The Miraculous Conversion of the Great Persecutor Both an Encouragement and a Warning Out of Great Tribulations Come Zeal and Clear Views of Truth.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Dec. 10 .- Rev. Dr. Talmage, who lectured in this city yesterday, having spoken during the week at Nashville, Memphis and other cities, preached here this forenoon to a large sudience under the auspices of the Baptist church. The subject was "Unborsed," and the text chosen was Acts ix. 8-5: "And as he journeyed he came near Damasons, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

The Damascus of Bible times still stands, with a population of 185,000. It was a gay city of white and glistening architecture, its minarets and crescents and domes playing with the light of the morning sun; embowered in groves of olive and citron and orange and pomegranate; a famous river plunging its brightness into the scene; a city by the ancients styled "a pearl surrounded by emeralds."

THE COMING TERROR

A group of horsemen are advancing upon that city. Let the Christians of the place hide, for that cavalcade coming over the hills is made up of persecutors; their leader small and unattractive in some respects, as leaders sometimes are insignificant in person-witness the Duke of Wellington and Dr. Archibald Alexander. But there is something very intent in the eye of this man of the text, and the horse be rides is lathered with the foam of a long and quick travel of 135 miles. He urges on his steed, for those Christians must be captured and silenced, and that religion of the cross must be annihilated.

Suddenly the horses shy off and plunge until the riders are precipitated. Freed from the riders, the horses bound snorting away. You know that dumb animals, at the sight of an eclipse, or an earthquake, or anything like a supernatural appearance, sometimes become very uncontrollable. A new sun had been kindled in the heavens, putting out the glare of the ordinary sun. Christ, with the glories of heaven wrapped about him, looked out from a cloud, and the splendor was insufferable, and no wonder the horses sprang and the equestrians

dropped. Dust covered and bruised, Saul attempts to get up, shading his eyes with his hands from the severe luster of the heavens, but unsuccessfully, for he is struck stone blind as he cries out, "Who art thou, Lord?" and Jesus answered him: I am the one you have been chasing. He that whips and scourges those Damascene Christians whips and scourges me. It is not their back that is bleeding; it is mine. It is not their heart that is breaking; it is mine. I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED. From that wild, exciting and over-

whelming scene there rises up the greatest preacher of all the ages-Paul-in whose behalf prisons were rocked down, before whom soldiers turned pale, into whose hand Mediterranean sea captains put control of their shipwrecking craft, and whose epistles are the avant courier of a resurrection day. I learn from this scene that a worldly

fall, sometimes precedes a spiritual uplifting. A man does not get much sympathy by falling off a horse. People say he ought not to have got into the saddle if he could not ride. Those of us who were brought up in the country remember well how the workmen laughed when, on our way back from the brook, we suddenly lost our ride. When in a grand review a general toppled from the like David from the belly of hell-a stirrups, it became a national merriment. Here is Paul on horseback-a proud

ments in his pocket, a graduate of a most famous school, in which the celebrated Dr. Gamaliel had been a professor, perhaps having already attained two of the three titles of the school-rab, the first; rabbi, the second, and on his way to rabbak, the third and highest title, 1 know from his temperament that his the persecutor. Christ and Paul were horse was ahead of the other horses. But without time to think of what posture he should take, or without consideration for his dignity, he is tumbled into the dust. And yet that was the best ride Paul ever took. Out of that violent fall he arose into the apostleship. So it has been in all ages, and so it is now.

PURIFIED BY SUFFERING. You will never be worth much for God and the church until you lose your fortune, or have your reputation upact, or in some way, somehow, are thrown and humiliated. You must go down before you go up. Joseph finds his path to hoofs of the galloping steeds on the way the Egyptian court through the pit into to Damascus. Oh, do you think that which his brothers threw him. Damel proud man on horseback can ever be would never have walked among the bronzed lions that adorned the Babylonish throne if he had not first walked among the real lions of the cave. And Paul marshals all the generations of Christendom by falling flat on his face on the road to Damascus.

