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VOL. XXVII.

ELIZABETH CITY, N. C., FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 1898.

NO. 5.

Which Half is the Better Half



The housewife's duties are harder than men realize. Cleaning alone is a constant tax on her strength, a never-ended task. More than half the work of cleaning she can have done for her, if she will, and the expense will be next to nothing.



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LIGHT IN THE CLOUDS.

DR. TALMAGE SAYS WE MUST LOOK FOR SUNSHINE.

We Are Prone to Look on the Dark Side of Life—Make the Best of Misfortune. Wealth Often Destroys—The Young Man's Best Heritage—Views of Heaven.

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WASHINGTON, April 24.—This sermon of Dr. Talmage will have a tendency to take the gloom out of many lives and stir up a spirit of healthful anticipation; text, Job xxvii, 21, "And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds."

Wind east. Barometer falling. Storm signals out. Ship reefing masts. Averages taken in. Prophecies of foul weather everywhere. The clouds congregate around the sun, proposing to abolish him. But after awhile he assails the flanks of the clouds with flying artillery of light and here and there is a sign of clearing weather. Many do not observe it. Many do not realize it. "And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds." In other words, there are a hundred men looking for storm where there is one man looking for sunshine. My object will be to get you and myself into the delightful habit of making the best of everything.

You may have wondered at the statistics that in India, in the year 1875, there were over 19,000 people slain by wild beasts, and that in the year 1878 there were in India over 20,000 people destroyed by wild animals. But there is a monster in our own land which is year by year destroying more than that. It is the old, best of melancholy and with gospel weapons I propose to chase it back to its midnight caverns. I mean to do two things—a sun in subtraction and a sun in addition—a subtraction from your days of depression and an addition to your days of joy. If God will help me, I will compel you to see the bright light that there is in the clouds and compel you to make the best of everything.

In the first place, you ought to make the very best of all your financial misfortunes. During the panic a few years ago you lost a lot of money. Some of you lost it in most unaccountable ways. For the question, "How many thousands of dollars shall I put aside this year?" you substituted the question, "How shall I pay my butcher and baker and clothier and landlord?" You had the sensation of rowing hard with two oars and yet all the time going down stream.

A Destroying Power.

You did not say much about it because it was not polite to speak much of financial embarrassment, but your wife knew. Less variety of wardrobe, more economy at the table, self denial in art and tapestry, compression, retrenchment. Who did not find the necessity of it? My friend, did you make the best of this? Are you aware of how narrow an escape you made? Suppose you had reached the fortune toward which you were rapidly going? What then? You would have been as proud as Lucifer.

How few men have succeeded largely in a financial sense and yet maintained their simplicity and religious consecration! Not one man out of a hundred. There are glorious exceptions, but the general rule is that in proportion as a man gets well off in this world he gets poorer off for the next. He loses his sense of dependence on God. He gets a distaste for prayer meetings. With plenty of bank stocks and plenty of government securities, what does that man know of the prayer, "Give me this day my daily bread?" How few men largely successful in this world are bringing souls to Christ, or showing self denial for others or are eminent for piety? You can count them all upon your eight fingers and two thumbs.

One of the old covetous souls, when he was sick and sick unto death, used to have a basin brought in—a basin filled with gold—and his only amusement and the only relief he got for his inflamed hands was running them down through the gold and turning it up in the basin. Oh, what infatuation and what destroying power money has for many a man! Now, you were sailing at 80 knots the hour toward these verticies of worldliness—what a mercy it was, that honest defalcation! The same divine hand that crushed your storehouse, your bank, your office, your insurance company, lifted you out of destruction. The day you honestly suspended in business made your fortune for eternity.

"Oh," you say, "I could get along very well myself, but I am so disappointed that I cannot leave a competence for my children." My brother, the same financial misfortune that is going to save your soul will save your children. With the anticipation of large fortune, how much industry would your children have, without which habit of industry there is no safety? The young man would say, "Well, father's no need of my working. My father will soon step out, and then I'll have just what I want." You cannot hide from him how much you are worth. You think you are hiding it. He knows all about it. He can tell you almost to a dollar. Perhaps he has been to the county office and searched the records of deeds and mortgages, and he has added 'em all up, and he has made an estimate of how long you will probably stay in this world and is not so much worried about you as you are. The only thing that would do him any good is to see you put in his head and heart. Of all the young men who started life with \$40,000 capital how many turned out well? I do not know half a dozen.

