FAINT YET PURSUING

GRAND ACHIEVEMENTS MADE UNDER NATURAL DISADVANTAGES.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Preaches an Eloquent Sermon at Nashville—His Picturesque Text Spiritual Encouragement For the Weak and Humble—A Breezy Discourse.

NASHVILLE, Dec. 17.—Rev. Dr. Talmage, who is now in this city on his western lecture tour, selected as his topic for today a text full of spiritual encouragement for those who labor under disadvantage in the struggle of life. The text chosen was Isaiah xxxiii, 23, "The lame take the prey."

The utter demolition of the Assyrian host was here predicted. Not only robust men should go forth and gather the spoils of conquest, but even men crippled of arm and crippled of foot should go out and capture much that was valuable. Their physical disadvantages should not hinder their great enrichment. So it has been in the past; so it is now; so it will be in the future. So it is in all departments. Men laboring under seemingly great disadvantages and amid the most unfavorable circumstances, yet making grand achievements, getting great blessing for themselves, great blessing for the world, great blessing for the church, and so "the lame take the prey."

CASES IN POINT.

Do you know that the three great poets of the world were totally blind—Homer, Ossian, John Milton? Do you know that Mr. Prescott, who wrote that enchanting book, "The Conquest of Mexico," never saw Mexico, could not even see the paper on which he was writing? A framework across the sheet, between which, up and down, went the pen immortal. Do you know that Gambassio, the sculptor, could not see the marble before him or the chisel with which he cut it into shapes bewitching? Do you know that Alexander Pope, whose poems will last as long as the English language, was so much of an invalid that he had to be sewed up every morning in rough canvas in order to stand on his feet at all?

Do you know that Stuart, the celebrated painter, did much of his wonderful work under the shadow of the dungeon where he had been unjustly imprisioned for debt? Do you know that Demosthenes, by almost superhuman exertion, first had to conquer the lisp of his own speech before he conquered assemblages with his eloquence? Do you know that Bacon struggled all through innumerable sicknesses, and that Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott went limping on clubfoot through all their life, and that many of the great poets and painters and orators and historians and heroes of the world had something to keep them back, and pull them down, and impede their way, and cripple their physical or their intellectual movement, and yet that they pushed on and pushed up until they reached the spoils of worldly success, and amid the huzza of nations and centuries "the lame took the prey."

You know that a vast multitude of these men started under the disadvantage of obscure parentage—Columbus, the son of the weaver; Ferguson, the astronomer, the son of the shepherd. America the prey of the one; worlds on worlds the prey of the other. But what is true in secular directions is more true in spiritual and religious directions, and I proceed to prove it.

There are in all communities many invalids. They never know a well day. They adhere to their occupations, but they go panting along the streets with exhaustions, and at eventime they lie down on the lounge with achings beyond all medicaments. They have tried all prescriptions, they have gone through all the cures which were proclaimed infallible, and they have come now to surrender to perpetual ailments. They consider they are among many disadvantages; and when they see those who are buoyant in health pass by, they almost envy their robust frames and easy respiration.

But I have noticed among that invalid class those who have the greatest knowledge of the Bible, who are in nearest intimacy with Jesus Christ, who have the most glowing experiences of the truth, who have had the most remarkable answers to prayer and who have most exhilarant anticipations of heaven. The temptations which weary us who are in robust health they have conquered.

"THE LAME TAKE THE PREY."

Many who are alert and athletic and swarthy loiter in the way—"the lame take the prey." Robert Hall an invalid, Edward Payson an invalid, Richard Baxter an invalid, Samuel Rutherford an invalid. This morning, when you want to call to mind those who are most Christlike, you think of some darkened room in your father's house from which there went forth an influence potent for eternity.

A step farther: Through raised letters the art of printing has been brought to the attention of the blind.

You take up the Bible for the blind, and you close your eyes, and you run your fingers over the raised letters and you say: "Why, I never could get any information in this way. What a slow, lumbrous way of reading! God help the blind!"

