NOT A STUPID RELIGION

Rev. Dr. Talmage Says It Is The Fairest Daughter of God.

A despatch from Washington says: —Rev. Dr. Talmage preached from the following text: Job xxviii, 17, "The crystal cannot equal it."

Many of the precious stones of the Bible have come to prompt recognition. But for the present I take up the less valuable crystal. Job, in my text, compares saving wisdom with a specimen of topaz. An infidel chemist or mineralogist would pronounce the latter worth more than the former, but Job makes an intelligent comparison, looks at religion, and then looks at the crystal and pronounces the former as of far superior value to the latter, exclaiming, in the words of my text, "The crystal cannot equal it."

Now, it is not part of my sermonic design to depreciate the crystal, whether it be found in Cornish mine or Harz mountain or mammoth cave or tinkling among the pendants of the chandeliers of a palace. The crystal is the star of the mountain; it is the queen of cave; and it is the eardrop of the hills; it finds its heaven in the diamond. Among all the pages of natural history there is no page more interesting to me than the page of crystallographic. But I want to show you that Job was right when, taking religion in one hand and the crystal in the other, he declared that the former is of far more value and beauty than the latter, recommending it to all the people and to all the ages, declaring "The crystal cannot equal it."

IN THE FIRST PLACE,

I remark that religion is superior to the crystal in exactness. That shapeless mass of crystal against which you accidentally dashed your foot is laid out with more exactness than any earthly city. There are six styles of crystallization and all of them divinely ordained. Every crystal has mathematical precision. God's geometry reaches through it, and it is a square, or it is a rectangle, or it is a rhomboid, or in some way it has a mathematical figure. Now, religion beats that in the simple fact that spiritual accuracy is more beautiful than material accuracy. God's attributes are exact, God's management of the world exact. Never counting wrong though He counts the grass blades and the stars and the sands and the cycles. His providences never dealing with us perpendicularly when those providences ought to be oblique, nor laterally when they ought to be vertical. Everything in our life arranged without any possibility of mistake. Each life a six-headed prism. Born at the right time; dying at the right time. There are no "happen so's" in our theology. If I thought this was a slipshod universe I would be in despair. God is not an anarchist. Law, order, symmetry, precision, a perfect square, a perfect rectangle, a perfect rhomboid, a perfect circle. The edge of God's robe of government never frays out, there are no loose screws in the world's machinery. It did not just happen that Napoleon was attacked with indigestion at Borodino so that he became incompetent for the day. It did not just happen that John Thomas, the missionary, on a heathen island, waiting for an outfit and orders for another missionary tour, received that outfit and those orders in a box that floated ashore, while the ship and the crew that carried the box were never heard of. I believe in a particular providence. I believe

GOD'S GEOMETRY

may be seen in all our life more beautifully than in crystallography. Job was right. "The crystal cannot equal it."

Again I remark that religion is superior to the crystal in transparency. We know not when or by whom glass was first discovered. Beads of it have been found in the tomb of Alexander Severus. Vases of it are brought up from the ruins of Herculaneum. There were female adornments made out of it 3,000 years ago—those adornments found now attached to the mummies of Egypt. A great many commentators believe that my text means glass. What would we do without the crystal? The crystal in the window to keep out the storm and let in the day; the crystal over the watch, defending its delicate machinery, yet allowing us to see the hour; the crystal of the telescope, by which the astronomer brings distant worlds so near he can inspect them. Oh, the triumph of the crystals in the celebrated windows of Rouen and Salisbury! But there is nothing so transparent in a crystal as in our holy religion. It is a transparent religion. You can put it to your eye and you see the man—his sin, his soul, his destiny. You look at God and you see something of the grandeur of His character. It is a transparent religion. Infidels tell us it is opaque. Do you know why they tell us it is opaque? It is because they are blind. "The natural man receiveth not the things of God because they are spiritually discerned." There is no trouble with the crystal. The trouble is with the eyes which try to look through it. We pray for vision, Lord, that our eyes may be opened! When the eye salve cures our blindness, then we find that religion is transparent.

