

THE JOY OF RELIGION

Dr. Talmage Urges All to Try Its Uplifting Power.

Characterizes Religion as God's Daughter - Sermon from the Text, "Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness."

NOVEMBER 18, 1881, by Louis Kleppel, N. Y. Washington, April 14.

In this discourse Dr. Talmage sets forth religion as an exhilaration, and urges all people to try its uplifting power; text, Proverbs 2, 17: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness."

You have all heard of God's only begotten Son. Have you heard of God's daughter? She was born in Heaven? She came down over the hills of our world. She had queenly step. On her brow was celestial radiance. Her voice was music. Her name is Religion. My text introduces her. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." But what is religion? The fact is that theological study has had a different effect upon me from the effect sometimes produced. Every year I tear out another leaf from my theology, until I have only three or four leaves left—in other words, a very brief and plain statement of Christian belief.

An aged Christian minister said: "When I was a young man, I knew everything. When I got to be 35 years of age, in my creed I had only a hundred doctrines of religion. When I got to be 40 years of age, I had only 50 doctrines of religion. When I got to be 50 years of age I had only ten doctrines of religion, and now I am dying at 75 years of age, and there is only one thing I know, and that is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And I have noticed in the study of God's word and in my contemplation of the character of God and of the eternal world that it is necessary for me to drop this part of my belief and that part of my belief as being nonessential, while I cling to the one great doctrine that man is a sinner and Christ is his Almighty and Divine Saviour.

Now I take these three or four leaves of my theology, and I find that the first place and dominant above all others is the sunshine of religion. When I go into a room, I have a passion for throwing open all the shutters. That is what I want to do this morning. We are apt to throw so much of the sepulchral into our religion and to close the shutters and to pull down the blinds that it is only through here and there a crevice that the light streams. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is a religion of joy indescribable and unutterable. Wherever I can find a bell I mean to ring it.

If there are any in this house this morning who are disposed to hold on to their melancholy and gloom, let them depart this service before the fairest and the brightest and the most radiant being of all the universe comes in. God's Son has left our world, but God's daughter is here. Give her room. Hail, princess of Heaven! Hail, daughter of the Lord Almighty! Come in and make this house thy throne-room.

In setting forth this idea the dominant theory of religion is one of sunshine. I hardly know where to begin. For there are so many thoughts that rush upon my soul. A mother saw her little child seated on the floor in the sunshine and with a spoon in her hand. She said: "My darling, what are you doing there?" "Oh," replied the child, "I am getting a spoonful of this sunshine." Would God that to-day I might present you with a gleaming goblet of this glorious, everlasting Gospel sunshine!

First of all, I find a great deal of sunshine in Christian society. I do not know of anything more delightful than the companionship of the mere tinkers of the world—the Thomas Howes, the Charles Lambs, the Charles Mathews of the world—the men whose entire business it is to make sport. They make others laugh. When if you will examine their autobiography or biography you will find that down in their soul there was a terrific disquietude. Laughter is no sign of happiness. The maniac laughs. The hyena laughs. The loon among the Adirondacks laughs. The drunkard, dashing his decanter against the wall, laughs.

There is a terrible reaction from all painful amusement and sinful merriment. Such men are cross the next day. They snap at you on exchange or they pass you, not recognizing you. Long ago I quit mere worldly society for the reason it was so dull, so insane and so stupid. My nature is voracious of joy. I must have it.

I always walk on the sunny side of the street, and for that reason I have crossed over into Christian society. I like their mode of repartee better. I like their style of amusement better. They live longer. Christian people, sometimes notice, live on when by all natural law they ought to have died. I have known persons who have continued in their existence when the doctor said they ought to have been dead ten years. Every day of their existence was a defiance of the laws

of anatomy and physiology, but they had this supernatural vivacity of the Gospel in their soul, and that kept them alive.

