, beginning it with the words: "In the name of God, amen! I, William Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-Avon, in the County of Warwick, in perfect health and memory (God be praised!) do make and ordain this my last will and testament, through the only merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting and my body to the earth whereof it is made?" Had Shakespeare lost his reason when he wrote his faith in Christ and the great atonement? Put your antagonist a few questions like that, and you will find him excusing himself for an engagement he must meet immediately.

These words also recognize far-reaching influences. Job probably had no adequate idea of the distance of the worlds mentioned from our world, but he knew them to be far off, and we, who have had the advantage of modern sidereal investigation, ought to be still more impressed than was Job with the question of the text, as it puts before us the fact that worlds hundreds of thousands of miles distant have a grip on our world. There are sweet influences which hold us from afar. There may have been in our ancestral line perhaps 200 years ago some consecrated man or woman who has held over all the generations since an influence for good which we have no power to realize, and we in turn by our virtue or vice may influence those who shall live 200 years from now. Moral gravitation is as powerful as material gravitation, and if, as my text teaches and science confirms, the Pleiades, which are millions of miles from our earth, influence the earth we ought to be impressed with how we may be influenced by others far away back and how we may influence others far down the future. That rill away up among the Alleghanies, so thin you think it will hardly find its way down the rocks, becomes the mighty Ohio, rolling into the Mississippi and rolling into the sea. That word you utter, that deed you do, may augment itself as the years go by until rivers cease to roll and the ocean itself shall be dried up in the burning of the world. Paul, who was all the time saying important things, said nothing more startlingly suggestive than when he declared, "None of us liveth or dieth to himself." Words, thoughts, actions, have an eternity of flight.

As Job could not bind the sweet influences of the Seven Stars, as they were called, so we cannot arrest or turn aside the good projected long ago. Those influences were started centuries before our cradle was rocked and will reign centuries after our graves are dug. Oh, it is a tremendous thing to live! God help us to live aright.

Astronomers can easily locate the Pleiades. They will take you into their observatories on a clear night and aim their revealing instrument toward the part in the heavens where those seven stars have their habitude, and they will point to the constellation Taurus, and you can see for yourself. But it is impossible to point to influences far back that have affected our character and will affect our destiny. We know the influences near by—paternal, maternal, conjugal—but by the time we have gone back two generations, or, at most, three, our investigations falter and fail. Through the modern, interesting habit of searching back to find the ancestral tree we may find a long list of names, but they are only names. The consecration or abandonment of some one 200 years ago was not recorded. It would not be so important if you and I, by our good or bad behavior, blessed or blasted only those immediately around us, but our goodness or our badness will reach as far as the strongest ray of Alcyone—yea, across the eternity. Under this consideration, what do you think of those who give themselves up to frivolity or idleness and throw away fifty years of their existence as though they were shells or pebbles or pods instead of embyro eternities?

I suppose one of the greatest surprises of the next world will be to see what wide, far-reaching influence for good or evil we have all exerted. I am speaking of ourselves, who are only ordinary people. But who can fully appreciate the far-reaching good done by men of wealth in Great Britain for the working classes—Mr. Lister, of Bradford; Edward Akroyd, of Halifax; Thomas Sikes, of Huddersfield; Joseph Wentworth, and Josiah Mason, and Sir Titus Salt? This last great soul, with his vast wealth, provided 756 houses at cheap rent for 3000 working people, and chapel and cricket ground and croquet lawn and concert hall and savings bank, where they might deposit some of their earnings, and life insurance for those who looked further ahead, and bathhouses and parks and museums and lecture halls with philosophical apparatus, the generous example of those men of a previous generation being copied in many places in Canada and the United States, making life, which would otherwise be a prolonged drudgery, an inspiration and a joy.

If something appears against us, they say, "Wait till I hear the other side." If disaster shall befall us, we know from whom would come the first condolence. Family friends, church friends, business friends, lifelong friends. In our heart of hearts we cherish them.

