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OF THE NATIVITY.

SERMON PREACHED BY DR. T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

A Night in Bethlehem His Subject—A Powerful and Impressive Discourse Delivered to a vast Congregation—The Babe in the Manger.

BROOKLYN, Dec. 27.—Dr. Talmage preached this morning a sermon appropriate to the Christmas season. Taking up the subject of the Nativity he drew from it lessons which, though perfectly legitimate, are commonly overlooked. His text was Luke ii, 16. "And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." The black window shutters of a December night were thrown open, and some of the best singers of a world where they all sing stood there, and putting back the drapery of cloud, chanted a peace anthem, until all the echoes of hill and valley applauded and encored the Hallelujah chorus. Come, let us go into that Christmas scene as though we had never before worshipped at the manger. Here is a Madonna worth looking at.

I wonder not that the most frequent name in all lands and in all Christian centuries is Mary. And there are Marys in palaces and Marys in cabins, and though German and French and Italian and Spanish and English pronounce it differently, they are all namesakes of the one whom we find on a bed of straw, with her pale face against the soft cheek of Christ in the night of the Nativity. All the great painters have tried, on canvas, to present Mary and her child and the incidents of that most famous night of the world's history.

Raphael, in three different masterpieces, celebrated them. Tintoretto and Gherlandajo surpassed themselves in the adoration of the Magi. Correggio needed to do nothing more than his Madonna to become immortal. The Madonna of the Lily, by Leonardo da Vinci, will kindle the admiration of all ages. But all the galleries of Dresden are forgotten when I think of the small room of that gallery containing theistine Madonna. Yet all of them were copies of St. Matthew's Madonna and Luke's Madonna, the inspired Madonna of the Old Book, which we had put into our hands when we were infants, and that we hope to have under our heads when we die.

GOD HONORED THE INFANTS.
Behold, in the first place, that on the first night of Christ's life God honored the brute creation. You cannot get into that Bethlehem barn without going past the camels, the mules, the dogs, the oxen. The brutes of that stable heard the first cry of the infant Lord. Some of the old painters represent the oxen and camels kneeling that night before the newborn babe. And well might they kneel! Have you ever thought that Christ came among other things to alleviate the sufferings of the brute creation? Was it not appropriate that he should, during the first few days and nights of his life on earth, be surrounded by the dumb beasts, whose moans and "blat and bellowing" have for ages been a prayer to God for the arresting of their tortures and the righting of their wrongs? It did not merely "happen" so that the intelligent creatures of God should have been that night in close neighborhood.

Not a tunnel in all the centuries, not a bird's nest, not a worn out horse on topwash, not a herd freezing in the poorly built cow pen, not a freight car in summer time bringing the beoves to market without water through a thousand miles of agony, not a surgeon's room witnessing the struggles of fox or rabbit or pigeon or dog in the horrors of vivisection, but has an interest in the fact that Christ was born in a stable, surrounded by brutes. He remembers that night, and the prayer he heard in their pitiful moan he will answer in the punishment of those who maltreat the dumb brutes. They surely have as much right in this world as we have.

In the first chapter of Genesis you may see that they were placed on the earth before man was, the fish and fowl created the fifth day, and the quadrupeds the morning of the sixth day, and man not until the afternoon of that day. The whale, the eagle, the lion, and all the lesser creatures of their kind were predecessors of the human family. They have the world by right of possession. They have also paid rent for the places they occupied. What an army of defense all over the world are the faithful watchdogs. And who can tell what the world owes the horse and camel and ox for transportation?

And Robin and Lark have, by the contract with which they have filled orchard and forest, more than paid for the few grains they have picked up for their sustenance.

When you abuse any creature of God you strike its Creator, and you insult the Christ who, though he might have been welcomed into life by princes and taken his first infant shudder amid Tyrian plush and unscented couches and rippling waters from royal aqueducts dripping into basins of ivory and pearl, chose to be born on the level with a cow's horn, or a camel's hoof, or a dog's nostril, that he might be the alleviation of animal suffering as well as the redeemer of man.

