

THE AUTUMN OF LIFE.

Rev. Dr. Talmage on Our Transition to the Life Elysian.

A despatch from Washington says:—Rev. Dr. Talmage took as his text "We all do fade as a leaf."—Isaiah lxxiv. 6.

It is so hard for us to understand religious truth that God constantly reiterates. As the schoolmaster takes a black-board, and puts upon it figures and diagrams, so that the scholar may not only get his lesson through the ear, but also through the eye, so God takes all the truths of his Bible, and draws them out in diagram, on the natural world. Champollion, the famous Frenchman, went down into Egypt to study the hieroglyphics on monuments and temples. After much labour he deciphered them, and announced to the learned world the result of his investigations. The wisdom, goodness, and power of God are written in hieroglyphics all over the earth and all over the heaven. God grant that we may have understanding enough to decipher them!

Those know but little of the meaning of the natural world, who have looked at it through the eyes of others, and from book or canvas taken their impression. The face of Nature has such a flush, and sparkle, and life, that no human description can gather them. There is to-day more glory in one branch of sumach than a painter could put on a whole forest of maples. God hath struck into the autumnal leaf a glance that none see but those who come face to face—the mountain looking upon the men and the man looking upon the mountain.

One autumn about this time I saw that which I shall never forget. I have seen the autumnal sketches of skillful pencils, but then I saw a pageant two thousand miles long. Let artists stand back when God stretches his canvas. A grander spectacle was never kindled before mortal eyes. Along the rivers, and up and down the sides of the great hills, and by the banks of the lakes, there was an indescribable mingling of gold, and orange, and crimson, and saffron, now sobering into drab and maroon, now flaming into seldorino and scarlet. Here and there the trees looked as if just their tips had blossomed into fire. In the morning light the forests seemed as if they had been transfigured, and in the evening hour they looked as if the sunset had burst and dropped upon the leaves. In more sequestered spots, where the frosts had been hindered in their work, we saw the first kindling of the flames of colour in a lovely sprig; then they rushed up from branch to branch, until the glory of the Lord submerged the forest. Here you find a tree just making up its mind to change, and there one looked as if bathed in liquid fire. Along the banks of Lake Huron there were hills over which there seemed pouring cataracts of fire, tossed up, and down, and every whither by the rocks. Through some of the ravines we saw occasionally a foaming stream as though it were rushing to put out the conflagration. If at one end of the woods a commanding tree would set up its crimson banner, the whole forest prepared to follow. If God's urn of colours were not infinite, the swamp that I saw along the Maumee would have exhausted it for ever. It seemed as if the sea of divine glory had dashed its surf to the tip top of the Alleghanies, and then it had come dripping down to lowest leaf and deepest cavern.

Most persons preaching from this text find only in it a vein of sadness. I find, that I have two strings to this Gospel harp—a string of sadness, and a string of joy infinite.

"We all do fade as a leaf."

First, like the foliage, we fade gradually. The leaves which, week before last, felt the frost, have day by day, been changing in tint, and will for many days yet cling to the bough, waiting for the wind to strike them. Suppose you that this leaf I hold in my hand took on its colour in an hour or in a day or in a week? No. Deeper and deeper the flush, till all the veins of its life now seemed opened and bleeding away. After a while, leaf after leaf, they fall. Now those on the outer branches, then those most hidden, until the last spark of the gleaming force shall have been quenched.

So gradually we pass away. From day to day we hardly see the change. But the frosts have touched us. The work of decay is going on. Now a slight cold. Now a season of over-fatigue. Now a fever. Now a stitch in the side. Now a neuritic thrust. Now a rheumatic twinge. Now a fall. Little by little. Pain by pain. Less steady of limb. Sight not so clear. Ear not so alert. After a while we take a staff. Then, after much resistance, we come to spectacles. Instead of bounding into a vehicle, we are willing to be helped in. At last the octogenarian falls. Forty years of decaying. No sudden change. No fierce cannonading of the batteries of life; but a fading away slowly—

gradually. As the leaf! As the leaf! Again: Like the leaf we fade, to make room for others. Next year's forests will be as grandly foliaged as this. There are other generations of oak leaves to take the place of those which this autumn perish. Next May the cradle of the wind will rock the young buds. The woods will be all a-hum with the chorus of leafy voices. If the tree in front of your house, like Elijah, takes a chariot of fire, its mantle will fall upon Elisha.