When the heirs of a vast estate in England wished to establish their claim to property worth $100,000,000 they offered a reward of $500 for the recovery of an old Bible, the family record of which contained the evidence requisite. But any Bible, new or old, can help us to a vaster inheritance than the one spoken of, one that never fades away.

The sweet influences of the heavenly world, which many wise men thought for a long while was Alcyone, the centre of the constellation of the Pleiades—world of our future residence, as we hope; world of chorus and illumination; world of reunion; world where we shall be everlastingly complete; world where our old faculties will be itensified and quickened and new faculties implanted; world of high association with Christ, through whose grace we got there at all, and apostles and poets, Habakkuk, and St. John of Patmos, and Edward Young, his "Night Thoughts" turned into eternal day; and Horatius Bonar of modern hymnology, and Hannah More, and Mrs. Hemans, and Mrs. Sigourney, who struck their harps till nations listened; and David, the victor over Goliath with what seemed insufficient weapons; and Joshua of the prolonged day in Gibeon, and Havelock, the evangelist hero, and those thousands of men of the sword who fought on the right side. What company to move in! What guests to entertain! What personages to visit! What choirs to chant! What banquets with lifted chalice filled with "the new wine of the kingdom!" What victories to celebrate!

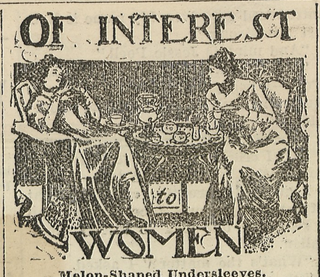
The stories of that world and its holy hilarities come in upon our souls sometimes in song, sometimes in sermon, sometimes in hours of solitary reflection, and they are, to use the words of my text, sweet influences. But there is one star that affects us more with its sweet influences than the centre star, the Alcyone of the Pleiades, and that is what one Bible author calls the Star of Jacob and another Bible author calls the Morning Star. Of all the sweet influences that have ever touched our earth those that radiate from Christ are the sweetest. Born an Asiatic villager, in a mechanic's home, living more among hammers and saws and planes than among books, yet at twelve years of age confounding robed ecclesiastics and starting out a mission under which those born without optic nerve took in the clear daylight and those afflicted with unresponsive tympanum were made to hear and those almost doubled up with deformities were straightened into graceful poise and the leprous became rubicund and the widow's only son exchanged the bier on which he lay lifeless for the arms of his overjoyed mother and pronouncing nine benedictions on the Mount of Beatitudes and doing deeds and speaking words which are filling the centuries with sweet influences.

Christ started every ambulance, kindled every electric ray, spread every soft hospital pillow and introduced all the alleviations and pacifications and rescues and mercies of all time.

He was the loveliest being that ever trod our earth—more beauty in His eyes, more tenderness in His manner, more gentleness in His footsteps, more music in His voice, more dignity in His brow, more gracefulness in the locks that rolled upon His shoulders, more compassion in His soul.

Sweet influences of the Holy Ghost, with all His transforming and comforting and emancipating power. When that power is fully felt there will be no more sins to pardon, and no more errors to correct, and no more sorrows to comfort, and no more bondage to break. But as the old-time ship captains watched the rising of the Pleiades for safe navigation and set sail in Mediterranean waters, but were sure to get back into port before the constellation Orion came into sight—the season of cyclone and hurricane—so there is a time to sail for heaven, and that is while the sweet influences are upon us and before the storms overtake and delay. Open all your soul to the light and warmth and comfort and inspiration of that gospel which has already peopled heaven with millions of the ransomed and is helping other millions to that glorious destination. Do not postpone the things of God and eternity until the storms of life swoop and the agitations of a great future are upon us. Do not dare wait until Orion takes the place of the Pleiades. Weigh anchor now and with chart unrolled and pilot on board head for the reunions and raptures that await all the souls forgiven. "And they need no candle, neither light nor the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever."

OF INTEREST TO WOMEN



Melon-Shaped Undersleeves.