Standing there, as I imagine now I

do, in that Bethlehem night with an infant Christ on the one side and the speechless creatures of God on the other, I cry, look out how you strike the lowest bit from that bleeding mouth. Remove that saddle from that raw back. Shoot not for fun that bird that is too small for food. Forget not to put water into the cage of that canary. Throw out some crumbs to those birds caged too far north in the winter's inclemency. Arrest that man who is making that one horse draw a load heavy enough for three. Rush in upon that scene where boys are torturing a cat or transfixing butterfly and grasshopper.

Drive not off that old robin, for her nest is a mother's cradle, and under her wing there may be three or four musicians of the sky in training. In your families and in your schools teach the coming generation more mercy than the present generation has ever shown, and in this marvelous Bible picture of the Nativity, while you point out to them the angel, show them also the camel, and while they hear the celestial chant let them also hear the cow's moan.

No more did Christ show interest in the botanical world, than he said, "Consider the lilies," when he showed sympathy for the ornithological, when he said, "Behold the fowls of the air," and the quadruped world, when he allowed himself to be called in one place a lion and in another place a lamb. Meanwhile, may the Christ of the Bethlehem cattle pen have mercy on the suffering stockyards that are preparing diseased and fevered meat for our American households.

GOD HONORED CHILDHOOD.
Behold, also, in this Bible scene, how on that Christmas night God honored childhood. Christ might have made his first visit to our world in a cloud, as he will descend on his next visit in a cloud. In what a chariot of illumined vapor he might have rolled down the sky, escorted by mounted cavalry, with lightning for drawn sword. Elijah had a carriage of fire to take him up; why not Jesus a carriage of fire to fetch him down? Or, over the arched bridge of a rainbow the Lord might have descended. Or Christ might have had his mortality built up on earth out of the dust of a garden, as was Adam, in full manhood at the start, without the introductory feebleness of infancy.

There were wiseacres that night in Bethlehem and Jerusalem snoring in deep sleep, and there were salaried officers of government, who, hearing of it afterward, may have thought that they ought to have had the first news of such a great event; some one dismounting from a swift camel at their door and knocking till, at some sentinel's question, "Who comes there?" the great ones of the palace might have been told of the celestial arrival. No; the shepherds heard the first two bars of the music, the first in the major key and the last in the subdominant minor. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." Ah, yes; the fields were honored.

The old shepherds with plaid and crook have for the most part vanished, but we have grazing—our United States pasture fields and prairie about forty-five million sheep—and all their keepers ought to follow the shepherds of my text, and those who toil in fields, all vine dressers, all orchardists, all husbandmen. Not only that Christmas night, but all up and down the world's history God had been honoring the fields.

Nearly all the messiahs of reform and literature and eloquence and law and benevolence have come from the fields. Washington from the fields. Jefferson from the fields. The presidential martyrs, Garfield and Lincoln, from the fields. Henry Clay from the fields. Daniel Webster from the fields. Before this world is right the overflowing populations of our crowded cities will have to take to the fields. Instead of ten merchants in rivalry as to who shall sell that one apple, we want at least eight of them to go out and raise apples. Instead of ten merchants desiring to sell that one bushel of wheat, we want at least eight of them to go out and raise wheat.

The world wants now more hard hands, more bronzed cheeks, more muscular arms. To the fields! God honored them when he woke up the shepherds by the midnight anthem; and he will while the world lasts, continue to honor the fields. When the shepherd's crook was that famous night stood against the wall of the Bethlehem klan it was a prophecy of the time when thrasher's flail and farmer's plow and woodman's ax and ox's yoke and shepherd's rick shall surrender to the God who made the country, as man made the town.

GOD HONORED MOTHERHOOD.
Behold also that on that Christmas

any velvet so soft as a child's cheek! Is there any sky so blue as a child's eye? Is there any music so sweet as the child's voice? Is there any plume so wavy as a child's hair.

