

# DEATH OF DR. TALMAGE

Makes Appropriate Reprinting

## HIS FAMOUS SERMON

Considered by Many the Masterpiece of the Great Pulpit Orator

### "On the Choice of a Wife."

Marriage Not For All—Multitudes Who Never Will Marry, Who Are Not Fit to Marry—Some Eminent Blunders—Avoid Matchmakers—Essential Qualities—Beauty a Benediction.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—The following discourse is one of a series of sermons on domestic life delivered several years ago by the late Rev. Dr. T. De Witt Talmage, and by many admirers is considered his pulpit masterpiece. In commemoration of his death it is now republished. It was published on the text: Judges xiv. 3: "Is there ever a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?"

Samson, the giant, is here asking consent of his father and mother to marriage with one whom they thought unfit for him. He was wise in asking their counsel, but not wise in rejecting it. Captivated with her looks, the big son wanted to marry a daughter of one of the hostile families, a deceitful, hypocritical, whining and saturnine creature, who afterward made for him a world of trouble till she quit him forever. In my text his parents forbade the bans, practically saying: "When there are so many honest and beautiful maidens of your own country, why do you so hard put to for a lifetime partner that you propose conjugal with this foreign flirt? Is there such a dearth of lies in our Israelitish gardens that you must wear our heart a Philistine's hilt? Do you pomegranates? Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?"

Excuseless was he for such a choice in a land and amid a race celebrated for female loveliness and moral worth, a land and a race of which self-denying Abigail and heroic Deborah, and dazzling Miriam, and pious Esther, and glorious Ruth, and Mary, who hugged to her heart the blessed Lord, were only magnificent specimens. The midnight folded in their hair, the lakes of liquid beauty in their eye, the gracefulness of spring morning in their posture and gait, were only typical of the greater brilliance and glory of their soul. Likewise excuseless is any man in our time who makes lifelong alliance with any one who, because of her disposition, or heredity, or habits, or intellectual vanity, or moral twilification, may be said to be of the Philistines.

The world never owned such opulence of womanly character or such splendor of womanly manners or multitudinous instances of wifely, motherly, daughterly, sisterly devotion, as it owns to-day. I have not words to express my admiration for good womanhood. Woman is not only man's equal, but in affectional and religious nature, which is the best part of us, she is seventy-five per cent. his superior. Yea, during the last twenty years, through the increased opportunity opened for female education, the women of the country are better educated than the majority of men; and if they continue to advance mentally at the present ratio, before long the majority of men will have difficulty in finding in the opposite sex enough ignorance to make appropriate consort. If I am under a delusion as to the abundance of good womanhood abroad, consequent upon my surroundings since the hour I entered this life until now, I hope the delusion will last until I embark from this planet. So you will understand, if I say in this course of sermons something that seems severe, I am neither cynical nor disgruntled.

There are in almost every farmhouse in the country, in almost every home of the great town, conscientious women, worshipful women, self-sacrificing women, holy women, innumerable Marys, sitting at the feet of Christ; innumerable mothers, helping to feed Christ in the person of His suffering disciples; a thousand capped and spectacled grandmothers Lois, bending over Bibles whose precepts they have followed from early girlhood; and tens of thousands of young women that are dawning upon us from school and seminary, that are going to bless the world with good and happy homes, that shall eclipse all their predecessors, a fact that will be acknowledged by all men except those who are struck through with moral decay from the Samson of the text is that man who, amid all this unparalleled munificence of womanhood, marries a fool. But some of you are abroad suffering from such disaster, and to halt others of you from going over the same precipice, I cry out in the words of my text: "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?"

That marriage is the destination of the human race is a mistake that I want to correct before I go further. There are multitudes who never will marry, and still greater multitudes who are not fit to marry. In Great Britain to-day there are nine hundred and forty-eight thousand more women than men, and that, I understand, is about the ratio in America. By mathematical and inexorable law, you see, millions of women will never marry. The supply for matrimony greater than the demand, the first lesson of which is that every woman ought to prepare to take care of herself if need be. Then there are thousands of men who have no right to marry, because they have become so corrupt of character that their offer of marriage is an insult to any good woman. Society will have to be toned up and corrected on this subject, so that it shall realize that if a woman who has sacrificed her honor is unfitted for marriage, so is any man who has ever sacrificed his purity. What right have you, O masculine beast! whose life has been loose, to take under your care the spotlessness of a virgin reared in the sanctity of a respectable home? Will a buzzard dare to court a dove?

But the majority of you will marry, and have a right to marry, and as your religious teacher I wish to say to these men, in the choice of a wife first of all seek divine direction. About thirty-five years

ago, when Martin Farquhar Tupper, the English poet, urged men to prayer before they decided upon matrimonial association, people laughed. And some of them have lived to laugh on the other side of their mouth.