So, when we go, others take our spheres. We do not grudge the future generations their places. We will have had our good time. Let them come on and have their good time. There is no sighing among these leaves at my feet because other leaves are to follow them. After a lifetime of preaching, doctoring, selling, sewing, or digging, let us cheerfully give way for those who come on to do the preaching, doctoring, selling, sewing, and digging. God, grant that their life may be brighter than ours has been! As we get older do not let us be affronted if young men and women crowd us a little. We will have had our day, and we must let them have theirs.

Do not be disturbed as you see good and great men die. People worry when some important personage passes off the stage, and say, "His place will never be taken." But neither the Church nor the State will suffer for it. There will be others to take the places. When God takes one man away, he has another right back of him. There will be other leaves as green, as exquisitely veined, as gracefully etched, as well-pointed. However prominent the place we fill, our death will not jar the world. One falling leaf does not shake the Adirondacks. A ship is not well manned unless there be an extra supply of hands—some working on deck, some sound asleep in their hammocks. God has manned this world very well. There will be other seamen on deck when you and I are down in the cabin, sound asleep in the hammocks.

Again: As with the leaves, we fade and fall amid myriads of others. We die in concert. The clock that strikes the hour of our going will sound the going of many thousands. Keeping step with the feet of those who carry us out will be the tramp of hundreds doing the same errand. London and Pekin are not the great cities of the world. It hath mightier population, longer streets, brighter lights, thicker darknesses. Caesar is there and all his subjects. Nero is there, and all his victims. It has swallowed up Thebes, and Tyre and Babylon, and will swallow all our cities. Yet, City of Silence. No voice. No hoof. No wheel. No clash. No smiting of hammer. No clack of flying loom. No jar. No whisper. Great city of Silence!

Again: As with variety of appearance the leaves depart, so do we. You have noticed that some trees, at the first touch of the frost, lose all their beauty; and they stand withered and uncomely, and ragged, waiting for the north east storm to drive them into the mire. The sun shining at noon-day glids them with no beauty. Ragged leaves! Dead leaves! So death smites many. There is no beauty in their departure: one sharp frost of sickness, or one blast of the cold waters, and they are gone. No tinge of hope. No prospect of heaven. Their spring was tall abloom with bright prospects; their summer thick foliaged with opportunities; but October came and their glory went. But thank God that is not the way people always die. Tell me, on what day of all the year the leaves of the woodbine are as bright as they are to-day? So Christian character is never so attractive as in the dying hour. Such go into the grave, not as a dog, with frown and harsh voice, driven into a brightly, sweetly, grandly! As the leaf! As the leaf!

Lastly: As the leaves fade and fall only to rise, so do we. All this golden shower of the woods is making the ground richer, and in the juice, and sap, and life of the tree the leaves will come up again. Next May the south wind will blow the resurrection trumpet, and they will rise. So we fall in the dust only to rise again. "The hour is coming when all who are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth." It would be a horrible consideration to think that our bodies were always to lie in the ground. However, beautiful the flowers you plant there, we do not want to make our everlasting residence in such a place.

We fall, but we rise! We die, but we live again! We moulder away, but we come to higher unfolding! As the leaf! As the leaf!

PHOSPHORUS AND MATCHES.
A pound of phosphorus heads 1,000,000 matches.

THE S. S. LESSON.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, NOV. 4

The Eulogist Steward, Luke 12. 1-18. Golden Text.—"Ye Cannot Serve God and Mammon, Luke 16. 13.

PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. He said also unto his disciples. And, apparently, in the presence of Pharisees. To get the full spiritual meaning we must assume the binding obligation of the Ten Commandments. Here is not a lesson in morals, strictly speaking, but a lesson spiritual, acumen and sanctified common sense. The lofty moral teachings of other portions of the Bible are not ignored, but assumed. The parables were directed against the Pharisees and scribes, who as a class were "children of this world;" but it has a deeper meaning, and applies to all of us. A steward. "A house dispenser, a supervisor and paymaster, who probably carried his master's signet ring. His office was familiar to the disciples, who had before this been compared by their Lord to faithful and wise stewards, Luke 12. 42-48. The same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. Or, "that he was wasting them;" the worst accusation that could be made against a house dispenser, for "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful," 1 Cor. 4. 2.

