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AT PEACE WITH ENEMIES.

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON AT THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

Why We Should Forgive—Ill Humor Exhausting to Physical and Mental Health. Those Who Preserve Their Temper in Debate Generally Come Out Ahead.

BROOKLYN, Oct. 23.—The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., preached in the Brooklyn tabernacle this morning on the subject: "Forgiveness before sundown." After explaining some passages concerning Hezekiah, Dr. Talmage gave out the following hymn, which was sung by the congregation:

This glorious hope revives
Our courage by the way,
While each in expectation lives
And longs to see the day.

Professor Henry Eyre Browne rendered on the organ an aria with variations, by Cramer. The text of the sermon was from Ephesians iv, 26: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Dr. Talmage said:

What a pillow embroidered of all colors hath the dying day. The cradle of clouds from which the sun rises is beautiful enough, but it is surpassed by the many colored mausoleum in which at evening it is buried. Sunset among the mountains! It almost takes one's breath away to recall the scene. The long shadows stretching over the plain make the glory of the departing light on the tiptop crags and struck aslant through the foliage the more transpicuous. Saffron and gold, purple and crimson commingled. All the castles of cloud in conflagration. Burning Moscovos on the sky. Hanging gardens of roses at their deepest blush. Banners of vapors, red as if from carnage, in the battle of the elements. The hunter among the Adirondacks and the Swiss villager among the Alps know what is a sunset among the mountains. After a storm at sea the rolling grandeur into which the sun goes down to bathe at nightfall is something to make weird and splendid dreams out of for a lifetime. Alexander Smith in his poem compares the sunset to "the barren beach of hell," but this wonderful spectacle of nature makes me think of the burnished wall of heaven. Paul in prison writing my text remembers some of the gorgeous sunsets among the mountains of Asia Minor, and how he had often seen the towers of Damascus blaze in the close of the Oriental days, and he flashes out that memory in the text when he says: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Sublime and all-suggestive duty for people then and people now. Forgiveness before sundown. He who never feels the throb of indignation is imbecile. He who can walk among the injustices of the world, inflicted upon himself and others, without flush of cheek or flash of eye or agitation of nature, is either in sympathy with wrong or semi-idiotic. When Ananias, the high priest, ordered the constables of the court room to smite Paul in the mouth, Paul fired up and said: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." In the sentence immediately before my text Paul commands the Ephesians: "Be ye angry and sin not." It all depends on what you are mad at and how long the feeling lasts whether anger is right or wrong. Life is full of exasperations. Saul after David, Simeon after Gideon, Korah after Moses, the Pasquins after Augustus, the pharisees after Christ, and every one has had his pursuers, and we are swindled or belied or misrepresented or persecuted or in some way wronged, and the danger is that helpful indignation shall become baleful spite, and that our feelings settle down into a prolonged outpouring of temper displeasing to God and ruinous to ourselves, and hence the important injunction of the text: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Why that limitation to one's anger? Why that period of flaming vapor set to punctuate a flaming disposition? What has the sunset got to do with one's resentful emotions? Was it a haphazard sentiment written by Paul without special significance? No, no; I think of five reasons why we should not let the sun set before our temper sets.

First, because twelve hours is long enough to be cross about any wrong inflicted upon us. Nothing is so exhausting to physical health or mental faculty as a protracted indulgence of ill humor. It racks the nervous system. It hurts the digestion, it heats the blood in brain and heart until the whole body is first overheated and then depressed. Beside that, it sours the disposition, turns one aside from his legitimate work, expends energies that ought to be better employed, and does us more harm than it does our antagonist. Paul gives us a good, wide allowance of time for legitimate denunciation, from 6 o'clock to 6 o'clock, but says: "Stop there!" Watch the descending orb of day, and when it reaches the horizon take a reef in your disposition. Unloose your collar and cool off. Change the subject to something delightfully pleasant. Unroll your tight fist and shake hands with some one. Bank up the fires at the curfew bell. Drive the growling dog of enmity back to its kennel. The hours of this morning will pass by, and the afternoon will arrive, and the sun will begin to set, and I beg you on its blazing hearth throw all your feuds, invectives and satires.