People talk too much about their cross and not enough about their crowns. Do you know that the Bible mentions a cross but seventeen times, while it mentions a crown

EIGHTY TIMES?

Ask that old man what he thinks of religion. He has been a close observer. He has been cultivating an aesthetic taste. He has seen the sunrises of half a century. He has been an early riser. He has been an admirer of cameos and corals and all kinds of beautiful things. Ask him what he thinks of religion, and he will tell you: "It is the most beautiful thing I ever saw. The crystal cannot equal it."

Beautiful in its symmetry. When it presents God's character, it does not present him as having love like a great protuberance on one side of His nature, but makes that love in harmony with His justice—a love that will accept all those who come to Him, and a justice that will by no means clear the guilty. Beautiful religion in the sentiment it implants! Beautiful religion in the hope that it kindles! Beautiful religion in the fact that it proposes to garland and enthrone and emparadise an immortal spirit. Solomon says it is a lily. Paul says it is a crown. The Apocalypse says it is a fountain kissed by the sun. Ezekiel says it is a foliaged cedar. Christ says it is a bridegroom come to fetch home a bride. While Job in the text takes up a whole vase of precious stones—the topaz and the sapphire and the chrysoprasus—he holds out of this beautiful vase just one crystal and holds it up until it gleams in the warm light of the eastern sky, and he exclaims, "The crystal cannot equal it."

Again, religion is superior to the crystal in its transformations. The diamond is only a crystallization. Carbonite of lime rises until it becomes calcite or aragonite. Red oxide of copper crystallizes into cubes and octahedrons. Those crystals which adorn our persons and our homes and our museums have only been resurrected from forms that were

FAR FROM LUSTROUS.

Scientists for ages have been examining these wonderful transformations. But I tell you in the gospel of the Son of God there is a more wonderful transformation. Over souls by reason of sin black as coal and hard as iron God, by his comforting grace, stoops and says, "They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels."

"What!" say you. "Will God wear jewellery?" If He wanted it He could make the stars of the heaven His belt and have the evening cloud for the sandals of His feet, but He does not want that adornment. He will not have that jewellery. When God wants jewellery, he comes down and digs it out of the depths and darkness of sin. These souls are all crystallizations of mercy. He puts them on and He wears them in the presence of the whole universe. He wears them on the hand that was nailed, over the heart that was pierced, on the temples that were stung. "They shall be mine," saith the Lord, "in the day when I make up my jewels." Wonderful transformation! Where sin abounded grace shall much more abound. The carbon becomes the solitaire. "The crystal cannot equal it."

Now, I have no liking for those people who are always enlarging in Christian meetings about their early dissipation. Do not go into the particulars, my brothers. Simply say you were sick, but make no display of your ulcers. The chief stock in trade of some ministers and Christian workers seems to be their early

CRIMES AND DISSIPATIONS.

The number of pockets you picked and the number of chickens you stole make very poor prayer meeting rhetoric. Besides that, it discourages other Christian people who never got drunk or stole anything. But it is pleasant to know that those who were farthest down have been brought highest up. Out of infernal serfdom into eternal liberty. Out of darkness into light. From coal to the solitaire. "The crystal cannot equal it."

"Oh," says some one, putting his hand over his eyes, "can it be that I who have been in so much sin and trouble will ever come to those crystals?" Yes, it may be—it will be. Heaven we must have, whatever we have or have not, and we come here to get it. "How much must I pay for it?" you say. You will pay for it just as much as the coal pays to become the diamond. In other words, nothing. The same Almighty power that makes the crystal in the mountain will change your heart which is harder than stone, for the promise is, "I will take away your stony heart, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

"Oh," says some one, "it is just the doctrine I want. God is to do everything and I am to do nothing." My brother, it is not the doctrine you want. The coal makes no resistance. It hears the resurrection voice in the mountain and it comes to crystallization; but your heart resists. The trouble with you, my brother, is the coal wants to stay coal.