2. How is it that I hear this of thee. "What is this that I hear of you?" The steward's master is not only indignant, he is astonished, for he had thoroughly trusted this man. Give an account of thy stewardship. Literally, "Give back," that is, "Hand me back my signet ring." Thou mayest, Rev. Ver., "thou canst" be no longer steward. It was not a question whether he had wronged his employer; it was a mere question how much he had squandered, and so his further employment as steward was not to be thought of. Here is a text which might well be applied to the final judgment of every human soul. It also applies to the close of any period of trust and probation. Every unfaithful steward, ecclesiastical, national, and individual, is in God's providential hour deprived of his privileges. The Pharisees were themselves fast approaching their day of judgment and doom, though they little dreamed it. Our Lord now turns from a consideration of the vice of dishonesty to the consideration of another class of faults.

3. What shall I do for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship. The original is, "is taking away," and what follows shows that he had not been fully discharged. This bad man had evidently made no provision for this overthrow, which he might have expected, and must have dreaded. The fruits of his wrong dealings had not been stored for his own use, but he had spent his master's money day by day as he stole it. I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. Of skilled labor there was not much in that nation and age, and it was not to be expected that this man would have skill in manufacture or commerce. For mere labor his luxurious life had unfitted him. From beggary he revolted.

4. I am resolved what to do. "I know what I will do." When I am put out of the stewardship. His discharge was a foreseen certainty, only postponed until his accounts should be rendered to his master. They may receive me into their houses. "They" means the debtors of his master. He will now so act as to make his lord's debtors debtors to himself.

5. He called every one of his lord's debtors unto him. Tenants, apparently, who, according to Eastern fashion paid their rent not in money, but in a proportion of the fruits of their plantations. How much, owest thou unto my lord? Although accounts are not kept in the Orient with anything approaching the strictness of our business methods, and although the steward had evidently been an unusually careless man, we need not assume that he had no account of the debts himself. His purpose now is to work on the emotion of these debtors so as to make them grateful to him, and he must not miss the effect of having them figure up their own debts.

6. A hundred measures of oil. One hundred baths, but how much a bath was is not certainly known. Dr. Ederheim says that there were three kinds of measurements used in Palestine; the ancient Hebrew, which was the same as the Roman measurement; the Jerusalem; and the Galilean. If the ancient Hebrew measure was taken the debt was a very large one indeed. Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. That is, "Take your document, 'Your lease,' as we would say; the contract which specifies the rent, and quickly, so as to prevent discovery, change the estimated yearly value of your plantation." Here was cunning, for if these men consented to be partners in the fraud their mouths would be tightly closed.

7. Another. The original implies "of another class," and this explains the different ratio of his discount. A hundred measures of wheat. The

word here is not bath, but cor, which is a dry measure nearly ten times as large as that liquid measure.

8. The lord commended the unjust steward. From this phrase, by which our Lord gives his opinion of the transaction, we get the title of our lesson. Be sure that no pupil lazily assumes that this refers to the Lord Jesus. It is the rich man, the employer. Not scrupulous himself, he has been outwitted, but he is large enough to admire the sharpness of his swindling steward. Because he had done wisely. Sagaciously. The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. Not that wicked men are shrewder than good men, but in reference to their own kind, their own age, their own circumstances they are wiser. They are children of this world merely, and adapted to this world; not fettered in the use of their intellect by all manner of moral, that is often "nonintellectual," restrictions. The child of light is not apt to listen to cruel or immoral suggestions, does not employ falsehood when falsehood would be convenient does not detect falsehood promptly if it is plausible. The very fact that he is a child of the other world makes it impossible for him to be as unscrupulous as this world expects. Our Lord is here making a comparison which has both a commendatory and a condemnatory bearing. He would have Christians "harmless as doves but also," wise as serpents."

9. I say unto you. Here comes an emphatic command. Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Or, as we have it in the eleventh verse, "the unrighteous mammon." The word "mammon" is Chaldaic, and means "riches." To make friends of it is, literally, by means of it. The "mammon" or "wealth of unrighteousness" refers to worldly wealth; but we are not to jump to the conclusion that it is wrong to be wealthy. Our Lord is here distinguishing between the wealth of the other world, treasure laid up in heaven, and the wealth of this world, "the characteristic and representative object and desire of the selfish and unrighteous." The love of this is the root of all evil; but while we are not to love it, we are to make friends by means of it. When ye fail, when the wealth fails. They may receive you into everlasting habitations. "They" are the friends that have been made by the right use of the mammon. "Everlasting habitations" becomes in the Revised Version "eternal tabernacles," "unwithering booths." We must remember that Jerusalem every year surfeited its life into a festival of feasts, a Feast of Tabernacles, when on every household, and in every open space and all over the surrounding hillsides, temporary little houses were made of shanty branches. These withered shortly, and their tenants went back to distant homes, and the whole festival showed itself to have been but a transitory joy. But the habitations of the New Jerusalem are everlasting. But the habitations of the New Jerusalem are everlasting. But the habitations of the New Jerusalem are everlasting.

10. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much, etc. Poor people as well as rich people may use money wisely or foolishly, selfishly or not, and character is tested by the use of a ten-cent piece as really as by the use of a million dollars.

11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? If the spiritual blessings, the grace of God, have not sanctified the dollars that have passed through your hands, how can you expect the true wealth of peace, pardon, and wisdom—the unsearchable riches of Christ?

12. If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who shall give you that which is your own? Everything we have in this world is another's. It is primarily God's and the needs of our fellow-men make very much of it—really theirs. If we are just and loving and Christlike in the distribution of what has been intrusted to us in this world God will give us wealth of our own in heaven—no otherwise.

13. No servant can serve two masters. That is, two rival and antagonistic masters. If they were in unity they would be but one.

A ROMAN AQUEDUCT.
A short time ago during some digging operations in Chester, England, an interesting relic of the Roman occupation of Great Britain was unearthed. This was a section of lead piping, supposed to have been laid about the year 70 A. D., and was utilized for the purpose of carrying water to the Roman camp. About twelve months ago a similar piece of piping was unearthed near this same spot, but its origin was disputed. The new discovery, however, sits all such controversies at rest, since upon the piping are plainly inscribed the words "Cneous Julius Agricola." This relic is additionally interesting since it is said to be the only inscription extant bearing the Roman governor's name.

LONDON'S FLOWER MART.

A SKETCH OF CONVENT GARDEN AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

It Belonged Formerly to an Order of Monks—Has Been the Resort of Historic Personages—Is Now Thronged by Costly and Fashionable Girls.

Just at nine in the morning, every day except Sunday a remarkable change takes place in Covent Garden Market. You couldn't exactly call it a transformation scene but you could call it a transformation smell. Up to 9 its odors are those of milady's drawing room on a fete day—only more so. The air is laden so heavily with the perfume of flowers that the atmosphere is fairly oppressive. And then at 9 the roses, and the hyacinths and all the other posies cease to make their presence felt, and all sorts of vegetables, ripe and decayed that have been in the background of odors rush forward with their more robust fragrance, and Covent Garden's romance fades.

It is all because of the eccentric hours kept by the Covent Garden Flower Market, the greatest in the world. It shuts up shop for the day at 9 in the morning, just as leisurely tradesmen on the near-by Strand are opening their doors. By that time practically every flower dealer in London, from the fashionable firm on Regent street and Piccadilly to the picturesque unkempt flower girl at the curb, has stocked up for the day, and thousands of dollars' worth of blooms have changed hands.

The place originally was known as "Convent Garden," for it belonged to a society of monks, but even in the oldest recorded times vegetable sales seem to have been sold there. Historic characters by the score knew the old place and its neighbourhood well. At the corner of Bow street, now known to fame only for its police court, Will's Coffee House, stood, a gathering place for several generations of famous wits and sharing with the old Cheshire Cheese the distinguished patronage, when they were in funds, of Goldsmith, Buswell, Garrick and Dr. Johnson.

The whole district, seven acres in all, was given by the Crown, to the ancestor of the present Duke of Bedford about the time Columbus was discovering America. It was just a modest little token of regard for the rent of the whole property was only \$30 a year at that time, about the same as the cheapest stand in the cheapest corner of the flower market to-day.

The Duke of Bedford, by wisdom or by luck, clung to his seven acres, and to this day a large part of them help to make the present Duke of Bedford one of the richest men in England. The flower market made a small beginning nearly seventy years ago as a few humble booths, crowded up against St. Paul's Church, the queer little place for worship tucked away in one corner of the market, and whose only claim to interest is in the fact that the author of "Hudibras" and the composer of "Rule, Britannia!" lie in its burial plot. The rambling booths began there to grow so fast that at last the thrifty Duke built a sort of shed for them. It was superseded finally by the present building, which has been enlarged two or three times and now boasts a separate branch for French flowers.

Visited in the early morning, at first sight, the floor of this great hall seems to be heaped up 10 feet high with one mass of flowers, apparently every bloom on earth. The flowers prove to be ranged upon dozens of little separate stalls, presided over by tired-looking men and women, each of the stalls bearing its owner's name on a neat sign above it. Every well-known flower is here, flowers haughty and flowers humble, and the little knot of buyers swarming before each of the stalls is as diverse in point of caste.

