DOOR OF MERCY.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Says There Will Be Salvation for the Morally Shipwrecked.

Yield Not to the Force of Immoral Gravitation—Helpfulness of Religion.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.—In this discourse Dr. Talmage depicts the struggle of a man who desires liberation from the enthrallment of evil and shows how he may be set free; text, Proverbs xxiii, 35: "When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

With an insight into human nature such as no other man ever had, Solomon in these words is sketching the mental process of a man who has stepped aside from the path of rectitude and would like to return. Wishing for something better, he says: "When shall I awake? When shall I get over this horrible nightmare of iniquity?" But seized upon by uneradicated appetite and pushed down hill by his passions he cries out: "I will seek it yet again. I will try it once more."

About a mile from Princeton, N. J., there is a skating pond. One winter day, when the ice was very thin, a farmer living near by warned the young men of the danger of skating at that time. They all took the warning except one young man. He, in the spirit of bravado, said, "Boys, one round more." He struck out on his skates, the ice broke and his lifeless body was brought up. And in all matters of temptation and allurement it is not a prolongation that is proposed, but only just one more indulgence, just one more sin. Then comes the fatality. Alas, for the one round more! "I will seek it yet again."

Our libraries are adorned with elegant literature addressed to young men, pointing out to them all the dangers and perils of life. Complete maps of the voyage of life—the shoals, the rocks, the quicksands. But suppose a young man is already shipwrecked, suppose he is already off the track, suppose he has already gone astray, how can he get back? That is a question that remains unanswered, and amid all the books of the libraries I find not one word on that subject. To that class of persons I this day address myself.

You compare what you are now with what you were three or four years ago, and are greatly disheartened. You are ready with every passion of your soul to listen to a discussion like this. Be of good cheer! Your best days are yet to come. I offer you the hand of welcome and rescue. I put the silver trumpet of the gospel to my lips and blow one long, loud blast, saying, "Whosoever will, let him come, and let him come now." The church of God is ready to spread a banquet upon your return, and all the hierarchs of heaven fall into line of bannered procession over your redemption.

Years ago, and while yet Albert Barnes was living, I preached in his pulpit one night to the young men of Philadelphia. In the opening of my discourse I said, "O Lord, give me one soul to-night!" At the close of the service Mr. Barnes introduced a young man, saying, "This is the young man you prayed for." But I see now it was a too limited prayer. I offer no such prayer to-day. It must take in a wider sweep. "Lord, give us all these souls to-day for happiness and heaven!"

So far as God may help me I propose to show what are the obstacles to your return, and then how you are to surmount those obstacles. The first difficulty in the way of your return is the force of moral gravitation. Just as there is a natural law which brings down to earth anything you throw into the air, so there is a corresponding moral gravitation. I never shall forget a prayer I heard a young man make in the Young Men's Christian Association of New York. With trembling voice and streaming eyes he said: "O God, Thou knowest how easy it is for me to do wrong and how hard it is for me to do right! God help me!" That man knows not his own heart who has never felt the power of moral gravitation.

In your boyhood you had good associates and bad associates. Which most impressed you? During the last few years you have heard pure anecdotes and impure anecdotes. Which the easiest stuck to your memory? You have had good habits and bad habits. To which did your soul more easily yield? But that moral gravitation may be resisted. Just as you may pick up anything from the earth and hold it in your hand toward heaven, just so, by the power of God's grace, a fallen soul may be lifted toward peace, toward pardon, toward salvation. The force of moral gravitation is in every one of us, but also power in God's grace to overcome that force.

The next thing in the way of your return is the power of evil habit. I know there are those who say it is very easy for them to give up evil habits. I cannot believe them. Here is a man given to intoxication, who knows it is disgracing his family, destroying his property and ruining him body, mind and soul. If that man, being an intelligent man and loving his family, could easily give up that habit, would he not do so? The fact that he does not give it up proves that it is hard to give it up. It is a very easy thing to sail down stream, the tide carrying you with great force, but suppose you turn the boat up stream—is it so easy then to row it? As long as we yield to the evil inclinations in our heart and to our bad habits we are sailing down stream, but the moment we try to turn we put our boat in the rapids just above Niagara and try to row up stream.

