

THE INFANT'S ESCAPE.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Enumerates the Dangers That Beset the Holy Babe.

Christ's Cradle Had No Rockers--The Character of Herod--But One Irreproachable Man--What Christianity Has Done for the World.

Washington, Dec. 25.—In a most unusual way a scene connected with the nativity is emphasized by Dr. Talmage in this Christmas discourse; text, Matthew ii, 13, "Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

The cradle of the infant Jesus had no rockers, for it was not to be soothed by oscillating motion, as are the cradles of other princes. It had no canopy, for it was not to be hovered over by anything so exquisite. It had no embroidered pillow, for the young head was not to have such luxurious comfort. Though a meteor—ordinarily the most erratic and seemingly ungovernable of all skyey appearances—had been sent to designate the place where that cradle stood and a choir had been sent from the heavenly temple to serenade its illustrious occupant with an epic, yet that cradle was the target for all earthly and diabolical hostilities. Indeed I give you as my opinion that it was the narrowest and most wonderful escape of the ages that the child was not slain before he had taken his first step or spoken his first word. Herod could not afford to have him born. The Cassars could not afford to have him born. The gigantic oppressions and abominations of the world could not afford to have him born. Was there ever planned a more systematized or appalling bombardment in all the world than the bombardment of that cradle?

The Herod who led the attack was treachery, vengeance and sensuality impersonated. As a sort of pastime he slew Hyrcanus, the grandfather of his wife. Then he slew Marianna, his wife. Then he butchered her two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus. Then he slew Antipater, his oldest son. Then he ordered burned alive 40 people who had pulled down the eagle of his authority. He ordered the nobles who had attended upon his dying bed to be slain, so that there might be universal mourning after his demise. From that same deathbed he ordered the slaughter of all the children in Bethlehem under 2 years of age, feeling sure that if he massacred the entire infantile population that would include the destruction of the child whose birthplace astronomy had pointed out with its finger of light. What were the slaughtered babes to him, and as many frenzied and bereft mothers? If he had been well enough to leave his bed he would have enjoyed seeing the mothers wildly struggling to keep their babes, and holding them so tightly that they could not be separated until the sword took both their lives at one stroke, and others, mother and child, hurled from roofs of houses into the street until that village of horseshoe shape on the hillside became one great butcher shop. To have such a man, with associates just as cruel, and an army at his command, attempting the life of the infant Jesus, does there seem any chance for his escape? Then that flight southward for so many miles, across deserts and amid bandits and wild beasts (my friend, the late missionary and scientist Dr. Lansing, who took the same journey, said it was enough to kill both the Madonna and the Child), and poor residence in Cairo, Egypt. You know how difficult it is to take an ordinary child successfully through the disorders that are sure to assail it even in comfortable homes and with all delicate ministrations, and then think of the exposure of that famous babe in villages and lands where all sanitary laws were put at defiance, his first hours on earth spent in a room without any doors, and oftentimes swept by chilled night winds; then afterwards riding many days under hot tropical sun, and part of many nights, lest the avenger overtake the fugitive before he could be hidden in another land!

The Babyhood of Christ.

The sanhedrin also were affronted at the report of this mysterious arrival of a child that might upset all conventionalities and threaten the throne of the nation. "Shut the door and bolt it and double bar it against him," cried all political and ecclesiastical power. Christ on a retreat when only a few days of age, with all the privations and hardships and sufferings of retreat! When the glad news came that Herod was dead, and the Madonna was packing up and taking her child home, bad news also came, that Archelaus, the son, had taken the throne—another crowned infamy. What chance for the babe's life? Will not some short grave hold the wondrous infant?

"Put him to death!" was the order all up and down Palestine, and all up and down the desert between Bethlehem and Cairo. The cry was: "Here comes an iconoclast of all established order! Here comes an aspirant for the crown of Augustus! If found on the streets of Bethlehem, dash him to death on the pavement! If found on a hill, hurl him down the rocks! A way with him!" But the babe got home in safety and passed up from infancy to youth and from youth to manhood and from carpenter shop to Messiahship and from Messiahship to enthronement, until the mightiest name on earth is Jesus, and there is no mightier name in heaven.

