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VOL. XXVI. ELIZABETH CITY, N. C., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1898. NO. 43

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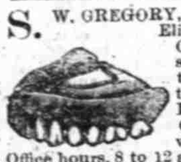
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FOR COMMON PEOPLE.

DR. TALMAGE'S WORDS OF CHEER FOR THE LOWLY.

The Rank and File of the Lord's Soldiery Need Especial Help—Let Us Be Content With God's Gifts—The Penalty of Greatness Outweighs the Joy.

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 13.—Dr. Talmage in this discourse calls the roll of faithful men and noble women in all departments who are unrecognized and unrewarded and sounds encouragement for those who do work in spheres inconspicuous; text, Romans xvi, 14, 15, "Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia."

Matthew Henry, Albert Barnes, Adam Clark, Thomas Scott and all the commentators pass by these verses without any especial remark. The other 20 people mentioned in the chapter were distinguished for something and were therefore discussed by the illustrious expositors, but nothing is said about Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia. Where were they born? No one knows. When did they die? There is no record of their decease. For what were they distinguished? Absolutely nothing, or the trait of character would have been brought out by the apostle. If they had been very intrepid or opulent or hirsute or musical of cadence or crass of style or in any wise anomalous, that feature would have been caught by the apostolic camera. But they were good people, because Paul sends to them his high Christian regards. They were ordinary people, moving in ordinary sphere, attending to ordinary duty and meeting ordinary responsibilities.

For the Rank and File.

What the world wants is a religion for ordinary people. If there be in the United States 70,000,000 people, there are certainly not more than 1,000,000 extraordinary, and then there are 69,000,000 ordinary, and we do well to **turn our backs for a little while** upon the distinguished and conspicuous people of the Bible and consider in our text the seven ordinary. We spend too much of our time in twisting garlands for remarkables, and building thrones for magnates, and sculpturing warriors, and apotheosizing philanthropists. The rank and file of the Lord's soldiery need especial help.

The vast majority of people will never lead an army, will never write a state constitution, will never electrify a senate, will never make an important invention, will never introduce a new philosophy, will never decide the fate of a nation. You do not expect to, you do not want to. You will not be a Moses to lead a nation out of bondage. You will not be a Joshua to prolong the daylight until you can shut five kings in a cavern. You will not be a St. John to unroll an Apocalypse. You will not be a Paul to preside over an apostolic college. You will not be a Mary to mother a Christ. You will more probably be Asyncritus, or Phlegon, or Hermas, or Patrobas, or Hermes, or Philologus, or Julia.

Many of you are women at the head of households. Every morning you plan for the day. The culinary department of the household is in your dominion. You decide all questions of diet. All the sanitary regulations of your house are under your supervision. To regulate the food and the apparel and the habits and decide the thousand questions of home life is a tax upon brain and nerve and general health absolutely appalling if there be no divine alleviation.

Needs of the Human Race.

It does not help you much to be told that Elizabeth Fry did wonderful things amid the criminals at Newgate. It does not help you much to be told that Mrs. Judson was very brave among the Bornesian cannibals. It does not help you very much to be told that Florence Nightingale was very kind to the wounded in the Crimea. It would be better for me to tell you that the divine friend of Mary and Martha is your friend, and that he sees all the annoyances and disappointments and abrasions and exasperations of an ordinary housekeeper from morn till night, and from the first day of the year until the last day of the year, and at your call he is ready with help and re-enforcement.

They who provide the food of the world decide the health of the world. You have only to go on some errand amid the taverns and the hotels of the United States and Great Britain to appreciate the fact that a vast multitude of the human race are slaughtered by incompetent cookery. Though a young woman may have taken lessons in music and may have taken lessons in painting and lessons in astronomy, she is not well educated unless she has taken lessons in dough. They who decide the apparel of the world and the food of the world decide the endurance of the world.