The flower market opens for business at 4 o'clock in the morning, and when you have to bring a new stock of goods to the shop fresh every day, it seems an extraordinary amount of toil, even before that shop is opened to the customers. The 200 dealers who carry on business in the flower market begin work anywhere from midnight to 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning, and long before dawn the procession of hooded drays, trucks, and huckster carts bringing the flowers from the various railway stations seems like a circus making its stealthy entry into a little country town.

Most of the flowers come from just outside London, and their gardeners vend them into the city over deserted roads that a few hours after will be crowded with omnibuses laden with gaping humanity. The rest of the blooms have grown in almost every part of England and Scotland, as well as on the continent, and come in by the earliest trains and boats every morning.

Their wares run from the modest mignonette to the pushful orchid beloved of Joseph Chamberlain, and they affirm that there is no business where prices fluctuate more, and which is less certain from day to day. Most of the roses and violets come from the South of France, and it is

not uncommon for from 1200 to 2000 baskets of them to arrive at a normal day. A strong night frost will kill off the market, and the market will be a dead market. The market is a very busy place, and the market is a very busy place.

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ONE YEAR OF KINGSHIP.

THE OPIUM FARMER HAS A BRIEF TASTE OF POWER.

This Remarkable Dignitary of Hsin Province Celebrates His Abdication With a Feast.

In order to regulate to some extent the importation of opium into Hsin Province, and to simplify the collection of duties the British Government some years ago decided to place the opium business in the hands of one individual, realizing, however, that the power and arbitrary power that could be wielded by a single individual in such a position, it was also decided that an office should only be held for a limited term, and that no person should be allowed to keep it for more than a year. So it was announced that the Government was prepared to give bids for the privilege.

Since that time the selection of the "opium farmer," as he is called, has become an annual event. The highest bid generally ranges from 100,000 to 200,000 taels, according to the aspects of the opium crop for the year, and the condition of the market. The successful applicant is only allowed to hold the office for a year, and he is given the assistance of a fleet of a dozen Government customs vessels to protect his interests. He himself employs several junks to guard his own

GROWING GIRLS SHOULD BE BRIGHT, ACTIVE AND STRONG.

A Great Responsibility Rests Upon Mothers at This Period as It Determines Their Daughter's Future Happiness and Some Useful Hints.

Rosy cheeks, bright eyes, a good step, and a good appetite, are the condition that bespeak health. But unfortunately the conditions of thousands of young girls with pale or sallow complexion, languid, stoop shoulders, and thin, are anemic, or in other words, their blood is poor, and watery. If further questioned, they will tell you that this condition leads to decline, consumption, and death. What is needed is a strength that will make new, rich, and store the vigor, brightness and fullness of youth. For this purpose no other discovery in the history of medicine can equal Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, and the ranks of once hopeless girls have been made bright, active and strong through their use. Among these have been brought back to life the girls by the use of this medicine. Miss M. G. McCreary, of St. Louis, Mo., writes: "I give me the greatest pleasure to speak of the benefit I have experienced from the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. For some years I resided in Wisconsin with a family where I devoted my time to English and music, intending to teach the teaching of the latter my profession. I was never very strong, and my studies fatigued me much. I suffered from severe headaches, weakness. I consulted a doctor on his advice, returned to Canada. The fatigue of the journey, however, made me worse, and I got so weak that I could not get without help. I was extremely pale, my eyes were swollen, I had continuous headaches, and was so weak that the least noise would set my heart beating violently. I had lost food and my weight was reduced to ninety-five pounds. My doctor's medicine nor anything else that I had taken up to that time seemed of the slightest benefit. I was confined to bed for nearly a year. I thought that nothing but death could end my sufferings. Happily my acquaintance with my father's friend brought me a box of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and urged me to try them. I did so, and I thought they helped me some, and my father and more. After I had used a few boxes all my friends could see they were helping me, and by the time I had taken nine boxes I was enjoying better health than I had ever had in my life before, and had gained fifteen pounds in weight. I tell you this out of gratitude so that other young girls who may be weak and sickly may know the way to regain their health."

Girls who are just entering womanhood are at the most critical period of their lives. Upon the care of this period depends their future happiness. Neglect may mean either an early grave or a life of misery. If mothers would insist that their growing daughters use Dr. Williams' Pink Pills occasionally, rich blood, strong nerves, and good health would follow. If your dealer does not keep those pills in stock they will be sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People are a great help to many young girls who are weak and sickly. They are a great help to many young girls who are weak and sickly. They are a great help to many young girls who are weak and sickly.

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