Men who have been always prospered may be efficient servants of the world, but will be of no advantage to Christ. You may ride majestically seated on your charger, rein in hand, foot in stirrup, but you will never be worth anything spiritually until you fall off. They who graduate from the school of Christ with the highest honors have on their diploma the seal of a lion's muddy paw, or the plash of an angry wave, or the drop of a stray tear, or the brown scoreb of a persecuting fire. In 999 cases out of 1,000 there is no moral or spiritual

thing for men of small caliber, for women with no capacity to reason, for children in the infant class under 6 years of age, but not for stalwart men. Look at this man of the text! Do you not think that the religion that could capture such a man as that must have some power in it? He was a logician; he was a metaphysician; he was an all conquering orator; he was a poet of the highest type. He had a nature that could swamp the leading men of his own day, and hurled against the sanhedrin he made it tremble.

He learned all that he could get in the school of his native village; then he had gone to a higher school and there mastered the Greek and the Hebrew and perfected himself in belles lettres, until in after years he astonished the Cretans, and the Corintbians, and the Athenians by quotations from their own authors. I have never found anything in Carlyle or Goeth or Herbert Spencer that could compare in strength or beauty with Paul's epistles. I do not think there is anything in the writings of Sir William Hamilton that shows such mental discipline as you find in Paul's argument about justification and the resurrection. I have not found anything in Milton finer in the way of imagination than I can find in Paul's illustrations drawn from the amphitheater.

There was nothing in Robert Emmet pleading for his life, or in Edmund Burke arraigning Warren Hastings in Westminster hall, that compared with the scene in the courtroom when, before robed officials, Paul bowed and began his speech, saying, "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day." I repeat that a religion that can capture a man like that must have some power in it. It is time you stopped talking as though all the brain of the world were opposed to Christianity. Where Paul leads, we can afford to

TALENTED CHRISTIANS. I am glad to know that Christ has in the different ages of the world had in his discipleship a Mozart and a Handel in music, a Raphael and a Reynolds in painting, an Angelo and a Canova in sculpture, a Rush and a Harvey in medicine, a Grotius and a Washington in statesmanship; a Blackstone, a Marshall and a Kent in law. And the time will come when the religion of Christ will conquer all the observatories and universities, and philosophy will through her telescope behold the morning star of Jesus, and in her laboratory see "that all things work together for good," and with her geological hammer discover the

Oh, instead of cowering and shivering when the skeptic stands before you and talks of religion as though it were a pusillanimous thing-instead of that, take your New Testament from your pocket and show him the picture of the intellectual giant of all the ages prostrated on the road to Damascus while his horse is flying wildly away. Then ask your skeptic " t it was that frightened the w the other. Oh, no, it is no weak peopl. It is a glorious gospel. It is an all conquering gospel. It is an omnipotent gospel. It is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salva-

'Rock of Ages."

HE MUST BE HUMBLED.

Again, Hearn from the text a man cannot become a Christian until he is unhorsed. The trouble is, we want to ride into the kingdom of God just as the knight rode into castle gate on palfrey, beautifully caparisoned. We want to come into the kingdom of God in fine style. No kneeling down at the altar, no sitting on "anxious seats," no crying over sin, no begging at the door of God's mercy. Clear the road and let us come in all prancing in the pride of our soul. No, we will never get into heaven that way. We must dismount.

There is no knight errantry in religion, no fringed trappings of repentance, but an utter prostration before God, a going down in the dust, with the cry, "Unclean, unclean!"-a bewailing of the soul, going down in the dust until Christ shall by his grace lift us up as he lifted man, riding on with government docu- Paul. Oh, proud hearted hearer, you must get off that horse! May a light from the throne of God brighter than the sun throw you! Come down into the dust and cry for pardon and life and heaven.

Again, I learn from this scene of the text that the grace of God can overcome boys at the same time in different villages, and Paul's antipathy to Christ was increasing. He hated everything about Christ. He was going down then with writs in his pockets to have Christ's disciples arrested. He was not going as a sheriff goes to arrest a man against whom he had no spite, but Paul was going down to arrest those people because he was glad to arrest them.

The Bible says, "He breathed out slaughter." He wanted them captured, and he wanted them butchered. I hear the click and clash and clatter of the come a Christian? Yes! There is a voice from heaven like a thunderclap uttering two words, the second word the same as the first, but uttered with more emphasis, so that the proud equestrian may have no doubt as to who is meant: "Saul! Saulf" That man was saved, and he was a persecutor, and so God can by his grace overcome any persecutor.