Put 10 or 12 Christian people in a room for Christian conversation, and you will from eight to ten o'clock hear more resounding glee, see more bright strokes of wit and find more thought and intellect and vigor than in any merely worldly party. Now, when I say a "worldly party" I mean that to which you are invited because under all the circumstances of the case it is the best for you to be invited, and to which you go because under all circumstances of the case it is better that you go, and, leaving the shawls on the second floor, you go to the parlor to give formal salutation to the host and the hostess and then move around, spending the whole evening in the discussion of the weather and in apology for treading on long trains and in effort to keep the corners of the mouth up to the sign of pleasure, and going around with an idiotic he-be about nothing until the collation is served, and then, after the collation is served, going back into the parlor to resume the weather, and then at the close going at a very late hour to the host and hostess and assuring them that you have had a most delightful evening, and then passing down off the front steps, the slam of the door the only satisfaction of the evening.

I know there is a great deal of talk about the self-denial of the Christian. I have to tell you that where the Christian has one self-denial the man of the world has a thousand self-denials. The Christian is not commanded to surrender anything that is worth keeping. But what does a man deny himself who denies himself the religion of Christ? He denies himself peace of conscience, he denies himself the joy of the Holy Ghost, he denies himself a comfortable death pillow, he denies himself the glory of Heaven. Do not talk to me about the self-denial of the Christian life. Where there is one in the Christian life there is a thousand in the life of the world. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness."

Again, I find a great deal of religious sunshine in Christian and divine explanation. To a great many people life is an inexplicable tangle. Things turn out differently from what was supposed. There is a useless woman in perfect health. There is an industrious and consecrated woman a complete invalid. Explain that. There is a bad man with \$50,000 of income. There is a good man with \$500 of income. Why is that? There is a foe of society who lives on, doing all the damage he can, to 75 years of age, and here is a Christian father, faithful in every department of life, at 35 years of age taken away by death, his family left helpless. Explain that. Oh, there is no sentence that offends drops from your lips than this: "I cannot understand it. I cannot understand it."

Well, now religion comes in just at that point with its illumination and its explanation. There is a business man who has lost his entire fortune. The week before he lost his fortune there were 20 carriages that stopped at the door of his mansion. The week after he lost his fortune all the carriages you could count on one finger. The week before financial trouble began people all took off their hats to him as he passed down the street. The week his financial prospects were under discussion people just touched their hats without anywise bending the rim. The week that he was pronounced insolvent people just jolted their heads as they passed, not tipping their hats at all, and the week the sheriff sold him out all his friends were looking in the store windows as they went down past him.

Now, while the world goes away from a man while he is in financial distress, the religion of Christ comes to him and says: "You are sick, and your sickness is to be moral purification; you are bereaved. God wanted in some way to take your family to Heaven, and He must begin somewhere, and so He took the one that was most beautiful and was most ready to go." I do not say that religion explains everything in this life, but I do say it lays down certain principles which are grandly consolatory. You know business men often telegraph in cipher. The merchant in San Francisco telegraphs to the merchant in New York certain information in cipher which no other man in that line of business can understand, but the merchant in San Francisco has the key to the cipher, and the merchant in New York has the key to the cipher, and on that information transmitted there are enterprises involving hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now, the providences of life sometimes seem to be a senseless riddle, a mysterious cipher; but God has a key to that cipher and the Christian a key to that cipher, and, though he may hardly be able to spell out the meaning, he gets enough of the meaning to understand that it is for the best. Now, is there not sunshine in that? Is there not pleasure in that? Far beyond laughter, it is nearer the fountain of joy than the fountains

demonstration, have you never cried for joy? There are tears which are eternal rapture in distillation.

There are hundreds of people who are walking day by day in the sublime satisfaction that all is for the best, all things working together for good for their soul. How a man can get along through this life without the explanation is to me a mystery. What! Is that child gone forever? Are you never to get it back? Is your property gone forever? Have you no explanation, no Christian explanation, and yet not a maniac? But when you have the religion of Jesus Christ in your soul it explains everything so far as it is best for you to understand. You look off in your life, and your soul is full of thanksgiving to God that you are so much better off than you might be. A man passed down the street without any shoes and said: "I have no shoes! Isn't it a hardship that I have no shoes? Other people have shoes!" until he saw a man who had no feet. Then he learned a lesson. You ought to thank God for what He does instead of grumbling for what He does not. God arranges all the weather in this world—the spiritual weather, the moral weather, as well as the natural weather. "What kind of weather will it be today?" said some one to a farmer. The farmer replied: "It will be such weather as I like." "What do you mean by that?" asked the other. "Well," said the farmer, "it will be such weather as pleases the Lord, and what pleases the Lord pleases me."