And yet I find among that class of persons, among the blind, the deaf and the dumb, the most thorough acquaintance with God's word. Shut out from all other sources of information, no sooner does their hand touch the raised letters than they gather a prayer. Without eyes, they look off upon the kingdoms of God's love. Without hearing, they catch the minstrelsy of the skies. Dumb, yet with pencil, or with irradiated countenance, they declare the glory of God.

A large audience assembled in New York at the anniversary of the Deaf and Dumb asylum, and one of the visitors with chalk on the blackboard wrote this question to the pupils, "Do you not find it very hard to be deaf and dumb?" And one of the pupils took the chalk and wrote on the blackboard this sublime sentence in answer, "When the song of the angels shall burst upon our enraptured ear, we will scarce regret that our ears were never marred with earthly sounds." Oh, the brightest eyes in heaven will be those that never saw on earth. The ears most alert in heaven will be those that in this world heard neither voice of friend nor thrum of harp nor carol of bird nor doxology of congregations.

A lad who had been blind from infancy was cured. The oculist operated upon the lad and then put a very heavy bandage over the eyes, and after a few weeks had gone by the bandage was removed and the mother said to her child, "Willie, can you see?" He said, "Oh, mamma, is this heaven?" The contrast between the darkness before and the brightness afterward was overwhelming. And I tell you the glories of heaven will be a thousandfold brighter for those who never saw anything on earth. While many with good vision closed their eyes in eternal night, and many who had a good, artistic and cultured ear went down into eternal discord, these afflicted ones cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he made their sorrows their advantage, and so "the lame took the prey."

In the seventh century there was a legend of St. Modobert. It was said that his mother was blind, and one day while looking at his mother he felt so sympathetic for her blindness that he rushed forward and kissed her blind eyes, and the legend says her vision came immediately. That was only a legend, but it is a truth, a glorious truth, that the kiss of God's eternal love has brought to many a blind eye eternal illumination.

HOPES OF THE FUTURE.

A step farther: There are those in all communities who toil mightily for a livelihood. They have scant wages. Perhaps they are diseased or have physical infirmities, so they are hindered from doing a continuous day's work. A city missionary finds them up the dark alley, with no fire, with thin clothing, with very coarse bread. They never ride in the street car; they cannot afford the 5 cents. They never see any pictures save those in the show window on the street, from which they are often jostled and looked at by some one who seems to say in the look: "Move on! What are you doing here looking at pictures?"

Yet many of them live on mountains of transfiguration. At their rough table he who fed the 5,000 breaks the bread. They talk often of the good times that are coming. This world has no charm for them, but heaven entrances their spirit. They often divide their scant crust with some forlorn wretch who knocks at their door at night, and on the blast of the night wind, as the door opens to let them in, is heard the voice of him who said, "I was hungry, and he fed me." No cohort of heaven will be too bright to transport them. By God's help they have vanquished the Assyrian host. They have divided among them the spoils. Lame, lame, yet they took the prey.

MORE CASES IN POINT.

I was riding along the country road one day, and I saw a man on crutches. I overtook him. He was very old. He was going very slowly. At that rate it would have taken him two hours to go a mile. I said, "Wouldn't you like to ride?" He said: "Thank you, I would. God bless you." When he sat beside me, he said: "You see, I am very lame and very old, but the Lord has been a good Lord to me. I have buried all my children. The Lord gave them and the Lord had a right to take them away. Blessed be his name! I was very sick, and I had no money, and my neighbors came in and took care of me, and I wanted nothing. I suffer a great deal with pain, but then I have so many mercies left. The Lord has been a good Lord to me."

And before we had got far I was in doubt whether I was giving him a ride or he was giving me a ride! He said: "Now, if you please, I'll get out here. Just help me down on my crutches, if you please. God bless you. Thank you, sir. Good morning. Good morning. You have been feet to the lame, sir, you have. Good morning."

