

# DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

## Secret Societies.

"Discover not a secret to another."—Prov. 25: 9.

It appears that in Solomon's time, as in all subsequent periods of the world, there were people too much disposed to tell all they knew. It was blab, blab, blab; physicians revealing the case of their patients, lawyers exposing the private affairs of their clients, neighbors advertising the faults of the next-door resident; pretended friends

## RETAYING CONFIDENCES.

One half of the trouble of every community comes from the fact that so many people have not capacity to keep their mouths shut. When I hear something disparaging of you, my first duty is not to tell you. But if I tell you what somebody has said against you, and then go out and tell everybody else what I told you, and they go out and tell others what I told them that I told you, and we all go out, some to hunt up the originator of the story and others to hunt it down, we shall get the whole community talking about what you did and what you did not do. There will be as many secrets taken as there was a band of Mochaes had swept upon a helpless village. We have two ears but only one tongue.

## A PHYSIOLOGICAL SUGGESTION

that we ought to hear a good deal more than we tell. Let us join a conspiracy that we will tell each other all the good and nothing of the ill, and then there will not be such awful need of sermons on Solomon's words, "Discover not a secret to another."

Solomon had a very large domestic circle. In his earlier days he had very confused notions about monogamy and polygamy, and his multitudinous associates in the matrimonial state kept him too well informed as to what was going on in Jerusalem. They gathered up all the privacies and poured them into his ear, and

## HIS FAMILY BECAME A SORORITY

or female debating society of seven hundred, discussing day after day all the difficulties between husbands and wives, between employers and employees, between rulers and subjects, until Solomon, in my text, deprecates volubly about affairs that do not belong to us, and extols the virtue of secretiveness.

By the power of a secret divulged, families, churches, neighborhoods, nations, fly apart. By the power of a secret kept, great charities, socialities, reformatory movements, and Christian enterprises may be advanced.

## MEN ARE GREGARIOUS

—cattle in herds, fish in schools, birds in flocks, men in social circles. You may by the discharge of a gun scatter a flock of quails, or by the plunge of the anchor send apart the denizens of the sea, but they will gather themselves together again. If you by some new power could break the associations in which men now stand, they would again adhere. God meant it so. He has gathered all the flowers and shrubs into associations. You may plant one forget-me-not or heart's-ease alone, away off upon the hill-side, but it will soon hunt up some other forget-me-not or heart's-ease. Plants love company. You will find them talking to each other in the dew.

You sometimes see a man with no out-branchings of sympathy. His nature is cold and hard like a ship's mast ice-lazled, which the most agile sailor could never climb. Others have a thousand roots and a thousand branches. Innumerable tendrils climb their hearts, and blossom all the way up, and the fowls of heaven sing in the branches. In consequence of this tendency we find

## PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER

in tribes, in communities, in churches, in societies. Some gather together to cultivate the arts, some to plan for the welfare of the State, some to discuss religious themes, some to kindle their faith, some to advance their craft. No every active community is divided into associations of artists, of merchants, of bookbinders, of carpenters, of masons, of plasterers, of shipwrights, of plumbers. Do you cry out against it? Then you cry out against a tendency divinely implanted. Your tirades would accomplish no more than if you should preach to a busy ant-hill a long sermon against secret societies.

Here we find the oft-discussed question whether associations that do their

## WORK WITH CLOSED DOORS

and admit their members by passwords, and greet each other with a secret grip, are right or wrong. I answer that it depends entirely on the nature of the object for which they meet. Is it to pass the hours in revelry, was-sail, blasphemy, and obscene talk, or to plot trouble to the State, or to debauch the innocent, then I say with an emphasis that no man can mistake. No! But is the object the defence of the rights of any class against oppression, the improvement of the mind, the enlargement of the heart, the advancement of art, the defence of the Government, the extirpation of crime, or the kindling of a pure-hearted society, then I say, with just as much emphasis, Yes.

