

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

DR. TALMAGE'S SUNDAY SERMON

Many Temptations That Beset the Young—We Should Carefully Guard Our Conduct.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—A familiar illustration from the barnyard is employed in this discourse by Dr. Talmage to show the comfort and protection that heaven affords to all trusting souls. The text is Matthew xxiii, 37, "Even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

Jerusalem was in sight as Christ came to the crest of Mount Olivet, a height of 700 feet. The splendors of the religious capital of the whole earth irradiated the landscape. There is the temple. Yonder is the king's palace. Spread out before His eyes are the pomp, wealth, the wickedness and the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and He bursts into tears at the thought of the obduracy of a place that He would gladly have saved and apostrophizes, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

Why did Christ select hen and chickens as a simile? Next to the apportionment of the comparison, I think it was to help all public teachers in the matter of illustration to get down off their stilts and use comparisons that all can understand. The plainest bird on earth is the barnyard fowl. Its only adornments are the red comb in its head-dress and the wattles under the throat. It has no grandeur of genealogy. All we know is that its ancestors came from India, some of them from a height of 4000 feet on the sides of the Himalayas. It has no pretension of nest like the eagle's eyrie. It has no lustre of plumage like the goldfinch. Possessing anatomy that allows flight, yet about the last thing it wants to do is to fly, and in retreat uses foot almost as much as wing. Musicians have written out in musical scale the song of lark and robin redbreast and nightingale, yet the hen of my text hath nothing that could be taken for a song, but only cluck and cackle. Yet Christ in the text uttered while looking upon doomed Jerusalem declares that what He had wished for that city was like what the hen does for her chickens.

Christ was thus simple in His teachings, and yet how hard it is for us who are Sunday-school instructors and editors and preachers and reformers and those who would gain the ears of audiences to attain that heavenly and divine art of simplicity! We have to run a course of literary disorders as children a course of physical disorders. We come out of school and college loaded down with Greek mythologies and out of the theological seminary weighed down with what the learned fathers said, and we fly with wings of eagles and flamingoes and albatrosses, and it takes a good while before we can come down to Christ's similitudes, the candle under the bushel, the salt that has lost its savor, the net thrown into the sea, the spittle on the eyes of the blind man and the hen and chickens.

I am in warm sympathy with the unpretentious old fashioned hen because, like most of us, she has to scratch for a living. She knows at the start the lesson which most people of good sense are slow to learn—that the gaining of a livelihood implies work, and that successes do not lie on the surface, but are to be attained by positive and continuous effort. The reason that society and the church and the world are so full of failures, so full of loafers, so full of deadbeats is because people are not wise enough to take the lesson which any hen would teach them that if they would find for themselves and for those dependent upon them anything worth having they must scratch for it. Solomon said, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard." I say, "Go to the hen, thou sluggard." In the Old Testament God compares Himself to an eagle stirring up her nest, and in the New Testament the Holy Spirit is compared to a descending dove, but Christ in a sermon that began with cutting sarcasm for hypocrites and ends with the paroxysm of pathos in the text compares Himself to a hen.

One day in the country we saw sudden consternation in the behavior of old Dominick. Why the hen should be so disturbed we could not understand. We looked about to see if a neighbor's dog were invading the farm. We looked up to see if a storm cloud were hovering. We could see nothing on the ground that could terrify, and we could see nothing in the air to ruffle the feathers of the hen, but the loud, wild, affrighted cluck which brought all her brood at full run under her feathers made us look again around and above us, when we saw that high up and far away there was a rapacious bird wheeling round and round and down and down, and not seeing us as we stood in the shadow, it came nearer and lower until we saw its beak was curved from base to tip and it had two flames of fire for eyes, and it was a hawk. But all the chickens were under old Dominick's wings, and either the bird of prey caught a glimpse of us or not able to find the brood huddled under wing, darted back into the clouds.

