Peninsula Enterprise.

VOLUME XXI. ACCOMAC C. H., VA., SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1902. NUMBER 40.

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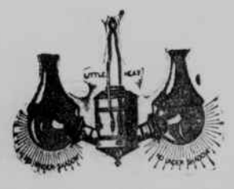

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Talmage Sermon

Washington, April 6.—In the following discourse, prepared by Dr. Talmage before his illness, a vivid glimpse of the splendors and glories of heavenly life is presented; text, Revelation viii, 1, "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

The busiest place in the universe is heaven. It is the center from which all good influences start; it is the goal at which all good results arrive. The Bible represents it as active with wheels and wings and orchestras and processions mounted or charioted. But my text describes a space when the wheels ceased to roll and the trumpets to sound and the voices to chant. The riders on the white horses reined in their charges. The doxologies were hushed and processions halted. The hand of arrest was upon all the splendors. "Stop, heaven!" cried an omnipotent voice, and it stopped. For thirty minutes everything celestial stood still. "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

From all we can learn it is the only time heaven ever stopped. It does not stop as other cities for the night, for there is no night there. It does not stop for a plague, for the inhabitant never says, "I am sick." It does not stop for bankruptcies, for its inhabitants never fail. It does not stop for impassable streets, for there are no fallen snows or sweeping freshets. What, then, stopped it for thirty minutes? Grotius and Professor Stuart think it was at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Lord thinks it was in the year 311, between the close of the Diocletian persecution and the beginning of the wars by which Constantine gained the throne. But that was all a guess, though a learned and brilliant guess. I do not know when it was, and I do not care when it was, but of the fact that such an interregnum of sound took place I am certain. "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

And, first of all, we learn that God and all heaven then honored silence. The longest and widest dominion that ever existed is that over which stillness was queen. For an eternity there had not been a sound. World making was a later day occupation. For unimaginable ages it was a mute universe. God was the only being, and as there was no one to speak to there was no utterance. But that silence has all been broken up into worlds, and it has become a noisy universe. Worlds in upheaval, worlds in congelation, worlds in conflagration, worlds in revolution.

The Power of Silence.

If geologists are right—and I believe they are—there has not been a moment of silence since this world began its travels, and the crashing and the splitting and the uproar and the hubbub are ever in progress. But when among the supernals a voice cried, "Hush!" and for half an hour heaven was still, silence was honored. The full power of silence many of us have yet to learn. We are told that when Christ was arraigned "he answered not a word." That silence was louder than any thunder that ever shook the world. Oftentimes when we are assailed and misrepresented the mightiest thing to say is to say nothing and the mightiest thing to do is to do nothing. Those people who are always rushing into print to get themselves set right accomplish nothing but their own chagrin. Silence! Do right and leave the results with God. Among the grandest lessons the world has ever learned are the lessons of patience taught by those who endured uncomplainingly personal or domestic or political injustice. Stronger than any bitter or sarcastic or revengeful answer is the patient silence.

The famous Dr. Morrison of Chelsea achieved as much by his silent patience as by his pen and tongue. He had asthma that for twenty five years brought him out of his couch at 2 o'clock each morning. His four sons and daughters dead, the remaining child by sunstroke made insane, the afflicted man once said, "At this moment there is not an inch of my body that is not filled with agony." Yet he was cheerful, triumphant, silent. Those who were in his presence said they felt as though they were in the gates of heaven. Oh, the power of patient silence! Æschylus, the immortal poet, was condemned to death for writing something that offended the people. All the pleas in his behalf were of no avail until his brother uncovered the arm of the prisoner and showed that his hand had been shot off at Salamis. That silent plea liberated him. The loudest thing on earth is silence if it be of the right kind and at the right time. There was a quaint old hymn spelled in the old style and once sung in the churches:

The race is not forever got
By him who fastest runs
Nor the Battel by those peopell
That shoot with the longest guns.