What I want to call your attention to is your narrow escape and mine and the world's narrow escape. Suppose that attempt on the young child's life had been successful! Suppose that delegation of wise men, who were to report to Herod immediately after they discovered the hard bed in the Bethlehem caravanary, had obeyed orders and reported! Suppose the beast carrying the Madonna and the Child in the flight had stumbled and flung to death its riders! Suppose Archelaus had got his hands on the babe

that his father had failed to find! Suppose that among the children dashed from the Bethlehem house tops or separated by sword of the enraged constabulary Jesus had perished!

The Beauty of Christmas.

Then, to begin on the outermost rim of my subject, Christmas festivities would never have been observed, Christmas carols never sung, Christmas gifts never bestowed, Christmas games never played, Christmas bells never rung. What an awful subtraction from the world's brightness would have been the making of Dec. 25 like other days of the year! Glorious day! After brightening England and Holland and Germany for centuries it stepped across the sea and pronounced its benediction on our shores. Why, we never get over our childhood Christmases. Father and mother joined in them. They forgot their rheumatisms and shortness of breath, and for awhile threw off the sorrows of a lifetime while they struggled with us as to who should first in the morning shout the "Merry Christmas!" Then there were all the innocent allurement as to who brought the presents, and the wonderment as to how sleighs drawn by reindeer could come down the perpendicular, and afterward the disappointment as some older brother or sister, with all the pride of discovery, tried to persuade us that the chimney had not been the channel of generous descent. Oh, what times they were, the Christmases of our boyhood and girlhood days! We still feel in our pulses some of the exuberance which we then unwittingly stored up for future times, when the eye might lose some of its luster and the foot some of its spring and the heart some of its rebound. How holly and rosemary and ivy and mistletoe looked interwoven! The Puritans may not have liked the day, and John Calvin may have pronounced it superstitious and feared it would bring into religious observance the saturnalia of the heathen, the decorations of ivy inappropriate because ivy had been dedicated to Bacchus and mistletoe inappropriate because mistletoe had been associated with Druidical rites, but we testify that Christmas never did us any harm, and the only objection we ever expressed was that it was so long a time from Christmas to Christmas.

Can the angel which St. John saw with measuring rod measuring heaven or hath any seraphic intelligence faculty enough to calculate the magnificent effect which 1,898 Christmas mornings and 1,899 Christmas noons and 1,898 Christmas nights have had on our poor old planet? Let us thank God that we live to see this Christmas, the bells of which ring out so clear, so inspiring, so jubilant—bells of family reunion, bells of church jubilee, bells of national victory. But had either Melchior or Balthasar or Caspar, the three wise men of the east, who had put down the sacks of aromatic frankincense or bags of clinking gold by the bare feet of the infant Lord, reported to Herod's palace the place where they found the child the swift horses of executioners would have carried death to that babe in Mary's arm.

The One Pure Man.

Still further remarking upon the narrow escape which you and I had and all the world had in that babe's escape, let me say that had that Herod plot been successful the one instance of absolutely perfect character would never have been unfolded. The world had enjoyed the lives of many splendid men before Christ came. It had admired its Plato among philosophers, its Mithridates among heroes, its Herodotus among historians, its Phidias among sculptors, its Homer among poets, its Aesop among fabulists, its Aeschylus among dramatists, its Demosthenes among orators, its Aesculapius among physicians, yet among the contemporaries of those men there were two opinions, as now there are two opinions concerning every remarkable man. There were plenty in those days who said of them, "He cannot speak," or "He cannot sing," or "He cannot philosophize," or "His military achievement was a mere accident," or "His oration, his pen, his medical prescription, never deserved the applause given." But concerning this full grown Christ, whose life was launched three decades before that first Christmas, the moan of camels and the bleat of sheep and the low of cattle mingled with the babe's first cry, while clouds that night were resonant with music, and star pointing down whispered to star. "Look, there he is!"

