

RUINOUS COMPANIONS.

"CONSORT WITH BURGLARS AND YOU WILL BE A BURGLAR."

Dr. Talmage Makes Some New Remarks on an Old Subject—How Spondriffs and Debauchees Are Made—Evil Wrought by the Skeptic.

BROOKLYN, June 2.—The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., preached at the Tabernacle today. After expounding the Scriptures he gave out that popular hymn by A. M. Toplady, beginning:

Your harp, ye trembling saints, low from the willows take. He took for his text Proverbs xiii, 20: "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." Following is a verbatim report of the sermon:

"May it please the court," said a convicted criminal, when asked if he had anything to say before sentence of death was passed upon him, "may it please the court, bad company has been my ruin. I received the blessings of good parents, and, in return, promised to avoid all evil associations. Had I kept my promise I should have been saved this shame, and been free from the load of guilt that hangs round me like a vulture, threatening to drag me to justice for crimes yet uncommitted. I, who once moved in the first circles of society, and have been the guest of distinguished public men, am lost, and all through bad company."

This is but one of the thousand proofs that the companion of fools shall be destroyed. It is the invariable rule. There is a well man in the wards of a hospital, where there are a hundred people sick with ship fever, and he will not be so apt to take the disease as a good man would be apt to be smitten with moral distemper, if shut up with iniquitous companions. In olden times prisoners were herded together in the same cell, but each one learned the vices of all the culprits, so that, instead of being reformed by incarceration, the day of liberation turned them out upon society beasts, not men.

DO NOT SEEK BAD COMPANIONS.

We may, in our places of business, be compelled to talk to and mingle with bad men; but he who deliberately chooses to associate himself with vicious people is engaged in carrying on a courtship with a Delilah, whose shears will clip off all the locks of his strength, and he will be tripped into perdition. Sin is catching, is infectious, is epidemic. I will tell you look over the millions of people now inhabiting the earth, and I challenge you to show me a good man who, after one year, has made choice and consorted with the wicked. A thousand dollars reward for one such instance. I care not how strong your character may be. Associate with gamblers, you will become a gambler. Clan with burglars, and you will become a burglar. Go among the unclean, and you will become unclean. Not appreciating the truth of my text, many a young man has been destroyed. He wakes up some morning in the great city, and knows no one except the persons into whose employ he has entered.

As he goes into the store all the clerks mark him, measure him and discuss him. The upright young men of the store wish him well, but perhaps wait for a formal introduction, and even then have some delicacy about inviting him into their associations. But the bad young men of the store at the first opportunity approach and offer their services. They patronize him. They profess to know all about the town. They will take him anywhere that he wishes to go—if he will pay the expenses. For if a good young man and a bad young man go to some place where they ought not, the good young man has invariably to pay the charges. At the moment the ticket is to be paid for, or the champagne settled for, the bad young man feels around in his pockets and says: "I have forgotten my pocket book." In forty-eight hours after the young man has entered the store the bad fellows of the establishment slap him on the shoulder familiarly, and, at his stupidity in taking certain allusions, say: "My young friend, you will have to be broken in," and they immediately proceed to break him in. Young man, in the name of God I warn you to beware how you let a bad man talk familiarly with you. If such an one slap you on the shoulder familiarly, turn round and give him a withering look, until the wretch crouches in your presence. There is no monstrosity of wickedness that can stand unabashed under the glance of purity and honor. God keeps the lightnings of heaven in his own scabbard, and no human arm can wield them; but God gives to every young man a lightning that he may use, and that is the lightning of an honest eye. Those who have been close observers will not wonder why I give warning to young men, and say, "Beware of bad company."

First, I warn you to shun the skeptic—the young man who puts his fingers in his vest and laughs at your old-fashioned religion, and turns over to some mystery of the Bible and says: "Explain that, my pious friend; explain that." And who says: "Nobody shall scare me; I am not afraid of the future; I used to believe in such things, and so did my father and mother, but I have got over it." Yes, he has got over it; and if you sit in his company a little longer, you will get over it too. Without presenting one argument against the Christian religion, such men will, by their jeers and scoffs and caricatures, destroy your respect for that religion which was the strength of your father in his declining years, and the pillow of your old mother when she lay a-dying. Alas! a time will come when that blustering young infidel will have to die, and then his diamond ring will flash no splendor in the eyes of Death, as he stands over the couch, waiting for his soul. Those beautiful locks will be uncombed upon the pillow, and the dying man will say: "I cannot die—I cannot die." Death,