I do not ask you to throw open the door and let Christ in. I only ask that you stop bolting and barring it. My friends, we will have to get rid of our sins. I will have to

GET RID OF MY SINS,

and you will have to get rid of your sins. What will we do with our sins among the three crystals? The crystal atmosphere would display our pollution. The crystal river would be befouled with our touch. Transformation must take place now or no transformation at all. Give sin full chance in your heart and the transformation will be downward instead of upward. Instead of crystal it will be a cinder.

In the days of Carthage a Christian girl was condemned to die for her faith, and a boat was bedaubed with tar and pitch and filled with combustibles and set on fire, and the Christian girl was placed in the boat and the wind was offshore and the boat floated away with its precious treasure. No one can doubt that boat landed at the shore of heaven. Sin wants to put you in a fiery boat and shove you off in an opposite direction—off from peace, off from God, off from heaven, everlastingly off, and the port toward which you would sail would be a port of darkness, and the guns that would greet you would be the guns of despair, and the flags that would wave at your arrival would be the black flags of death. Oh, my brother, you must either kill sin or sin will kill you! It is no exaggeration when I say that any man or woman that wants to be saved may be saved. Tremendous choice! A thousand people are choosing this moment between salvation and destruction, between light and darkness, between charred ruin and glorious crystallization.

THE S. S. LESSON.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON
OCTOBER 27.

Text of the Lesson, Gen. xlv., 1-15. Golden Text, Rom. xii., 21.

1-3. "There stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren." The story as told in the intervening chapters between the last lesson and this one is most fascinating in its detail of Joseph's dealings with his brethren, but especially in its foreshadowing of coming events in connection with the return of Christ and His revelation to His brethren. The first visit of Joseph's ten brethren to buy corn, Benjamin being carefully kept at home lest evil might befall him. Joseph's recognition of his brethren, his trying them by calling them spies and putting them in ward three days, their remembrance of their sin and conversation concerning it in the presence of Joseph, whom they supposed did not undertstand their language, as he had spoken to them through an interpreter; his holding Simeon as a hostage till they should bring their younger brother, his sending the others back with corn and each man's money secretly put in his sack and Jacob's pitiful cry when told that the ruler of Egypt would not see them again unless Benjamin was with them—this is all told in chapter xlii. Their second visit, taking Benjamin and double money (the returned money and money to buy more corn) and a present for the man, Joseph's reception of them and feast for them in his own house, with his special interest in and favor to Benjamin, are told in chapter xliii. Joseph's plan, seemingly, to retain Benjamin and the earnest and eloquent plea of Judah, who had become surety for Benjamin, are the topics of chapter xliv. Now follows in our lesson Joseph's revelation of himself to them.

4, 5. "And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come nearer to me I pray you." Nothing in his heart but love and pity and forgiveness for them as he yearns over them. He would take them to his heart and bless them, bidding them not to be grieved nor angry with themselves because of their past misconduct, assuring them that God had overruled it all for the good of many. His words, while comforting, were truly heart searching, for we cannot know the comfort of forgiveness in its fullness till we have seen and felt something of the enormity of our sin. To his first words, "I am Joseph," he now adds, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." There could be no mistaking this. He was the very same Joseph whom they had envied and hated and sold as a slave to the Midianites as they said, "We shall see what will become of his dreams."

6, 7. "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance." We can hardly suppose that the hand of God was as plain to Joseph in all the events of the past years, in his slavery and imprisonment, as it was to him now looking back upon it from the glory to which he had been brought. We cannot see how all things are working together for our good as children of God, and we do not always consider that they work together according to His purpose to conform us to the image of His Son (Rom. viii, 28, 29), but as truly as Joseph could look back and see, not his cruel brethren, but God working out His purposes, so we shall find that no real evil has ever befallen us and that all enemies and all adverse circumstances have been really for us, for our good, under the controlling hand of God.