Oh, the sunshine, the sunshine of Christian explanation! Here is someone bending over the grave of the dead. What is going to be the consolation? The flowers you strew upon the tomb? Oh, no. The chief consolation on that grave is what falls from the throne of God. Sunshine, glorious sunshine! Resurrection sunshine!

Sometimes you wish you could make the tour of the whole earth, going around as others have gone, but you have not the means. You will make the tour yet, during one musical pause in the eternal anthem. I say these things for the comfort of those people who are abridged to their opportunities, those people to whom life is humdrum, who toil and work and aspire after knowledge, but have no time to get it, and say: "If I had the opportunities which other people have, how I would fill my mind and soul with grand thoughts!" Be not discouraged, my friends. You are going to the university yet. Death will only matriculate you into the royal college of the universe.

Besides that, we shall have all the pleasures of association. We will go right up in the front of God without any fright. All our sins gone, there will be nothing to be frightened about. There our old Christian friends will troop around us. Just as now one of your sick friends goes away to Florida, the land of flowers, or the south of France, and you will not see him for a long while, and after awhile you meet him, and the hollows under the eyes are all filled and the appetite has come back and the crutch has been thrown away, and he is so changed you hardly know him. You say: "Why, I never saw you look so well." He says: "I couldn't help but be well. I have been sailing these rivers and climbing these mountains, and that's how I got this elasticity. I never was so well." Oh, my friends, your departed loved ones are only away for their health in a better climate, and when you meet them they will be so changed, and after awhile, when you are assured that they are your friends, your departed friends, you will say: "Why, where is that cough? Where is that paralysis? Where is that pneumonia? Where is that consumption?" And he will say: "Oh, I am entirely well. There are no sick ones in this country. I have been ranging these hills, and hence this elasticity. I have been here now 20 years, and not one sick one have I seen. We are all well in this climate."

And then I stand at the gate of the Celestial city to see the processions come out, and I see a long procession of little children, with their arms full of flowers, and then I see a procession of kings and priests moving in Celestial pageantry—a long procession, but no black tasseled vehicle, no mourning group, and I say: "How strange it is! Where is your Greenwood? Where is your Laurel Hill? Where is your Westminster abbey?" And they shall cry: "There are no graves here." And then listen for the tolling of the old bellfries of Heaven, the old bellfries of eternity. I listen to hear them toll for the dead. They only strike up a silvery chime, tower to tower, east gate to west gate, as they ring out: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, for 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."

Oh, unglue your hand and give it to me in congratulation on that scene! I feel as if I could shout. I will shout. Dear Lord, forgive me that I ever complained about anything. If all this is before us, who cares for anything but God and Heaven and eternal brotherhood? Take the crape off the door-bell. Your loved ones are only away for their health in a land ambrosial.

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Dr. Price's Cream Baking Powder adds to the healthfulness of all risen flour-foods, and makes the food lighter, sweeter, finer-flavored, more delicious.

It is worth while to exercise care in purchasing baking powder to see that you get the kind that makes the food more wholesome and at the same time more palatable.

PRICE BAKING POWDER CO. CHICAGO.

NOTE.—There are many mixtures in imitation of baking powder which it is prudent to avoid. The one which is lower in price than the others, but they are made of alum. Alum in food is poisonous.

Come, Lowell Mason; come, Isaac Watts. Give us your best hymn about joy celestial.

What is the use of postponing our Heaven any longer? Let it begin now, and whosoever hath a harp let him thrum it, and whosoever hath a trumpet let him blow it, and whosoever hath an organ let him give us a full diapason. They crowd down the air, spirits blessed, moving in cavalcade of triumph. Their chariot wheels whirl in the Sabbath sunlight. They come! Halt, armies of God! Halt until we are ready to join the battalion of pleasures that never die!