The need of divine direction I argue from the fact that so many men, and some of them strong and wise, have wrecked their lives at this juncture. Witness Samson and this woman of Timnah! Witness Socrates, pecked of the historical Xantippe! Witness Job, whose wife had nothing to prescribe for his carbuncles but allopathic doses of profanity! Witness Ananias, a liar, who might perhaps have been cured by a truthful spouse, yet marrying as great a liar as himself—Sapphira! Witness John Wesley, one of the best men that ever lived, united to one of the most outrageous and scandalous of women, who sat in City Road Chapel making mouths at him while he preached! Witness the once connubial wretchedness of John Ruskin, the great art essayist, and Frederick W. Robertson, the great preacher. Witness a thousand hells on earth kindled by unworthy wives, termagants that scold like a March northeaster; female spendthrifts, that put their husbands into fraudulent schemes to get money enough to meet the lavishness of domestic expenditure; opium-using women—about four thousand of them in the United States—who will have the drug, though it should cause the eternal damnation of the whole household; heartless and overbearing, and nambypamby and unreasonable women, yet married—married perhaps to good men! These are the women who build the low club-houses, where the husbands and sons go because they can't stand it at home. On this sea of matrimony, where so many have wrecked, am I not right in advising divine pilotage?

Especially is devout supplication needed, because of the fact that society is so full of artificialities that men are deceived as to whom they are marrying, and no one but the Lord knows. After the dress-maker, and the milliner, and the jeweler, and the hair-adjuster, and the dancing-master, and the cosmetic art have completed their work, how is an unsophisticated man to decipher the physiological hieroglyphics, and make accurate judgment of who it is to whom he offers hand and heart? That is what makes so many recent marriages, but the goods delivered are so different from the sample by which they bargained. They were strangled, and they backed out. They mistook Jezebel for Longfellow's Evangeline, and Lucretia Borgia for Martha Washington.

Aye, as the Indian chief boasts of the scalps he has taken, so there are in society to-day many coquettes who boast of the masculine hearts they have captured. And these women, though they may live amid richest uphoistery, are not so honorable as the cyprians of the street, for these advertise their infamy, while the former profess heaven while they mean hell. There is so much counterfeit womanhood abroad it is no wonder that some cannot tell the genuine coin from the base. Do you not realize you need divine guidance when I remind you that mistake is possible in this important affair, and, if made, is irrevocable?

The worst predicament possible is to be unhappily yoked together. You see it is impossible to break the yoke. The more you pull apart, the more galling the yoke. The minister might bring you up again, and in your presence read the marriage ceremony backward, might put you on the opposite sides of the altar from where you were when you were united, might take the ring off of the finger, might read the wedding veil asunder, might tear out the marriage leaf from the family Bible record, but that would fail to unmarry you. It is better not to make the mistake than to attempt its correction. But men and women do not reveal all their characteristics till after marriage, and how are you to avoid committing the fatal blunder? There is only one Being in the universe who can tell you whom to choose, and that is the Lord of Paradise. He made Eve for Adam, and Adam for Eve, and both for each other. Adam had not a large group of women from whom to select his wife, but it is fortunate, judging from some mistakes which she afterward made, that it was Eve or nothing.

There is in all the world some one who was made for you, as certainly as Eve was made for Adam. All sorts of mistakes occur because Eve was made out of a rib from Adam's side. Nobody knows which of his twenty-four ribs was taken for the nucleus. If you depend entirely upon yourself in the selection of a wife, there are twenty-three possibilities to one that you will select the wrong rib. By the fate of Ahab, whose wife induced him to steal; by the fate of Macbeth, whose wife pushed him into massacre; by the fate of James Ferguson, the philosopher, whose wife entered the room while he was lecturing and willfully upset his astronomical apparatus, so that he turned to the audience and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have the misfortune to be married to this woman;" by the fate of Bulwer, the novelist, whose wife's temper was so incompatible that he furnished her a beautiful house near London, and withdrew from her company, leaving her with the dozen dogs whom she entertained as pets; by the fate of John Milton, who married a termagant after he was blind, and when some one called her a rose, the poet said: "I am no judge of flowers, but it may be so, for I feel the thorns daily;" by the fate of an Englishman whose wife was so determined to dance on his grave that he was buried in the sea; by the fate of a village minister whom I know, whose wife threw a cup of hot tea across the table because they differed in sentiment—by all these scenes of disquietude and domestic calamity, we implore you to be cautious and prayerful before you enter upon the connubial state, which decides whether a man shall have two heavens or two hells, a heaven here and heaven forever, or a hell now and a hell hereafter.