My friends, the tossing sea of Galilee seemed most to offend Christ by the amount of noise it made, for he said to it, "Be still!" Heaven has been crowning kings and queens unto God for many centuries, yet heaven never stopped a moment for any such occurrence, but it stopped thirty minutes for the coronation of silence. "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

Heaven an Eventful Place.

Learn also from my text that heaven must be an eventful and active place from the fact that it could afford only thirty minutes of recess. There have been events on earth and in heaven that seemed to demand a whole day or whole week or whole year for celestial consideration. If Grotius was right and this silence occurred at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, that scene was so awful and so prolonged that the inhabitants of heaven could not have done justice to it in many weeks. After fearful besiegement of the two fortresses of Jerusalem, Antonia and Hippicus, had been going on for a long while, a Roman soldier, mounted on the shoulder of another soldier, hurled into the window of the temple a firebrand, and the temple was all aflame, and after covering many sacrifices to the holiness of God the building itself became a sacrifice to the rage of man. The hunger of the people in that city during the besiegement was so great that as some outlaws were passing a doorway and inhaled the odors of food they burst open the door, threatening the mother of the household with death unless she gave them some food, and she took them aside and showed them that it was her own child she was cooking for the ghastly repast. Six hundred priests were destroyed on Mount Zion because, the temple being gone, there was nothing for them to do. Six thousand people in one cloister were consumed. There were 1,100,000 dead according to Josephus. Grotius thinks that this was the cause of silence in heaven for half an hour. If Mr. Lord was right, and this silence was during the Diocletian persecutions, by which 844,000 Christians suffered death from sword and fire and banishment and exposure, why did not heaven listen throughout at least one of those awful years? No! Thirty minutes! The fact is that the celestial programme is so crowded with spectacle that it can afford only one recess in all eternity, and that for a short space. While there are great choruses in which all heaven can join, each soul there has a story of divine mercy peculiar to itself, and it must be a solo. How can heaven get through with all its recitatives, with all its cantatas, with all its grand marches, with all its victories? Eternity is too short to utter all the praise.

In my text heaven spared thirty minutes, but it will never again spare one minute. In worship in earthly churches where there are many to take part we have to counsel brevity, but how will heaven get on rapidly enough to let one hundred and forty-four thousand get through each with his own story and then one hundred and forty-four million and then one hundred and forty-four billion and then one hundred and forty-four trillion? Not only are all the triumphs of the past to be commemorated, but all the triumphs to come. Not only what we now know of God, but what we will know of him after everlasting study of the deific. If my text had said there was silence in heaven for thirty days, I would not have been startled at the announcement, but it indicates thirty minutes. Why, there will be so many friends to hunt up, so many of the greatly good and useful that we will want to see, so many of the inscrutable things of earth we will need explained, so many exciting earthly experiences we will want to talk over, and all the other spirits and all the ages will want the same, that there will be no more opportunity for cessation. How busy we will be kept in having pointed out to us the heroes and heroines that the world never fully appreciated—the yellow fever and cholera doctors who died, not flying from their posts; the female nurses who faced pestilence in the lazarettos; the railroad engineers who stayed at their places in order to save the train, though they themselves perished. Hubert Goffin, the master miner, who, landing from the bucket at the bottom of the mine just as he heard the waters rush in and when one jerk of the rope would have lifted him into safety, put in the bucket a blind miner who wanted to go to his sick child and jerked the rope for him to be pulled up, crying, "Tell them the water has burst in and we are probably lost, but we will seek refuge at the other end of the right gallery," and then giving the command to the other miners till they digged themselves so near out that the people from the outside could come to their rescue. The multitudes of men and women who got no crown on earth we will want to see when they get their crown in heaven. I tell you heaven will have no more half hours to spare.

Besides that, heaven is full of children. They are in the vast majority. No child on earth who amounts to anything can be kept quiet half an hour, and how are you going to keep five hundred million of them quiet half an hour? You know heaven is much more of a place than it was when that recess of thirty minutes occurred. Its population has quadrupled, sextupled, centupled. Heaven has more on hand, more of rapture, more of knowledge, more of intercommunication, more of worship. The most thrilling place we have ever been in is stupid compared with that, and, if we now have no time to spare, we will then have no eternity to spare. Silence in heaven only half an hour!

