

GRACE OF COURTESY

DR. TALMAGE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Courtesy a Commendable Christian Virtue—Let Us Speak Well One of Another.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—In this discourse Dr. Talmage urges thoughtfulness for others, and shows how such a benignant spirit may be fostered; text, I Peter ii, 8, "Be courteous."

In an age when bluntness has been canonized as a virtue it may be useful to extol one of the most beautiful of all the royal family of graces—courtesy. It is graciousness, deference to the wishes of others, good manners, affability, willingness to deny ourselves somewhat for the advantage of others, urbanity. But what is the use of my defining the grace of courtesy when we all know so well what it is? The botanist might say some very interesting things about a rose, and the chemist might discourse about water or light, but without ever seeing a botanist or a chemist we know what a rose is and what water and light are. Do not take our time in telling us what courtesy is. Only show us how we may get more of it and avoid what are its counterfeits. Mark you, it cannot be put on or dramatized successfully for a long while. We may be full of bows and genuflections, and smiles and complimentary phrases and have nothing of genuine courtesy either in our make-up or in our demeanor. A backwoodsman who never saw a drawing room or a dancing master or a caterer or a fold of drapery may with his big soul and hard hand and awkward salutation exercise the grace, while one born under richest upholstery and educated in foreign schools, and bothered to know which of ten garments he will take from a royal wardrobe, may be as barren of the spirit of courtesy as the great Sahara desert is of green meadows and tossing fountains.

Christian courtesy is born in the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, who has transformed and illumined and glorified one's nature. Mark you, I am speaking of the highest kind of courtesy, which is Christian courtesy. Something like it—ordinary politeness—may grow up with us under the direction of intelligent and watchful parents, but I am not speaking of that which is merely agreeableness of conversation and behavior. All that may be a matter of tutelage and fine surrounding and show itself in lifting the hat to passers-by and in a graceful way of asking about your health and sending the right kind of acceptance when you cannot go and understanding all the laws of preference at table and parlor door, all of which is well. I am speaking of a principle of courtesy so implanted in one's nature that his civility of conversation and manner shall be the outburst of what he feels for the happiness and welfare of others, a principle that will work in the next world as well as in this, and will be as appropriate in the mansions of heaven as in earthly dwelling places.

Now, you know as well as I do that some of the most undesirable people have been seeming incarnations of courtesy. In our early American history there arose a man of wonderful talent, an imperfection of all that can charm drawing rooms and cultivated circles. Aged men who knew him in their youth have told me that he was the most irresistible man they ever met, his voice silvery, his smile bewitching, his glove immaculate, his eye piercing, his high forehead wreathed in curls, his attire a fascination. He became Vice-President of the United States and within one vote of being President. Men threw away their fortunes to help him in his political aspirations and to forward him in a conspiracy to overthrow the Government of the United States, he trying to do in America what Napoleon did at that very time was trying to do in Europe—establish a throne for himself. But he was immoral and corrupt. He was the serpent that wound his way into many a domestic paradise. He shot to death one of the greatest of Americans—Alexander Hamilton. The world found out long ago before he left it that the offender I speak of was an embodiment of dissoluteness and base ambition. He was the best illustration that I know of the fact that a man may have the appearance of courtesy while within he is all wrong.

Abalom, a Bible character, was a specimen of a man of polish outside and of rottenness inside. Beautiful, brilliant and with such wealth of hair that when it was cut in each December as a matter of pride he had it weighed, and it weighed 200 shekels. He captured all who came near him. But, oh, what a heart he had—full of treachery and unflinching spirit and baseness! He was as bad as he was alluring and charming.

In the famous Athenian Alcibiades history discourses of the same splendor of manner covering utter depravity. Noble pedigree, transcendent abilities, radiant personality, eloquent tongue, triumphant warfare, victor at Olympic games, but a debauchee and an impersonation of all the vices. Alas, that all up and down history and clear on into our day there are so many of what Christ called "wolves in sheep's clothing"—"whitewashed sepulchers, full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." Guided abominations, walking lazaretts, attired in vermilion and gold. Perdition hanging out the banners of heaven. As far as possible are they removed from all genuine courtesy.