There is no need that we who plan for the conquest of right over wrong should publish to all the world our intentions. The general of an army never sends to the opposing troops information of the coming attack. Shall we who have enlisted in the cause of God and humanity expose our plans to the enemy? No! we will in secret plot the ruin of all the enterprises of Satan and his cohorts. When they expect us by day we will fall upon them by night. While they are strengthening their left wing we will fall on their right. By a plan of battle formed

## IN SECRET CONCLAVE

we will come suddenly upon them crying, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Secrecy of plot and execution are wrong only when the object and ends are nefarious. Every family is a secret society, every business firm, and every banking and insurance institution. Those men who have no capacity to keep a secret are unfit for

positions of trust anywhere. There are thousands of men whose vital need is culturing a capacity to keep a secret. Men talk too much, and women too. There is a time to keep silence as well as a time to speak.

Although not belonging to any of the great secret societies of which there have been so much violent discussion, I have only words of praise for those associations which have for their object the maintenance of right against wrong, or the reclamation of inebriates, or like the score of mutual benefit societies called by different names, that provide temporary relief for widows and orphans, and for men incapacitated by sickness or accident from earning a livelihood. Had it not been for the

## SECRET LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

in this country monopoly would long ago have, under its ponderous wheels, ground the laboring classes into an intolerable servitude. The men who want the whole earth to themselves would have got it before this had it not been for the banding together of great secret organizations. And while we deplore many things that have been done by them, their existence is a necessity, and their legitimate sphere distinctly pointed out by the providence of God. Such organizations are trying to dismiss from their association all members in favor of anarchy and social chaos. They will gradually cease anything like tyranny over their members, and will forbid violent interference with any man's work, whether he belongs to their union or is outside of it, and will declare their disgust with any such rule as that passed in England by the Manchester Bricklayers' Association, which says any man found running or working beyond a regular speed shall be fined two shillings and sixpence for the first offence, five shillings for the second, ten shillings for the third, and if still persisting, shall be dealt with as the committee think proper.

## GREEK LETTER SOCIETIES.

There are secret societies in our colleges that have letters of the Greek alphabet for their nomenclature, and their members are at the very front of scholarship and irreproachable in morals, while there are others the scene of carousal, and they gamble, and they drink, and they graduate knowing a hundred times more about sin than they do of geometry and Sophocles. In other words, secret societies, like individuals, are good or bad, are the means of moral health or of temporal and eternal damnation. All good people recognize the vice of slandering an individual, but many do not see the sin of slandering an organization. There

## OLD SECRET SOCIETIES

are in this and other countries, some of them centuries old, which have been widely denounced as immoral and damaging in their influence; yet I have hundreds of personal friends who belong to them, friends who are consecrated to God, pillars in the church, faithful in all relations of life, examples of virtue and piety. They are the kind of friends whom I would have for my executors if I am so happy as to leave anything for my household at the time of my decease, and they are the men whom I would have carry me out to the last sleep when I am dead. You cannot make me believe that they would belong to bad institutions. They are the men who would stamp on anything iniquitous, and I would certainly rather take their testimony in regard to such societies than the testimony of those who, having been sworn in as members, by their assault upon them confess themselves perjurers.

One of these secret societies gave for the relief of the sick in 1873, in this country, \$1,400,274. Some of these societies have poured a very heaven of sunshine and benediction into the home of suffering. Several of them are founded on fidelity to good citizenship and the Bible. I have never taken one of their degrees. They might give me the grip a thousand times, and I would not recognize it. I am ignorant of their pass-words, and I must judge entirely from the outside. But

## CHRIST HAS GIVEN US A RULE

by which we may judge not only all individuals, but all societies, secret and open. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Bad societies make bad men. Good societies make good men. A bad man will not stay in a good society. A good man will not stay in a bad society. Then try all secret societies by two or three rules.