standing ready beside the couch, says: "You must die; you have only half a minute to live; let me have it right away—your soul." "No," says the young infidel, "here are my gold rings, and these pictures; take them all." "No," says Death, "what do I care for pictures!—your soul." "Stand back," says the dying infidel. "I will not stand back," says Death, "for you have only ten seconds now to live; I want your soul." The dying man says: "Don't breathe that cold air into my face. You crowd me too hard. It is getting dark in the room. O God!" "Hush," says Death; "you said there was no God." "Pray for me," exclaims the expiring infidel. "Too late to pray," says Death; "but three more seconds to live, and I will count them off—one—two—three." He has gone! Where? Where? Carry him out—out, and bury him beside his father and mother, who died while holding fast the Christian religion. They died singing; but the young infidel only said: "Don't breathe that cold air into my face. You crowd me too hard. It is getting dark in the room."

THE MAN WHO DOES NOTHING IS WORTH NOTHING.

Again, I urge you to shun the companionship of idlers. There are men hanging around every store, and office, and shop, who have nothing to do, or act as if they had not. They are apt to come in when the firm are away, and wish to engage you in conversation while you are engaged in your regular employment. Politely suggest to such persons that you have no time to give them during business hours. Nothing would please them so well as to have you renounce your occupation and associate with them. Much of the time they lounge around the club rooms or the doors of engine houses, or after the dining hour stand upon the steps of a fashionable hotel or an elegant restaurant, wishing to give you the idea that that is the place where they dine. But they do not dine there. They are sinking down lower and lower, day by day. Neither by day nor by night have anything to do with the idlers. Before you admit a man into your acquaintance ask him politely: "What do you do for a living?" If he says, "Nothing; I am a gentleman," look out for him. He may have a very soft hand and very faultless apparel, and have a high sounding family name, but his touch is death. Before you know it you will in his presence be ashamed of your work dress. Business will become to you drudgery, and after awhile you will lose your place, and afterwards your respectability, and last of all your soul. Idleness is next door to villainy. Thieves, gamblers, burglars, shop lifters and assassins are made from the class who have nothing to do. When the police go to hunt up and arrest a culprit they seldom go to look in among busy clerks or in the busy carriage factory, but they go among the groups of idlers. The play is going on at the theatre, when suddenly there is a scuffle in the top gallery. What is it? A policeman has come in, and leaning over, has tapped on the shoulder of a young man, saying: "I want you, sir." He has not worked during the day, but somehow has raked to gether a shilling or two to get into the top gallery. He is an idler. The man on his right hand is an idler and the man on his left hand is an idler.

Shrink back from idleness in yourself and in others if you would maintain a right position. Good old Ashbel Green, at more than eighty years of age, was found busy writing, and some young man said to him: "Why do you keep busy? It is time for you to rest." He answered: "I keep busy to keep out of mischief." No man is strong enough to be idle. Are you fond of pictures? If so I will show you one of the works of an old master. Here it is: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered well. I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelth and thy want as an armed man." I don't know of another sentence in the Bible more expressive than that. It first hisses softly, like the fuse of a cannon, and at last bursts like a fifty-four pounder. The old proverb was right: "The devil tempts most men, but idlers tempt the devil."

BREAD THAT IS CAST UPON THE WATERS.

A young man came to a man of ninety years of age and said to him: "How have you made out to live so long and be so well?" The old man took the youngster to an orchard, and, pointing to some large trees full of apples, said: "I planted these trees when I was a boy, and do you wonder that now I am permitted to gather the fruit of them?" We gather in old age what we plant in our youth. Sow to the wind, and we reap the whirlwind. Plant in early life the right kind of a Christian character, and you will eat luscious fruit in old age, and gather these harvest apples in eternity.

Again, I urge you to avoid the perpetual pleasure seeker. I believe in recreation and amusement. I need it as much as I need bread, and go to my daily exercise with as conscientious a purpose as I go to the Lord's Supper; and all persons of sanguine temperament must have amusement and recreation. God would not have made us with the capacity to laugh if he had not intended us sometimes to indulge it. God hath hung in sky, and set in wave, and printed on grass many a roundelay; but he who chooses pleasure seeking for his life work does not understand for what God made him. Our amusements are intended to help us in some earnest mission. The thunder cloud hath an edge exquisitely purpled, but, with voice that jars the earth, it declares: "I go to water the green fields." The wild flowers under the fence are gay, and they say: "We stand here to make a beautiful edge for the wheat field, and to refresh the husbandmen in their nooning." The stream sparkles

and foams, and frolics, and says: "I go to baptize the moss. I have the spots on the trout. I slake the thirst of the bird. I turn the wheel of the mill. I rock in my crystal cradle muckshaw and water lily." And so, while the world plays, it works. Look out for the man who always plays and never works.