So Christ calls with great earnestness to all the young. Why, what is the matter? It is bright sunlight, and there can be no danger. Health is theirs. A good home is theirs. Plenty of food is theirs. Prospect of long life is theirs. But Christ continues to call, calls with more emphasis and urges haste and says not a second ought to be lost. Oh, do tell us what is the matter. Ah, now I see; there are hawks of temptation in the air, there are vultures wheeling for their prey, there are claws of allurements ready to clutch. Now I see the peril. Now I understand the urgency. Now I see the only safety. Would that Christ might this day take our sons and daughters into His shelter as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing.

The fact is that the most of them will never mind the shelter unless while they are chickens. It is a simple matter of inexorable statistics that most of those who do not come to Christ in youth never come at all. What chance is there for the young without divine protection? There are the grogshops, there are the gambling halls, there are the infidelities and immoralities of spiritualism, there are the bad books, there are the impurities, there are the business necessities, and so numerous are these assailants that it is a wonder that honesty and virtue are not lost arts. The birds of prey, diurnal and nocturnal, of the natural world are ever on the alert. They are assassins of the sky; they have varieties of taste. The eagle prefers the flesh of the living animals; the vulture prefers the carcasses; the falcon kills with one stroke, while other styles of beak

give prolongation of torture. And so the temptations of this life are various.

Fathers, mothers, older brothers and sisters and Sabbath-school teachers, be quick and earnest and prayerful and importunate and get the chickens under wing. May the Sabbath schools of America and Great Britain within the next three months sweep all their scholars into the kingdom. Whom they have now under charge is uncertain. Concerning that scrawny, puny child that lay in the cradle many years ago, the father dead, many remarked, "What a mercy if the Lord would take the child?" And the mother really thought so too. But what a good thing that God spared that child, for it became world renowned in Christian literature and one of God's most illustrious servants—John Todd.

But we all need the protecting wing. If you had known when you entered upon manhood or womanhood what was ahead of you, would you have dared to undertake life? How much you have been through! With most life has been a disappointment. They tell me so. They have not attained that which they expected to attain. They have not had the physical and mental vigor they expected or they have met with rebuffs which they did not anticipate. You are not at forty or fifty or sixty or seventy or eighty years of age where you thought you would be. I do not know any one except myself to whom life has been a happy surprise. I never expected anything, and so when anything came in the shape of human favor or comfortable position or widening field of work it was to me a surprise. I was told in the theological seminary by some of my fellow students that I never would get anybody to hear me preach unless I changed my style, so that when I found that some people did come to hear me it was a happy surprise. But most people, according to their own statement, have found life a disappointment. Indeed, we all need shelter from its temptations.

But now the summer day is almost past, and the shadows of the house and barn and wagon shed have lengthened. The farmer, with scythe or hoe on shoulder, is returning from the fields. The oxen are yoked. The horses are crunching the oats at the full bin. The air is bewitched of honeysuckle and wild brier. The milkman, pail in hand, is approaching the barnyard. The fowls, keeping early hours, are collecting their young. "Cluck!" "Cluck!" "Cluck!" And soon all the eyes of that feathered nursery are closed. The bachelors of the winged tribe have ascended to their perch, but the hens, in a motherhood divinely appointed, take all the risk of a slumber on the ground, and all night long the wings will stay outspread, and the little ones will not utter a sound.

Thus at sundown, lovingly, safely, completely, the hen broods her young. So, if we are the Lord's, the evening of our life will come. The heats of the day will have passed. There will be shadows, and we cannot see as far. The work of life will be about ended. The hawks of temptation that hovered in the sky will have gone to the woods and folded their wings. Sweet silences will come. The air will be redolent with the breath of whole arbors of promises sweeter than jasmine or evening primrose. The air may be a little chill, but Christ will call us, and we will know the voice and heed the call, and we will come under the wings for the night, the strong wings, the soft wings, the warm wings, and without fear and in full sense of safety, and then we will rest from sundown to sunrise, "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing."