## TEST THE FIRST:

Their influence on home, if you have a home. That wife soon loses her influence over her husband who nervously and foolishly looks upon all evening absence as an assault on domesticity. How are the great enterprises of reform, art and literature and beneficence and public weal to be carried on if every man is to have his front bounded on one side by his front door-step, and on the other side by his back window, knowing nothing higher than his own attic or lower than his own cellar? That wife who becomes jealous of her husband's attention to art or literature or religion or charity is breaking her own sceptre of conjugal power. I know an instance where a wife thought that her husband was giving too many nights to Christian service, to charitable service, to prayer-meetings, and to religious convocation. She systematically decoyed him away, until now he attends no church, waits upon no charitable institution, and is on a rapid way to destruction, his morals gone, his money gone, and I fear, his soul gone. Let any Christian wife rejoice when her husband consecrates evenings to the service of humanity, and of God or anything elevating. But

## LET NO MAN SACRIFICE HOME

life to secret society life, as many do. I can point out to you a great many names of men who are guilty of this sacrifice. They are as general as angels at the society room, and as ugly as sin at home. They are generous on all subjects of wine suppers, yachts, and fast horses, but they are stingy about the wives' dresses and the children's shoes. That man has made that which might be a beautiful influence, a usurper of his affections, and he has married it, and he is guilty of moral bigamy. Under this process the wife, whatever her features, becomes uninteresting and home-

ly. He becomes critical of her, does not like the dress, does not like the way she arranges her hair, is amazed that he ever was so unromantic as to offer her hand and heart. There are secret societies where membership always involves domestic shipwreck. Tell me that a man has joined a certain kind, and tell me nothing more about him for ten years, and I will write his history if he be still alive. The man is a wine-guzzler, his wife broken-hearted or prematurely old, his fortune gone, and his home a mere name in a directory.

## A SUGGESTED RATIO

Here are six secular nights in the week. "What shall I do with them?" says the father and the husband. "I will give four of these nights to the improvement and entertainment of my family, either at home or in good neighborhood school. I will devote one to charitable institutions. I will devote one to my lodge." I congratulate you. Here is a man who says, "Out of the six secular nights of the week I will devote five to lodges and clubs and associations, and one to the home, which night I will spend in scowling like a Maroh squall, wishing I was out spending it as I have spent the other five." That man's obituary is written. Not one out of ten thousand that ever sets so far on the wrong road ever stops. Gradually his health will fall through late hours, and through too much stimulants he will be first-rate prey for erysipelas and rheumatism of the heart. The doctor coming in will at a glance see it is not only present disease he must fight, but years of fast living. The clergyman, for the sake of the feelings of the family, on the funeral day will only talk in religious generalities. The men who got his yacht in the eternal rapids will not be at the obsequies. They have pressing engagements that day. They will send flowers to the coffin, will send their wives to utter words of sympathy, but they will have engagements elsewhere. They never come. Bring me mallet and chisel, and I will cut

## THAT MAN'S EPIITAPH:

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." "No," you say, "that would not be appropriate." "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." "No," you say, "that would not be appropriate." Then give me the mallet and chisel, and I will cut an honest epitaph: "Here lies the victim of dissipating associations!"

Another test by which you can find whether your secret society is right or wrong is the effect it has on your secular occupation. I can understand how through such an institution a man can reach commercial success. I know some men have formed their best business relations through such a channel. If the secret society has advantaged you in an honorable calling it is a good one. But has your credit failed? Are bargain-makers now more anxious how they trust you with a bale of goods? Have the men whose names were down in the commercial agency a I before they entered the society, been going down since in commercial standing? They look out. You and I every day know of commercial establishments going to ruin through the social excesses of one or two members, their fortune beaten to death with ball-player's bat, or cut amidships with the front prow of the regatta, or going down under the swift hoofs of the fast horses, or drowned in the large potatoes of cognac or Monongahela. That secret society was the Loch Earn. Their business was the Ville de Havre. They struck, and the Ville de Havre went under.