That Christ, after the detectives of Herod and Pilate, and sanhedrin had watched him by day and watched him by night year after year, was reported innocent. It was found out that when he talked to the vagrant woman in the temple it was to tell her to "Go and sin no more," and that if he spoke with the penitent thief it was to promise him paradise within 24 hours, and that as he moved about he dropped ease of pain upon the invalid's pillow, or light upon the eye that lacked optic nerve, or put bread into the hands of the hungry, or took from the oriental hearse the dead young man and vitalized him and said to the widowed mother, "Here he is, alive and well!" and she cried, "My boy, my boy!" and he responded, "Mother, mother!" And the sea, tossing to roughly some of his friends by a word easier than a nurse's word to a petulant child, he made it keep still. The very judge who for other reasons allowed him to be put to death declared, "I find no fault in him!" Was there ever a life so thoroughly ransacked and hypercriticized that turned out to be so perfect a life?

Now, can you imagine what would have been the calamity to earth and heaven, what a bereavement to all history, what swindling not only of the human race, but of cherubim and seraphim and archangel, if because of infernal incursion upon the bed of that Bethlehem babe this life of divine and glorious manhood had never been lived? The Christ parables would never have been uttered, the sermon on the mount, all adrip with benedictions, never preached, the golden rule, in picture frame of everlasting love, would never have been hung up for the universe to gaze upon and admire.

A Graveyard Peace.

Still further remarking upon the narrow escape which you and I and the world had in the diversion of the persecutors from the place of nativity, let me say that had that Herod raid upon the swaddling clothes been successful the world would never have known the value of a righteous peace. Much has been made of the fact that the world was at peace when Christ came. Yes. But what kind of a peace was it? It was a peace worse than war. It was the peace of a graveyard. The Roman eagles had plucked out the world's eyesight and plunged their beaks through the heart of dead nations. It was a peace like that spoken of by a dying Indian chieftain when a Christian home missionary said to him, "You have been a warrior and I suppose have been in many feuds, but you must be at peace with all your enemies in order to die aright." The dying chieftain replied: "That's easy enough. I am at peace with all my enemies, for I have killed all of them."

That was the style of peace on earth when Christ came, but the spirit of arbitration, which is to garland the tomb of this century and coronet the brow of the coming century, is consequent upon the midnight anthem above Bethlehem, two bars to that music, the first of divine inspiration, and the second of earthly pacification. "Glory to God and peace to men." In his manhood Christ pronounced the same doctrine—"Blessed are the merciful."

The Peace of Christ.

I take another step forward in showing the narrow escape you and I had and the world had in the secretion of Christ's birthplace from the Herodic detectives and the clubs with which they would have dashed the babe's life out when I say that without the life that began that night in Bethlehem the world would have had no illuminated deathbeds. Before the time of Christ good people closed their earthly lives in peace while depending upon the Christ to come, and there were antediluvian saints, and Assyrian saints, and Egyptian saints, and Grecian saints, and Jerusalem saints long before the clouds above Bethlehem became a balcony filled with the best singers of a world where they all sing, but I cannot read that there was anything more than a quieting guess that came to those before Christ deathbeds. Job said something bordering on the confident, but it was mixed up with a story of "skin worms" that would destroy his body. Abraham and Jacob had a little light on the dying pillow, but, compared with the after Christ deathbeds, it was like the dim tallow candle of old beside the modern cluster of lights electric. I know Elijah went up in memorable manner, but it was a terrible way to go—a whirlwind of fire that must have been splendid to look at by those who stood on the banks of the Jordan, but it was a style of ascent that required more nerve than you and I ever had, to be a placid occupant of a chariot drawn by such a wild team. The triumphant deathbeds, as far as I know, were the after Christ deathbeds. What a procession of hosannas have marched through the dying room of the saints of the last 19 centuries! What cavalcade of mounted halleluiah has galloped through the dying visions of the last 3,000 years save 100! Peaceful deathbeds in the years B.C.! Triumphant deathbeds, for the most part, reserved for the years A.D. Behold the deathbeds of the Wesleys, of the Doddridges, of the Legh Richmonds, of the Edward Paysons, of Vara, the converted heathen chieftain, crying in his last moments: "The canoe is in the sea. The sails are spread. She is ready for the gale. I have a good pilot to guide me. My outside man and my inside man differ. Let the one rot till the trumpet shall sound, but let my soul wing her way to the throne of Jesus." Of dying John Fletcher, who entered his pulpit to preach, though his doctors forbade him, and then descended to the communion table, saying, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim before the mercy seat," thousands of people a few days after following him to the grave, singing:

With heavenly weapons he has fought
The battles of the Lord,
Finished his course and kept the faith
And gained the great reward.