An unthinking man may consider it a matter of little importance, the cares of the household and the economies of domestic life, but I tell you the earth is strewn with the martyrs of kitchen and nursery. The health shattered womanhood of America cries out for a God who can help ordinary women in the ordinary duties of housekeeping. The wearing, grinding, unappreciated work goes on, but the same Christ who stood on the bank of Galilee in the early morning and kindled the fire and had the fish already cleaned and broiling when the sportsmen stepped ashore, chilled and hungry, will help every woman to prepare breakfast, whether by her own hand or the hand of her hired help. The God who made indestructible eulogy of Hannah, who made a coat for Samuel, her son, and carried it to the temple every year, will help every woman in preparing the family wardrobe. The God who opens the Bible with the story of Abraham's entertainment by the three angels on the plains of Mamre will help every woman to provide hospitality, however rare and embarrassing. It is high time that some of the attention we have been giving to the remarkable women of the Bible—remarkable for their virtue or their want of it or remarkable for their deeds—Deborah and Jezebel and Herodias and Athalia and Dorcas and the Marys, excellent and abandoned—it is high time some of the attention we have been giving to these conspicuous women of the Bible be given to Julia, an ordinary woman, amid ordinary duties and meeting ordinary circumstances, attending to ordinary responsibilities.

Work For Christians.

Then there are all the ordinary business men. They need divine and Christian help. When we begin to talk about business life, we slump right off and talk about men who did business on a large scale and who sold millions of dollars of goods a year, and the vast majority of business men do not sell a million dollars of goods, nor half a million, nor quarter of a million, nor the eighth part of a million. Put all the business men of our cities, towns, villages and neighborhoods side by side, and you will find that they sell less than a hundred thousand dollars worth of goods. All these men in ordinary business life want divine help. You see how the wrinkles are printing on the countenance the story of worriment and care. You cannot tell how old a business man is by looking at him. Gray hairs at 30; a man at 45 with the stoop of a nonogenarian. No time to attend to improved dentistry; the grinders cease because they are few. Actually dying of old age at 40 or 50, when they ought to be at the meridian! Many of these business men have bodies like a neglected clock to which you come, and when you wind it up it begins to buzz and roar, and then the hands start around very rapidly, and the clock strikes 5 or 10 or 40, and strikes without any sense, and then suddenly stops. So is the body of that worn out business man. It is a neglected clock, and, though by some summer recreation it may be wound up, still the machinery is all out of gear. The hands turn around with a velocity that excites the astonishment of the world. Men cannot understand the wonderful activity, and there is a roar and a buzz and a rattle about these disordered lives, and they strike 10 when they ought to strike 5, and they strike 12 when they ought to strike 6, and they strike 40 when they ought to strike nothing, and suddenly they stop. Postmortem examination reveals the fact that all the springs and pivots and weights and balance wheels of health are completely deranged. The human clock is simply run down, and at the time when the steady hand ought to be pointing to the industrious hours on a clear and sunlit dial the whole machinery of body, mind and earthly capacity stops forever. Oak Hill and Greenwood have thousands of business men who died of old age at 30, 35, 40, 45.

Wants of Business Life.

Now, what is wanted is grace—divine grace for ordinary business men, men who are harnessed from morn till night and all the days of their life—harnessed in business. Not grace to lose $100,000, but grace to lose $10. Not grace to supervise 250 employees in a factory, but grace to supervise the bookkeeper and two salesmen and the small boy that sweeps out the store. Grace to invest not the $80,000 of net profit, but the $2,500 of clear gain. Grace not to endure the loss of a whole shipload of spices from the Indies, but grace to endure the loss of a paper of collars from the leakage of a displaced shingle on a poor roof. Grace not to endure the tardiness of the American congress in passing a necessary law, but grace to endure the tardiness of an errand boy stopping to play marbles when he ought to deliver the goods. Such a grace as thousands of business men have today—keeping them tranquil, whether goods sell or do not sell, whether customers pay or do not pay, whether tariff is up or tariff is down, whether the crops are luxuriant or a dead failure—calm in all circumstances and amid all vicissitudes. That is the kind of grace we want.