Swarthy men had gone the road that day. I do not know where they came out, but every hobble of that old man was toward the shining gate. With his old crutch he had struck down many a Sennacherib of temptation which has mastered you and me. Lame, so fearfully lame, so awfully lame, but he took the prey.

A step farther: There are in all communities many orphans. During our last war and in the years immediately following, how many children at the north and south we heard say, "Oh, my father was killed in the war." Have you ever noticed—I fear you have not—how well those children have turned out? Starting under the greatest disadvantage, no orphan asylum could do for them what their father would have done had he lived.

The skirmisher sat one night by the light of fagots in the swamp, writing a letter home, when a sharpshooter's bullet ended the letter which was never folded, never posted and never read. Those children came up under great disadvantage. No father to fight their way for them. Perhaps there was in the old family Bible an old yellow letter pasted fast, which told the story of that father's long march and how he suffered in the hospital. But they looked still farther on in the Bible, and they came to the story of how God is the father of the fatherless and the widow's portion, and they soon took their father's place in that household.

They battled the way for their mother. They came on up, and many of them have already, in the years since the war, taken positions in church and state, north and south. While many of those who suffered nothing during those times have had sons go out into lives of indolence and vagabondage, these who started under so many disadvantages because they were so early bereft, these are the lame who took the prey.

A step farther: There are those who would like to do good. They say, "Oh, if I only had wealth, or if I had eloquence, or if I had high social position, how much I would accomplish for God and the church!" I stand here today to tell you that you have great opportunities for usefulness.

Who built the pyramids? The king who ordered them built? No; the plain workmen who added stone after stone and stone after stone. Who built the dikes of Holland? The government that ordered the enterprise? No; the plain workmen who carried the earth and rang their trowels on the wall. Who are those that built these vast cities? The capitalists? No; the carpenters, the masons, the plumbers, the plasterers, the tinners, the roofers, dependent on a day's wages for a livelihood. And so in the great work of assuaging human suffering and enlightening human ignorance and halting human iniquity. In that great work, the chief part is to be done by ordinary men, with ordinary speech, in an ordinary manner, and by ordinary means.

The trouble is that in the army of Christ we all want to be captains and colonels and brigadier generals. We are not willing to march with the rank and file and do duty with the private soldier. We want to belong to the reserve corps and read about the battle while warming ourselves at the campfires or on furlough at home, our feet upon an ottoman, we sagging back into an armchair.

As you go down the street you see an excavation, and four or five men are working and perhaps 20 or 30 leaning on the rail looking over at them. That is the way it is in the church of God today. Where you find one Christian hard at work, there are 50 men watching the job.

Oh! my friends, why do you not go to work and preach the gospel? You say, "I have no pulpit." You have. It may be the carpenter's bench, it may be the mason's wall. The robe in which you are to proclaim this gospel may be a shoemaker's apron. But woe unto you if you preach not this gospel somewhere, somehow! If this world is ever brought to Christ it will be through the unanimous and long continued efforts of men who, waiting for no special endowment, consecrate to God what they have. Among the most useless people in the world are men with 10 talents, while many a one with only two talents, or no talent at all, is doing a great work, and so "the lame take the prey."

There are thousands of ministers of whom you have never heard—in log cabins at the west, in mission chapels at the east—who are warring against the legions of darkness, successfully warring. Tract distributers, month by month undermining the citadels of sin. You do not know their going or their coming, but the footfalls of their ministry are heard in the palaces of heaven. Who are the workers in our Sabbath schools throughout this land today? Men celebrated, men brilliant, men of vast estate? For the most part, not that at all.

I have noticed that the chief characteristic of the most of those who are successful in the work is that they know their Bibles, are earnest in prayer, are anxious for the salvation of the young, and Sabbath by Sabbath are willing to sit down unobserved and tell of Christ and the resurrection. These are the humble workers who are recruiting the great army of Christian youth—not by might, not by power, not by profound argument, not by brilliant antithesis, but by the blessing of God on plain talk, and humble story, and silent tear, and anxious look, "the lame take the prey."