Crepe de chine is frequently used to make undersleeves for winter gowns, because lace or mousseline undersleeves would quickly soil if worn under a dark jacket. The yoke of the gown would then be also made of crepe de chine, although it would be treated with applications of lace or jet or of anything else desired. The popular shape at present is the neat "melon" undersleeves, with the minimum of flare, and this is drawn in above and below to keep the line of the arm trim and trig.

Skirts Are Longer.

Dress skirts are longer than ever before, some of the loveliest garden party gowns trailing over the grass in undulating folds, while the upper portion fits like a glove. Women find the clinging skirt with bouffant foot trimming far too becoming to be abandoned for something that is not nearly so graceful. Pompadour gauzes, organdies and soft muslins are made with long, serpentine trains, which are finished with innumerable little ruches and ruffles gathered or pleated. There is no stiffening whatever around the bottom of fashionable skirts, simply ruffles and flounces to give the desired flare.

Girls of the West and East Contrasted.

Place the New Yorker beside a typical Western girl—one, say, from Kansas—clothe them in identical garments and the difference becomes even more pronounced. They may be equally cultured, equally intellectual, equally charming, but they are not alike. The Westerner is apt to be bigger of bone; her eyes will be more widely open; she will look at the world with franker gaze; she will be slightly more independent or "aggressive," more used to "doing herself." She will take the rough manners of the hurrying men as a matter of course. No frown will pucker her pretty eyebrows when she is jostled. She walks with less lightness and more sturdiness. She outbreathes an air of accepting things as she finds them and making the best of them. In all probability she is the daughter of a man and woman who were among the West's winners. Her parents found life hard, she finds it easy; but the result of their long battle against untamed nature and restricted social conditions is shadowed in her.—Woman's Home Companion.

Stylish Underwear.

At this season we are able to pick up wonderful examples of lingerie. Fashion has declared that we shall spend a fair amount on our petticoats this year. Lawn petticoats in white and pale shades, with a quantity of lace or finest embroidery, are essential to the satisfaction of the woman who prides herself on being thoroughly well turned out.

Of course, nothing beats the daintiness of white cambric. Lingerie holds first and foremost place in the wardrobe of every self-respecting woman. Good taste and an appreciation of daintiness both indicate the soul of an artist in all matters appertaining to dress. Godliness and virtue are not represented by slovenliness of attire, and there is something very unlovely in the peculiar type of woman who wears silk outer raiment, covering not overclean, uncompromising underwear. And there is no need for it in these days, for dainty lingerie is obtainable at very small cost, and a good needlewoman can make her own.

Of course, on the other hand, we may spend quite a fortune on lingerie de luxe, which is a perfect craze with Parisians and the really smart dresser. A nightgown in a delicate shade of silk, cut by the master hand and showing the most exquisite handwork, with entre deux of priceless lace, represents a considerable outlay.—Washington Star.

Mothers of Geniuses.

In proof of inherited talent, it is said that the mother of Schumann was endowed with great musical ability, and that Chopin received his gift and also his delicate constitution from the maternal side. Gounod's mother was exceedingly fond of both music and painting, while the mother of Spohr was an excellent judge of music and a fine critic without being herself a musician. Milton's letters show tender love and gratitude to his mother, and Raleigh credits to his the politeness of deportment which ever distinguishes him. Goethe pays frequent tribute in his writings to the character and culture of his mother, as does also the poet Wordsworth. Haydn dedicated one of his most famous instrumental compositions to his mother, and Sidney Smith believed that from his came his rare conversational powers and quick repartee. It is well known that Gibbons' mother was a great reader and cultivated the same taste and habit in her son. The mother of Charles Darwin made herself acquainted with all branches of natural history, and entertained a great fondness for animals. This simple record is in evidence that maternal talents and tastes are frequently handed down and traceable in sons as a direct inheritance. It is claimed that the gifts of the father usually descend to the daughters.

Proper Proportions.

In these days of gymnastics and exercising fads it would seem that one ought to have good ideas of perfect proportions, even if they cannot always be attained. It will be a satisfaction, at least, to know just what are the "proper proportions" for which we are striving.

