

WORD OF THE LORD

Dr. Talmage on the Ministry of Silence, Grief and Death.

COMPENSATION IS GREAT

The Mysterious Law by Which God Rewards Us of Coming Change Compared With All Changes.

BOOKS, July 9.—Rev. Dr. Talmage has chosen as his subject for today the text, "At evening time it shall be light" (Zechariah xiv. 7).

The "light" in all languages is the symbol for gloom and suffering. It is often really cheerful, bright and impressive. I speak not of such nights as come down with no star pouring light from above or silvery ways leading up light from beneath—morning, hurrying, peering—such as you often see when the pomp and magnificence of heaven turn out on night parades, and it seems as though the song which the morning stars began so long ago were chiming yet among the constellations and the sons of God were shouting for joy.

Such nights the sailor blesses from the forecastle, and the trapper on the vast prairie, and the belated traveler by the roadside, and the soldier from the tent, earthly hosts gazing upon heavenly, and shepherds guarding their flocks abroad, while angel bands above them set the silver bells a-ringing. "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace good will toward men."

What a solemn and glorious thing is light in the wilderness! Night among the mountains! Night on the coast! Fragrant night among tropical groves! Flashing night amid arctic solitudes! Calm night on Roman campaigns! Awful night among the cordilleras! Glorious night mid sea after a tempest! Thank God for the night! The moon and the stars which rule it are light-houses on the coast toward which, I hope, we are all sailing, and blind mariners are we if with so many beaming, beaming, flaming lights to guide us we cannot find our way into the harbor. My text may well suggest that as the natural evening is often luminous so it shall be light in the evening of our sorrows—of old age—of the world's history—of the Christian life. "At evening time it shall be light."

This prophecy will be fulfilled in the evening of Christian sorrow. For a long time it is broad daylight. The sun rises high. Innumerable activities go ahead with a thousand feet and work with a thousand arms, and the packer struck a mine, and the investor yielded it 20 per cent, and the book came to its twentieth edition, and the farm quadrupled in value, and sudden fortune hoisted to high position, and children were praised, and friends without number swarmed into the family home, and prosperity sang in the music and stepped in the dance and glowed in the wine and ate at the banquet, and all the gods of music and ease and gratification gathered around the Jupiter holding in his hand a many thunderbolts of power.

But every sun must set, and the brightest day must have its twilight. Suddenly the sky was overcast. The fountain dried up. The song hushed. The wolf broke into the family fold and carried off the best lamb. A deep bowl of woe came crashing down through the joyous symphonies. At one rough twang of the hand of disaster the harp strings all broke. Down went the strong business firm. Away went long established credit. Up flew a flock of calamities! The new book would not sell. A patent could not be secured for the invention. Stocks sank like lead. The insurance company expired. "How much," says the thief, "will you bid for this piano?" "How much for this library?" "How much for this family picture?" Will the crown ever lead one up in such circumstances? What have become of the great multitude of God's children who have been pointed of the fall and crushed under the wheel and trampled under the hoof? Did they lie down in the dust weeping, wailing and gnashing their teeth? When the rod of fatherly chastisement struck them, did they strike back? Because they found one bitter cup on the table of God's supply, did they upset the whole table? Did they knock down at their empty money vans and say, "All my treasures are gone? Did they stand by the grave of their dead saying, "There never will be a resurrection?"

Did they become their thwarted plans and say, "The stocks are down—would God I were dead!" Did the sight of their disaster upon their meadows, stables, dark and howling, smothering and choking their life out? No! No! No! At evening time it was light. The swift promise overtook them. The eternal constellations from the circuit about God's throne poured down an infinite incense. Under their shining the billows of trouble took on crests and planes of gold and Jasper and amethyst and flame. All the trees of life rustled in the mid-summer air of God's love. The night blessing assurances of Christ's sympathy filled all the atmosphere with heaven. The soul at every step seemed to start up from its feet bright winged joys warbling heavenward.

It is good that I have been afflicted," said David. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," said Job. "Successful, yet always rejoicing," says St. Paul. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," exclaims John in apocalyptic vision. At evening time it was light. Light from the cross! Light from the promised. Light from the throne! Streaming, joyous, outshining, everlasting light!