Oh, my friends, it would take a sermon as long as eternity to tell the joys that are coming to us. I just set open the sunny door. Come in, all ye disciples of the world who have found the world a mockery. Come in, all ye disciples of the dance, and see the bounding feet of this Heavenly gladness. Come in, ye disciples of worldly amusement, and see the stage where kings are the actors and burning words the footlights and thrones the spectacular. Arise, ye dead in sin, for this is the morning of resurrection. The joys of Heaven submerge our soul. I pull out the trumpet stop. In thy presence there is a fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

These are the saints beloved of God. Washed are their robes in Jesus' blood. Brighter than angels, lo, they shine. Their glories splendid and sublime! My soul anticipates the day. Would stretch her wings and soar away; To aid the song, the palm to bear. And bow, the chief of sinners, there. Oh, the sunshine, the glorious sunshine, the everlasting sunshine!

GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL

Mr. and Mrs. D. M. Frazier, formerly of the Merchants Hotel in Higginsville, have leased the Grand Central of this city and will open it for the accommodation of guests on next Monday, April 22d. The house has been newly furnished and Mr. and Mrs. Frazier are thorough hotel people. They understand their business and will do everything possible for the convenience and comfort of their guests.

Mrs. John, Isley, near Spring Place, Tenn., has given birth to four babies, each weighing four pounds. They are all living and doing well. Mr. Isley, the father, is himself a twin brother.

Messrs. J. G. Riley and Frank McClure, of Waverly, and Mr. Wood McGrew, the newly elected marshal of that town, came up to the county seat Tuesday evening on business and returned home Wednesday. When we get the main line started our eastern county towns will have more convenient train service for getting in and out of our city than they now have.

About 11 a. m. Wednesday fire destroyed the one story frame cottage on the north-west corner of Main and Twenty-third streets, in East Lexington. The fire originated in the kitchen and spread rapidly and before the fire company could get to it the house was so far gone that it could not be saved. The house was occupied and owned by Leonard Rickert, and it was a total loss together with all the household goods and wearing apparel. It was insured for only \$450.

Mr. Oscar Thomas and wife went down to Waverly Thursday. Mr. Thomas, ever thoughtful of the interests of his old home town and through friendship for the newly elected city marshal, Mr. Wood McGrew, took with him a complete outfit for a marshal, which he proposes, with imposing ceremonies to present to the new city officer. The regalia consisted of an elegant straw helmet with a blazing star at its front, a paper cap pistol and a ferocious looking bill made from a broomstick. He intends that his friend shall have ample protection against the desperadoes that make life dangerous in our neighboring town of Waverly.

Miss Susie Leacour went to City Friday morning to visit relatives friends.

Mr. H. G. Morrison, assistant agent of the Missouri Pacific R. R., left the city Thursday.

Mrs. M. Fred Evans, of Independence, came down Friday morning to see family of her father, Judge Richard Evans.

Mrs. Geo. Stewart and children came from Winston Friday morning to see family of her father, Mr. John Stewart.

Mrs. John Poage, who has been visiting her sister, Mrs. Bert Taubman, yesterday to her home at Chillicothe.

Mr. Edgar Scott, son of Mr. James Scott of our city, left Thursday evening for Kansas City, where he expects to enter the navy.

Misses Ruth and Lina Bergens have been visiting with their parents in Kansas City for a few days, and returned Thursday night to their domestic female college.

Mr. Chan. Geyer's car No. 1000 west on the Missouri Pacific last evening on its way to Ash Grove, Kan. Geyer has retired and fixed up his first class stye.

The first base ball game of the season will be played at the academy ground Monday by the Missouri Valley and the W. M. A. teams. The game is an interesting one.

Condensed News

The Cuban constitutional convention will try to reach this country to see the president before he begins his western trip.

A farmer near Salina, Kan., had red poker to cure his corn, a result his corns are gone but had to be amputated with them.

The state board of health of Missouri has commenced a war on the ground that they assist in developing the bubonic plague germ.

The French government has bought a large tract of land residence part of Washington purpose of building a French embassy.

There is a strike of the men on the Lackawanna yards at Scranton. Three miles of coal cars are blocked on one portion of the road.

About 30,000 Odd Fellows in Kansas City the 25th anniversary of Odd Fellows America.

Notice to Bridge Committee. I will receive sealed proposals for erecting a seventy foot span steel bridge, with two spans, across Little Sal Creek, about east of Wellington.

Commissioner reserves the right to reject any or all bids. B. D. WELDON, City Engineer, April 18, 1901.