A physician tells his patient that he must quit the use of tobacco, as it is destroying his health. The man replies, "I can stop that habit easy enough." He quits the use of the weed. He goes around not knowing what to do with himself. He cannot add up a column of figures; he cannot sleep nights. It seems as if the world had turned upside down. He feels his business is going to ruin. Where he was kind and obliging he is scolding and fretful. The composure that characterized him has given way to a fretful restlessness, and he has become a complete fidget. What power is it that has rolled a wave of woe over the earth and shaken a portent in the heavens? He has quit tobacco. After awhile he says: "I am going to do as I please; the doctor does not understand my case. I am going back to my old habits." And he returns. Everything assumes its usual composure. His business seems to brighten. The world becomes an attractive place to live in. His children, seeing the difference, hail the return of their father's genial disposition. What wave of color has dashed blue into the sky and greenness into the mountain foliage and the glow of sapphire into the sunset? What enchantment has lifted a world of beauty and joy on his soul? He has resumed tobacco.

The fact is we all know in our own experience that habit is a taskmaster. As long as we obey it, it does not chastise us. But let us resist it and we find that we are lashed with scorpion whips and bound with ship cable and thrown into the track of bone breaking Juggernauts.

In Paris there is a sculptured representation of Bacchus, the god of revelry. He is riding on a panther at full leap. Oh, how suggestive! Let every one who is speeding on bad ways understand he is not riding a docile and well broken steed, but that he is riding a monster wild and bloodthirsty and going at a death leap.

I have also to say if a man wants to return from evil practices society repulses him. The prodigal, wishing to return, tries to take some professor of religion by the hand. The professor of religion looks at him, looks at the faded apparel and the marks of dissipation, and instead of giving him a firm grip of the hand offers him the tip end of the longer fingers of the left hand, which is equal to striking a man in the face.

Oh, how few Christian people understand how much gospel there is in a good, honest handshaking! Sometimes when you have left the need of encouragement and some Christian man has taken you heartily by the hand have you not felt thrilling through every fiber of your body, mind and soul an encouragement that was just what you needed?

The prodigal, wishing to get into good society, enters a prayer meeting. Some good man without much sense greets him by saying: "Why are you here? You are about the last person that I expected to see in a prayer meeting. Well, the dying thief was saved, and there is hope for you." You do not know anything about this, unless you have learned that when a man tries to return from evil courses of conduct he runs against repulsions innumerable.

We say of some man, "He lives a block or two from the church, or half a mile from the church." In all our great cities there are men who are 5000 miles from church—vast deserts of indifference between them and the house of God.

The fact is we must keep our respectability though thousands perish. Christ sat with publicans and sinners, but if there come to the house of God a man with marks of dissipation upon him people are almost sure to put up their hands in horror, as much as to say, "Is it not shocking?"

How these dainty, fastidious Christians in all our churches are going to get into heaven I do not know unless they have an especial train of cars cushioned and upholstered, each one a car to himself. They cannot go with the great herd of publicans and sinners.

O ye who curl your lip of scorn on the fallen, I tell you plainly that if you had been surrounded by the same influences instead of sitting to-day amid the cultured and the refined and the Christian you might have been a crouching wretch in stable or ditch covered with filth and abomination!

It is not because we are naturally any better, but because the mercy of God has protected us. Those that are brought up in Christian parentage should not be so hard on the fallen.

I think also that men are often hindered from returning by the fact that churches are anxious about their membership, too anxious about their denominations, and they rush out when they see a man about to give up sin and return to God and ask him how he is going to be baptized, whether by sprinkling or immersion, and what kind of a church he is going to join.

Oh, despise not parental anxiety! The time will come when you will have neither father nor mother, and you will go around the place where they used to watch you and find them gone from the house and gone from the field and gone from the neighborhood. Cry as loud for forgiveness as you may over the mound in the churchyard, they cannot answer. Dead! Dead!