Millions of men want it, and they may have it for the asking. Some hero or heroine comes to town, and as the procession passes through the street the business men come out, stand on tiptoe on their store step and look at some one who in arctic clime, or in ocean storm, or in day of battle, or in hospital agonies did the brave thing, not realizing that they, the enthusiastic spectators, have gone through trials in business life that are just as great before God. There are men who have gone through freezing arctics and burning torrids and awful Marengos of experiences without moving five miles from their doorstep.

Christ's Friendship.

Now, what ordinary business men need is to realize that they have the friendship of that Christ who looked after the religious interests of Matthew, the custom house clerk, and helped Lydia of Thyatira to sell the dry goods and who opened a bakery and fish market in the wilderness of Asia Minor to feed the 7,000 who had come out on a religious picnic and who counts the hairs of your head with as much particularity as though they were the plumes of a coronation, and who took the trouble to stoop down with his finger writing on the ground, although the first shuffle of feet obliterated the divine caligraphy, and who knows just how many locusts there were in the Egyptian plague, and knew just how many ravens were necessary to supply Elijah's pantry by the brook Cherith, and who, as floral commander, leads forth all the regiments of primroses, foxgloves, daffodils, hyacinths and lilies which pitch their tents of beauty and kindle their campfires of color all around the hemisphere—that that Christ and that God knows the most minute affairs of your business life and however inconsiderable, understanding all the affairs of that woman who keeps a thread and needle store as well as all the affairs of a Rothschild and a Baring.

Then there are all the ordinary farmers. We talk about agricultural life, and we immediately shoot off to talk about Cincinnatus, the patrician, who went from the plow to a high position, and after he got through the dictatorship in 21 days went back again to the plow. What encouragement is that to ordinary farmers? The vast majority of them—none of them will be patricians. Perhaps none of them will be senators. If any of them have dictatorships, it will be over 40 or 50 or 100 acres of the old homestead. What these men want is grace to keep their patience while plowing with balky oxen and to keep cheerful amid the drought that destroys the corn crop and that enables them to restore the garden the day after the neighbor's cattle have broken in and trampled out the strawberry bed and gone through the Lima bean patch and eaten up the sweet corn in such large quantities that they must be kept from the water lest they swell up and die.

Noble Husbandmen.

Grace in catching weather that enables them, without imprecation, to spread out the hay the third time, although again and again and again it has been almost ready for the mow. A grace to doctor the cow with a hollow horn, and the sheep with the foot rot, and the horse with the distemper and to compel the unwilling acres to yield a livelihood for the family, and schooling for the children, and little extras to help the older boy in business, and something for the daughter's wedding outfit, and a little surplus for the time when the ankles will get stiff with age, and the breath will be a little short, and the swinging of the cradle through the hot harvest field will bring on the old man's vertigo. Better close up about Cincinnatus. I know 500 farmers just as noble as he was. What they want is to know that they have the friendship of that Christ who often drew his similes from the farmer's life, as when he said, "A sower went forth to sow," as when he built his best parable out of the scene of a farmer boy coming back from his wanderings, and the old farmhouse shook that night with rural jubilee, and who compared himself to a lamb in the pasture field, and who said that the eternal God is a farmer, declaring, "My Father is the husbandman."

Those stone masons do not want to hear about Christopher Wren, the architect who built St. Paul's cathedral. It would be better to tell them how to carry the hod of brick up the ladder without slipping, and how on a cold morning with the trowel to smooth off the mortar and keep cheerful, and how to be thankful to God for the plain food taken from the pail by the roadside. Carpenters standing amid the adz, and the bit, and the plane, and the broadax need to be told that Christ was a carpenter, with his own hand wielding saw and hammer. Oh, this is a tired world, and it is an overworked world, and it is an underfed world, and it is a wrung out world, and men and women need to know that there are rest and recuperation in God and in that religion which was not so much intended for extraordinary people as for ordinary people, because there are more of them.

Next to God.