The third test by which you may know whether the society to which you belong is good or bad is this: What is its effect on your sense of moral and religious obligation? Now, if I should take the names of all the people in this audience this morning and put them on a roll, and then I should lay that roll back of this organ, and a hundred years from now some one should take that roll and call it from A to Z there would not one of you answer. I say that any society that makes me forget that fact is

## A BAD SOCIETY.

When I go to Chicago I am sometimes perplexed as to Buffalo, as I suppose many travellers are, as to whether it is better to take the Lake Shore route or the Michigan Central, equally expeditious and equally safe, getting to their destination at the same time. But suppose that I hear that on one route the track is torn up, the bridges are down, and the switches are unlocked, it will not take me a great while to decide which road to take. Now, here are two roads in the future—the Christian and the unchristian, the safe and the unsafe. Any institution or any association that confuses my ideas in regard to that fact is a bad institution and a bad association. I had prayers before I joined that society, did I have them afterward? I attended the house of God before I connected myself with that union, do I absent myself from religious influences?

Which would you rather have in your hand when you come to die—a pack of cards or a Bible? Which would you rather have pressed to your lips in the closing moment—the cup of Belshazzar or the chalice of Christian communion? Whom would you rather have for your pall-bearers—the elders of a Christian church or the companions whose conversation was full of slang and innuendo? Whom would you rather have for your

## ETERNAL COMPANIONS—

those men who spend their evenings betting, gambling, swearing, carousing, and telling vile stories, or your little child, that bright girl whom the Lord took?

Oh, you would not have been away so much nights, would you, if you had known she was going away so soon? Dear me, your house has never been the same place since. Your wife has never brightened up, she has never got over it. She never will get over it. How long the evenings are with no one to put to bed, and no one to whom to tell the beautiful Bible stories! What a pity it is that you cannot spend more evenings at home in trying to help her bear that sorrow! You can never drown that grief in the wine-cup. You can never break away from the little arms that used to be flung around your neck when she used to say, "Papa, do stay with me to-night. Do stay with me to-night." You will never be able to wipe

away from your lips, the dying kiss of your little girl.

The fascination of a bad secret society is so great that sometimes a man has turned his back on his home when his child was dying of scarlet fever. He went away. Before he got back at midnight the eyes had been closed, the undertaker had done his work, and the wife, worn out with three weeks' watching, lay unconscious in the next room. Then the returned father comes upstairs, and he sees the cradle gone, and he says, "What is the matter?" On the Judgment Day he will find out what was the matter.

Oh, man astray, God help you! I am going to make

## A VERY STOUT ROPE.

You know that sometimes a rope-maker will take very small threads and wind them together, until after a while they become ship cable. And I am going to take some very small delicate threads and wind them together until they make a stout rope. I will take all the memories of the marriage day—a thread of laughter, a thread of light, a thread of music, a thread of banqueting, a thread of congratulation, and I will twist them together and I have one strand. Then I take a thread of the hour of the first advent in your house, a thread of the darkness that preceded, and a thread of the light that followed; and a thread of the beautiful scarf that little child used to wear when she bounded out at eventide to greet you; and then a thread of the beautiful dress in which you laid her away for the resurrection; and then I will take all these threads together, and I have another strand. Then I take a thread of the scarlet robe of a suffering Christ, and a thread of the white raiment of your loved ones before the throne, and a string of the harp cherubic, and a string of the harp seraphic, and I will twist them all together, and I have a third strand. "Oh," you say,

## "EITHER STRAND IS ENOUGH

to hold fast a world!" No; I will take these strands and I will twist them together, and one end of that rope I will fasten, not to the communion table, for it shall be removed; not to a pillar of the organ, for that will crumble in the ages; but I will wind it round and round the cross of a sympathizing Christ, and having fastened one end of the rope to the cross, I throw the other end to you. Lay hold of it! Pull four your life! Pull for heaven!