That Immortal Half Hour.

My subject also impresses me with the immortality of a half hour. That half hour mentioned in my text is more widely known than any other period in the calendar of heaven. None of the whole hours of heaven is measured off, none of the years, none of the centuries. Of the millions of ages past and the millions of ages to come not one is especially measured off in the Bible. But the half hour of my text is made immortal. The only part of eternity that was ever measured by earthly timepiece was measured by the minute hand of my text. Oh, the half hours! They decide everything. I am not asking what you will do with the years or months or days of your life, but what of the half hours? Tell me the history of your half hours and I will tell you the story of your whole life on earth and the story of your whole life in eternity. The right or wrong things you can think in thirty minutes, the right or wrong things you can say in thirty minutes, the right or wrong things you can do in thirty minutes are glorious or baleful, inspiring or desperate.

Look out for the fragments of time. They are pieces of eternity. It was the half hours between shoeing horses that made Elihu Burritt the learned blacksmith, the half hours between professional calls as a physician that made Abercrombie the Christian philosopher, the half hours between his duties as schoolmaster that made Salmon P. Chase chief justice, the half hours between shoe lasts that made Henry Wilson vice president of the United States, the half hours between canalboats that made James A. Garfield president. The half hour a day for good books or bad books, the half hour a day for prayer or indolence, the half hour a day for helping others or blasting others, the half hour before you go to business and the half hour after you return from business—that makes the difference between the scholar and the ignoramus, between the Christian and the infidel, between the saint and the demon, between triumph and catastrophe, between heaven and hell. The most tremendous things of your life and mine were certain half hours. The half hour when in the parsonage of a country minister I resolved to become a Christian then and there, the half hour when I decided to become a preacher of the gospel, the half hour when I first realized that my son was dead, the half hour when I stood on the top of my house in Oxford street and saw our church burn, the half hour in which I entered Jerusalem, the half hour in which I stopped on Mount Calvary, the half hour in which I stood on Mars hill and about ten or fifteen other half hours are the chief times of my life. You may forget the name of the exact years or most of the important events of your existence, but those half hours, like the half hour of my text, will be immortal. I do not query what you will do with the twentieth century, I do not query what you will do with this year, but what will you do with the next half hour? Upon that hinges your destiny, and during that some of you will receive the gospel and make complete surrender, and during that others of you will make final and fatal rejection of the full and free and urgent and impassioned offer of life eternal. Oh, that the next half hour might be the most glorious thirty minutes of your earthly existence!

Far back in history a great geographer stood with a sailor looking at a globe that represented our planet, and he pointed to a place on the globe where he thought there was an undiscovered continent. The undiscovered continent was America. The geographer who pointed where he thought there was a new world was Martin Behaim and the sailor to whom he showed it was Columbus. This last was not satisfied till he had picked that gem out of the sea and set it in the crown of the world's geography. O ye who have been sailing up and down the rough seas of sorrow and sin, let me point out to you another continent—yea, another world—that you may yourself find, a rapturous world, and that is the world a half hour of which we now study! Oh, set sail for it! Here is the ship and here are the compasses. In other words, make this half hour the grandest half hour of your life and become a Christian. Pray for a regenerated spirit. Louis XIV., while walking in the garden at Versailles, met Mansard, the great architect, and the architect took off his hat before the king. "Put on your hat," said the king, "for the evening is damp and cold." And Mansard, the architect, the rest of the evening kept on his hat. The dukes and marquises, standing with bare heads before the king, expressed their surprise at Mansard, but the king said, "I can make a duke or a marquis, but only God can make a Mansard." And I say to you, my hearers, only God by his convicting and converting grace can make a Christian, but he is ready this very half hour to accomplish it.