God pity the young man who has brought disgrace on his father's name! God pity the young man who has broken his mother's heart! Better that he had never been born. Better if in the first hour of his life, instead of being laid against the warm bosom of maternal tenderness, he had been coffined and sepulchered.

There is no balm powerful enough to heal the heart of one who has brought parents to a sorrowful grave, and who wanders about through the dismal cemetery rending the air and wringing the hands and crying: "Mother! Mother!" Oh, that to-day, by all the memories of the past and by all the hopes of the future, you would yield your heart to God! May your father's God and your mother's God be your God forever!

This hour the door of mercy swings wide open. Hesitate not a moment. In many a case hesitation is the loss of all. At the corner of a street I saw a tragedy. A young man evidently doubted as to which direction he had better take. His hat was lifted high enough so you could see he had an intelligent forehead. He had a stout chest and a robust development. Splendid young man! Cultured young man! Honored young man! Why did he stop there while so many were going up and down? The fact is that every young man has a good angel and a bad angel contending for the mastery of his spirit, and there were a good angel and a bad angel struggling with that young man's soul at the corner of the street. "Come along with me," said the good angel; "I will take you home. I will spread my wings over your pillow. I will lovingly escort you all through life under supernatural protection. I will bless every cup you drink out of, every couch you rest on, every doorway you enter. I will consecrate your tears when you weep, your sweat when you toil, and at the last I will hand over your grave into the hand of the bright angel of a Christian resurrection. I have been sent of the Lord to be your guardian spirit. Come with me," said the good angel in a voice of unearthly symphony. It was music like that which drops from a lute of heaven when a seraph breathes on it.

"Oh, no," said the bad angel, "come with me. I have something better to offer. The wines I pour are from chalices of bewitching carousal. The dance I lead is over floors tessellated with unrestrained indulgence. There is no God to frown on the temples of sin where I worship. The skies are Italian. The paths I tread are through meadows daisied and primrosed. Come with me."

The young man hesitated at a time when hesitation was ruin, and the bad angel smote the good angel until it departed, spreading wings through the starlight, upward and away until a door swung open in the sky, and forever the wings vanished. That was the turning point in that young man's history, for, the good angel flown, he hesitated no longer, but started on a pathway which is beautiful at the opening, but blasted at the last. The bad angel led the way through gate after gate, and at each gate the road became rougher and the sky more lurid, and what was peculiar, as the gate slammed shut it came to with a jar that indicated it would never open. Past each portal there were a grinding of locks and a shoving of bolts, and the scenery on each side of the road changed from gardens to deserts, and the June air became a cutting December blast, and the bright wings of the bad angel turned to sackcloth, and the fountains that at the start had tossed with wine poured forth bubbling tears of foaming blood. And on the right side of the road there was a serpent, and the man said to the bad angel, "What is that serpent?" And the answer was, "That is the serpent of stinging remorse." On the left side of the road there was a lion, and the man asked the bad angel, "What is that lion?" The answer was, "That is the lion of all devouring despair." A vulture flew through the sky, and the man asked the bad angel, "What is that vulture?" The answer was, "That is the vulture waiting for the carcasses of the slain."

And then the man said to the bad angel, "What does all this mean? I trusted in what you said at the street corner; I trusted it all. Why have you thus deceived me?" Then the last deception fell off the charmer and he said, "I was sent from the pit to destroy your soul. I watched my chance for many a long year. When you hesitated that night at the street corner I gained my triumph. Now you are here. Ha, ha! You are here! Come, now, let us fill the chalice and drink to darkness and woe and death! Hail, hail!"

Oh, young man, will the good angel sent forth by Christ or the bad angel sent forth by sin get the victory over your soul? Their wings are interlocked this moment above you, contending for your soul, as above the Apennines eagle and condor fight in midsky. This hour decides eternal destinies.

OF INTEREST TO WOMEN



Made of Antique Brocade.

