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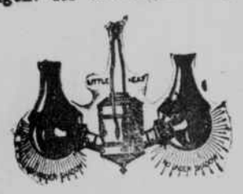

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Talmage Sermon

By Rev. Frank De Witt Talmage, D. D.

Los Angeles, Cal., Nov. 19.—For the old folks, the young folks, the influential and the humble there are words of cheer and congratulation in this sermon, as well as encouragement in well doing. The text is Romans xvi, 9, "Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved."

Have you ever wandered over any of the great battlefields of the world? Have you ever had a guide lead you over the blood soaked soil of Gettysburg? Then you have been struck with the fact that no one squad, no one company, no one regiment, no one brigade, no one division alone fought that battle. The success of General George G. Meade or of Robert E. Lee depended not more upon the generals being faithful than upon all the colonels and majors and captains and sergeants and corporals and private soldiers being faithful and working together and in unison. The difference between a conquering army and a mob is the difference between men working together in an intelligent way to achieve a desired purpose and a conglomerate collection of individuals, each claiming that his own will is the equal, if not the superior, of all the other wills and intelligences about him.

What is true of the army is absolutely true in reference to business. How is the Panama canal to be dug? By the United States commissioners appointed by the president? By the chief engineer? By the contractors? Oh, no. As in the mercantile establishment, the buyers, the advertising agents, the floorwalkers, the salesmen, the delivery wagons, all work together in unison and each as a co-operative agent helps the other, so in the Panama canal all the different departments are working together. Each man is helped by some other man, and each man tries to help the other men. Now, what is true in the army and in the business and in the contractor's world is equally true in regard to church work. Here we do not find the minister himself doing all the work. Paul himself could not do it. He had his helpers, his associates, his workers. He himself tells us that Urbane and Stachys were his associates in God's work. Neither can the church members make a successful church unless there is co-operation in the pulpit. Thus the purpose of my sermon today is to show you who are the minister's best friends; who are the men and the women upon whom he should most wisely lean and whose advice he should be most anxious to follow. I speak thus not only to help the pew, but also to answer letters which have come to me from all parts of the country, written by young ministers, asking what course they should take in reference to their church work.

Who are the minister's best friends? In the first place, they are the old folks. They are the men and the women who have been walking with Jesus Christ twenty, forty, fifty or even sixty years. They are the church members whose hair is white, whose step is often infirm and whose hearing sometimes must have the sounding board of the palm of the hand back of the ear in order to hear the sermons aright. But, though their eyes may be weak and their hearing muffled, with those eyes they have been reading the promises of God, and with those ears they have been listening to his words of comfort through many dark trials which have come to them year in and year out perhaps for half a century. Now, my friends, the minister of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot afford to turn his back upon such counselors; neither can the church members themselves afford to stop their ears to the words of advice which these aged Christians can speak out of their past experiences.

The Value of Experience.

Is not the man of experience in the temporal world to be more followed than the young stripling whose knowledge consists only of theories and generalities? Suppose you had a very serious illness, suppose a dangerous operation had to be performed upon you, for whom would you send? Would you call the young doctor who last year graduated at the head of his medical class, brilliant though he might be? No. You would send for such a man as Dr. Hamilton, who stood by the bedside of James A. Garfield, or for a man like Dr. Janeway, who came as fast as revolving wheels could carry him to the bedside of William McKinley, or for a skillful practitioner like Sir Morell Mackenzie, who looked into the diseased throat of Crown Prince Frederick. These were all old men. For years and years and years they had been examining throats and cutting away diseased tissues.

Suppose you are going to ascend the Ganges, the most dangerous navigable river of the world. Every day the current of that river changes. The banks are strewn with the bleaching bones of ships which were allowed to rot in the sun when their keels were beached. Would you send for the brilliant laced staff officer of India's viceroy? Nay. You would send for the old, grizzled, white haired pilot who for years and years has been running up and down that dangerous stream. He knows by experience where the currents run and where are the dangerous sand bars. He may be cranky. He may be gruff and fault finding, but he is imperious and peremptory because he knows the dangers and knows how many lives and valuable ca[illegible] been lost in that winding stream. Now, my friends, whose advice should the minister most willingly follow—the young men who know but little about Christ and who have only been church members for a few months, the younger men who have not risen to the high plane where they can drop their selfish ambitions, or the old men who know that their lives are nearly run and whose only object is to serve their church during the few years that are left? I want to tell all ministers and all church members that any minister or any church which gets out of the habit of honoring and following the advice of the old folks is heading toward almost certain shipwreck. The older members of the church intuitively know when any proposed course is right, and they intuitively know when it is wrong. Better, rather, heed the advice of the old Christians than any other class of laymen.