STILL SOME PRISECUTION. The days of sword and fire for Christians seem to lare gone by. The bayonets of Napoleon I pried open the "in-quisition" and let the rotting wretches out. The ancient dungeons around Rome are today mere curiosities for the travelers. The Coliceum, where wild beasts used to suck up the life of the martyrs while the emperor watched and Lolia Paulina sat with emerald adornments hands as the Christians died under the had been a sham and pretense, would be not have pricked the bubble? He was a

secution ceased? No. Are you not cari- overwhelmed, I say there must have catored for your religion? In proportion as you try to serve God and be faithful to him, are you not sometimes maltreated?

That woman finds it hard to be a Chrisfamily arrayed against her - father, mother, brother and sister making her the target of ridicule. That young man finds it hard to be a Christian in the shop or factory or store when his comrades jeer at him because he will not go to the gambling hell or other places of iniquity.

Oh, no, the days of persecution have not ceased and will not until the end of the world. But oh, you persecuted ones, is it not time that you began to pray for your persecutors? They are no prouder, no fiercer, no more set in their way than was this persecutor of the text. He fell. They will fall if Christ from the heavens grandly and gloriously looks out on them. God can by his grace make a Renan believe in the divinity of Jesus and a Tyndall in the worth of prayer.

Robert Newton stamped the ship's deck in derisive indignation at Christianity only a little while before he became a Christian. "Out of my house," said a father to his daughter, "if you will keep praying." Yet before many months passed the father knelt at the same altar with the child. And the Lord Jesus Christ is willing to look out from heaven upon that derisive opponent of the Christian religion and address him, not in glittering generalities, but calling him by name: "John! George! Henry!-Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" HOPE FOR THE WORST,

Again, I learn from this subject that there is hope for the worst offenders. It was particularly outrageous that Saul should have gone to Damascus on that errand. Jesus Christ had been dead only three years, and the story of his kindness, and his generosity, and his love filled all the air. It was not an old story, as it is now. It was a new story. Jesus had only three summers ago been in these very places, and Saul every day in Jerusalem must have met people who knew Christ, people with good eyesight whom Jesus had cured of blindness, people who had been dead and who had been resurrected by the Saviour, and people who could tell Paul all the particulars of the crucifixion-just how Jesus looked in the last hour, just how the heavens grew black in the face at the torture.

He heard that recited every day by people who were acquainted with all the circumstances, and yet in the fresh memory of that scene he goes to persecute Christ's disciples, impatient at the time it takes to feed the horses at the inn, not pulling at the snaffle, but riding with the chief of sinners! No outbreak of murderer. He stood by when Stephen died and helped in the execution of that good man.

When the rabble wanted to be unimpeded in their work of destroying Stephbut did not dare to lay them down lest to death? He deserved to die miserably, wretchedly and forever, notwithstanding all his metaphysics, and his eloquence,

THE CHIEF OF SINNERS.

He was the chief of sinners. He said it will you. If there is any man in this saved and says, "I have wandered very grievously from God; I do not believe there is any hope for me," I tell you the there is any hope for me," I tell you the story of this man in the text who was brought to Jesus Christ in spite of his dence. Only 50 cts a mouth. By mail brought to Jesus Christ in spite of his sins and opposition. There may be some here who are as stoutly opposed to Christ as Paul was. There may be some here who are captive of their sins as much so as the young man who said in regard to his dissipating habits: "I will keep on with them. I know I am breaking my mother's heart, and I know I am killing myself, and I know that when I die I shall go to hell, but it is now too late to

The steed on which you ride may be swifter and stronger and higher mettled than that on which the Cilician persecutor rode, but Christ can catch it by the bridle and hurl it back and hurl it down. There is mercy for you who say you are too bad to be saved. You say you have put off the matter so long; Paul had neglected it a great while. You say that the sin you have committed has been among the most aggravating circumstances; that was so with

You say you have exasperated Christ Paul's. and coaxed your own ruin; so did Paul. And yet he sits today on one of the highest of the heavenly thrones, and there is mercy for you, and good days for you, and gladness for you, if you will only take the same Christ which first threw him down and then raised him up. It seems to me as if I can see Paul today rising up from the highway to Damas-cus, and brushing off the dust from his cloak, and wiping the sweat of excite-ment from his brow, as he turns to us and all the ages, saying, "This a faith-ful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

THE SUBLIME REALITY. Once more, I learn from this subject that there is a tremendous reality in religion. If it had been a mere optical delusion on the road to Damascus, was not Paul just the man to find it out? If it Again, I learn from the subject that the religion of Christia not a pusillantimous thing. People in this day try to have gone by. But has the day of per-

been something in it. And, my dear brother, you will find that there is some thing in religion somewhere. The only question is, Where?