Genuine antique Persian brocade is used for the fashionable little wrist bags, with clasps of carved oxidized silver set with coral.

The Ruffled Skirt.

It seems to be impossible to get away from the ruffled skirt. The most decidedly tailor gown makes this concession to grace, and it certainly does add to the beauty. As a rule the ruffles are still shaped circular, and only one is used on a skirt.

The Cleverest Hat.

Just the cleverest hat is in the walking hat shape. The crown and side drapery are of camel's-hair felt in one piece; this shows slender appliques in darker shades of velvet and shaded wing-like pieces of plumage form the sides, tail feathers extended over the back a la Virot.

Jewelry Novelties.

The newest chains are very simple, the gold links small and at wide intervals a few gems are introduced. The tawdry bead chains have never been generally worn and have not a smart appearance. Some of the latest charms are so beautifully and artistically enameled that they are quite costly. A realistic miniature turtle has a gemmed head, and the scent balls in heart and globe shapes are now beautifully jeweled.

The Superior American Women.

After many happy weeks spent in the States I am not in the least surprised that Englishmen should marry American women. They show their good taste—I should do the same were I a man. Nor am I surprised that American women should prefer Englishmen—for the same remark applies. There is a delightful freedom, an air of comradeship coupled with pleasant manners and pretty looks in the American woman which are most attractive. Her hospitality is unbounded, her generosity thoughtful, and she is in every way an all-round good sort.

The American woman is an excellent speaker. It is surprising to hear her oratory at one of her large club luncheons, such as the Sorosis in New York. The club woman is young and handsome, well dressed and pleasing, and she stands up and addresses a couple of hundred women just as easily as she would begin a tete-a-tete across a luncheon table. She is not shy, or if she is she hides it cleverly.

There is no doubt about it the American dame is a great personality; but either she will have to educate her sons to her own level or descend from the pedestal on which she now reigns. Which will it be?—Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, in the London Times.

Work For Nimble Fingers.

With the advent of the first cool days the mind of the housewife instinctively turns to the thought of how she may best add to the cosiness and comfort of her home for the winter months.

There are many finishing touches that one may give that will cost but little, but add greatly to the attractiveness of one's surroundings and to the beauty of a room. The old-time tidy, drape or throw, as it has successively been called, has seen its best days, and in its place the squares of silk or linen or of Rennaissance have appeared.

One of the prettiest table coverers shown for some time is made of a square of dull green linen or denim. Take the plain surface and hem it around the edge with a narrow hem. Add a fringe of cream color mixed with pink and green, selecting a fringe that has a gimp finish at the top. Now take a strip of cretonne of cream colored ground, with bright flowers or geometrical designs. Cut the strips three inches wide and paste them on the square of linen three inches above the edge. Miter the corners. Edge all around with a gimp matching the fringe and sew it firmly in place. bedroom or sitting room. Curtains matching the cloth may be made if the cloth is to be used in a bedroom, and a bed spread may also be used to correspond.

To Be or Not to Be—Short Skirted?

Smart women who stopped in Paris the past summer bent on gathering together a battery of new frocks, were startled by the news that the long trailing skirt is doomed, and that short—quite short—ones are to be the fashion. And yet many women are still skeptical. A round of the tailors and dressmakers is not very satisfactory. One says: "It is true. They are to be short." Another says: "We will wait. It is in the hands of our customers." One dressmaker whose distinguished gowns are wonderful creations, corroborated the rumor. "It is perfectly true that walking dresses are no longer to be trained, but are to be raised two inches from the ground, and that the afternoon toilette is just to touch the ground and no more. Evening dresses are to remain long." And she added that there is to be a new skirt for promenade affairs, particularly well and cunningly shaped, and that, while it is not to be so full as the "housemaid," it will be more so than the sheath skirt, so long popular. With it will be worn a three-quarter coat, which will form a distinct change.