Oh! this work of saving the youth of our country—how few appreciate what it is! This generation tramping on to the grave—we will soon all be gone. What of the next?

NOT TALENTS, BUT EFFORT.

An engineer on a locomotive going across the western prairies day after day saw a little child come out in front of a cabin and wave to him. So he got in the habit of waving back to the little child, and it was the day's joy to him to see this little one come out in front of the cabin door and wave to him while he answered back.

One day the train was belated and it came on to the dusk of the evening. As the engineer stood at his post he saw by the headlight that little girl on the track, wondering why the train did not come, looking for the train, knowing nothing of her peril. A great horror seized upon the engineer. He reversed the engine. He gave it in charge of the other man on board, and then he climbed over the engine, and he came down on the cowcatcher. He said, though he had reversed the engine, it seemed as though it were going at lightning speed, faster and faster, though it was really slowing up, and with almost supernatural clutch he caught that child by the hair and lifted it up, and when the train stopped and the passengers gathered around to see what was the matter, there the old engineer lay, fainted dead away, the little child alive and in his swarthy arms.

"Oh," you say, "that was well done." But I want you to exercise some kindness and some appreciation toward those in the community who are snatching the little ones from under the wheels of temptation and sin—snatching them from under thundering rail trains of eternal disaster, bringing them up into respectability in this world and into glory for the world to come. You appreciate what the engineer did. Why can you not appreciate the grander work done by every Sabbath school teacher and by every Christian worker?

Oh, my friends, I want to impress upon myself and upon yourselves that it is not the number of talents we possess, but the use we make of them.

God has a royal family in the world. Now, if I should ask, "Who are the royal families of history?" you would say, "House of Hapsburg, House of Stuart, House of Bourbon." They lived in palaces and had great equipage. But who are the Lord's royal family? Some of them may serve you in the household, some of them are in unlighted garrets, some of them will walk this afternoon down the street, on their arm a basket of broken food; some of them are in the almshouse, despised and rejected of men; yet in the last great day, while it will be found that some of us who fared sumptuously every day are hurled back into discomfiture, they are the lame that will take the prey.

One step farther: There are a great many people discouraged about getting to heaven. At my desk in The Christian Herald office I am in daily receipt of numerous letters from people brought up in good families, and who had Christian parentage, but who frankly tell me that they are astray a thousand miles from the right track and fear their case is hopeless. My brothers, it is to you I want to preach now. I have been looking for you. I will tell you how you got astray. It was not maliciousness on your part. It was perhaps through the geniality and sociality of your nature that you fell into sin. You wandered away from your duty; you unconsciously left the house of God; you admit the gospel to be true, and yet you have so grievously and so prolongedly wandered you say rescue is impossible.

It would take a week to count up the names of those in heaven who were on earth worse than you tell me you are. They went the whole round of iniquity; they disgraced themselves; they disgraced their household; they despaired of return because their reputation was gone; their property was gone; everything was gone. But in some hour like this they heard the voice of God, and they threw themselves on the divine compassion, and they rose up more than conquerors. And I tell you there is the same chance for you. That is one reason why I like to preach this gospel, so free a gospel, so tremendous a gospel. It takes a man all wrong and makes him all right.

In a former settlement where I preached, a member of my congregation quit the house of God, quit respectable circles, went into all styles of sin, and was slain of his iniquity. The day for his burial came, and his body was brought to the house of God. Some of his comrades who had destroyed him were overheard along the street, on their way to the burial, saying, "Come, let us go and hear Talmage damn this old sinner!" Oh! I had nothing but tears for the dead, and I had nothing but invitations to the living. You see, I could not do otherwise. "Christ Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost." Christ in his dying prayer said, "Father, forgive them," and that was a prayer for you and a prayer for me.

A PERSONAL APPEAL.

Oh, start on the road to heaven today. You are not happy. The thirst of your soul will never be slaked by the fountains of sin. You turn everywhere but to God for help. Right where you are, call on him. He knows you; he knows all about you. He knows all the odds against which you have been contending in life. Do not go to him with a long rigmarole of a prayer, but just look up and say, "Help! Help!"