Women who are correctly proportioned, and neither too fat nor too lean, are few in number. It may not be amiss to give some idea of the correct proportion of the features and the body. The head should be one-seventh of the body. The nose, forehead and chin of equal length. The distance between the eyes the length of the eye. The distance from the inner angle of the eye to the dividing line of the lips should measure from two and one-quarter to two and one-half inches.

A woman of five feet should weigh 110 pounds.

A woman of five feet one inch should weigh 115 pounds.

A woman of five feet two inches should weigh 120 pounds.

A woman of five feet three inches should weigh 127 pounds.

A woman of five feet four inches should weigh 134 pounds.

A woman of five feet five inches should weigh 142 pounds.

A woman of five feet six inches should weigh 146 pounds.

A woman of five feet seven inches should weigh 152 pounds.

A woman of five feet eight inches should weigh 160 pounds.

Hair Ornaments.

While here and there hat trimmings and ornaments for the hair raise their heads, "low bridge" is the cry of the hour. Charming things in hair ornaments show this. There is a tendency to circlets, and one very lovely one is of white pearls, with two aigrettes, not standing, but lying almost flat, one to the right and the other to the left from the centre of the front. Black aigrettes are also worn with the several strands of pearls which encircle the coil. These hair ornaments are not made for low styles of coiffure.

* * *

Dainty and becoming is another ornament of flowers, a little circlet of lilies of the valley with a small cluster of small pink roses in the front.

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For half mourning, or the woman who wears violet there is a heavier circlet of violets and chiffon to match, with the flowers and chiffon massed a little more closely at one side of the front.

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Smart in black is another headdress of squares of black jet linked together and finished with two reclining aigrettes in black in the front.

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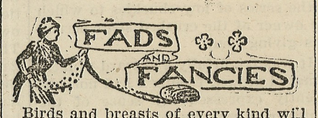
As a rule there seems to be a tendency to things which are sweet and pretty rather than smart this year, and the wreaths of roses and other small flowers are of this nature. But there is more smartness and brilliancy in a spray of big garden lilies with long stamens, the petals marked with dashes of deep pink or red. If a long spray is too much there is a single flower with one of the quaint long buds and a few leaves.—New York Times.



Birds and breasts of every kind will be seen on the winter hats.

Guipure lace in Cluny pattern represents one of the season's novelties.

The desire to "rustle" has all died out. All petticoats and skirt linings are now made of soft-finished silks.

An embroidered white Swiss was very dainty made up over yellow, with stock and belt of yellow satin ribbon.

The newest raglan coats are made three-quarter length and have double shoulder cape. They are strapped with panne velvet matching the cloth or of a darker shade.

White alpaca of fine quality is excellent for petticoats of the much frilled variety. The material launders well and makes an acceptable change from silk and muslin.

Separate skirts in corduroy have, some of them, the seams strapped with a wide band of the corduroy and shaped stitched flounce around the lower edge. Suits are frequently trimmed with bands of cloth the color of the corduroy.

Many cloth and wool costumes have their edges cut in square tabs, which are about an inch apart. The tabs are stitched down on an under band of contrasting color in silk, often dotted in black, steel or silver. The effect is easily obtained by an ordinary dressmaker, yet is decidedly modish.

One of the most effective combinations of green with golf red is in a flannel waist, which has a tucked yoke in the front, the fullness taken in around the waist with more tucks, and the plain space between covered with polka dots, embroidered in green silk. The waist is buttoned in the back with small, flat, green buttons gilt rimmed.

One of the prettiest hats to be seen, and a simple one, is made of brown feathers, the crown covered with the feathers as with a piece of velvet; more feathers nearly encircle the round rim, starting from the centre of the front. These breast-shaped feather pieces are set at intervals with tiny dots of impian feathers and a tiny line of the rich green and blue runs across the rim in the centre where the feathers meet. Inside the rim are twists of velvet in two shades of brown.

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