By the bliss of Pliny, whose wife, when her husband was pleading in court, had messengers coming and going to inform her what impression he was making; by the joy of Grotius, whose wife delivered him from prison under the pretence of having books carried out lest they be injurious to his health, she sending out her husband unobserved in one of the book-cases; by the good fortune of Roland, in Louis' time, whose wife translated and composed for her husband while Secretary of the Interior—talented, heroic, wonderful Madame Roland; by the happiness of many a man who has made intelligent choice of one capable being prime counselor and companion in brightness and in grief—pray to Almighty God, morning, noon, and night, that at the right time and in the right way He will send you a good, honest, loving, sympathetic wife; or if she is not sent to you, that you may be sent to her.

At this point let me warn you not to let a question of this importance be settled by the celebrated matchmakers flourishing in almost every community. Depend upon your own judgment divinely illumined. These brokers in matrimony are ever planning how they can unite impetuous innocence to an heiress, or celli-

bate woman to millionaire or marquis, and that in many cases makes life an unhappiness. How can any human being, who knows neither of the two parties as God knows them, and who is ignorant of the future, give such directions as you require at such a crisis?

"Take the advice of the earthly match-maker instead of the divine guidance, and you may some day be led to use the words of Solomon, whose experience in home life was as melancholy as it was multitudinous. One day his palace, with its great wide rooms and great wide doors and great wide hall, was too small for him and the loud tongue of a woman belaboring him about some of his neglects, and he retreated to the housetop to get relief from the fungal bombardment. And while there he saw a poor man on one corner of the roof with a mattress for his only furniture, and the open sky his only covering. And Solomon envies him and cries out: "It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house." And one day during the rainy season the water leaked through the roof of the palace and began to drop in a pail or pan set there to catch it. And at one side of him all day long the water went drop! drop! drop! while on the other side a female companion quarreling about this, and quarreling about that; the acrimonious and petulant words falling on his ear in ceaseless pelting—drop! drop! drop! and he seized his pen and wrote: A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. If Solomon had been as prayerful at the beginning of his life as he was at his close, how much domestic infelicity he would have avoided?

But prayer about this will amount to nothing unless you pray soon enough. Wait until you are fascinated and the equilibrium of your soul is disturbed by a magnetic and exquisite presence, and then you will answer your own prayers, and you will mistake your own infatuation for the voice of God.

If you have this prayerful spirit you will surely avoid all female scoffers at the Christian religion; and there are quite a number of them in all communities. It must be told that, though the only influence that keeps woman from being estimated and treated as a slave—aye, as a brute and beast of burden—is Christianity, since where it is not dominant she is so treated; yet there are women who will so far forget themselves and forget their God that they will go and hear lecturers malign Christianity and scoff at the most sacred things of the soul. A good woman, over-persuaded by her husband, may go once to hear such a tirade against the Christian religion, not fully knowing what she is going to hear; but she will not go twice.

A woman, not a Christian, but a respecter of religion, said to me: "I was persuaded by my husband to go and hear an infidel lecture once, but going home I said to him: 'My dear husband, I would not go again though my declination should result in our divorce forever.' And the woman was right. If after all that Christ and Christianity have done for a woman, she can go again and again to hear such assaults, she is an awful creature, and you had better not come near such a reeking leprosy. She needs to be washed, and for three weeks to be soaked in carbolic acid, and for a whole year fumigated, before she is fit for decent society. While it is not demanded that a woman be a Christian before marriage, she must have regard for the Christian religion or she is a bad woman and unworthy of being your companion in a life charged with such stupendous solemnity and vicissitudes.

What you want, O man! in a wife, is not a butterfly of the sunshine, not a giggling nonentity, not a painted doll, not a gossiping gadabout, not a mixture of artificialities which leave you in doubt as to where the humbug ends and the woman begins, but an earnest soul, one that cannot only laugh when you laugh, but weep when you weep. There will be wide, deep graves in your path of life, and you will both want steadying when you come to the verge of them, I tell you. When your fortune fails you will want some one to talk of treasures in heaven, and not charge upon you with a bitter, "I told you so."

Don't make the mistake that the man of the text made in letting his eye settle the question in which coolest judgment directed by divine wisdom are all-important. He who has no reason for his wifely choice except a pretty face is like a man who should buy a farm because of the dahlias in the front dooryard. Beauty is a talent, and when God gives it He intends it as a benediction upon a woman's face. When the good Princess of Wales dismounted from the rail train last summer, and I saw her radiant face, I could understand what they told me the day before, that when at the great military hospital where are now the wounded and the sick from the Egyptian and other wars, the Princess passed through, all the sick were cheered at her coming, and those who could be roused neither by doctor nor nurse from their stupor, would get up on their elbows to look at her, and when she passed lips prayed an audible prayer: "God bless the Princess of Wales. Doesn't she look beautiful?"