My text has its strongest application for people who were born in the country, wherever you may now live, and that is the majority of you. You cannot hear my text without having all the rustic scenes of the old farmhouse come back to you. Good old days they were. You knew nothing much of the world, for you had not seen the world. By law of association you cannot recall the brooding hen and her chickens without seeing also the barn and the haymow and the wagon shed and the house and the room where you played and the fireside with the big back-log before which you sat and the neighbors and the burial and the wedding and the deep snowbanks, and hear the village bell that called you to worship and seeing the horses which, after pulling you to church, stood around the old clapboarded meeting house, and those who sat at either end of the church pew and, indeed, all the scenes of your first fourteen years, and you think of what you were then and of what you are now and all these thoughts are aroused by the sight of the old hen-coop. Some of you had better go back and start again. In thought return to that place and hear the cluck and see the outspread feathers and come under the wing and make the Lord your portion and shelter and warmth, preparing for everything that may come, and so avoid being classed among those described by the closing words of my text, "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Ah, that throws the responsibility upon us. "Ye would not." Alas, for the "would not!" If the wandering broods of the farm heed not their mother's call and risk the hawk and dare the freshet and expose themselves to the frost and storm, surely their calamities are not the mother's fault. "Ye would not!" God would, but how many would not?

When a good man asked a young woman who had abandoned her home and who was deploring her wretchedness why she did not return, the reply was: "I dare not go home. My father is so provoked he would not receive me home." "Then," said the Christian man, "I will test this." And so he wrote to the father, and the reply came back, and in a letter marked outside "Immediate" and inside saying, "Let her come at once; all is forgiven." So God's invitation for you is marked "Immediate" on the outside, and inside it is written, "He will abundantly pardon." Oh, ye wanderers from God and happiness and home and heaven, come under the sheltering wing. A vessel in the Bristol Channel was nearing the rocks called the Steep Holmes. Under the tempest the vessel was unmanageable, and the only hope was that the tide would change before she struck the rocks and went down, and so the captain stood on the deck, watch in hand. Captain and crew and passengers were pallid with terror. Taking another look at his watch and another look at the sea, he shouted: "Thank God, we are saved! The tide has turned! One minute more and we would have struck the rocks!" Some of you have been a long while drifting in the tempest of sin and sorrow, and have been making for the breakers. Thank God, the tide has turned. Do you not feel the lift of the billow? The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to your soul, and, in the words of Boaz Ruth, I command you to "The Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou hast come to trust."

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I have used Ripans Tablets with so much satisfaction that I can cheerfully recommend them. Have been troubled for about three years with what I called bilious attacks coming on regularly once a week. Was told by different physicians that it was caused by bad teeth, of which I had several. I had the teeth extracted, but the attacks continued. I had seen advertisements of Ripans Tablets in all the papers but had no faith in them, but about six weeks since a friend induced me to try them. Have taken but two of the small 5-cent boxes of the Tablets and have had no recurrence of the attacks. Have never given a testimonial for anything before, but the great amount of good which I believe has been done me by Ripans Tablets induces me to add mine to the many testimonials you doubtless have in your possession now.

A. T. DAWSON.

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. PRISON.

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. Bowler, Ph. G., 588 Newark Ave., Jersey City, I took Ripans Tablets with grand results.

Miss BESSIE WIEDMANN.

Mother was troubled with heartburn and sleeplessness, caused by indigestion, for a good many years. One day she saw a testimonial in the paper endorsing Ripans Tablets. She determined to give them a trial, was greatly relieved by their use and now takes the Tablets regularly. She keeps a few cartons Ripans Tablets in the house and says she will not be without them. The heartburn and sleeplessness have disappeared with the indigestion which was formerly so great a burden for her. Our whole family take the Tablets regularly, especially after a hearty meal. My mother is fifty years of age and is enjoying the best of health and spirits; also eats hearty meals, an impossibility before she took Ripans Tablets.

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