The text shall also find fulfillment in the time of old age. It is a grand thing to be young—to have the sight clear and the hearing acute and the step elastic and all our pulses marching on to the drumming of a stout heart. Middle-aged old age will be denied many of us, but youth we all know what that is. Those wrinkles were not always on your face. That snow was not always on your head. That hoarse voice was not always in your throat. You have not always worn spectacles. Grease and dignified as you now are, you once went crawling down the hillside, or threw off your hat for the race, or sent the ball flying sky high. But youth will not always last. It

stays only long enough to give us an embossed spine, and broad shoulders for burden carrying, and an arm with which to battle our way through difficulties. Life's path if you follow it long enough will come under frowning crag and across troubling caseway. Blessed old age if you let it come naturally. You cannot hide it. You may try to cover the wrinkles, but you cannot cover the wrinkles. If the time has come for you to be old, be not ashamed to be old. The grandest things in all the universe are old. Old mountains, old rivers, old seas, old stars and an old eternity. Then do not be ashamed to be old unless you are older than the mountains and older than the stars.

How men and women will lie! They say they are 30, but they are 60. They say they are 40, but they are 80. They say they are 60, but they are 90. How many people will lie! Glorious old age if found in the way of righteousness! How beautiful the old age of Jacob, leaning on the top of his staff, of John Quincy Adams falling with the harness on, of Washington lying sitting pen in hand amid the scenes himself had made classical, of John Angel James to the last proclaiming the gospel to the masses of Birmingham, of Theodore Frelinghuysen down to feebleness and emaciation devoting his illustrious faculties to the kingdom of God. At evening time it was light!

See that you do honor to the aged. A philosopher stood at the corner of the street day after day saying to the passer-by: "You will be an old man. You will be an old man." "You will be an old woman. You will be an old woman." People thought he was crazy. I do not think that he was. Smooth the way for that mother's feet—they have not many more steps to take. Steady those tottering limbs—they will soon be at rest. Flow not up that face with any more wrinkles. Trouble and care have marked it full enough. Thrust no thorn into that old heart. It will soon cease to beat.

"The eye that mocketh its father and refuseth to obey its mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." The young eagles morning and hot noonday of life have passed with many. It is 4 o'clock! 5 o'clock! 6 o'clock! The shadows fall longer and thicker and faster. Seven o'clock! 8 o'clock! The sun has dipped below the horizon. The warmth has gone out of the air. Nine o'clock! 10 o'clock! The heavy dews are falling. The activities of life's day are all hushed. It is time to go to bed. Eleven o'clock! 12 o'clock! The patriarch sleeps the blessed sleep, the cool sleep, the long sleep. Heaven's messengers of light have kindled bonfires of victory all over the heavens. At evening time it is light—light!

My text shall also find fulfillment in the latter days of the church. Only a few missionaries, a few churches, a few good men, compared with the institutions leprosy and putrefied. It is early yet in the history of everything good. Civilization and Christianity are just getting out of the cradle. The light of martyr stakes flashing all up and down the sky is but the flaming of the morning, but when the evening of the world shall come, glory to God's conquering truth, it shall be light. War's sword clanging back in the seaboard; intolerance buried under 10,000 broken deacons; the world's impurity turning its brow heavenward for the benediction, "blessed are the pure in heart"; the last vestige of selfishness submerged in heaven descending charities; all China worshipping Dr. Abel's Saviour; all India believing in Henry Martyn's Bible; Aboriginal superstition acknowledging David Brainerd's piety; human bondage delivered through Thomas Clarkson's Christianity; vagrancy coming back from its pollution at the call of Elizabeth Fry's Redeemer; the mountains coming down, the valleys going up; "holiness" inscribed on horse's bell and silverworm's thread and brown thrasher's wing and shell's tinge and manufacturer's shuttle and chemist's laboratory and king's scepter and nation's Magna Charta. Not a hospital, for there are no wounds; not an asylum, for there are no orphans; not a prison, for there are no criminals; not an almshouse, for there are no paupers; not a tear, for there are no sorrows; The long days of earth's lamentation has ended in the triumphal march of redeemed empires, the forests harping it on vine strong branches, the water chanting it among the gorges, the thunders drumming it among the hills, the ocean giving it forth with its organs, trade winds touching the keys and earth's feet on the pedal.