GOD HONORED SCIENCE.
Notice also that in this Bible night scene God honored science. Who are the three who men kneeling before the Divine Infant? Not bores, not ignoramuses, but Caspar, Belshazzar and Melchior, men who knew all that was to be known. They were the Isaac Newtons and Herschels and Faradays of their time. Their alchemy was the forerunner of our sublime chemistry, their astrology the mother of our magnificent astronomy. They had studied stars, studied metals, studied physiology, studied everything.

And when I see these scientists bowing before the beautiful babe, I see the prophecy of the time when all the telescopes and microscopes, and all the Leyden jars, and all the electric batteries, and all the observatories, and all the universities shall bow to Jesus. It is much that way already. Where is the college that does not have morning prayers, thus bowing at the manger? Who have been the greatest physicians? Omitting the names of the living, lost we should be invidious, have we not had among them Christian men like our own Joseph C. Hutchinson and Rush and Valentine Mott and Abercrombie and Abernethy? Who have been our greatest scientists? Joseph Henry, who lived and died in the faith of the Gospels, and Agassiz, who, standing with his students among the hills, took off his hat and said, "Young gentlemen, before we study these rocks let us pray for wisdom to the God who made the rocks."

Today the greatest doctors and lawyers of Brooklyn and New York and of this land and of all lands revere the Christian religion, and are not ashamed to say so before juries and legislatures and senates. All geology will yet bow before the Rock of Ages. All botany will yet worship the Rose of Sharon. All astronomy will yet recognize the Star of Bethlehem. And physiology and anatomy will join hands and say, "We must, by the help of God, get the human race up to the perfect nerve and perfect muscle and perfect brain and perfect form of that perfect child before whom, nigh twenty hundred years ago, the wise men bent their tired knees in worship."

GOD HONORED THE FIELDS.
Behold also in that first Christmas night that God honored the fields. Come in, shepherd boys, to Bethlehem and see the child. "No," they say, "we are not dressed good enough to come in." "Yes, you are; come in." Sure enough, the storms and the night dew and the brambles have made rough work with their apparel, but none have a better right to come in. They were the first to hear the music of that Christmas night. The first announcement of a Saviour's birth was made to those men in the fields.

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GOD HONORED MOTHERHOOD.
Behold also that on that Christmas

night God honored motherhood. Two angels on their wings might have brought an infant Saviour to Bethlehem without Mary's being there at all. When the villagers on the morning of December 26 awoke, by divine arrangement and in some unexplained way the child Jesus might have been found in some comfortable cradle of the village. But no! Motherhood for all time was to be consecrated, and one of the tenderest relations was to be the maternal relation, and one of the sweetest words, "mother."

In all ages God has honored good motherhood. John Wesley had a good mother; St. Bernard had a good mother; Samuel Budgett a good mother; Doddridge a good mother; Walter Scott a good mother; Benjamin West a good mother. In a great audience, most of whom were Christians, I asked that all those who had been blessed of Christian mothers arise, and almost the entire assembly stood up. Don't you see how important it is that all motherhood be consecrated?

Why did Titian, the Italian artist, when he sketched the Madonna, make it an Italian face? Why did Rubens, the German artist, in his Madonna, make it a German face? Why did Joshua Reynolds, the English artist, in his Madonna, make it an English face? Why did Murillo, the Spanish artist, in his Madonna, make it a Spanish face? I never heard, but I think they took their own mothers as the type of Mary, the mother of Christ. When you hear some one, in sermon or oration, speak in the abstract of a good, faithful, honest mother, your eyes fill up with tears, while you say to yourself, "that was my mother."

The first word a child utters is apt to be "Mother," and the old man in his dying dream calls "Mother! mother!" It matters not whether she was brought up in the surroundings of a city and in affluent home, and was dressed appropriately with reference to the demands of modern life, or whether she wore the old time cap and great round spectacles, and apron of her own make, and knit year socks with her own needles, seated by the broad fireplace, with great backlog ablaze, on a winter night.