Love of the Old For the Young.

"But," says some young minister or Christian Endeavorer, "the difficulty with the old folks is that they are out of sympathy with the young folks. What are we to do when they do not sympathize with us?" My young friend, you are mistaken. The old church members are not out of sympathy with the young folks when they are acting wisely. It is only when they are rash and imprudent. Furthermore, of all admirers and helpers whom the young minister has in his congregation no class is more loyal to him than the white haired elders and their wives. As a rule when men and women grow old they do not want to go to old people's homes and associate with old people, but they want to associate with the young. Especially do they love to have a young man for their pastor. When my father, a very young man, was called to Syracuse, N. Y., the most prominent man in that part of the state was a member of his congregation. He was at that time over eighty years of age. In legislative halls he had sat the contemporary and the compeer of Clay and Webster, and he himself was one of the giants of the bar. My father was at that time undeveloped and immature. Yet every Sunday this big brained, silver tongued orator sat at his feet, as William E. Gladstone sat at the feet of his own son in the little church of Hawarden. One day a friend came to him and said, "Well, senator, how do you like the young preacher?" With that the old man answered: "I am a very old man. I have seen and heard much. But I believe the young man is truly trying to serve his Master. Therefore I shall do all I can to help him. Besides, my friend, the older a man grows the more he likes young men and young men's preaching!" Oh, ye young men in the gospel pulpit, hear it! The best friends a young minister has are the old folks. Beware when the voices of the aged are not heeded in your church councils. When a young minister gets out of touch with the older members of his congregation he is always out of touch with the best interests of his church and out of touch with the real teachings of Jesus Christ.

But the next class of a minister's best friends to whom I wish to call your attention are the prayer meeting people. I allude to those who, week in and week out, month in and month out, year in and year out, every Wednesday night as far as they are able always wend their way to the week night service as regularly and as conscientiously as they go to the breakfast table in the morning and come home after their business at night. These prayer meeting folks do not always belong to the wealthy classes. Their wardrobes are not always filled with silks and broadcloths. Some of them during the day may have had on the overalls of a carpenter or a mason, or they may have held in their hands the order book of a grocery clerk. But these prayer meeting people, whether they be rich or poor, are the most valuable people of the church—that is, of course, excepting some of the older folks, who, on account of their physical infirmities, are unable to be out. It is not by running after silver and gold and social position that the minister is to build up his church. It is by finding his cabinet and his church leaders among the men and women of spiritual power, who improve every opportunity to acquaint themselves with the word of God and gain the unction of the Spirit at the altar of prayer.

Living the Christ Life.

This was the way Dr. Charles H. Hall, the great Episcopalian rector of Trinity church, Brooklyn, built up his parishes. When he was a young man he went forth, I believe, as a missionary to the negroes of the Bermudas. Far away from home, among these black men and women who could neither read nor write, he felt he had but little use for his books of classic lore. So he left them all behind and took along with him his Bible. He devoted himself to the study of the gospels and the teachings of Jesus. He not only read and reread those gospels, but he tried to live that life among his ignorant congregation. The result was that when he came back to America and some of the great pulpits of the country called him he knew nothing but Jesus. He preached Christ. He lived Christ. So absorbed was he in the life of Christ that he leaned entirely upon those who knew Christ and were trying to live this life. And the result was Charles H. Hall's churches, wherever he went, speedily took on new life. The rich and the poor crowded his churches together, not because he sought the rich or those of social position, but because he tried to lead all men to be followers of the Nazarene. Ah, yes, when we place the men and the women of the prayer meeting in the prominent positions of our churches, then our churches grow mighty in spite of the sin and the temptations of the world.

But how prone the young minister is to follow after those who are rich or socially strong in a community and yet not noted for their Christian consecration! How common it is for the rich merchant to be the president of the board of trustees, even though he be not a church member. How easy it is for the young minister to yield to the worldly elements of his congregation who want fine music in the choir loft, even though that music has to be rendered by men and women who never have professed Christ as their Saviour and who are notorious for their indifference to all things sacred and divine! How liable the minister is to lean upon those who never lean upon Jesus and then to expect his people to be spiritual people! God forbid that in any church the pastor should seek for his chief advisers and leaders those who think more of the cut of their outer garments than they do of their inner consecration, for those who would sooner go to a ball or a card party or a theater than to the house of prayer! When the leaders of a church are unsanctified they become the leaven which leavens the church loaf.