## What's in a Name?

A name is certainly not the least important factor in a man's career. How much more difficult would it be for a Muggins or a Finigan to gain acceptance as a poet, however great his talent, than for a Tennyson or a Milton! No matter how great a man's energy, talent, or courage may be, an odd or ridiculous name will be a clog to him through life, and add immensely to his difficulties in making his way upwards. Of what avail a man's aristocratic appearance, correct dress, coat of the most fashionable cut, and satisfactory balance at the bank, if his visiting card condemns him to pity or to ridicule? What a consolation it must be to a lady afflicted with a disagreeable name to know that she may have an opportunity of changing it for a better in a way at once gratifying to her pride and affection. This privilege of an odd or ridiculous name has been assumed by the Pope, who change their names when they are chosen as successors to St. Peter. The introduction of this Papal custom, Sergius the Second, may well be excused for the innovator seeing that his own name signified Hog's-mouth. Melanchthon was not above this weakness and he adopted the Greek form of his proper name, which signified "Black Earth;" and the learned Erasmus made a similar transformation of his Dutch name, Gerard.

In the time of Louis the Fourteenth, a distinguished writer who was a member of the Academy, a Councillor of State, and a friend of Richelieu, had the misfortune to bear the inappropriate name of Guenx (Beggars). Can we wonder at his adopting the name of his paternal estate, and calling himself Balzac? Many other instances might be quoted of men of talent and eminence being dissatisfied with the names that were borne by their ancestors.

Some people, in their anxiety to compensate their children for the vulgar or ridiculous family names which they have inherited, couple with them what they consider aristocratic or euphonious Christian names. Hence, we have such combinations as Gladys Beatrice Higgs, Constance Aurelia Smith, and Victor Augustus Jones. One can sympathize with the fact that many pleasing hours of consultation and discussion are given by the young mother and her husband in deciding what name will sound most mellifluous, and assort most fittingly with the sterling and attractive qualities which are so perceptibly packed up in that little cherub, their first-born.

The ancients had many superstitions as to names, and even elevated the study to a science under the title of Onomastia.

When the Romans raised an army or numbered the citizens, they were always careful that the first name taken should be an auspicious one. More than one Emperor owed his elevation simply to his name; and Caesar, in his expedition to Africa, gave a command to obscure Scipio, because the people believed that the Scipios were invincible in Africa.

Similar influences weighed with the French envoys, who went to negotiate a marriage between one of the Spanish princesses and Louis VIII. They rejected Urraca, the elder and more beautiful princess, who was intended for their royal master, and preferred her sister, because her name, Blanche, had a more musical sound.

A Spanish Ambassador to the court of Elizabeth considered his dignity slighted when the Queen appointed a wealthy citizen to receive him because his host bore the very short name of John Cuts. He soon found, however, that if Cuts had a short name he had a long purse and a right royal way of dipping into it for the sake of upholding the English name for hospitality.

Neither despise nor oppose what you do not understand.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

SUNDAY, MAY 8, 1887.

## The Child Moses.

### LESSON TEXT.

(Exod. 2: 1-10.)

### LESSON PLAN.

TOPIC OF THE QUARTER: *Bondage and Deliverance.*

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER: *There is no other God that can deliver after this sort.—Dan. 3: 29.*

LESSON TOPIC: *A Deliverer Born.*

LESSON OUTLINE: 1. The Child Hidden, vs. 1-4. 2. The Child Discovered, vs. 5-6. 3. The Child Nourished, vs. 7-10.

GOLDEN TEXT: *The Lord is thy keeper.—Psa. 121: 5.*

DAILY HOME READINGS:

M.—Exod. 2: 1-10. A deliverer born.

T.—Luke 2: 1-20. The great Deliverer born.

W.—Matt. 2: 1-23. The great Deliverer hidden.

