AT THE TABERNACLE.

DR. TALMAGE CELEBRATES HIS TWENTY-FOURTH ANNIVERSARY THERE.

He Feels Like Uttering a Long and Loud Hallelujah, For the Talent of the World Centers at Brooklyn, and So the Gospel Is Spread Abroad.

BROOKLYN, April 23.—Rev. Dr. Talmage today preached his twenty-fourth anniversary sermon. Subject, "A Brooklyn Pastorate." The occasion was an unusually interesting one, and the great audience was visibly impressed during the services. Over the pulpit in flowers were the figures "1869" and "1893." The text was Revelation iv, 4, "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders."

This text I choose chiefly for the numerals it mentions—namely, four and twenty. That was the number of elders seated around the throne of God. But that is the number of years seated around my Brooklyn ministry, and every pulpit is a throne of blessing or blasting, a throne of good or evil. And today, in this my twenty-fourth anniversary sermon, 24 years come and sit around me, and they speak out in a reminiscence of gladness and tears. Twenty-four years ago I arrived in this city to shepherd such a flock as might come, and that day I carried in on my arms the infant son who in two weeks from today I will help ordain to the gospel ministry, hoping that he will be preaching long after my poor work is done.

We have received into our membership over 5,000 souls, but they, I think, are only a small portion of the multitudes who, coming from all parts of the earth, have in our house of God been blest and saved. Although we have as a church raised $1,100,000 for religious purposes, yet we are in the strange position of not knowing whether in two or three months we shall have any church at all, and with audiences of 6,000 or 7,000 people crowded into this room and the adjoining rooms we are confronted with the question whether I shall go on with my work here or go to some other field. What an awful necessity that we should have been obliged to build three immense churches, two of them destroyed by fire!

A misapprehension is abroad that the financial exigency of this church is past. Through journalistic and personal friends a breathing spell has been afforded us, but before us yet are financial obligations which must promptly be met, or specially this house of God will go into worldly uses and become a theater or a concert hall. The $12,000 raised cannot cancel a floating debt of $140,000. Through the kindness of those to whom we are indebted $40,000 would set us forever free. I am glad to say that the case is not hopeless. We are daily in receipt of touching evidences of practical sympathy from all classes of the community and from all sections of the country, and it was but yesterday that by my own hand I sent, for contributions gratefully received, nearly 50 acknowledgments east, west, nor th and south.

A DAY FOR HALLELUJAH.

Our trust is in the Lord, who divided the Red sea and "made the mountains skip like lambs." With this paragraph I dismiss the financial subject and return to the spiritual. This morning the greatness of God's kindness obliterates everything, and if I wanted to build a groan I do not know in what forest I would hew the timber, or from what quarry I would dig the foundation stone, or who would construct for me an organ with a tremolo for the only stop, and so this morning I occupy my time in building one great, massive, high, deep, broad, heaven piercing hallelujah. In the review of the last 24 years I think it may be useful to consider some of the characteristics of a Brooklyn pastorate.

In the first place, I remark that a Brooklyn pastorate is always a difficult pastorate. No city under the sun has a grander array of pulpit talent than Brooklyn. The Methodists, the Baptists, the Congregationalists, the Episcopalians, all the denominations send their brightest lights here. He who stands in any pulpit in Brooklyn preaching may know that he stands within 15 minutes' walk of sermons which a Saurin, and a Bourdaloue, and a John M. Mason, and a George Whitefield would not be ashamed of. No city under the sun where a poor sermon is such a drug on the market.

For 40 years Brooklyn has been surcharged with homiletics, an electricity of eloquence that struck every time it flashed from the old pulpits which quaked with the powers of a Bethune, and a Cox, and a Spencer, and a Spear, and a Vinton, and a Farley, and a Beecher, not mentioning the names of the magnificent men now manning the Brooklyn pulpits. So during all the time there has been something to appeal to every man's taste and to gratify every man's preference.

Now, let me say to all ministers of the gospel who are ambitious for a Brooklyn pulpit that it is always a difficult pastorate. If a man shall come and stand before any audience in almost any church in Brooklyn, he will find before him men who have heard the mightiest themes discussed in the mightiest way. You will have before you, if you full in an argument, 50 logicians in a fidget. If you make a slip in the use of a commercial figure of speech, there will be 500 merchants who will notice it. If you throw out an anchor or furl a sail in the wrong way, there will be ship captains right off who will wonder if you are as ignorant of theology as you are of navigation! So it will be a place of hard study. If you are going to maintain yourself, you will find a Brooklyn pastorate a difficult pastorate.

A PROMINENT PULPIT.