But there is still another class to whom I wish to call your attention. The new minister's best friends are always to be found among those who were the best friends of the minister who preceded him in that pulpit. They are to be found among those who are always ready to praise their last minister's virtues and never allude to his failings. They will tell you their last pastor had the loveliest wife and the finest children and the happiest of homes. They will say: "Yes, our old pastor was a good man. I never sat at his feet without receiving a blessing from his sermons." And these friends of the old minister did receive a blessing from every one of his sermons. And they will receive a blessing from every one of the new minister's sermons. As they were friends to the old minister, so they will be friends of the new.

The New Love Versus the Old.

But there are always some people who think they cannot prove their love for the new minister unless they tell him all the faults of the old. No sooner is the new minister installed than these false friends gather around him. "Ah," they will say, "I am so glad you are to be our pastor. We have needed you for the last five years. This is the age of young men. Our old pastor was too old. He was worn out. He has been dead for the last twenty years and was not conscious of the fact. The young people did not like him. And then his wife was an invalid. Oh, I am glad you have not a sick wife. Then our old pastor's children wanted all the offices. His daughter was the head of our Christian Endeavor society, and his son was usher in the chief aisle, and his sister was the head of our primary department. But everything now is going to be different. We have you, and all will be well." Yes; things will be different, but only in name. Young men, you who are about to enter the Christian ministry, always fight shy of the church members who would try to praise you at the expense of the noble men of God who gave the best of their lives to your pulpit before you came to it. If they are untrue to your predecessors, they will be untrue to you. I always have my suspicions of the man who, to show his love and devotion to his second wife, has to spend most of his honeymoon in planting Canada thistles and poison ivy upon the grave of his first.

Would that some people who find so much fault with their old pastors might receive the rebuke which a minister gave to his daughter who was criticising an absent friend! The daughter was saying her friend was "odd" and "peculiar." "Yes," answered the old father, "she certainly is odd and peculiar. She is so odd and peculiar that she was never heard to speak ill of an absent friend." I like that. We cannot be untrue to our absent friends and at the same time true to those who are by our side. We cannot be untrue to our pastors who are gone and true to those who are now preaching in our pulpits.

But there is yet another criterion by which you can judge a minister's best friends. They are to be numbered among those who do not love their church so much that they are blinded to the gospel duties which are calling them outside of the four walls of that church. They are the Christians who realize that as there is one family living within the four walls of the home so there is a church family living within the four walls of the church. They strive to fulfill their obligations not only to their own family and the church family, but to those outside who do not yet know Christ. The church family is a very important family, but it does not represent the whole human race. Now, as every father and mother must help care for the wants of their indigent neighbors, so every church family should and must care for the spiritual wants of the great heathen outside world. Therefore the church member who simply says "Let us care for our own church, for our own pulpit and pew and Sunday school" is not a true Christian. The true church member is the one who has the missionary spirit and who realizes his duty to China and Africa and Persia and India as well as to his own city and neighborhood. Yet it is at this vital missionary point that so many of our would be minister's best friends fail.

An Eastern Parable.

It is only by our spiritual scattering that we can gather in, and it is only by laying down our lives that we can save them. An old eastern parable goes thus: A merchant was about to go into a far country. He gave to two friends a couple of sacks of wheat apiece. He said, "Take care of these for me until I return." Years passed, and the merchant returned. He said to his friends, "Where is my wheat?" The first returned to him his two bags of wheat, which he had kept for the merchant in a storehouse. The grain was mildewed and useless. The second friend took the merchant out upon the hillside and showed him his fields below in the valley waving with golden headed wheat ready for the sickle. "There is your wheat. I have grown it all for you. It is all yours." Then said the master: "Give me my two sacks of grain back, and the rest shall be yours." So it is in the missionary work of the church. When our church leaders help us to scatter the gospel seed upon the other side of the sea they have faith that God will give us a tenfold, a hundredfold blessing. It is not when a church lives for itself that it prospers, but when it lives for others. Scatter your missionary seed, and the abundant spiritual harvest shall be yours.