Precisely the opposite opinion to the foregoing was held by a firm of tailors and dressmakers. Their belief is that the rumor has absolutely no foundation in fact. Their models, fresh from Paris, are still fully trained; indeed, at the sides, are longer than ever, and their picturesque three-quarter tailcoats set off by flowing skirts. The effect of the rumor will probably be this, for the present at least — that those who want to wear short skirts will wear them, and help incidentally a great cause, the cause of health, while others will cling to their trailing draperies for many a month to come. The boot and shoe makers are certain to watch the course of this fashion with a keen and feeling interest, for directly short skirts arrive pretty footgear will be more than ever required. Quite certainly ought small toques and hats to accompany the shortened skirt. Should large specimens of picture headgear continue to please, a dreadful repetition of the day when women were all head may be expected. Yet, so deft is fashion, and so clever, that even were this monstrosity to be introduced, not a few among us would forthwith fall in love with it.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

Boudoir Chat:

The young Queen of Holland is a total abstainer.

Sarah Bernhardt says that she rehearsed Cleopatra 500 times before it was finally presented to an audience.

Mrs. Andrew Carnegie is a clever photographer. She was a New York girl, and is twenty years younger than her husband.

The Queen of Spain likes good music, and during her residence at San Sebastian, in summer, never fails to invite Sarasate to her palace for some private soirees.

Princess Henry of Battenberg has an extraordinary affection for canaries, and at Osborne there is quite an aviary full of them. Many of these little birds are also kept in the apartments used by herself and her children.

The Frenchwoman of to-day is imitating her American sister. The smart Frenchwoman now plays golf, and in an American costume. She interlards her mother tongue with American expressions, sometimes, alas! American slang, quite unconsciously.

Mrs. W. I. Treat, of Bangor, Me., has among her most cherished possessions a little strip of the flag which draped the theatre box occupied by President Lincoln when he was shot, thirty-six years ago. It was this flag which tripped the assassin, Booth, and broke his leg when he leaped from the box to the stage.

Miss Alice de Rothschild is one of the richest women in England. She also owns a villa at Grasse, and a London house in Piccadilly. Like all her wealthy and world renowned family, Miss de Rothschild is both generous and wisely discriminating in her deeds of charity, but she rules with a firm hand, and proves an excellent woman of business.

The first Turkish woman who has visited Europe with the object of exposing the unhappy condition of her countrywomen is the Princess Hairie Ben-Ayad, who is now in London with her husband, Ali Nouri Bey, late Consul-General of Turkey in Rotterdam. The princess is well educated and accomplished, and expects to give a course of lectures on social conditions in Turkey, in which she hopes to arouse sentiment against the existing state of affairs.

Pretty Things to Wear.

Roses in hues and shadings rivaling nature are now encircled by foliage to match.

Leather and calf skin belts are stylish. The buckle is usually of black enamel.

Belts or stocks of Oriental embroidery present a pleasing color contrast with costumes of gray, dark blue or black.

Louisine silks and some new armure weaves are preferred by many milliners to taffeta and liberty satin for drapery effects.

With a dark gray raglan there is a set of furs, a long-haired muff and boa, with a gray tint, just off the black, and which matches excellently well the coat.

For the woman who does not care for large pearls, and who likes variety there is the heavy rope made of many twisted strands of small pearls. These ropes, finished with tassels of the pearls at the ends, are very charming.

Many of the gowns by fashionable dressmakers have waists that open in the back and are perfectly straight in front, with a point. The skirt in many instances is put on the belt, with the back fulness confined in small box pleats flowing away from the waist.

Although the much-worn gilt spike of last season has outlived its usefulness, pendants are still in favor and earrings of an antiquated type are available for this purpose. After the ring has been cut off the other part may be sewn on to a velvet or silk tab. Gold, silver or jeweled earrings may be thus utilized.

Gold stone and silver are the fashionable trimmings for umbrella handles, and seem to be taking the place lately held by the pearl and silver. The gold stone is rich and heavy, of somewhat iridescent effect when turned to the light, and shows tints of gold and dark red. Jeweled effects on gun metal are also new and handsome.

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