You will do well to avoid those whose regular business it is to play ball, skate or go a-boating. All these sports are grand in their places. I never derived so much advantage from any ministerial association as from a ministerial club that went out to play ball every Saturday afternoon in the outskirts of Philadelphia. These recreations are grand to give us muscle and spirits for our regular toil. I believe in muscular Christianity. A man is often not so near God with a weak stomach as when he has a strong digestion. But shun those who make it their life occupation to sport. There are young men whose industry and usefulness have fallen overboard from the yacht on the Hudson or the Schuylkill. There are men whose business fell through the ice of the skating pond, and has never since been heard of. There is a beauty in the gliding of a boat, in the song of skates, in the soaring of a well struck ball, and I never see one fly but I involuntarily throw up my hands to catch it; and, so far from laying an injunction upon ball playing, or any other innocent sport, I claim them all as belonging of right to those of us who toil in the grand industries of church and state.

LISTEN NOT TO THE TEMPTER'S VOICE.

But the life business of pleasure seeking always makes in the end a criminal or a sot. George Brummell was smiled upon by all England, and his life was given to pleasure. He danced with peeresses, and swung a round of mirth, and wealth, and applause, until exhausted of purse, and worn out of body, and bankrupt of reputation, and ruined of soul, he begged a biscuit from a grocer, and declared that he thought a dog's life was better than a man's.

Such men will crowd around your desk or counter or work bench or seek to decoy you off. They will want you to break out in the midst of your busy day to take a ride with them to Coney Island or to Central park. They will tell you of some people you must see; of some excursion that you must take; of some Sabbath day that you ought to forsake. They will tell you of exquisite wines that you must taste; of costly operas that you must hear; of wonderful dances that you must see; but before you accept their convoy or their companionship remember that while at the end of a useful life you may be able to look back to kindness done, to honorable work accomplished, to poverty helped, to a good name earned, to Christian influence exerted, to a Saviour's cause advanced—these pleasure seekers on their death bed have nothing better to review than a torn playbill, a ticket for the races, an empty tankard, and the cast out rinds of a carousel; and as in the delirium of their awful death they clutch the goblet and press it to their lips, the dregs of the cup falling upon their tongue will begin to hiss and uncoil with the adders of an eternal poison.

Cast out these men from your company. Do not be intimate with them. Always be polite. There is no demand that you ever sacrifice politeness. A young man accosted a Christian Quaker with: "Old chap, how did you make all your money?" The Quaker replied: "By dealing in an article that thou mayest deal in if thou wilt—civility." Always be courteous, but at the same time firm. Say no as if you meant it. Have it understood in store, and shop, and street, that you will not stand in the companionship of the skeptic, the idle, the pleasure seeker.

Rather than enter the companionship of such, accept the invitation to a better feast. The promises of God, are the fruits. The harps of heaven are the music. Clusters from the vineyards of God have been pressed into the tankards. The sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty are the guests. While, standing at the banquet, to fill the cups and divide the clusters and command the harps and welcome the guests, is a daughter of God on whose brow are the blossoms of paradise, and in whose cheek is the flush of celestial summer. Her name is Religion.

HER WAYS ARE WAYS OF PLEASANTNESS.

And all her paths are peace.

WHERE THE RIGHT ROAD LEADS TO.

Decide this soon, oh, young man, what direction you will take. There comes such a moment of final decision—why not now? One night I saw a young man at the street corner evidently doubting as to which direction he had better take, his hat lifted high enough so you could see he had an intelligent forehead, and he had a stout chest and a robust development. Splendid young man. Cultured young man. Honored young man. Why did he stop there while so many were going up and down? The fact is, that every man has a good angel and a bad angel contending for the mastery of his spirit, and there was a good angel and a bad angel struggling with that young man's soul at the corner of the street. "Come with me," said the good angel; "I will take you home; I will spread my wing over your pillow; I will lovingly escort you all through life under supernatural protection; I will bless every cup you drink out of, every couch you rest on, every doorway you enter; I will consecrate your tears when you weep, your sweat when you toil, and at the last I will hand over your grave to the bright angel of a Christian resurrection. In answer to your father's petition and your mother's prayer, I have been sent of the Lord out of heaven to be your guardian spirit. Come with me," said the good angel, in a voice of unearthly symphony. It was music like that which drops from a lute of heaven when a seraph breathes on it. "No, no," said the bad angel, "come with me; I have something better to offer; the wines I pour are from chalice of bewitching carousal; the dance I lead is over floor