But, lastly, I remark that the minister's best friends are to be found among those who are ready and willing to work in inconspicuous places. These best friends are not the men who want to push their way into the highest places of the synagogue. They are the men and the women who are ready to take the humble places, the insignificant places, the places which, as a rule, but few people want to fill, and because these men and women are willing to take humble positions, how great a temptation it is for the minister to give the highest positions to those who will not work in the church unless they get these high positions! I have never found a true, loyal friend to a minister unless that friend was as willing to work in an inconspicuous as in a conspicuous place.

This nation can well rest her safety upon the loyalty of her people. Men of all classes, if necessary, are willing to die for her in the ranks as common soldiers and sailors. Commander Bronson, late of the Yankee, one of our naval gunboats, tells this most interesting experience of his: The warship was rounding a cape and encountering a heavy sea. One of his sailors was at the wheel. The commander watched the man for a little while, then he said, "You steer very well, my man." The common sailor saluted and answered, "I thank you, sir." "Have you been practicing much since joining the ship?" "No." "Well, then, where did you learn to steer so well?" With that the common sailor replied: "All along the Atlantic coast, sir. For years I have been accustomed to steer my own steam yacht." There was one of the scions of a wealthy New York family working as a common sailor. Aye, that country is safe whose wealthy men are ready to sacrifice for it like that. And that church is safe which is filled with members who are ready to work in the inconspicuous places as well as in the conspicuous. And, my friends, as a minister I again want to add my testimony in reference to this line of thought. I have never found a church layman who was not willing to work in an inconspicuous place in the church, who was ever a true, loyal friend to the minister, if he was placed in a conspicuous one. And, furthermore, I have never found a man willing to work for Christ in an inconspicuous place who, if Christ called him to a higher position in the church, was not just as true and faithful in the higher position as in the lower.

I have preached this sermon for two reasons. I want you to know the noble men and the noble women who, like those mentioned by Paul, have labored with so many ministers in the gospel. As Paul writes in the words of my text: "Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys; my beloved. Salute Appeles in Christ. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord." I want you to salute some of the noble men and women who have done so much to upbuild the pulpit's work. Salute these older men and women of our church. How faithful they have been! Then salute these praying men and women. How could we have got along without them? Salute these friends who have always been so true to the pastors that are gone. Then salute those who have been working for our foreign and home missionary causes. Salute them all for Christ's sake.

Then I had another hope in preaching this sermon. It was that if in the past any of us have fallen below the ideal I have sketched, if the pastor has in any respect failed in his duty, if there is any one who has failed to live near to Christ and so has not been among the minister's best friends, there may be repentance and new consecration. As for me, I promise here and now to surrender myself to His will. Are you ready to make the same avowal? I salute thee, Urbane.

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Sold Washington's Socks.

The Paris police have in custody a man who, they are not certain which, is either the most arrant fool or a swindler of the utmost audacity. Jean Manutor, as he calls himself, opened a little shop and began selling alleged antiquities. Among the articles catalogued and offered at fabulous prices were:

A pair of Cardinal Richelieu's slippers.

Bathtub in which Marat was murdered.

Pistol with which Boulanger shot himself.

Pipe once owned by Edgar Allan Poe.

Three pairs of George Washington's socks.

Bow with which William Tell shot the apple from his son's head.

A tooth of Raphael.

The bullet which killed Abraham Lincoln.

Manutor was doing a rushing business when the police stepped in. He seems to be totally unaware that he was breaking the law and protested that all the articles were as represented.

Romantic Necklace Story.

There is a romantic story attaching to the great rope of pearls worn by the Princess Fredericka of Hanover at recent functions. They are magnificent specimens and very old. Centuries ago a princess of the house loved them so that they were buried with her. But in process of time the great grief of her relatives grew gradually fainter and fainter until they began to whisper what a shame it was that such glorious jewels should be wasted. One day the princess' tomb was opened and the pearl necklace was taken from her neck. But the pearls were spoiled. They had lost their luster and beauty. The new owner wept over them and dreamed about them, and her dream told her that three generations of lovely women would have to wear them before their luster returned. Three lovely princesses did wear them, and they are now pearls without peers.—Boston Transcript.

SENSE ORGANS IN PLANTS.

Light Perceiving Leaves That Have Eyes and Eyelashes.

Dr. G. Haberlandt, professor of botany in the University of Gratz, celebrated for his revelations on the sense organs in plants, is their champion who tells the world that, having eyes, they see.

The first question for Dr. Haberlandt to solve was what part of the leaf was sensitive to light. By covering the leaf with black paper he shows that the principal and most delicate sensitiveness resides in the blade, although a coarser and secondary sensitiveness to the incident light is found in the stalk.