I remark still further, a Brooklyn pastorate is always a conspicuous pastorate. The prominent pulpit of the country has no greater force than that on the seacoast. Every pulpit word, good or bad, wise or ignorant, kind or mean, is watched. The reportorial corps of these cities is an organized army. Many of them have collegiate education and large culture, and they are able to weigh oration or address or sermon. If you say a silly thing, you will never hear the end of it, and if you say a wise thing it will go into perpetual multiplication. There is no need of decrying that fact. Men whose influence has been built by the printing press spend the rest of their lives in denouncing newspapers. The newspaper is the pulpit on the wing. More preaching done on Monday than on Sunday. The omnivorous, all eyed printing press is ever vigilant.

Besides that a Brooklyn pastorate is always conspicuous in the fact that everybody comes here. Brooklyn is New York in its better mood! Strangers have not seen New York until they have seen Brooklyn. The East river is the chasm in which our merchants drop their cares and their anxieties and their business troubles, and by the time they have greeted their families in the home circle they have forgotten all about Wall street and Broadway and the shambles. If they commit business sins in New York during the day, they come over to Brooklyn to repent of them!

BROOKLYN ABSORBS THE WORLD'S INTELLECT

Everybody comes here. Stand at the bridge entrance or at the ferry gates on Sabbath morning at 10 o'clock, or Sabbath evening at 7 o'clock, and you see north, south, east, west—Europe, Asia, Africa, New Zealand, Australia—coming to Brooklyn to spend the Sabbath, or part of it, in the persons of their representatives. Some of them fresh from the sea. They have just landed, and they want to seek the house of God publicly to thank the Lord for their deliverance from cyclone and fog banks off Newfoundland. Every song sung, every prayer offered, every sermon preached in New York and Brooklyn, and all along this sea coast, in some shape goes all round the world. A Brooklyn pastorate is at the greatest altitude of conspicuity.

Again I remark that a Brooklyn pastorate is characterized by brevity. I bethink myself of but three ministers of the gospel now preaching here who were preaching when I came to Brooklyn. Most of the pulpits around me have changed seven or eight times since my arrival.

Sometimes the pastorate has been brief for one reason and sometimes for another reason. Sometimes the ministers of the gospel have been too good for this world, and Heaven has transplanted them. Sometimes they changed places by the decree of their denomination. Sometimes they came with great blare of trumpets, proposing to carry everything before them, and got extinguished before they were distinguished. Some got preached out in two or three years and told the people all they knew. Some with holy speed did in a short time work which it takes a great many years to do.

Whether for good or bad reasons a Brooklyn pastorate is characterized by brevity, not much of the old plan by which a minister of the gospel baptized an infant, then received him into the church, after he had become an adult married him, baptized his children, married them and lived on long enough to bury almost everybody but himself. Glorious old pastorates they were. Some of us remember them—Dr. Spring, Peter Labaugh, Dominie Zabriskie, Daniel Waldo, Abram Halsey. When the snow melted from their foreheads, it revealed the flowers of an unfading coronal. Pastorates of 30, 40, 50, 55 years' continuance.

Some of them had to be helped into the pulpit or into the carriage, they were so old and decrepit, but when the Lord's chariots halted one day in front of the old parsonage they stepped in vigorous as an athlete, and as we saw the wheels of fire whirling through the gates of the sunset we all cried out, "My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

I remark again a Brooklyn pastorate is characterized by its happiness.

BROOKLYN A PLACE FOR HAPPINESS.

No city under the sun where people take such good care of their ministers. In proportion as the world outside may curse, a congregation stands close up by the man whom they believe in. Brooklyn society has for its foundation two elements—the Puritanic, which always means a quiet Sabbath, and the Hollandish, which means a worshipful people. On the top of this an admixture of all nationalities—the brawny Scot, the solid English, the vivacious Irish, the polite French, the philosophic German, and in all this intermingling of population the universal dominant theory that a man can do as he pleases, provided he doesn't disturb anybody else.

A delightful climate. While it is hard on weak throats, for the most of us it is bracing. Not an atmosphere made up of the discharged gases of chemical factories or the miasms of swamps, but coming panting right off 3,000 miles of Atlantic ocean before anybody else has had a chance to breathe it! All through the city a society of kind, genial, generous, sympathetic people. How they fly to you when you are in trouble! How they watch over you when you are sick! How tender they are with you when you have buried your dead! Brooklyn is a good place to live in, a good place to die in, a good place to be buried in, a good place from which to rise in a beautiful resurrection.