I like what John Wesley said to a man when their carriages met on the road. The ruffian, knowing Mr. Wesley and disliking him, did not turn out, but kept the middle of the road. Mr. Wesley cheerfully gave the man all the road, himself riding into the ditch. As they passed each other the ruffian said, "I never turn out for fools," and Mr. Wesley said, "I always do." I like the reproof which Chinaman in San Francisco gave an American. The American pushed him off the sidewalk until he fell into the mud. The Chinaman on rising began to brush off the mud and said to the American: "You Christian, me heathen. Good-bye." A stranger entered a church in one of the cities and was allowed to stand a long while, although there was plenty of room. No one offered a seat. The stranger after awhile said to one of the brethren, "What church is this?" The answer was, "Christ's church, sir." "Is He in?" said the stranger. The officer of the church understood what was meant and gave him a seat. We want more courtesy in places of business, more courtesy in our homes.

But heart courtesy must proceed hand and head and foot courtesy. Cultivation of it should begin in the father's house. You often notice that brothers and sisters are often gruff and snappy and say things and do things that they would not have the outside world know about. Ruff things are sometimes said in households which ought never to be said at all—teasing and recrimination and fault-finding and harsh criticisms, which will have their echo thirty and forty and fifty years afterward. In the fleet driven by the east wind no

sweet flowers of kindness and gentility will grow.

Let children hear their parents picking at each other, and those children will be found picking at each other, and far down the road of life will be seen the same disposition to pick at others. Better than this habit of picking at children, which so many parents indulge in, would be one good, healthy application of the rod. Better a shower that lasts a few minutes than the cold drizzle of many days. We never get over our first home, however many houses we may have afterward.

Let us all cultivate the grace of Christian courtesy by indulging in the habit of praise instead of the habit of blame. There are evils in the world that we must denounce, and there are men and women who ought to be chastised, but never let us allow the opportunity of applauding good deeds pass unimproved.

The old theory was that you must never praise people lest we make them vain. No danger of that. Before any of us get through with life we will have enough mean and ignoble and depreciating and lying things said about us to keep us humble. God approvingly recognizes a system of rewards as well as of punishments.

Christian courtesy I especially commend to those who have subordinates. Almost every person has some one under him. How do you treat that clerk, that servant, that assistant, that employe? Do you accost him in brusque terms and rough command him to do that which you might kindly ask him to do? The first words that the Duke of Wellington uttered were, "If you please." That conqueror in what was in some respects the greatest battle ever fought in his last hours, asked by his servant if he would take some tea, replied, "If you please." His last words an expression of courtesy. Beautiful characteristic in any class. The day laborers in Sweden, passing each other, take off their hats in reverence. There is no excuse for boorishness in any circle. As complete a gentleman as ever lived was the man who was unhorsed on the road to Damascus and headed on the road to Ostia—Paul, the apostle. I know that he might be so characterized by the way he apologized to Aeneas, the high priest. I know it from the way he complimented Felix as a judge, and from the way he greets the king, "I thank myself, King Artaban, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews, especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." I know that Paul was a gentleman from the way he opened his sermon on Mars hill, not insulting his audience, as King James's translation implies, but saying, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are very devout." I know he was a gentleman from the fact that when he with others of a shipwreck, on the Island of Melita visited the governor of the island he was most impressed with the courtesy shown them and reported that visit in these words: "In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and lodged us three days courteous."

And then see those words of advice which he gives: "Bear ye one another's burdens," in honor preferring one another; "Honour all men."

What a mighty means of usefulness is courtesy! The lack of it brings to many a dead failure, while before those who possess it in large quantity all the doors of opportunity are open. You can tell that urbanity does not come from study of books of etiquette, although such books have their use, but from a mind full of thoughtfulness for others and a heart in sympathy with the conditions of others.

If those conditions be prosperous, a gladness for the success, or if the conditions be depressing, a sorrow for the unfavorable circumstances. Ah, this world needs fighting up!

To those of us who are prosperous it is no credit that we are in a state of good cheer, but in the lives of ninety-nine out of a hundred there is a pathetic side, a taking off, a deficit, an anxiety, a trouble. By a genial look, by a kind word, by a helpful action, we may lift a little of the burden and partly clear the way for the stumbling foot. Oh, what a glorious art it is to say the right word in the right way at the right time!

If others lack courtesy, that is no reason why you should lack it. Respond to rudeness by utmost affability. Because some one else is a boor is no reason why you should be a boor. But how few show urbanity when badly treated! Human nature says: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a retort for a retort, a slander for a slander, maltreatment for maltreatment." But there have been those who and I have known who amid assault and caricature and injustice have maintained the loveliness of blossom week in springtime. Nothing but divine grace in the heart can keep such equilibrium. That is not human nature until it is transformed by supernatural influences. To put it on the lowest ground you cannot afford to be revengeful and malignant.