This meant that the blade of the leaf must contain the eyes, if eyes there be. Anything corresponding to an organ for sight, he reasoned, would be on the surface. So he looked for the ocelli, as he terms the light perceiving organs of plants, in the epidermis covering the upper surface of the leaf.

It can also be seen, as the botanical oculist discovered, that the relation of the spot of light to the surrounding part, which is more or less dark, changes when the light falls obliquely. So when a leaf is illuminated obliquely he considers that it is stimulated to curve by the fact that the spots of light are not central in the cells, and the curving ceases when the brightest illumination is once more in the center. So the plasmic membrane of this inner wall of each cell in the epidermis becomes the retina of the eye, or, in scientific phrase, "has a quasi retinal function by which the leaf is believed to orientate itself in regard to light."

Proceeding, Dr. Haberlandt examined the eye and found that it was good, well fitted to concentrate light. It is commonly lenslike in form, the outer wall being convex, the inner wall either plain or curved.

Plants have not only eyes, but eyelashes. The tropaeolum, the handsome cousin of the florid fuchsia, is one of the proud plants that can vaunt themselves on the luxurious comeliness of fine lashes. The leaves of this plant are unwettable, and when immersed remain coated with a silvery mantle of air. The waxy layer which gives this quality may be removed by painting the surface with diluted alcohol without injury to the leaves. The result of immersion is that normal leaves, protected by a layer of air, react normally to oblique illuminations—that is, they see, whereas the wettable leaves whose waxy bloom has been removed have lost their eyesight, their power of reacting, says the Chicago Tribune.

In all Dr. Haberlandt's experiments he always has found his ocelli (eyes) on the upper and not the lower surface of leaves. And he also found them tending to occur especially near the edges of leaves just in those regions where the amount of movement corresponding to curvature through a given angle is greatest.

The position of the eyes is in the most advantageous position possible for the eyes to receive the rays of the sun and yet be shielded from exposure. The eyelashes droop directly over the eye itself when showers come, and the leaf turns slightly so that the eyelashes form a perfect protection. Also, if the leaf is exposed to too great heat from the sun the lashes droop again, shading them.

The eyes of leaves vary greatly, according to the professor, in different plants and trees, and he believes the sense of sight much more highly developed in the rapid growing and tropical plants than in others.—New York World.

An African Monarch.

The kind of Uganda, in British East Africa, rejoices or grieves in the somewhat picklish and chowchowy name of Daudi Chua. This august sovereign—may his tribe increase!—is now "going on" eight. To befit a colored scepter bearer he has a highly colored court. He sits on a throne of scarlet, and probably the court carpenters have made it a world too long for his chubby little legs. Under the British protectorate folks have to be economical in Uganda, and a king must grow up to his throne and can't have a custom made one every time he has growing pains. We can remember when a king of Uganda was every inch a king, no matter how few his inches. So sacred, so supra purple was he that the remains of his food had to be buried lest its sacredness strike dead some unhappy subject. The British have changed all that. Daudi—we wish we had a photograph of him—Daudi sits on his scarlet throne, a leopard skin under his bare feet, a toy gun in his little hands, probably not a bit more absurd and many times more "sympathetic" in the eyes of the heavenly powers than many a wide ruling czar or kaiser that has been, is or shall be.—Everybody's Magazine.

A Chinese-Jewish Colony.

There is said to be a Chinese-Jewish colony in the Yangtsekiang valley in China. This colony has existed since 200 years before the Christian era. Its people have a synagogue in which they attend worship, extract the sinews from flesh before eating it, erect tablets to Moses and Abraham and are called by some "blue capped Mohammedans" because of their blue headdress. Otherwise they are but little different from other Chinese citizens, hold high offices in the land at times and because of Chinese tolerant principles have never been persecuted or oppressed.

Smoothing It Over.

"I have come," said the old subscriber, "to complain about your report of my daughter's wedding."

"What was the matter with it?" demanded the editor.

"Well, her name is Gratia, but you printed it 'Gratis.'"

"That's not so bad. She was given away, wasn't she?"

Its Delight.

Sympathetic Friend—So marriage has been a sad experience to you, Mrs. Grass? Mrs. Grass—On the contrary, it has proved a most delightful one. The alimony allowed by the court is extremely liberal.—Boston Transcript.

None pities him that's in the snare, who, warned before, would not beware. —Herrick.