I want to see John Howard when the last prisoner is reformed. I want to see Florence Nightingale when the last sailor wound has stopped hurting. I want to see William Penn when the last Indian has been civilized. I want to see John Huss when the last flame of persecution has been extinguished. I want to see John Bunyan after the last pilgrim has come to the gate of the Celestial City. Above all, I want to see Jesus after the last saint shall sit on his throne and begin to sing his psalm. I have watched the calmness and the glory of the evening hour. The laborer have come from the field. The heavens are glowing with an indescribable effulgence, as though the sun in departing had forgotten to shut the gate after it. All the beauty of cloud and leaf swims in the lake. For a star in the sky, a star in the water—heaven above and heaven beneath. Not a leaf rustling, or a bee humming, or a grasshopper chirping. Silence in the meadows, silence among the hills.

Thus bright and beautiful shall be the evening of the world. The hosts of earthly conflict are cooled. The glory of heaven fills all the scene with love and joy and peace. At evening time it is light—light!

Finally, my text shall find fulfillment at the end of the Christian's life. You know how a short winter's day is, and how little work you can do. Now, my friends, life is a short winter's day. The sun rises at 8 and sets at 4. The birth angel and death angel fly only a little way apart. Baptism and burial are near together. With one hand the mother rocks the cradle, and with the other she touches the grave.

I went into the home of one of my parishioners on Thanksgiving day. The little child of the household was bright and glad, and with it I bended up and down the hall. Christmas day came, and the light of that household had perished. We stood, with black book, reading over the grave, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." But I hurl away this darkness. I cannot have you weep. Thanks be unto God, who gives us the victory, at evening time it shall be light! I have seen many

Christmas. Do I ever saw any of them die in darkness. What if the billows of death do rise above our heads, who does not love to battle? What though other lights do go out in the blast, what do we want of them when all the gates of glory spring open before us, and from a myriad voices, a myriad harps, a myriad thrones, a myriad palaces, these dash upon us, "Hosanna! Hosanna!"

"Throw back the shutters and let the sun come in," said dying Scoville McCollum, one of my Sabbath school boys. You can see Paul putting on robes and wings of ascension as he exclaims: "I have fought the good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." Hugh McCall went to one side of the scaffold of martyrdom and cried: "Farewell sun, moon and stars! Farewell all earthly brightness! Then went to the other side of the scaffold and cried: "Welcome, God and Father! Welcome, sweet Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the covenant! Welcome death! Welcome glory!"

A minister of Christ in Philadelphia, dying, said in his last moments, "I move into the light!" They did not go down doubting and fearing and shivering, but their barbed cry rang through all the caverns of the apocalyptic and was echoed back from all the thrones of heaven: "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" Sing, my soul, of joys to come.

I saw a beautiful being wandering up and down the earth. She touched the aged, and they became young. She touched the poor, and they became rich. I said, "Who is this beautiful being, wandering up and down the earth?" They told me that her name was Death. What a strange thrill of joy when the pained Christian begins to use his arm again! When the blind Christian begins to see again! When the deaf Christian begins to hear again! When the poor pilgrim puts his feet on such pavement and joins in such company and has a free seat in such a great temple!

Hungry men no more to hunger; thirsty men no more to thirst; weeping men no more to weep; dying men no more to die. Gather up all sweet words, all jubilant expressions, all rapturous exclamations. Bring them to me, and I will pour them upon this stupendous theme of the soul's disenchantment! Oh, the joy of the spirit as it shall mount up toward the throne of God shouting: "Fret not your eye and heaven, but the eye hath not seen it. Your ear has caught harmonies uncounted and indescribable—caught them from harp's trill and bird's carol and waterfall's dash and ocean's doxology, but the ear hath not heard it.

How did those blessed ones get up into the light? What hammer knocked off their chains? What loom wove their robes of light? Who gave them wings? Ah, eternity is not long enough to tell it; seraphim have not capacity enough to realize it—the marvels of redeeming love! Let the palms wave; let the crowns glitter; let the anthems sound; let the trees of Lebanon clap their hands—they cannot tell the half of it. Archangel before the throne, thou failest! Sing on, praise on, ye hosts of the glorified. And if with your scepters you cannot reach it and with your songs you cannot express it, then let all the myriads of the saved unite in the exclamation, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!"