In such a city I have been permitted to have 24 years of pastorate. During these years how many heartbreaks, how many losses, how many bereavements! Hardly a family of the church that has not been struck with sorrow, but God has sustained you in the past, and he will sustain you in the future. I exhort you to be of good cheer, O thou of the broken heart. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." I wish over every door of this church we might have written the word "Sympathy"—sympathy for all the young.

We must crowd them in here by thousands and propose a radiant gospel that they will take on the spot. We must make this place so attractive for the young that a young man will come here on Sabbath morning, put down his hat, brush his hair back from his forehead, unbutton his overcoat and look around wondering if he has not by mistake got into heaven. He will see in the faces of the old people not the gloom which some people take for religion, but the sunshine of celestial peace, and he will say, "Why, I wonder if that isn't the same peace that shone out on the face of my father and mother when they lay dying?"

And then there will come a dampness in his eyes through which he can hardly see, and he will close his eyes to imprison the emotion, but the hot tear will break through the fringes of eyelashes and drop upon the coat sleeve. He will put his head on the back of the pew in front and sob, "Lord God of the old people, help me!" We ought to lay a plot here for the religious capture of all the young people in Brooklyn.

THE SYMPATHIES OF BROOKLYN.

Yes, sympathy for the old. They have their aches and pains and distresses. They cannot hear or walk or see as well as they used to. We must be reverential in their presence. On dark days we must help them through the aisle and help them find the place in the hymnbook. Some Sabbath morning we shall miss them from their place, and we shall say, "Where is Father So-and-so today?" and the answer will be: "What, haven't you heard? The King's wagons have taken Jacob up to the palace where his Joseph is yet alive."

Sympathy for business men. Twenty-four years of commercial life in New York and Brooklyn are enough to tear one's nerves to pieces. We want to make our Sabbath service here a rescue for all these martyrs of traffic, a foretaste of that land where they have no rents to pay, and there are no business rivalries, and where riches, instead of taking wings to fly away, brood over other riches.

Sympathy for the fallen, remembering that they ought to be pitied as much as a man run over with a rail train. The fact is that in the temptations and misfortunes of life they get run over. You and I in the same circumstances would have done as badly; we should have done worse perhaps. If you and I had the same evil surroundings and the same evil parentage that they had and the same native born proclivities to evil that they had, you and I should have been in the penitentiary or outcasts of society. "No," says some self righteous man, "I couldn't have been overthrown in that way." You old hypocrite, you would have been the first to fall!

We want in this church to have sympathy for the worst man, remembering he is a brother; sympathy for the worst woman, remembering she is a sister. If that is not the gospel, I do not know what the gospel is. Ah, yes! sympathy for all the troubled; for the orphans in their exposure; for widowhood with its weak arm fighting for bread; for the household which erst resounded with merry voices and pattering feet, now awfully still—broad winged sympathy, like the feathers of the Almighty—warm blooded sympathy, everlasting sympathy—sympathy which shows itself in the grasp of the hand, in the glittering tear of the eye, in the consoling word of the mouth—sympathy of blankets for the cold, of bread for the hungry, of medicine for the sick, of rescue for the lost. Sympathy!

GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR THE PAST.

Let it thrill in every sermon. Let it tremble in every song. Let it gleam in every tear and in every light. Sympathy! Men and women are sighing for sympathy, groaning for sympathy, dying for sympathy, tumbling off into uncleanliness and crime and perdition for lack of sympathy. May God give it to us! Fill all this pulpit with it from step to step. Let the sweep of these galleries suggest its encircling arms. Fill all the house with it from door to door and from floor to ceiling, until there is no more room for it, and it shall overflow into the street, and passers by on foot and in carriage shall feel the throb of its magnificent benediction.

Let that be a new departure as a church. Let that be a new departure as a pastor. Sympathy! Gratitude to God demands that this morning I mention the fact that during all these 24 years I have missed but one service through sickness. When I entered the ministry, I was so delicate I did not think I would preach three months, but preaching has agreed with me, and I think the healthiest thing in all the earth is the religion of Jesus Christ. Bless the Lord, O my soul! What ingrates we are in regard to our health!

I must, in gratitude to God, also mention the multitudes to whom I have been permitted to preach. It is simply miraculous, the attendance morning by morning, night by night and year by year and long after it has got to be an old story. I know some people are dainty and exclusive in their tastes. As for myself, I like a big crowd. I would like to see an audience large enough to scare me. If this gospel is good, the more that get it the better.