"Forever and Ever."

Again, my text suggests a way of studying heaven so that we can better understand it. The word "eternity" that we can handle so much is an immeasurable world. Knowing that we could not understand that word, the Bible uses it only once. We say "forever and ever." But how long is "forever and ever?" I am glad that my text puts under our eye heaven for thirty minutes. As when you see a great picture, you put a sheet of paper into a scroll and look through it or join your forefinger to your thumb and look through the circle between, and the picture becomes more intense, so this masterpiece of heaven by St. John is more impressive when we take only thirty minutes of it at a time. Now, we have something that we can come nearer to grasping, and it is a quiet heaven. When we discourse about the multitudes of heaven, it must be almost a nervous shock to those who have all their lives been crowded by many people and who want a quiet heaven. For the last thirty-five years I have been much of the time in crowds and under public scrutiny and amid excitements, and I have sometimes thought for a few weeks after I reach heaven I would like to go down in some quiet part of the realm, with a few friends, and for a little while try comparative solitude. Then there are those whose hearing is so delicate that they get no satisfaction when you describe the crash of the eternal orchestra, and they feel like saying, as a good woman in Hudson, N. Y., said after hearing me speak of the mighty chorus of heaven, "That must be a great heaven, but what will become of my poor head?" Yes, this half hour of my text is a still experience. "There was silence in heaven for half an hour."

A Glimpse of the King's Palace.

You will find the inhabitants all at home. Enter the King's palace and take only a glimpse, for we have only thirty minutes for all heaven. "Is that Jesus?" "Yes." Just under the hair along his forehead is the mark of a wound made by a bunch of twisted brambles, and his foot on the throne has on the round of his instep another mark of a wound made by a spike, and a scar on the palm of the right hand and a scar on the palm of the left hand. But what a countenance! What a smile! What a grandeur! What a loveliness! What an overwhelming look of kindness and grace! Why, he looks as if he had redeemed a world! But come on, for our time is short. Do you see that row of palaces? That is the Apostolic row. Do you see that long reach of architectural glories? That is Martyr row. Do you see that immense structure? That is the biggest house in heaven; that is "the house of many mansions." Do you see that wall? Shade your eyes against its burning splendor, for that is the wall of heaven, jasper at the bottom and amethyst at the top. See this river rolling through the heart of the great metropolis? That is the river concerning which those who once lived on the banks of the Hudson or the Alabama or the Rhine or the Shannon say, "We never saw the like of this for clarity and sheen." That is the chief river of heaven—so bright, so wide, so deep. But you ask, "Where are the asylums for the old?" I answer, "The inhabitants are all young." "Where are the hospitals for the lame?" "They are all agile." "Where are the infirmaries for the blind and deaf?" "They all see and hear." "Where are the almshouses for the poor?" "They are all multimillionaires." "Where are the inebriate asylums?" "Why, there are no saloons." "Where are the graveyards?" "Why, they never die." Pass down those boulevards of gold and amber and sapphire and see those interminable streets built by the Architect of the universe into homes, over the threshold of which sorrow never steps and out of whose windows faces, once pale with earthly sickness, now look rubicund with immortal health.

"Oh, let me go in and see them!" you say. No, you cannot go in. There are those who would never consent to let you come out again. You say, "Let me stay here in this place where they never sin, where they never suffer, where they never part." No, no! Our time is short, our thirty minutes are almost gone. Come on! We must get back to earth before this half hour of heavenly silence breaks up, for in your mortal state you cannot endure the pomp and splendor and resonance when this half hour of silence is ended. The day will come when you can see heaven in full blast, but not now. I am now only showing you heaven at the dullest half hour of all the eternities. Come on! There is something in the celestial appearance which makes me think that the half hour of silence will soon be over. Yonder are the white horses being hitched to chariots, and yonder are seraphs fingering harps as if about to strike them into symphony, and yonder are conquerors taking down from the blue halls of heaven the trumpets of victory. Remember we are mortal yet and cannot endure the full roll of heavenly harmonies and cannot endure even the silent heaven for more than half an hour. Hark! The clock in the tower of heaven begins to strike, and the half hour is ended. Descend! Come back! Come down till your work is done. Shoulder a little longer your burdens. Fight a little longer your battles. Weep a little longer your griefs. And then take heaven not in its dullest half hour, but in its mightiest pomp, and, instead of taking it for thirty minutes, take it world without end.