The healing profession has had its Abercrombies and its Abernethys and its Valentine Motts and its Willard Parkers, but the ordinary physicians do the most of the world's medicining, and they need to understand that while taking diagnosis or prognosis or writing prescription or compounding medicament or holding the delicate pulse of a dying child they may have the presence and the dictation of the Almighty Doctor who took the case of the madman and after he had torn off his garments in foaming dementia clothed him again, body and mind, and who lifted up the woman who for 18 years had been bent almost double with the rheumatism into graceful stature, and who turned the scabs of leprosy into rubicund complexion and who rubbed the numbness out of paralysis, and who swung wide open the closed windows of hereditary or accidental blindness until the morning light came streaming through the fleshly casements, and who knows all the diseases and all the remedies and all the herbs and all the catholicons and is monarch of pharmacy and therapeutics, and who has sent ten thousand doctors of whom the world makes no record, but to prove that they are angels of mercy I invoke the thousands of men whose ailments they have assuaged and the thousands of women to whom in crises of pain they have been next to God in benefaction.

Come, now, let us have a religion for ordinary people in professions, in occupations, in agriculture, in the household, in merchandise, in everything. I salute across the centuries Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia.

Unpretentious People.

First of all, if you feel that you are ordinary, thank God that you are not extraordinary. I am tired and sick and bored almost to death with extraordinary people. They take all their time to tell us how very extraordinary they really are. You know as well as I do, my brother and sister, that the most of the useful work of the world is done by unpretentious people who toil right on, by people who do not get much approval, and no one seems to say, "That is well done." Phenomena are of but little use. Things that are exceptional cannot be depended on. Better trust the smallest planet that swings in its orbit than ten comets shooting this way and that, imperiling the longevity of worlds attending to their own business. For steady illumination better is a lamp than a rocket.

Then if you feel that you are ordinary remember that your position invites the less attack. Conspicuous people how they have to take it! How they are misrepresented and abused and shot at! The higher the horns of a roebuck the easier to strike him down. What a delicious thing it must be to be a candidate for governor of a state or president of the United States! It must be so soothing to the nerves. It must pour into the soul of a candidate such a sense of serenity when he reads the blessed newspapers.

I came into the possession of the abusive cartoons in the time of Napoleon I, printed while he was yet alive. The retreat of the army from Moscow, that army buried in the snows of Russia, one of the most awful tragedies of the centuries, represented under the figure of a monster called General Frost shaving the French emperor with a razor of icicle. As Satyr and Beelzebub he is represented, page after page, page after page. England cursing him, Spain cursing him, Germany cursing him, Russia cursing him, Europe cursing him, North and South America cursing him. The most remarkable man of his day and the most abused. All those men in history who now have a halo around their name on earth wore a crown of thorns. Take the few extraordinary railroad men of our time and see what abuse comes upon them, while thousands of stockholders escape. New York Central railroad had 9,265 stockholders. If anything in that railroad affronted the people, all the abuse came down on one man and the 9,264 escaped. All the world took after Thomas Scott, president of the Pennsylvania railroad, abused him until he got under the ground. Over 17,000 stockholders in that company. All the blame on one man. The Central Pacific railroad—two or three men get all the blame if anything goes wrong. There are 10,000 in that company.

Penalties of Prominence.

I mention these things to prove it is extraordinary people who get abused, while the ordinary escape. The weather of life is not so severe on the plain as it is on the high peaks. The world never forgives a man who knows or gains or does more than it can know or gain or do. Parents sometimes give confectionery to their children as an inducement to take bitter medicine, and the world's sugar plum precedes the world's aqua fortis. The mob cried in regard to Christ, "Crucify him, crucify him!" and they had to say it twice to be understood, for they were so hoarse, and they got their hoarseness by crying a little while before at the top of their voice, "Hosanna." The river Rhone is foul when it enters Lake Leman, but crystalline when it comes out on the other side. But there are men who have entered the bright lake of worldly prosperity crystalline and come out terribly riled. If, therefore, you feel that you are an ordinary, thank God for the defenses and the tranquillity of your position.

Then remember, if you have only what is called an ordinary home, that the great deliverers of the world have all come from such a home. And there may be seated, reading at your evening stand, a child who shall be potent for the ages. Just unroll the scroll of men mighty in church and state, and you will find they nearly all came from log cabin or poor homes. Genius almost always runs out in the third or fourth generation. You cannot find in all history an instance where the fourth generation of extraordinary people amount to anything. In this country we had two great men, father and son, both presidents of the United States, but from present prospects there never will be in that genealogical line another president for a thousand years. Columbus from a weaver's hut, Demosthenes from a cutler's cellar, Bloomfield and Missionary Carey from a shoemaker's bench, Arkwright from a barber's shop, and he whose name is high over all in earth and air and sky from a manger.