There will be a password at the gate of heaven. A great multitude come up and knock at the gate. The gatekeeper says, "The password." They say, "We have no password. We were great on earth, and now we come up to be great in heaven." A voice from within answers, "I never knew you." Another group come up to the gate of heaven and knock. The gatekeeper says, "The password." They say, "We have no password. We did a great many noble things on earth. We endowed colleges and took care of the poor." A voice from within says, "I never knew you."

Another group come up to the gate of heaven and knock. The gatekeeper says, "The password." They answer, "We were wanderers from God and deserved to die, but we heard the voice of Jesus." "Aye, aye," said the gatekeeper, "that is the password! Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates, and let these people come in." They go in and surround the throne, jubilant forever.

Ah! do you wonder that the last hours of the Christian on earth are illuminated by thoughts of the coming glory? Light in the evening. The medicines may be bitter. The pain may be sharp. The parting may be heartrending. Yet light in the evening. As all the stars of night sink their anchors of pearl in lake and river and sea, so the waves of Jordan shall be illuminated with the down flashing of the glory to come. The dying soul looks up at the constellations. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Close the eyes of the departed one; earth would seem tame to its enchanted vision. Fold the hands; life's work is ended. Well the face; it has been transfigured. Mr. Topham in his dying hour said, "Light! Light! Light!" "What is the meaning of that?" "The light of heaven," he exclaimed, "with illuminated countenance." "Light!" In the last instant of his breathing he lifted up his hands and cried: "Light! Light! Thank God for light in the evening."

As a Human Life. Why is it that people in general are so prone to disregard loss of strength, clearly perceptible in bodily shrinkage, failure of appetite, broken rest, incomprehensible loss of sleep, nervousness, an over-coming confidence in the power of nature to recuperate—these are recognizable signs. One of the most observable signs of danger shown by distressed nature is weakness.

AT AN END.—The "female complaint" and "menstrual troubles" which women suffer from, are cured by Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. For all the derangements, disorders, and diseases peculiar to the sex, this is the only remedy so certain that it can be guaranteed. If it ever fails to benefit or cure, you have your money back.

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Maccabees Will Swam On the Sunday excursion to Muskegon July 16. Leave Union station 8 a. m. via C. & W. M. Rate \$1.00.

G. R. & I.

Bay View Camp Meeting and Assembly. \$5.75 to Bay View and return on July 10 to 19, inclusive, good for return until August 10.

Trains leave Grand Rapids 7:30 a. m., 1:30 p. m., and 10:20 p. m.; arrive Bay View 3:08 p. m., 7:20 p. m., and 9:43 a. m.

ATTEND SPECIAL SALE of silks at Wilkes', Monday.

Sunday Train to Ottawa Beach. Leaves Union station via C. & W. M., at 9:30 a. m. Leave Beach at 6:30 p. m., and pleasant place to spend Sunday. Good fishing for those who like it. Good fish to eat at the hotel. Everything good—even the price for the ride down and back—75 cents. Carry a lunch if you don't want to go to the hotel.

VIA C. & W. M.

Grand Rapids \$5.75 Bay View Round Trip.

Account of Camp Meeting and Assembly at Bay View, the "Scenic Line"—Chicago & West Michigan Ry.—will sell tickets on July 10th to 19th, good to return August 17th, at one fare rate from all stations. Rate from Grand Rapids is \$5.75. Trains leave at 7:30 a. m. and 1:40 p. m., with parlor cars, stopping at Traverse City for meals. Night train leaves at 11:15, with sleeper, Truon 1304 for accommodations.

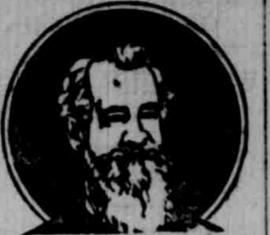
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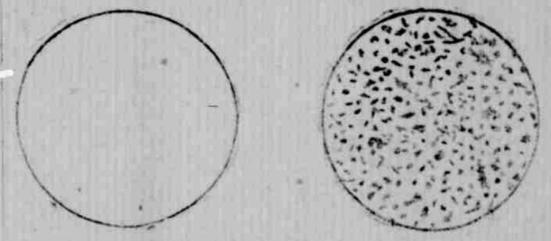
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