The Necessity of Christ.

Are you ready now for a thought that overtowers all other thoughts in importance and grandeur? Pray that you may be ready. It as far exceeds anything I have said as all the gold mines of California, developed and undeveloped, exceed the thimbleful of gold dust which in 1848 a California miner brought from a mill race and put upon the desk of a surprised capitalist. In remarking upon the narrow escape which you and I and the world made let me say that had the Herod raid on that room of the Bethlehem klan been a successful raid or had some oiled taken by the child in that flight toward Cairo been fatal heaven would have been to us an eternal impossibility. With our fallen nature unchanged, unregenerated, unreconstructed through Jesus Christ, the human race would be no more fit for heaven than a noisome weed is fit for a queen's garland, no more than a shattered bass viol is fit to sound in a Dusseldorf musical jubilee. If at one time Garibaldi seemed to hold in his right hand the freedom of Italy and Washington seemed at one time to hold in his right hand American independence, and Martin Luther seemed to hold in his right hand the emancipation of the church of God for all nations, so in grander and better sense the infant born in that Bethlehem stall held in one hand the ransom of earth and in the other the

After all, there is no better test of an article than popularity—ask your friends what they think of Blue Ribbon Tea.

rapture of heaven. He started that night for three places which he must reach, or we never could reach heaven, Gethsemane and Calvary and Olivet, the first for agonizing prayer, the second for excruciating suffering, the third for glorious ascension as the law of gravitation relaxed for once to let him up out of his exile. Had his life been only one day or one year of duration instead of 33 years, had he died in Bethlehem or in Cairo or in the desert between, not a church would ever have been built, not a hospital ever opened, not a nation ever freed, not a civilization ever inaugurated, not a soul saved. Oh, what a crisis that was in the world's history! What a crisis in the eternities!

A Time for Joy.

Now let the Christmas table be spread. Let it be an extension table made up of the tables of your households, and added to them the tables of celestial festivity, all together making a table long enough to reach across a hemisphere—yea, long enough to reach from earth to heaven. Send out the invitations to all the guests whom we would like to have come and dine. Come all the ransomed of earth and all the crowned of heaven. As at ancient banquets the king who was to preside came in after all the guests had taken their places at the table, so perhaps it may be now. Let the old folks who sat at either end of your Christmas table ten or 20 or 40 years ago be seated, their aches and pains all gone. Behold, they sit down in the exhilaration of everlasting youth! Come brothers and sisters who used to retire with us early on Christmas eve so that the mysteries of bestowed gifts might be kept secret and who rose with us early on Christmas morn to see what was to be revealed. Come all the old neighbors of our boyhood and girlhood days who used to happen in toward the close of this day to wish us a merry time. Come all the ministers of Christ who have in pulpits for many a year been telling the story of the star that pointed to the world's first Christmas gift and at the same time awakened Herod's apprehensions. Come in! Room at this Christmas table for all those who have bowed at the manger in whatever world you now live:

Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.

Yea, come and sit at this Christmas table, all heaven. Archangel at that end of the table, and all the angels under him adjoining. Come down! Come in! And take your places at this Christmas banquet. The table is spread, and the King who will preside is about to enter. He comes—him of Bethlehem, him of Calvary, him of Olivet, him of the throne! Rise and greet him. Fill all your chalices with the wine pressed from the heavenly Eschol and drink at this Christmas banquet to the memory of the babe's rescue from Herod's pursuit, and the memory of those astronomers of the east who defeated the malice and sarcasm and irony and infernal stratagem of the monster's manifesto. "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. Given at the palace. Herod the Great."

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Pretty Street Gowns.

Handsome street suits are made of smooth-finished cloth in brown, bright blue or gray. Velvet trims both wool and silk goods. The newest jet trimming is in open designs like embroidery with beads, spangles and mousseline appliques. Heavier passementeries are of silk cord and braid in scroll and geometrical patterns. If the belt is for a street gown, have it of velvet with steel buckles, but the sash for the evening dress may have the buckle of Rhinestones and be worn at the back without any bow, only long rounded ends with a narrow frill of silk mousseline all around. —Ladies' Home Journal.