The Best Inheritance.

The best inheritance a young man can have is the feeling that he has to fight his own battle and that life is a struggle into which he must throw body, mind and soul or be disgracedly

wounded. Where are the burial places of the men who started life with a fortune? Some of them in the potter's field, some in the suicide's grave. But few of these men reached 55 years of age. They drank, they smoked, they gambled. In them the beast destroyed the man. Some of them lived long enough to get their fortunes and went through them. The vast majority of them did not live to get their inheritance. From the gloom or home of infamy they were brought home to their father's house, and in delirium began to pick off loathsome reptiles from the embroidered pillow and to fight back imaginary devils. And then they were laid out in highly upholstered parlor, the casket covered with flowers by indulgent parents—flowers suggestive of a resurrection with no hope.

As you sat this morning at your breakfast table and looked into the faces of your children, perhaps you said within yourself: "Poor things! How I wish I could start them in the best of competence. Here I have been disappointed in all my expectations of what I would do for them!" Upon that scene of pathos I break with a psalm of congratulation, that by your financial losses your own prospects for heaven and the prospect for the heaven of your children are mightily improved. You may have lost a toy, but you have won a palaeo.

"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." What does that mean? It means that the grandest blessing God ever bestowed upon you was to take your money away from you. Let me here say, in passing, do not put much stress on the treasures of this world. You cannot take them along with you. At any rate, you cannot take them more than two or three miles; you will have to leave them at the cemetery. Attila had three coffins. So fond was he of this life that he decreed that first he should be buried in a coffin of gold and that then that should be enclosed in a coffin of silver and that then a large amount of treasure should be thrown in over his body. And so he was buried, and the men who buried him were slain, so that no one might know where he was buried and no one might there interfere with his treasures. Oh, men of the world, who want to take your money with you, better have three coffins!

Helpful Thoughts.

Again, I remark, you ought to make the very best of your bereavements. The whole tendency is to brood over these separations, and to give much time to the handling of mementos of the departed, and to make long visitations to the cemetery, and to say: "Oh, I can never look up again. My hope is gone; my faith in God is gone. Oh, the wear and tear and exhaustion of this loneliness!" The most frequent bereavement is the loss of children. If your departed child had lived as long as you have lived, do you not suppose that he would have had about the same amount of trouble and trial that you have had? If you could make a choice for your child between 40 years of annoyance, loss, vexation, exasperation and bereavements and 40 years in heaven, would you not take the heaven in a May day party? If your children want to go on a flowery and musical excursion, you consent. You might prefer to have them with you, but their jubilant absence satisfies you. Well, your departed children have only gone out in a May day party, amid flowery and musical entertainment, amid joys and hilarities forever. That ought to quell some of your grief, the thought of their glee.

So it ought to be that you could make the best of all bereavements. The fact that you have so many friends in heaven will make your own departure very cheerful. When you are going on a voyage, everything depends upon where your friends are—if they are on the wharf that you leave or on the wharf toward which you are going to sail. In other words, the more friends you have in heaven the easier it will be to get away from this world. The more friends here the more bitter goodbye; the more friends there the more glorious welcome. Some of you have so many brothers, sisters, children, friends in heaven that I do not know how hardly you are going to crowd through. When the vessel came from foreign lands and brought a prince to our harbor, the ships were covered with bunting, and you remember how the men-of-war thundered brassides; but there was no joy there compared with the joy which shall be demonstrated when you sail up the broad bay of heavenly salutation. The more friends you have there the easier your own transit. What is death to a mother whose children are in heaven? Why, there is no more grief in it than there is in her going into a nursery amid the romp and laughter of her household. Though all around may be lack, see you not the bright light in the

clouds—that light that irradiated faces of your glorified kindred?

Making the Worst of Things.

So also, my friends, I would have you make the best of your sicknesses. When you see one more step with elastic step and in full physical vigor, sometimes you become impatient with your lame foot. When a man describes an object a mile off, and you cannot see it at all, you become impatient of your dim eye. When you hear of a well man making a great achievement, you become impatient with your depressed nervous system or your dilapidated health. I will tell you how you can make the worst of it. Brood over it; brood over all your sicknesses, and your nerves will become more twitchy and your dyspepsia more aggravated, and your weakness more appalling. But that is the devil's work, to tell you how to make the worst of it. It is my work to show you a bright light in the clouds.