Many have received the gospel here, but others have rejected it. Now, I tell you what I am going to do with some of my dearest friends who have hitherto rejected the gospel. You are not afraid of me, and I am not afraid of you, and some day, O brother, I will clasp your hands together, and I will turn your face the other way, and I will take hold of your shoulders, and while you are helpless in my grasp I will give you one headlong push into the kingdom of God. Christ says we must compel you to come in. I will compel you to come in. Can I consent to anything else with these men, who are as dear to me as my own soul? I will compel you to come in.

Profiting by the mistakes of the past, I must do better work for you and better work for God. Lest I might through some sudden illness or casualty be snatched away before I have the opportunity of doing so, I take this occasion to declare my love for you as a people. It is different work if a pastor is placed in a church already built up, and he is surrounded by established circumstances. There are not 10 people in this church that have not been brought into the church through my ministry. You are my family. I feel as much at home here as I do in my residence on Oxford street. You are my family—my father, my mother, my sister, my son, my daughter. You are my joy and crown, the subject of my prayers.

THE PREACHER'S AMBITION.

Your present and everlasting welfare is the object of my ambition. I have no worldly ambition. I had once. I have not now. I know the world about as well as any one knows it. I have heard the hand-clapping of its applause, and I have heard the hiss of its opposition, and I declare to you that the former is not especially to be sought for, nor is the latter to be feared. The world has given me about all the comfort and prosperity it can give a man, and I have no worldly ambition. I have an all consuming ambition to make full proof of my ministry, to get to heaven myself and to take a great crowd with me. Upon your table and cradle and armchair and pillow and lounge and nursery and drawing room and kitchen may the blessing of the Almighty God come down!

During these 24 years there is hardly a family that has not been invaded by sorrow or death. Where are those grand old men, those glorious Christian women, who used to worship with us? Why, they went away into the next world so gradually that they had concluded the second stanza or the third stanza in heaven before you knew they were gone. They had on the crown before you thought they had dropped the staff of the earthly pilgrimage.

And then the dear children! Oh, how many have gone out of this church! You could not keep them. You folded them in your arms and said: "O God, I cannot give them up. Take all else—take my property, take my reputation—but let me keep this treasure. Lord, I cannot bear this."

Oh, if we could all die together, if we could keep all the sheep and the lambs of the family fold together until some bright spring day, the birds a-chant and the waters a-glitter, and then we could altogether hear the voice of the good Shepherd and hand in hand pass through the flood. No, no, no, no! Oh, if we only had notice that we are all to depart together, and we could say to our families: "The time has come. The Lord bids us away." And then we could take our little children to their beds and straighten out their limbs and say: "Now, sleep the last sleep. Good night, until it is good morning." And then we could go to our own couches and say: "Now, altogether we are ready to go. Our children are gone; now let us depart."

No, no! It is one by one. It may be in the midnight. It may be in the winter, and in the snow coming down 20 inches deep over our grave. It may be in the strange hotel and our arm too weak to pull the bell for help. It may be so suddenly we have no time even to say goodby. Death is a bitter, crushing, tremendous curse.

THE HARP OF COMFORT.

I play you three tunes on the gospel harp of comfort. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." That is one. "All things work together for good to those who love God." That is the second. "And the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes." That is the third. During these 24 years I have tried as far as I could, by argument, by illustration and by caricature to fill you with disgust with much of this modern religion which people are trying now to substitute for the religion of Jesus Christ and the religion of the apostles.

I have tried to persuade you that the worst of all cant is the cant of skepticism, and instead of your apologizing for Christianity it was high time that those who do not believe in Christianity should apologize to you, and I have tried to show that the biggest villains in the universe are those who would try to rob us of this Bible, and that the grandest mission of the church of Jesus Christ is that of bringing souls to the Lord—a soul saving church.

But now those years are gone. If you have neglected your duty, if I have neglected my duty, it is neglected forever. Each year has its work. If the work is performed within the 12 months, it is done forever. If neglected, it is neglected forever.

When a woman was dying, she said, "Call them back." They did not know what she meant. She had been a disciple of the world. She said, "Oh, call them back!" They said, "Who do you want us to call back?" "Oh," she said, "call them back, the days, the months, the years. I have wasted. Call them back!" But you cannot call them back. You cannot call a year back, or a month back, or a week back, or an hour back, or a second back. Gone once, it is gone forever.

When a great battle was raging, a messenger came up and said to the general, who was talking with an officer, "General, we have taken a standard from the enemy." The general kept right on conversing with his fellow officer, and the messenger said again, "General, we have taken a standard from the enemy." Still the general kept right on, and the messenger lost his patience, not having his message seemingly appreciated, and said again, "General, we have taken a standard from the enemy." The general then looked at him and said, "Take another." Ah, forgetting the things that are behind, let us look to those that are before. Win another castle; take another standard; gain another victory.