tessellated with unrestrained indulgences; there is no God to frown on the temples of sin where I worship. The skies are Italian. The paths I tread are through meadows, daisied and primrosed. Come with me." The young man hesitated at a time when hesitation was ruin, and the bad angel snote the good angel until it departed, spreading wings through the starlight upward and away, until a door flashed open in the sky and forever the wings vanished. That was the turning point in that young man's history; for, the good angel flown, he hesitated no longer, but started on a pathway which is beautiful at the opening, but blasted at the last. The bad angel, leading the way, opened gate after gate, and at each gate the road became rougher and the sky more lurid, and what was peculiar, as the gate slammed shut it came to with a jar that indicated that it would never open. Passed each portal, there was a grinding of locks and a showing of bolts; and the scenery on either side the road changed from gardens to deserts, and the June air became a cutting December blast, and the bright wings of the bad angel turned to sack cloth, and the eyes of light became hollow with hopeless grief, and the fountains, that at the start had tugged with wine, poured forth bubbling tears and foaming blood, and on the right side the road there was a serpent, and the man said to the bad angel: "What is that serpent?" and the answer was: "That is the serpent of stinging remorse." On the left side the road there was a lion, and the man asked the bad angel: "What is that lion?" and the answer was: "That is the lion of all devouring despair." A vulture flew through the sky, and the man asked the bad angel: "What is that vulture?" and the answer was: "That is the vulture waiting for the carcases of the slain." And then the man began to try to pull off him the folds of something that had wound him round and round, and he said to the bad angel: "What is it that twists me in this awful convulsion?" and the answer was: "That is the worm that never dies!" And then the man said to the bad angel: "What does all this mean? I trusted in what you said at the corner of the street that night; I trusted it all, and why have you thus deceived me?" Then the last deception fell off the charmer, and it said: "I was sent forth from the pit to destroy your soul; I watched my chance for many a long year, when you hesitated that night on the street, I gained my triumph; now you are here. Ha! ha! You are here. Come, now, let us fill these two chalices of fire, and drink together to darkness and woe and death. Ha! Ha!" Oh! young man, will the good angel sent forth by Christ or the bad angel sent forth by sin get the victory over your soul? Their wings are interlocked this moment above you, contending for your destiny, as above the Appennines eagle and condor fight mid-sky. This hour may decide your destiny. God help you. To hesitate is to die!

FISH ON THE TABLE.

There can be no doubt that it would be better for the brain and nervous system if fish oiler replaced meat as an article of food. Too stimulating and heating diet has been the cause of several diseases. Fish is one of the most easily digested of foods. A medical authority states that trout is digested in one hour and milk not till two hours. The reason for the ease with which fish is digested is the small amount of fat contained. Cod and light colored fish are more easily assimilated into the system than the darker kinds, though not as nutritious. Broiled fish is most easily digested, and fried the least. Raw oysters are easily digested and very nutritious. Cooking sacrifices their best quality. Clam and oyster waters are now being much used for invalids. Fish is not only a very important and wholesome food but it is less expensive than meat. The use of fish affords one of the easiest and cheapest ways by which to have a variety. Care should be taken in fish as in other foods to buy it in its season. During Lent there is a great variety of fish at reasonable prices. Halibut is a little higher than, but is still cheaper than beefsteak, and has more solid meat to a pound than steak. Salmon is possible in season, but as it is a dollar and a dollar and a half a pound it will hardly be seen on the economist's table. One large fish has enough nutriment to form the basis of a family dinner without meat. It should always be served with farinaceous or vegetable food, as toast, potatoes, rice, macaroni and the like. Fish will reduce the cost of table fare if wisely used, and still satisfy the most vigorous appetite.—Good House-keeping.

Extension of Photography.

One of the officials of the Midland railway, England, is the company's photographer-in-ordinary. The name of his functions is legion. When engines or carriages of a new pattern are constructed he takes a record of their features. If it is reported to the engineer that a viaduct shows signs of giving way, or a wall is cracked, or an embankment has slipped, if the damage is only slight, instead of going himself to see the state of affairs, he sends the photographer to see and record it for him. If an accident has happened there can thus be no subsequent dispute as to how the engine was lying, or whether the carriages left the rails.—New York Mail and Express.

Anecdote of O'Connell.

O'Connell was called to the bar in Dublin, in 1798. Among his first cases was one against a fellow Kerryman, who called him a "purse proud blockhead." "I have no purse to be proud of," said O'Connell, "and if I am a blockhead, all the better for you." The man lost his case and wrote a challenge to duel, but the young lawyer replied that he declined unless the Kerryman would insure his life in O'Connell's favor so that it would be worth while to shoot him.—San Francisco Argonaut.

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