It matters not how many wrinkles crossed and recrossed her face, or how much her shoulders stooped with the burdens of a long life, if you painted a Madonna, hers would be the face. What a gentle hand she had when we were sick, and what a voice to soothe pain, and was there any one who could so fill up a room with peace and purity and light? And what a sad day that was when we came home and she could greet us not, for her lips were forever still.

Come back, mother, this Christmas day, and take your old place, and as ten or twenty or fifty years ago come and open the old Bible as you used to; read and kneel in the same place where you used to pray, and look upon us as of old when you wished us a merry Christmas or a happy New Year. But no! That would not be fair to call you back. You had troubles enough and aches enough and bereavements enough while you were here. Tarry by the throne, mother, till we join you there, your prayers all answered, and in the eternal home of our God we shall again keep Christmas jubilee together.

But speak from your thrones, all you glorified mothers, and say to all these, your sons and daughters, words of love, words of warning, words of cheer. They need your voice for they have traveled far and with many a heartbreak since you left them, and you do well to call from the heights of heaven to the valleys of earth: Hail, enthroned ancestry! We are coming. Keep a place right beside you at the banquet.

Slow footed years! Mora swiftly run into the gold of that unsetting sun; Homesick we are for thee, O land beyond the sea.

A Joke of the Kaiser.
A story which reaches me from Potsdam is of a harmless character. The German emperor appeared a few days ago before the barracks of the Guard Hussars. He dismounted and gave the corporal of the guard orders to march his men away silently into the officers' mess close by. Then he caused the alarm to be sounded by the trumpet of the guard, when he kept by his side. The officer of the guard, who had noticed nothing of the event, came rushing out, but the guard was gone. "Where is your guard, sir?" said the emperor; to which the unfortunate man could of course give no answer. His majesty was mightily pleased at the result of this practical joke.—Vanity Fair.

The Way the Boy Got It.
The danger of trusting oral messages to boys, however bright they may be, was demonstrated in a newspaper office not a thousand miles away from City Hall park. A member of the editorial staff sent one of the boys to the composing room for a proof of a story entitled, "Arion's Great Performance." Arion, it should be remembered, is Senator Stanford's wonderful 2-year-old trotter, who has just made splinters out of all previous 2-year-old records. The boy, on returning from the composing room, said, "They ain't no theatrical proofs." There was a puzzled editor until it was learned that the boy had asked for "Harrigan's Great Performance."—New York Tribune.

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By way of awful example the story is printed of a lovely little girl baby who pined away and seemed at the point of death whenever she lived in the same house with her father. Away from him she grew fat and rosy. There seemed something uncanny and witchlike in the thing. At least there would have been had not that father lived in a scientific and analytical age, when we nose into everything and very properly try to find material causes for everything occurring in the material world. That father would certainly have been led out and hanged in an age before mankind knew enough to watch sharply to find out that it was the fumes from incessant tobacco smoking that nearly killed the baby.

"August Flower"

The Hon. J. W. Fennimore is the Sheriff of Kent Co., Del., and lives at Dover, the County Seat and Capital of the State. The sheriff is a gentleman fifty-nine years of age, and this is what he says: "I have used your August Flower for several years in my family and for my own use, and found it does me more good than any other remedy. I have been troubled with what I call Sick Headache. A pain comes in the back part of my head first, and then soon a general headache until I become sick and vomit. At times, too, I have a fullness after eating, a pressure after eating at the pit of the stomach, and sourness, when food seemed to rise up in my throat and mouth. When I feel this coming on I take a little August Flower it relieves me, and is the best remedy I have ever taken for it. For this reason I take it and recommend it to others as a great remedy for Dyspepsia, &c."

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The school taxes of district No. 21 in Marion county are now due and payable at the clerk's office in No. 197 Commercial street, Salem, first door south of the postoffice. The same will become delinquent unless paid within 60 days, the 31 day of Nov. 1891. W. H. SIMPSON, District Clerk.

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