Which of the Bible men most attract your attention? You say, Moses, Job, David, Jeremiah, Paul. Why, what a strange thing it is that you have chosen those who were physically disordered! Moses—I know he was nervous from the clip he gave the Egyptian. Job—his brood was afflicted and diseased, and his skin distressfully eruptive. David—he had a running sore, which he speaks of when he says, "My sore ran in the night and ceased not." Jeremiah had enlargement of the spleen. Who can doubt it who reads Lamentations? Paul—he had a lifetime sickness which the commentators have been guessing about for years, not knowing exactly what the apostle meant by "a thorn in the flesh." I do not know either, but it was something sharp, something that stuck him. I gather from all this that physical disorder may be the means of grace to the soul. You say you have so many temptations from bodily ailments and if you were only well you think you could be a good Christian. While your temptations may be different they are no more than those of the man who has an appetite three times a day and sleeps eight hours every night.

Views of Heaven.

From my observation I judge that invalids have a more rapturous view of the next world than well people and will have higher renown in heaven. The best view of the delectable mansion is through the lattice of the sickroom. There are trains running every hour between pillow and throne, between hospital and mansion, between bandages and robes, between crutch and palm branch. Oh, I wish some of you people who are compelled to cry: "My head, my head! My foot, my foot! My back, my back!" would try some of the Lord's medicine! You are going to be well anyhow before long. Heaven is an old city, but has a new reported one. A case of sickness or of ill mortality. No ophthalmia for the eye. No pneumonia for the lungs. No pleurisy for the side. No neuralgia for the nerves. No rheumatism for the muscles. "The inhabitants shall never say, I am sick." "There shall be no more pain."

Again, you ought to make the best of life's finality. Now, you think I have a very tough subject. You do not see how I am to strike a spark of light out of the flint of the tombstone. There are many people who have an idea that death is a submergence of everything pleasant by everything dreadful. If my subject could close in the upsetting of all such preconceived notions, it would close well. Who can judge best of the features of a man—those who are close by him, or those who are afar off? "Oh," you say, "those can judge best of the features of a man who are close by him."

Now, my friends, who shall judge of the features of death—whether they are lovely or whether they are repulsive? You are too far off. If I want to make a judgment as to what really the features of death are, I will not ask you; I will ask those who have been within a month of death or a week of death or an hour of death or a minute of death. They stand so near the features, they can tell. They give unanimous testimony, if they are Christian people, that death, instead of being demonic, is cheerful. Of all the thousands of Christians who have been carried through the gates of the cemetery, gather up their dying experiences they are full of joy. They nearly all bordered on a jubilate. How often you have seen a dying man join in the psalm being sung around his bedside, the middle of the verse opening to let his ransomed spirit free, long after the lips could not speak looking and pointing upward.

Not God's Best Work.

Some of you talk as though God had exhausted himself in building this world and that all the rich curtains he ever made he hung around this planet of ours. This world is not the best thing God can do; this world is not the best thing that God has done.

One week of the year is called blossom week—called so all through the land because there are more blossoms in that week than in any other week of the year. Blossom week! And that is what the future world is to which the Christian is invited—blossom week forever. It is far ahead of this world as paradise is ahead of Dry Tortugas, and here we stand shivering and fearing to go out, and we were probably content to stay in the stormy petrels, when we are invited to arbors of jasmine and birds of paradise.

One season I had two springtimes. I went to New Orleans in April, and I marked the difference between going toward New Orleans and then coming back. As I went on down toward New Orleans the verdure, the foliage, became thicker and more beautiful. When I came back, the farther I came toward home the less the foliage, and less and less it became until there was hardly any. Now, it all depends upon the direction in which you travel. If a spirit from heaven should come toward our world, he is traveling from June toward December, from radiance toward dark-

ness, from hanging gardens toward icebergs. And one would not be very much surprised if a spirit of God sent forth from heaven toward our world should be slow to come. But how strange it is that we dread going out toward that world when going is from December toward June, from the snow of earthly storm to the snow of Edenic blossom, from the arctic of trouble toward the tropics of eternal joy.