Be Content.

Let us all be content with such things as we have. God is just as good in what he keeps away from us as in what he gives us. Even a knot may be useful if it is at the end of a thread.

At an anniversary of a deaf and dumb asylum one of the children wrote upon the blackboard words as sublime as the "Iliad," the "Odyssey" and the "Divina Commedia" all compressed in one paragraph. The examiner, in the signs of the mute language, asked her, "Who made the world?" The deaf and dumb girl wrote upon the blackboard, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The examiner asked her, "For what purpose did Christ come into the world?" The deaf and dumb girl wrote upon the blackboard, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The examiner said to her, "Why were you born deaf and dumb, while I hear and speak?" She wrote upon the blackboard, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." Oh, that we might be baptized with a contented spirit! The spider draws poison out of a flower, the bee gets honey out of a thistle; but happiness is a heavenly elixir, and the contented spirit extracts it not from the rhododendron of the hills, but from the lily of the valley.

Nelson's Wonderful Feat.

Writers of historical reminiscences have to be masters of a certain amount of accurate information about their heroes if they wish to avoid mistakes. If they are not, they are sure to "get things mixed."

Not long since a reviewer in the London Times, writing of a book named 'Roving Commissions," related on his own account the following episode of Nelson, the great admiral:

"While in chase of Villeneuve's French fleet he was informed of the enemy heaving in sight, at which information Nelson evinced the highest satisfaction and gleefully rubbed his hands."

As a correspondent of The Times points out, this incident occurred in 1805. Nelson lost his right arm in the attack on Santa Cruz, Tenerife, in 1797—eight years prior to his pursuit of Villeneuve's fleet. It would have been, therefore, a difficult matter for him to "rub his hands" in 1805.

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A GIGANTIC NEST.

A Great Cone Which the Australian Hens Build For the Purpose of Hatching.

The mallee hen of Australia lays its eggs in a huge nest. The nest is really an artificial mound of gigantic proportions for the size of its maker and the purpose it is to serve. This artificial mound is a co-operation incubator. It is built by many pairs of birds, male and female working alike to construct it. These same pairs or flocks of birds annually repair and enlarge the queer looking cone which rises up like a turret dome from the level prairie.

Sometimes these tunnels attain a height of fully 15 feet in the perpendicular, with a radius of equal measurement. Many of these nests have measured as much as 50 yards, or 150 feet, around their base. That would give the largest one measured a diameter of about 50 feet. These mound nests are entered through a sort of funnel cavity at the top of the cone.

The hens of all the building and repairing pairs lay in this immense nest. The eggs are deposited about 6 feet below the surface. While each hen lays her egg in the family mound, no hen drops her egg closer than 20 inches to that of her neighbor. This egg is deposited in a cavity made for it, wherein it is placed in a vertical position, carefully smoothed over by the hen before she quits the nest. Contrary to the usual practice of the bird and fowl species, these mallee hens lay at night instead of in the day. Several days elapse also between the dropping of two eggs by the same hen.

The eggs of the mallee hen are out of all proportion to her size. They are as large as those of a goose and of large hens are very much larger.

The eggs thus laid and covered in this great sand oven in the hot districts are never again disturbed by the hens. The eggs are hatched by the heat the sun bakes into the soil where they lay. It has never been known how the young chicks are excavated from their egg grave, for the eggs are deposited fully six inches below the surface, and the hardening rains do not aid their exit very much.

The hen is so very shy and vigilant that no one is able to study her maternal and domestic habits with satisfaction. As she lays her egg at night and transacts most of her affairs in the night watch so that no naturalist or curious individual can ferret her out, possibly she steals to her expected brood under cover of night also and gives them the parental unearthing which they must surely need after the pipping of the eggshell.

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