Only those who have had experience can tell the torture corns cause. Pain with your boots on, pain with them off—pain night and day; but relief is sure to those who use Holloway's Corn Cure.

Forcing Bulbs in Winter.

Forcing bulbs for winter flowering may be hastened or retarded by the amount of warmth used. To hurry them along use more heat; to keep them back keep them in a cool place. Those forced by excessive warmth are inferior to those allowed a longer time to develop, and their flowers will not last as long.—December Ladies Home Journal.

At the Telephone.

"Hello! Give me one thousand and sixty-six."
"What?"
"Ten hundred and sixty-six."
"I can't understand you."
"One, naught, six, six."
"One, naught, six, six."
"I don't get it. Try again."
"One. Got that?"
"Yes."
"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, naught. Naught-naught! Got the naught?"
"Yes."
"One, two, three, four, five, six. Got the six?"
"Yes."
"One, two, three, four, five, six, again. Got the six again?"
"Yes."
"Well, that's what I want."
"Oh, you want one, owe, double six. Why didn't you say so?"

Try It.—It would be a gross injustice to confound that standard healing agent—Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil with the ordinary unguents, lotions and salves. They are oftentimes inflammatory and astringent. The Oil is, on the contrary, eminently cooling and soothing when applied externally to relieve pain, and powerfully remedial when swallowed.

Heroes of the Pen.

The intensity of application with which the mind follows whatever it lays hold of in literary pursuits is exemplified in the case of Robert Ainsworth, a celebrated writer and antiquarian of the seventeenth century. He had been for years engaged in a voluminous Latin dictionary, and while fascinated with this heroic work gave so little time and attention to his wife that he incurred her bitterest jealousy, and before the work was quite complete she committed the whole to the flames. Instead of abandoning himself to despair, Ainsworth set to work and rewrote it, accomplishing the entire work in time. The same bitter disappointment was endured with similar heroism by Carlyle when the MS. of his "Frederick the Great" was destroyed by fire.

Minard's Liniment the Lumberman's Friend.

Trouble in the Camp.

"There seemed to be a rather acrimonious discussion going on as I went by headquarters."
"Yes," said the Salvation Army captain, sadly. "Brother Jones, who beats the drum, happened to say to Brother Smith, who does most of the preaching, that actions spoke louder than words."

A dose of Miller's Worm Powders occasionally will keep the children healthy.

Leaping Power of a Flea.

If a man were to leap as far in proportion to his size as the flea he would jump 76 miles. Fleas will never touch an epileptic and will instantly leave a dead or dying person.

The best remedy for scrofula is Miller's Compound Iron Pills. 50 doses 25 cents.

Lotteries in Montreal.

It is estimated by the police of Montreal that the people of that city spend over \$2,500,000 a year on lotteries. The number of policy tickets bought annually is about 6,000,000.

Health for the children. Miller's Worm Powders.

Their First Meeting.

He was a big, uncouth looking chap, who perhaps labored in a foundry. This wheel was on the order of a locomotive. At least, it was awkward-looking and heavy, like himself. He was riding along pushing the pedals down with the hollows of his feet. This added to his awkward appearance.

She was a delicate young girl, perhaps a stenographer, with a refined face and chestnut hair drawn straight back from a well-formed brow. Her wheel suited her, for it had the appearance of lightness and grace and quickness. The girl wore glasses.

How fate should decree that these two should come together, it is hard to say. They were going in opposite directions, near the middle of one of the most crowded streets. He hesitated, wobbled, and they met. There was a crash, and he was on the ground. The front wheel of her machine was turned back upon itself and was a useless mass of twisted spokes. Her glasses had fallen to the pavement and broken. His wheel was unharmed. He looked as if he meant it when he stammered: "I'm sorry, miss. I thought you were going the other way."

She looked angry for a moment, then a look of determination came over her face and she smiled as she said in the pleasantest manner imaginable: "Oh, never mind, I'm glad nobody's hurt."