Oh, what an ado about dying! We get so attached to the malarial marsh in which we live that we are afraid to go up and live on the hilltop. We are alarmed because vacation is coming. Eternal sunlight and best programme of celestial minstrels and hallelujah no inducement. Let us stay here and keep cold and ignorant and weak. Do not introduce us to Elijah and John Milton and Bourdaloue. Keep our feet on the sharp cobblestones of earth instead of planting them on the bank of amaranth in heaven. Give us this small island of a leprous world instead of the immunities of splendor and delight. Keep our hands full of nettles, and our shoulder under the burden, and our neck in the yoke, and hopple on our ankles, and handcuffs on our wrists. "Dear Lord," we seem to say, "keep us down here where we have to suffer instead of letting us up where we might live and reign and rejoice."

Death Is True Life.

I am amazed at myself and at yourself for this infatuation under which we all rest. Men you would suppose would get frightened at having to stay in this world instead of getting frightened at having to go toward heaven. I congratulate anybody who has a right to die. By that I mean through sickness you cannot avert or through accident you cannot avoid—your work consummated. "Where did they bury Lily?" said one little child to another. "Oh," she replied, "they buried her in the ground." "What! In the cold ground?" "Oh, no, no, not in the cold ground, but in the warm ground, where baby seeds become beautiful flowers."

"But," says some one, "it pains me so much to think that I must lose the body with which my soul has so long companioned." You do not lose it. You no more lose your body by death than you lose your watch when you send it to have it repaired or your jewel when you send it to have it reset or the faded picture when you send it to have it touched up or the photograph of a friend when you have it put in a new looking-glass or the portrait of a man when you go to Rome to get his, Payson will go to Portland to get his, President Edwards will go to Princeton to get his, George Cookman will go to the bottom of the Atlantic to get his, and we will go to the village churchyards and the city cemeteries to get ours, and when we have our perfect spirit rejoined to our perfect body, then we will be the kind of men and women that the resurrection morning will find in a new looking-glass. So you see you have not made out any delusive story yet. What have you proved about death? What is the case you have made out? You have made out just this—that death allows us to have a perfect body, free of all aches, united forever with a perfect soul free from all sin. Correct your theology. What does it all mean? Why, it means that moving day is coming, and that you are going to quit cramped apartments and be mansioned forever. The horse at the gate will not be the one lathered and basted, carrying bad news, but it will be the horse that St. John saw in Apocalyptic vision—the white horse on which the King comes to the banquet. The ground around the palace will quake with the tires and hoofs of celestial equipage, and those Christians who in this world lost their friends and lost their property and lost their health and lost their life will find out that God was always kind and that all things worked together for their good and that those were the wisest people on earth who made the best of everything. See you not now the bright light in the clouds?

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Rate of one fare for the round trip, tickets on sale May 2nd-4th, with final limit May 31st.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.

National Order of Elks.

Rate of one fare for the round trip, tickets on sale May 7th-9th, with final limit of May 31st.

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NORFOLK, VA.

Southern Baptist and Auxiliary Conventions.

Rate of one fare for the round trip, tickets on sale May 2nd-6th, with final limit of five days.

CHARLOTTE, N. C.

Twentieth of May Celebration of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.

Rate of one fare for the round trip, tickets on sale May 16th-19, and one cent per mile travelled from points within a radius of two hundred miles, tickets on sale 18th-19th with final limit May 23rd.

Reunion of Confederate Veterans.

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Rate of one fare for the round trip, tickets on sale May 16th-19, and one cent per mile travelled from points within a radius of two hundred miles, tickets on sale 18th-19th with final limit May 23rd.

Reunion of Confederate Veterans.

Rate of one cent per mile travelled, tickets on sale May 18th-19th with final limit May 23rd.

For full information in regard to these rates call on or address any Agent of the Seaboard Air Line or write to:

T. J. ANDERSON, General Passenger Agent, Portsmouth, Va.

REduced Rates in May.

The Seaboard Air Line announces the following Reduced Rates for Special Occasions to take place in May.

BALTIMORE MD.

Quadrant Conference of the M. E. Church, South.

Rate of one fare for the round trip, tickets on sale May 2nd-4th, with final limit May 31st.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.

National Order of Elks.

Rate of one fare for the round trip, tickets on sale May 7th-9th, with final limit of May 31st.

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the U. S.

Rate of one fare for the round trip, tickets on sale May 7th-9th, with final limit of June 4th.

NORFOLK, VA.

Southern Baptist and Auxiliary Conventions.

Rate of one fare for the round trip, tickets on sale May 2nd-6th, with final limit of five days.

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