The husband looks up in amazement, and says: "Well, well, you are the greatest woman I ever saw. I thought you would faint dead away when I told you." And as he looks at her all the glories of physiognomy in the Court of Louis XV, on the modern fashion plates, are tame as compared with the superhuman splendors of that woman's face. Joan of Arc, Mary Antoinette, and La Belle Hamilton, the enchantment of the Court of Charles II, are nowhere.

There is another time when the plainest wife is a queen of beauty to her husband. She has done the work of life. She has reared her children for God and heaven, and though some of them may be a little wild they will yet come back, for God has promised. She is dying, and her husband stands by. They think over all the years of their companionship, the weddings and the burials, the ups and the downs, the successes and the failures. They talk over the goodness of God and His faithfulness to children's children. She has no fear about going. The Lord has sustained her so many years she would not dare to distrust Him now. The lips of both of them tremble as they say good-by and encourage each other about an early meeting in a better world. The breath is feebler and feebler, and stops. Are you sure of it? Just hold that mirror at the mouth, and see if there is any vapor gathering on the surface. Gone! As one of the neighbors takes the old man by the arm-gently and says: "Come, you had better go into the next room and rest." He says: "Wait a moment; I must take one more look at that face and at those hands." Beautiful! Beautiful!

My friends, I hope you do not call that death. That is an autumnal sunset. That is a crystalline river pouring into a crystalline sea. That is the solo of human life overpowered by hallelujah chorus. That is a queen's coronation. That is heaven. That is the way my father stood at eighty-two, seeing my mother depart at seventy-nine. Perhaps so your father and mother went. I wonder if we will die as well.

### THE IVORY MARKET.

The Supply for England Decreases Steadily and Rapidly.

Our ivory supply, according to the annual reports just issued, continues to show signs of a steady decrease, the total quantity imported last year being only 232 tons, against 272 tons in the preceding year, and an average annual importation of 232½ tons since 1889, so that, naturally there has been a good demand at higher prices.

In the face of the continued small receipts, prospects are described as being decidedly favorable—that is, from the seller's point of view. East Indian cut points suitable for billiard balls realized, as usual, the highest price, selling up to £85 10s per hundredweight, against £75 last year. The west coast of Africa was the only center that shipped us more ivory last year than during 1900, but still the 108½ tons received thence are below the average quantity—112 tons—shipped during the last four years.

The quantity received from the Cape was extremely small, only three-quarters of a ton, while last year no ivory came to us through that port. One may say that Cape ivory is a thing of the past, for even before the present war the country had been so thoroughly explored that the big game formerly to be met with in those districts had either been exterminated or gone further north, and their ivory, if still obtainable, must now be shipped through the more northern ports. This makes one wonder where we shall draw our supply of ivory from when Africa is denuded of elephants, which at the present rate of progress must soon occur. Would it be feasible to reserve an area large enough to allow the wild elephants to wander about and breed, undisturbed by the hunter, until the time arrives to obtain their tusks?—London News.

### Witty Sayings of Famous Men.

King Henry VII. of England was one day much annoyed by a long speech delivered to him by a pompous mayor. As the mayor went on with his speech an ass brayed. "Gentlemen," said the king, "pray speak one at a time, please." The story must have been in the mind of the judge who twitted Curran, the Irish orator. Curran was addressing the court when the bray of an ass was heard outside and the judge could not resist the temptation of saying: "One at a time, Mr. Curran, please." But the ass gave Curran his chance. As the judge summed up the bray was again heard and the great lawyer, jumping from his seat, asked the judge: "Does not your lordship hear a remarkable echo in the court?"

Some men never think of the poor save when their own purses are empty.

### Wyoming Has Found Two Bibles.

Two valuable bibles have been discovered in Wyoming among old papers in the last week. One was printed in Germany in 1734, sent to John Vroom of Rawlins with a box of heirlooms from his family's former home in Amsterdam.

The other is a copy of the celebrated "Breeches Bible," found in a case of forgotten books by Judge Alfred Heath of this town. This is an English Bible printed in 1606. It is bound in oak boards, covered with leather and reinforced with heavy brass clamps. The leaves are yellow with age, but the printing and numerous illustrations are still perfectly legible. It contains the old Testament, the Apocrypha, a table of proper names, the Psalms, the Lord's prayer, the Commandments, and the Canticles, all set to music. The feature of the book that makes it valuable is the following verse: "And they sewed figge tree leaves together and made themselves breeches."

Few copies of this edition are known to be in existence.

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