There was a man who rode from Stamhours. Very swift. But there are those here-aye, all of us are speeding on at tenfold that velocity, at a thousandfold that rate, toward eternity, May Almighty God, from the opening heavens, flash upon your soul this bour the question of your eternal destiny, and oh, that Jesus would this hour overcome you with his pardoning mercy as he stands here with the pathos of a broken heart and sobs into your ear: "I have come for thee. I come with my back raw from the beating. I come with my feet mangled with the nails. I come with my brow aching from the twisted bramble I come with my heart bursting for your woes. I can stand it no longer. I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

A Traveler's Tale.

It was in a first class carriage, and the assengers, throwing off all cold reserve, had been beguiling the journey with pleasant conversation. One man in particular, whose bronzed and sun burned features told of long sojourns in foreign lands, had kept them all interested with his anecdotes and stories of far distant

"Yes, gentlemen," said he, "there is nothing like travel to expand the mind. You see so many sights that are novel and have so many strange experiences that a foreign tour is an education in itself. Now, I don't suppose, for instance, that many of you gentlemen have ever seen a beet root putting on a waistcoat.' The company sat up, staring in surprise.

"Seen a beet root putting on a waist coat? No, we certainly have not." "Nor a lettuce donning a pair of trou

SETS?" "No." "Nor a pile of mustard and cress getting into a shooting jacket?"

"No." "Nor a spring onion fixing on its tie

and collar?" "No, not even that."

"Well, gentlemen," said the traveler as the train drew up in the station and he prepared to escape, "you may believe me or believe me not, as you like. But several times in my wanderings I have seen with my own eyes not only a beet root, or a lettuce, or an onion, but a whole salad dressing."-London Tit-Bits.

Egypt Ever the Same.

The characters in the "Thousand and One Nights" may be almost imagined to step out of their setting words and to take form and glow with the generous loose rein faster and faster. Oh, he was warmth of life before one's very eyes. The natives still drink the same coffee modesty when he said that. He was a and out of the same cups; they smoke the same pipes; they wear generally the same dress; they play the same primitive instruments that whisper the same strange and plaintive tones; the funeral processions wend their way along the streets as en and wanted to take off their coats, of old; the popular festivals or modlids are still observed with the same untiring they be stolen, Paul said, "I'll take care capacity for enjoyment; the public reof the coats," and they put them down citers still practice their profession beat the feet of Paul, and he watched the fore admiring crowds; the water carriers coats, and he watched the horrid man- still carry their burdens so welcome to gling of glorious Stephen. Is it a wonder the thirsty lips; except in the houses of that when he fell from the horse he did the rich and thoroughly Europeanized, not break his neck-that his foot did not the food is still eaten with the fingers catch somewhere in the trappings of the and in the same manner, and the hands saddle, and he was not dragged and kicked are washed in the same basins and ewers; the mosque of El-Azhar still attracts its crowds of students.

Even the old wooden locks and keys are still in use, and the water jars are still kept cool in the lattice work of the overhanging mushrabiyeh window frames. what was true when he said that. And Instances of this sort might be multiplied If you want a fine DRESS SHOE, made in the latest styles, den't pay \$6 to \$8, try my \$3, \$3.50, \$4.00 or \$5 Shoe. They fit equal to custom made and took and wear as well. If you wish to economize in your footwear, do so by purchasing W. L. Dougias Shues. Hame and price stamped on the bottom, look for it when you buy W. L. DOUGLAS, Brocktom, Mass. Sold by yet the grace of God saved him, and so a hundrodfold. It is indeed a wonderful change and contrast that is presented to house who thinks he is too bad to be the eye when you leave the European and enter the native quarter.—Gentleman's Magazine.

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