Hatred and high indignation are stages of unhealth. They enrage the spleen; they weaken the nerves; they attack the brain. Rage in a man is one form of apoplexy. Every time you get mad, you damage your body and mind and soul, and you have not such a surplus of vigor and energy that you can afford to sacrifice them. So I applaud Christian courtesy. I would put it upon the throne of every heart in all the world. The beauty of it is that you may extend it to others and have just as much of it—yea, more of it—left in your own heart and life.

It is like the miracle of the loaves and fishes, which, by being divided, were multiplied until twelve baskets were filled with the remnants. It is like a torch, with which fifty lamps may be lighted and yet the torch remain as bright as before it lighted the first lamp.

But this grace will not come to its coronal until it reaches the heavenly sphere. What a world that must be where selfishness and jealousy and pride and acerbities of temper have never entered and never will enter! No struggle for precedence. No rivalry between enmity and scrupulum. No ambition as to who shall have the front seats in the temple of God and the Lamb. No controversy about the pace the guest may take at the banquet. No rivalry of robe or coronet. No racing of chariots. No throne looking assistance upon other thrones, but all the inhabitants perfectly happy and rejoicing in the perfect happiness of others. If I never get to any other delightful place I want to get to that place. What a realm to live in forever! All worshipping the same God, all saved by the same Christ, all experiencing the same emotions, all ascending the same heights of love and exultation, all celebrating the victories. Courtesy, there easy, because there will be no faults to overlook, no apologies to make, no mistakes to correct, no disagreeableness to overcome, no wrongs to right. In all the ages to come, not a detraction or a subterfuge. A perfect soul in a perfect heaven. In that realm, world without end, it will never be necessary to repeat the words of my text, words that now need of repetition, "Be courteous."

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I want to inform you, in words of highest praise, of the benefit I have derived from Ripans Tablets. I am a professional nurse and in this profession a clear head is always needed. Ripans Tablets does it. After one of my cases I found myself completely run down. Acting on the advice of Mr. Geo. Bowser, Ph. G., 588 Newark Ave., Jersey City, I took Ripans Tablets with grand results. Miss BESSIE WIEDMANN.

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A new style packet containing TEN RIPANS TABLETS packed in a paper carton (without glass) is now for sale at some drug stores—FOR FIVE CENTS. This low-priced sort is intended for the poor and the economical. One dozen of the five-cent cartons (120 tablets) can be had by mail by sending forty-eight cents to the RIPANS TABLETS COMPANY, No. 10 Spruce Street, New York—or a single carton (TEN TABLETS) will be sent for five cents and postage. They may also be had of some grocers, general storekeepers, news agents and at some liquor stores and barber shops. They banish pain, induce sleep and prolong life. One gets relief.

I have been a great sufferer from constipation for over five years. Nothing gave me any relief. My feet and legs and abdomen were bloated so I could not wear shoes on my feet and only a loose dress. I saw Ripans Tablets advertised in our daily paper, bought some and took them as directed. Have taken them about three weeks and there is such a change! I am not constipated any more and I owe it all to Ripans Tablets. I am thirty-seven years old, have no occupation, only my household duties and nursing my sick husband. He has had the dropsy and I am trying Ripans Tablets for him. He feels some better but it will take some time, he has been sick so long. You may use my letter and name as you like. MRS. MARY GORMAN CLARK.

I have been suffering from headaches ever since I was a little girl. I could never ride in a car or go into a crowded place without getting a headache and sick at my stomach. I heard about Ripans Tablets from an aunt of mine who was taking them for catarrh of the stomach. She had found such relief from their use she advised me to take them too, and I have been doing so since last October, and will say they have completely cured my headaches. I am twenty-nine years old. You are welcome to use this testimonial. Mrs. J. BROOKMYER.

My seven-year-old boy suffered with pains in his head, constipation and complained of his stomach. He could not eat like children of his age do and what he did eat did not agree with him. He was thin and of a sallow color. Reading some of the testimonials in favor of Ripans Tablets, I tried them. Ripans Tablets not only relieved but actually cured my youngster, the headaches have disappeared, bowels are in good condition and he never complains of his stomach. He is now a red, chubby-faced boy. This wonderful change I attribute to Ripans Tablets. I am satisfied that they will benefit any one (from the cradle to old age) if taken according to directions. E. W. PRICE.

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