Roll on, sweet day of the world's emancipation, when "the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the wood shall clap their hands, and instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier will come up the myrtle tree, and it shall be unto the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that cannot be cut off."

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON V, SECOND QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, APRIL 30.

Text of the Lesson, Prov. i, 20-33—Memory Verses, 20-23—Golden Text, Heb. xii, 25—Commentary by the Rev. D. M. Stearns.

20. "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets." When we read in the New Testament such words as these, "Christ, the wisdom of God," "Who of God is made unto us wisdom" (I Cor. i, 24, 30), we have no difficulty in understanding who is meant in this book by wisdom. Just as Jesus Christ is both the living personal word and also the written word, so He is wisdom as to His person and as to His utterances. It is no wonder, then, that it is written, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom" (iv, 7).

21. "She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates. In the city she uttereth her words, saying." The great multitude are in the broad way of self and self pleasing, with little or no thought of a hereafter and a day of judgment. They care not for the fact that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and their only thought is pleasure and prosperity here and now (Matt. vii, 13; Gal. vi, 7). Wisdom is represented as calling unto them as they hurry along their downward road.

22. "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" Simple ones, if they believe the devil, are easily led astray. If they believe God, they are easily led aright. If they go astray, they are soon among the scorners and the fools. Yet wisdom loves them and cries unto them: "How long?" "How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" "How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me" (Jer. iv, 14; Ex. x, 3).

23. "Turn you at My reproof; behold I will pour out My Spirit unto you; I will make known My words unto you." He calls so lovingly, so patiently, so perseveringly. "Come unto Me; return unto the Lord; turn, O backsliding children; take with you words and turn to the Lord." These are some of the many words of the Lord to the erring ones as He entreats them to come unto Him (Isa. lv, 3, 7; Jer. iii, 1, 7, 12, 14; Hos. xiv, 2). He only asks us to turn to Him, and He will do all the rest, giving His words and His Spirit. His words which are Spirit and Life (John vi, 63).

24. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded." It does not seem possible that a people who had been so wondrously dealt with could so treat such love, but the human heart is still the same, and the same love on His part is turned away from by those to whom His hands are imploringly stretched out. How is it with you?

25. "But ye have set at naught all My counsel, and would none of My reproof." They mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy (II Chron. xxxvi, 16). They even went so far as to say, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves" (Isa. xxviii, 15). Like the men before the flood, whose houses God filled with good things, they said unto God, "Depart from us; what can the Almighty do for us" (Job xxii, 15-18)?

26. "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, and he that soweth the wind shall reap the whirlwind" (Gal. vi, 7; Hos. viii, 7). Concerning all who take counsel against Him it is written, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. ii, 4), and if His loving invitations are persistently despised we must remember His words, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Luke xiv, 24).

27. "When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you." In due time these things will come upon all who despise His love and make light of His salvation. Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee (Job xxxvi, 18).

28. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time, as they behaved themselves ill in their doings (Mic. iii, 4). He told Jeremiah that the intercession of Moses and Samuel could not save the nation, and He told Ezekiel that the presence of Noah, Daniel and Job would be of no avail (Jer. xv, 1; Ezek. xiv, 14, 20). Sin may become so great that nothing will do but judgment.

29. "For that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord." They say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways (Job xxi, 14). The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a foundation of life, a great treasure (Prov. i, 7; ix, 10; xiv, 27; Isa. xxxiii, 6). But they had no reverence for God, no respect for His ways, no gratitude for His gifts. The fool says there is no God, and many a one who would not say this wishes that there was no God. The carnal mind is enmity against God (Rom. viii, 7).

30. "They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof." Our Lord Jesus said that whosoever heard His words, but did them not, was like a man building on sand, only to have everything swept away (Matt. vii, 26, 27).

31. "Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices." Their own wickedness will correct them and their backslidings reprove them. Hear, O earth; behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words (Jer. ii, 19; vi, 19). If people will not receive the truth, God will let them receive delusion and a lie (II Thess. ii, 10-12). He simply lets them have their own way, with its consequences, if they insist on having it.

32. "For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." To turn away from God is to turn one's back on the only source of love and light. It is to choose darkness rather than light (John iii, 19).

33. "But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from fear of evil." What a wonderful salvation our wonderful Lord has provided for His enemies if they will only turn to Him in true penitence. Life, eternal life, abundant pardon, forgiveness of all sins, with the assurance of there being no more remembered, an inheritance incorruptible, a joint heirship with Jesus Christ, with the promise of all things temporal and spiritual that we can possibly need.