8. "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God, and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh." Note the threefold "God sent me" (verses 5, 7, 8). We think of our Lord Jesus, who, when suffering so much from His enemies, saw not them; but His Father, and said, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John xviii, 11.) When Shimer cursed David and threw stones at him, David saw not Shimer, but God, and just left him to God to manage (II Sam, xvi, 5-13). It is blessed indeed to see God and not people or circumstances and believe that not a dog can move its tongue against us without God's permission (Ex. xi, 7). See also Isa. xli, 12, 13; liv, 17.

9-11. "Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt. Come down unto me; tarry not." This was the message to his dear old father urging him to come quickly with all his children and children's children and flocks and herds that Joseph might nourish and care for them. See the verse following the portion assigned for our lesson and note the interest Pharaoh took in bringing Jacob and all that he had down to Egypt, sending waggons for the wives and little ones and urging them to regard not their stuff, because the good of all the land of Egypt was theirs. Our Lord Jesus said in His prayer to His Father, when speaking of His disciples, "The glory which thou gavest Me I have given them" (John xvii, 22), and it is written in I Cor. iii, 21-23, that all things are ours, but many are so occupied with their stuff and the care of it that they neither see nor enjoy their riches in Christ.

12, 13. "Tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and of all that ye have seen." They probably found it difficult to believe their eyes, for it must have seemed too good and too wonderful to be true. When they arrived home and told their father, he believed them not until he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent. Then his spirit revived, and he said: "It is enough. Joseph, my son, is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die" (verses 26-28). As believers bearing testimony to Christ, His sufferings and His glory and our inheritance in Him many will not believe unless they see some waggons, something in our lives to prove the truth of our words. We are to love and prove our love not by words only, but by the good works which He will work in us.

14, 15. The weeping and kissing and the communion afterwards make us think of the welcome which the prodigal son received and the feast that followed. This is the fourth of the seven weepings of Joseph, two of which are in our lesson (verse 2 and here), two in chapter l, and one each in chapters xlii, xliii, xlvi. They are worthy of particular study. Note also the three weepings of our Lord, at the grave of Lazarus, over Jerusalem and in Gethsemane, and consider that by His great humiliation and sacrifice He has made provision for the forgiveness and bringing near and everlasting care of all who come to Him.

HOW TO FATTEN CHICKENS

IMPORTANT BRANCH OF POULTRY FARMING.

Britain Has An Inexhaustible Demand for Prime Quality Fowls.

The late summer and fall is the time when the farmer disposes of his fowl. To dispose of these to the very best advantage some attention should be given to the work of fattening and preparing them for market. Too many farmers neglect this, and at the same time expect to reap a large profit out of their poultry. It is now agreed that the very best way of fattening poultry is to inclose a few fowls in a small compartment and feed them all they will eat of good fattening food.

The usual time required to properly fatten a fowl is about three weeks. But good-sized, well-conditioned pullets often "make-up" in a fortnight, whereas very large-framed cockerels will take four and sometimes as much as five weeks, before they are fully fatted. A fatter, however, does not care much how long a bird may take to fatten, provided that he is putting on flesh the whole time, and that when he is in fit condition to kill he will be worth a good round sum at the finish.

As a rule, fatters do not give the food otherwise than in a cold state and we think that during the summer time this is to be preferred. But we are finally convinced that in cold weather greater benefit will accrue by

WARMING THE MILK

or water used, and thereby making the food not hot, but nicely warm when taken by the birds. The best way to mix up the food is, to place what milk or water is required into a pail, then add in the ground oats a little at a time, and stir well with a wooden ladle. Continue to add more meal until the whole is sufficiently thickened. Ninety gallon casks sawn in half are admirably adapted for mixing the food, and also make capital receptacles for storing milk.