Yet you say, "My hand trembles so from my dissipations, I can't even take hold of a hymn book to sing." Do not worry about that, my brother; I will give out a hymn at the close so familiar you can sing it without a book. But you say, "I have such terrible habits on me, I can't get rid of them." My answer is, Almighty grace can break up that habit and will break it up. But you say, "The wrong I did was to one dead and in heaven now, and I can't correct that wrong." You can correct it. By the grace of God, go into the presence of that one, and the apologies you ought to have made on earth make in heaven.

"Oh," says some man, "if I should try to do right, if I should turn away from my evildoing unto the lord, I would be jostled, I would be driven back, nobody would have any sympathy for me." You are mistaken. Here, in the presence of the church on earth and in heaven, I give you today the right hand of Christian fellowship. God sent me here today to preach this, and he sent you here to hear this: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thought, and let him return unto the Lord, who will have mercy, and unto our God, who will abundantly pardon."

Though you may have been the worst sinner you may become the best saint, and in the great day of judgment it will be found that "where sin abounded grace does much more abound," and while the spoils of an everlasting kingdom are being awarded for your pursuit it will be found that "the lame took the prey." Blessed be God that we are this Sabbath one week nearer the obliteration of all the inequalities of this life and all its disquietudes.

Years ago, on a boat on the North river, the pilot gave a very sharp ring to the bell for the boat to slow up. The engineer attended to the machinery, and then he came up with some alarm on deck to see what was the matter. He saw it was a moonlight night and there were no obstacles in the way. He went to the pilot and said: "Why did you ring the bell in that way? Why do you want to stop? There's nothing the matter." And the pilot said to him, "There is a mist gathering on the river; don't you see that? and there is night gathering darker and darker, and I can't see the way."

Then the engineer, looking around and seeing it was a bright moonlight, looked into the face of the pilot and saw that he was dying, and then that he was dead. God grant that when our last moment comes we may be found at our post doing our whole duty. And when the mists of the river of death gather on our eyelids may the good Pilot take the wheel from our hands and guide us into the calm harbor of eternal rest!

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Leaves Yaquina, Nov. 9th, 19th, and 28th.
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East and South
—VIA—
THE SHASTA ROUTE
—of the—
Southern Pacific Company.
CALIFORNIA EXPRESS TRAIN—RUN DAILY BETWEEN PORTLAND AND S. F.

South.				North.
6:15 p. m.	Lv.	Portland	Ar.	8:30 a. m
10:16 p. m.	Lv.	Salem	Lv.	4:50 a. m
10:15 a. m.	Ar.	San Fran.	Lv.	7:00 p. m

Above trains stop at all stations from Portland to Albany inclusive; also at Tangent Shedd, Halsey, Harrisburg, Junction City, Irving, Eugene and all stations from Roseburg to Ashland inclusive.
ROSEBURG MAIL DAILY.

8:30 a. m.	Lv.	Portland	Ar.	4:40 p. m.
11:17 a. m	Lv.	Salem	Lv.	1:40 p. m.
50 p. m.	Ar.	Roseburg	Lv.	7:00 a. m

Dining Cars on Ogden Route
PULLMAN BUFFET SLEEPERS
—AND—
Second Class Sleeping Cars.
Attached to all through trains.
West Side Division, Between Portland and Corvallis:
DAILY—(EXCEPT SUNDAY).

7:00 a. m.	Lv.	Portland	Ar.	5:05 p. m.
12:15 p. m.	Ar.	Corvallis	Lv.	1:00 p. m.

At Albany and Corvallis connect with trains of Oregon Pacific Railroad.
EXPRESS TRAIN—(DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAY)

4:00 p. m.	Lv.	Portland	Ar.	8:25 a. m
7:35 p. m.	Ar.	McMinnville	Lv.	5:15 a. m

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