Other things being equal the man who preserves good temper will come out ahead. An old essayist says that the celebrated John Henderson of Bristol, England, was at a dining party where political excitement ran high and the debate got angry, and while Henderson was speaking his opponent, unable to answer his argument, dashed a glass of wine in his face, when the speaker deliberately wiped the liquid from his face and said: "This, sir, is a digression; now, if you please, for the main argument." While worldly philosophy could help but very few to such equipose of spirit the grace of God could help any man to such a triumph. "Impossible," you say, "I would have either left the table in anger or have knocked the man down." But I have come to believe that nothing is impossible, if God help, since what I saw at Beth-Shan faith cure in London, England, two summers ago. While the religious service was going on Rev. Dr. Boardman, glorious man, since gone to his heavenly rest, was telling the scores of sick people present that Christ was there as of old to heal all diseases, and that, if they would only believe, their sickness would depart. I saw a woman near me, with hand and arm twisted of rheumatism, and her wrist was fiery with inflammation, and it looked like those cases of chronic rheumatism which we have all seen and sympathized with, cases beyond all hum in healing. At the preacher's reiteration of the words: "Will you believe? Do you believe? Do you believe now?" I heard this poor sick woman say, with an emphasis which sounded through the building: "I do believe." And then she laid her twisted arm and hand out as straight as your arm and hand or mine. I had seen one rise from the dead. I would not have been much more thrilled. Since then I believe that God will do anything in answer to our prayer and in answer to our faith, and he can heal our bodies, and if our soul is all twisted and misshapen of revenge and hate and inflamed with evil proclivity, he can straighten that also and make it well and clean. Aye, you will postpone till sundown forgiveness of enemies if you can

realize that their behavior toward you may be put into the catalogue of the "all things" that "work together for good to those that love God." I have had multitudes of friends, but I have found in my own experience that God so arranged it that the greatest opportunities of usefulness that have been opened before me were opened by enemies. And when, years ago, they conspired against me, that opened all Christendom to me as a field in which to preach the Gospel. So you may harness your antagonists to your best interests and compel them to draw you on to better work and higher character. Suppose, instead of waiting until six minutes past 5 o'clock this evening, when the sun will set, you transact this glorious work of forgiveness before meridian.

Again, we ought not to let the sun go down on our wrath, because we will sleep better if we are at peace with everybody. Insomnia is getting to be one of the most prevalent of disorders. How few people retire at 10 o'clock at night and sleep clear through to 6 in the morning! To relieve this disorder all narcotics, and sedatives, and chloral, and bromide of potassium, and cocaine and intoxicants are used, but nothing is more important than a quiet spirit if we would win soundness. How is a man going to sleep when he is in mind pursuing an enemy? With what nervous twitch he will start out of a dream! That new plan, for cornering his foe will keep him wide awake while the clock strikes 11, 12, 1, 2, 3, 4. I give you an unfailing prescription for wakefulness, spend the evening hours rehearsing your wrongs and the best way of avenging them. Hold a convention of friends on this subject in your parlor or office at 8 or 9 o'clock. Close the evening by writing a bitter letter, expressing your sentiments. Take from the desk or pigeon hole the papers in the case to refresh your mind with your evening's meanness. Then lie down and wait for the coming of the day, and it will come before sleep comes, or your sleep will be a worried quiescence, and, if you take the precaution to lie flat on your back a frightful nightmare. Why not put a bound to your animosity? Why let your foes come into the sanctities of your dormitory? Why let those slanderers who have already torn your reputation to pieces or injured your business, bend over your midnight pillow and drive from you one of the greatest blessings that God can offer—sweet, refreshing, all invigorating sleep? Why not fence out your enemies by the golden bars of the sunset? Why not stand behind the barricade of evening cloud and say to them: "Thus far and no farther!" Many a man and many a woman is having the health of body as well as the health of soul eaten away by a malevolent spirit. I have in time of religious awakening had persons night after night come into the inquiry room and get no peace of soul. After a while I have bluntly asked her: "Is there not some one against whom you have a hatred that you are not willing to give up?" After a little confusion she has slightly whispered, "Yes." Then I said to her: "You will never find peace with God as long as you retain that animosity."