A good-sized copper should be erected out in the open, not too close to the dwelling house, as the preparation of fat for the fowls is not a pleasant operation to have performed just under an open window, especially if the wind happens to be blowing in that direction. Empty in one or two hundredweights of rough fat (which can be bought from most butchers at about 2c a pound) according to the size of the copper, and pour in sufficient water to cover the whole several inches deep. After an hour or two's boiling, the fat will rise to the top, and should then be skimmed, and put into a pail. Have ready in some cool place a few milk pans, and pour the hot fat from the pail into one of these, then, when cooled a little, pour in a

CUPFUL OF COLD WATER.

This latter will sink to the bottom, and prevent the fat from sticking to the same. Continue in like manner until all the fat has been boiled out of rough pieces. The next day these milk pans may be emptied by sliding a knife around the edges of the pan, when the whole mass will come away in one solid block; these can be carefully stored until required.

When milk is given to the youngsters to drink, it should never be allowed to become sour, as in such condition it often causes diarrhoea to set up. But we consider that in the case of fattening fowls it is quite different. Not only is sour milk not injurious to fattening fowls but we will go further and say that sour milk is infinitely superior to new milk for this purpose.

Not one in a hundred fatters ever bother themselves about trying to free their birds of insects, when they are brought home for fattening. Nevertheless nothing interferes more with the continual process of fattening than the fact that the fowls are infested with these troublesome creatures. The insect powders sold for this purpose are too expensive to be used for fattening fowls, but great benefit to the birds will be gained by giving them a good dusting in

FLOUR OF SULPHUR,

and the best and quickest way we know of is to have half of a small tub filled about one-third full with the sulphur. Let one man take the bird's head in one hand, and the feet in the other, and let someone else rub the sulphur on, and place the birds for ten minutes in some unused shed, or any handy place where they can give themselves a shake and get rid of the pests.

The chickens should be put in a coop of small round bars. They should be from 1 to 1½ inches apart and always put long ways, so that the birds can stand and eat out of the troughs. The bars in front of the coop should be about two inches apart. One coop three feet long and about sixteen inches wide is large enough for six birds. It should be eighteen inches high. The fattening coops are best in a shed or outhouse where it is quiet and a little dark. After placing the birds in the coops they should be left without any food for at least twelve hours. The exception being when they have been travelling many hours before arriving at their destination, when it is advisable to feed them as soon as convenient. There are many farmers who would never think of putting the birds in a coop to fatten, but shut them in a pig-pen or out-building, and give them a lot of food in a trough, so that they can run to it when they like.

THIS IS WRONG.

When fowls are shut up in such places they ought to be fed carefully, so that they can clean up every particle of food. If proper care and attention cannot be given to the birds while in the fattening coops, we strongly advocate the principle of allowing them their liberty.

The proper times to feed are as early in the morning as convenient, say, in summer at six o'clock, and in winter at half-past seven, then again in the afternoon about five o'clock in summer and four o'clock in winter. There are, nevertheless, some exceptions to this rule. Young spring chickens require an extra feed at noon, and and some, large birds quick at "emptying," may also with advantage be fed three times a day. But do not follow the plan recommended by some, of feeding fattening fowls generally "little and often." They will sicken of their food very quickly, and this means a lot of useless and unnecessary labor.

The usual method adopted for feeding the fowls during the first week of the process, is to give what most fatters term "water gruel." This consists of nothing but the ground oats mixed up with water into a rather sloppy consistency. The idea is, that during the first week the bird's system is not trained to rich living, and many fatters prefer to do what they term

"GO STEADY AT FIRST."

We are, however, persuaded that a milk (we refer of course to either skim milk or sour pure milk) be added in proportion of one-half to that of water the extra cost is amply repaid by the impetus thus given to the fattening process.

During the second week we increase the quality of milk regularly each day, so that by the end of this week we have discontinued the use of water entirely, the solid portion of the food being still the ground oats