Entering Into Heavenly Citizenship.

But how will you spend the first half hour of your heavenly citizenship after you have gone in to stay? After your prostration before the throne in worship of him who made it possible for you to get there at all I think the rest of your first half hour in heaven will be passed in receiving your reward if you have been faithful. I have a strangely beautiful book containing the pictures of the medals struck by the English government in honor of great battles. These medals are pinned over the heart of the returned heroes of the army on great occasions, the royal family present and the royal bands playing—the Crimean medal, the medal of the mutiny, the Victoria cross, the Waterloo medal. In your first half hour in heaven in some way you will be honored for the earthly struggles in which you won the day. Stand up before all the royal house of heaven and receive the insignia while you are announced as victor over the drafts and freshets of the farm field, victor over the temptations of the Stock Exchange, victor over professional allurements, victor over domestic infelicities, victor over mechanic's shop, victor over the storehouse, victor over home worriments, victor over physical distresses, victor over hereditary depressions, victor over sin and death and hell. Take the badge that celebrates those victories through our Lord Jesus Christ. Take it in the presence of all the galleries, saintly, angelic and divine, while all heaven chants, "These are they who came out of great tribulation and had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb."

Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer though they die;
They see the triumph from afar
And seize it with their eye.

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Crushing a Senator.

Senator Dolliver of Iowa tells this story on himself, which is expected to illustrate the difficulty a man of small means finds in getting along at the national capital. As a representative he found little trouble, but when he became senator he found he had a much more pretentious title to support.

"On one occasion," says Senator Dolliver, "I was invited to attend a social function given by a high official. I went and had a most delightful time, concluding that Washington social life was not a thing to be in the least afraid of. This conclusion was reached, by the way, just as I was taking leave of the host.

"A liveried servant approached me and asked if my carriage was waiting and whether it was a single or double conveyance. Out of consideration for a lean pocketbook I had ordered a cab rather than a two horse carriage. As I was taking leave of a few of my friends outside the door I had the pleasure of hearing the servant shouting to the carriage drivers:

"'Senator Dolliver's one hoss hack! Senator Dolliver's one hoss hack!'

"The man then came to me and, with his head high in the air, announced, 'Your hack's waitin', Senator Dolliver.'"

Her Opportunity.

"Mrs. Weeds," said Mr. Binks, "I asked your daughter to marry me, and she referred me to you."

"I'm sure that's very kind of Susie; but, then, she always was a dutiful girl. Really, Mr. Binks, I hadn't thought of marrying again at my time of life, but since you insist suppose we make the wedding day the 20th of this month."—New York Press.

Merely an Opinion.

"There's only one thing more rash than marrying for money."

"What is it—marrying to win a bet?"

"No—marrying without money."—New York Commercial Advertiser.

Even So.

Little Elmer—Papa, what is it that makes a statesman great?

Professor Broadhead—Death, my son.—Harper's Bazar.

A LUCULLIAN REPAST.

Whistler's Supper of Cold Lamb For a New York Artist.

Alden Weir, the New York artist, relates an amusing story of how he became acquainted with the eccentric J. A. MacNeill Whistler. Weir was one day copying one of the old masters in the National gallery, in London, when he became conscious of a man passing to and fro once or twice behind him. The man paused and, looking over the painter's shoulder, murmured, "Not bad!"

But Weir was engrossed in his work and gave no heed to the passing comment. After looking around a bit more the stranger stopped again and repeated, "Not bad; not bad at all!"