A boy in Sparta, having stolen a fox, kept him under his coat, and, though the fox was gnawing his vitals, he submitted to it rather than expose his misdeed. Many a man with a smiling face has under his jacket an animosity that is gnawing away the strength of his body and the integrity of his soul. Better get rid of that hidden fox as soon as possible. There are hundreds of domestic circles where that which most is needed is the spirit of forgiveness. Brothers apart and sisters apart and parents and children apart. Solomon says a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city. Are there not enough sacred memories of your childhood to bring you together? The rabbins recount how that Nebuchadnezzar's son had such a spite against his father that after he was dead he had his father burned to ashes, and then put the ashes into four sacks, and tied them to four eagles' necks which flew away in opposite directions. And there are now domestic antipathies which seem forever to have scattered all parental memories to the four winds of heaven. How far the eagles fly with that sacred ashes! The hour of sundown makes to that family no practical suggestion. Thomas Carlyle, in his biography of Frederick the Great, says the old king was told by the confessor he must be at peace with his enemies if he wanted to enter heaven. Then he said to his wife, the queen: "Write to your brother after I am dead that I forgive him." Rolloff, the confessor, said: "Her majesty had better write him immediately." "No," said the king, "after I am dead; that will be safer." So he let the sun of his earthly existence go down upon his wrath.

Again: We ought not to allow the sun set before forgiveness takes place, because we might not live to see another day. And what if we should be ushered into the presence of our Maker with a grudge upon our soul? The majority of people depart this life in the night. Between 11 o'clock p. m. and 3 o'clock a. m. there is something in the atmosphere which relaxes the grip which the body has on the soul, and most of people enter the next world through the shadows of this world. Perhaps God may have arranged it in that way so as to make the contrast the more glorious. I have seen sunshiny days in this world that must have been almost like the radiance of heaven. But as most people leave the earth between sundown and sunrise, they quit this world at its darkest, and heaven, always bright, will be the brighter for that contrast. Out of blackness into irradiation. Shall we then leap over the rosate bank of sunset into the favorite hunting ground of disease and death, carrying our animosities with us? Who would want to confront his God, against whom we have all done meaner things than anybody has ever done against us, carrying old grudges? How can we expect his forgiveness for the greater when we are not willing to forgive others the less? Napoleon was encouraged to undertake the crossing of the Alps because Charlemagne had previously crossed them. And all this rugged path of forgiveness bears the bleeding footsteps of him who conquered through suffering, and we ought to be willing to follow. On the night of our departure from this life into the next, our one plea will have to be for mercy, and it will have to be offered in the presence of him who has said: "If you forgive not men their trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." What a sorry plight if we stand there hating this one, and hating that one, and wishing this one a damage, and wishing some one else a calamity, and we ourselves needing forgiveness for 10,000 times 10,000 obliquities of heart and life. When our last hour comes, we want it to find us all right. Hardly anything affects me so much in the uncovering of ancient Pompeii as the account of the soldier who, after the city had for many centuries been covered with the ashes and scoriae of Vesuvius, was found standing in his place on guard, hand on spear and helmet on head. Others fled at the awful submergence, but the explorer, 1700 years after, found the body of that brave fellow in right position. And it will be a grand thing if, when our last moment comes, we are found in right position toward the world, as well as in right position toward God, on guard and unafraid by the ashes from the mountain of death. I do not suppose that I am any more of a coward than most people, but I declare to you that I would not dare to

Continued on page three.

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