Mr. Weir turned slightly, bowed acknowledgment and resumed his painting. The stranger, whom he had not turned far enough around to look at, stood still and presently spoke once more. "I'm Whistler; I'm Whistler," he said.

Weir turned full around then, and there stood the arch maker of enemies ready to make a friend. Mr. Weir found a way of making himself known without saying "I'm Weir," and Whistler was delighted. He was all affability and insisted that the New Yorker dine with him at his club. The day was by that time spent, and painting time had passed, but Weir had planned to leave London at 10 p. m. and had packed his luggage preparatory to doing so before going to the gallery, expecting to dine quickly and take his train alone.

Whistler was insistent, however, and Weir went to his hotel, unpacked and clad himself for dinner, Whistler agreeing to call for him at 7 o'clock. The hour came, but no Whistler, and another hour went by and still no Whistler and no word from him. Weir never gets angry, it is said, but he changed his clothes again and his mind about his eccentric compatriot at the same time and prepared for his journey and a late snack in lieu of a dinner. At that moment Whistler was announced. He was all elegance and apologies. The genial Weir forgave much and started with his host for the club, concluding that the 10 o'clock train would not carry him away that night after all.

At the door of the club Whistler halted abruptly, remarking that he was no more a member of that club and so couldn't take his guest there. "But we'll go to my house," he said reassuringly, "and make up with a supper of cold lamb."

The dignified Weir had become limp by this time and very faint. He went along. As they passed in at Whistler's door Whistler asked the astute butler if he had a bit of cold lamb, and the butler said he thought so. Whistler asked his guest to remain for a few moments in a small reception room, promising to return for him directly. The minutes lengthened, hunger strengthened, and the host shamefully kept away. Men and women in evening dress arrived and passed up stairs from time to time. Weir was left alone. He began to suspect Whistler of many things.

At last the apologetic host reappeared and led Mr. Weir into a company of his friends whom he had invited to a Lucullian repast, and the New York guest has been known to refer to the evening since, notwithstanding the exigencies of the moment, as a particularly jolly one.—Argonaut.

The Country's Pie Center.

The pie center of the country is Brockton, Mass. It claims all kinds of records, and from the figures of its industry it deserves recognition. For pie-making and pie eating, for big pies and little pies, for thin pies and thick pies, for light pies and heavy pies, it is willing to enter the arena against any city in the Union, barring none.

Three factories alone turn out 365,000 pies every year, but this is only a small portion of the city's pie industry. The 10,000 inhabitants consume about 3,000 pies daily, or over 1,000,000 each year. If laid in a straight line, edge to edge, they would make a pie bicycle path from Boston to Chicago. At 10 cents each, and they are worth more than that, Brockton consumes $2.50 worth of pie per citizen each year.

The champion piemaker of the town is a boarding house keeper, Mrs. Viola V. King. Her record last year was 5,605 pies, or about thirteen pies a day for every day in the year. The holder of second place in the piemaking industry is another boarding house keeper, Mrs. Margaret Caskin, proprietress of the Empire House, who has 2,840 pies to her credit.—Philadelphia North American.

Crusade Against Profanity.

A very strong and commendable crusade is being made at this time against profanity. In many cities and towns of the state there have been organizations effected to do away with this careless and sinful habit. The evil is widespread and has not been confined to one class of persons, and it is high time that pure speech be the rule among all classes and that God's name be honored and hallowed, that it be held as sacred and more so than that of mother or father, for God not only demands it, but he is entitled to our most heartfelt gratitude and reverence. Slang is too prevalent in conversation and in song. Even the pulpit is not altogether free from its use. Other agencies help to spread phrases and words not of the choicest and best character.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Queen Alexandra's Lucky Shot.

Many years ago Queen Alexandra visited Elsley and was invited to try her fortune at the targets at a distance of 600 yards. The rifle was placed in position for her, and with her first shot she hit the bullseye. This rifle is now one of her most treasured possessions and is preserved in a glass case in one of her private rooms at Sandringham.—London Standard.

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