T.—Luke 2: 21-35. The great Deliverer welcomed.

F.—Luke 2: 36-52. The great Deliverer's growth.

S.—Psa. 46: 1-11. Divine deliverance.

S.—1 Cor. 15: 35-57. Deliverance completed.

### LESSON ANALYSIS.

#### I. THE CHILD HIDDEN.

1. **The Goodly Child:**

She saw him that he was a goodly child (2).

Joseph was comely, and well favoured (Gen. 39: 6).

He was... goodly (1 Sam. 16: 12).

Moses... was exceeding fair (Acts 7: 20).

They say he was a goodly child (Heb. 11: 23).

2. **The Trustful Mother:**

She put the child therein, and laid it in the flags (3).

I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life (Sam. 1: 11).

Is it well with the child?... It is well (2 Kings 4: 26).

Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it (John 2: 5).

By faith Moses... was hid... by his parents (Heb. 11: 23).

3. **The Watchful Sister:**

His sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him (4).

Then said the sister, Shall I... call thee a nurse? (Exod. 2: 7).

Then came there unto him... all his sisters (Job 42: 11).

Dost thou not care that my sister did leave me? (Luke 10: 40).

The sisters therefore sent unto him (John 11: 3).

1. "He was a goodly child." (1) In his parents' eyes; (2) In his people's esteem; (3) In the world's development; (4) In the Almighty's plans.

2. "An ark of bulrushes." (1) Woven by a believing mother; (2) Protecting a goodly child; (3) Arousing the royal interest; (4) Fulfilling the Almighty's plans.

3. "His sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him." (1) Girlish timidity; (2) Sisterly devotion; (3) Womanly fidelity.

#### II. THE CHILD DISCOVERED.

1. **Discovery:**

She saw the ark among the flags (5).

Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not (Gen. 28: 16).

Behold the mountain was full of... chariots of fire (2 Kings 6: 17).

Lo, I see four men loose, walking in... the fire (Dan. 3: 25).

When they saw the star, they rejoiced (Matt. 2: 10).

2. **Tears:**

Behold the babe wept (6).

I have seen thy tears; behold, I will heal thee (2 Kings 20: 5).

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy (Psa. 126: 5).

I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears (Isa. 38: 5).

She hath wetted my feet with her tears (Luke 7: 44).

3. **Compassion:**

She had compassion on them (6).

The Lord... had compassion on them (2 Kings 13: 23).

He was moved with compassion for them (Matt. 9: 36).

When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her (Luke 7: 13).

His father saw him, and was moved with compassion (Luke 15: 20).

1. "The daughter of Pharaoh came." (1) On an unimportant errand; (2) Under a Divine leading; (3) Accomplishing a momentous work.

2. "She opened it." (1) In natural curiosity; (2) Under Divine guidance.

3. "The babe wept." (1) Expressing its own discomfort; (2) Awakening a queenly compassion; (3) Inaugurating a royal destiny.

#### III. THE CHILD NOURISHED.

1. **Care:**

Take this child away, and nurse it for me (9).

One little ewe lamb, which he... nourished (2 Sam. 12: 3).

I have nourished and brought up children (Isa. 1: 3).

He was nourished three months in his father's house (Acts 7: 20).

Pharaoh's daughter took him (Acts 7: 21).

2. **Growth:**

And the child grew (10).

David waxed greater and greater (2 Sam. 5: 10).

The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit (Luke 1: 80).

Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature (Luke 2: 52).

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord (2 Pet. 3: 18).

3. **Royalty:**

He became her son (10).

Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests (Exod. 19: 6).

Pharaoh's daughter... nourished him for her own son (Acts 7: 21).

Moses... refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Heb. 11: 24).

Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2: 9).

1. "Shall I go and call thee a nurse?" (1) A question seemingly incidental;

(2) A question actually pivotal; (3) A question practically momentous. 2. "The maid went and called the child's mother." (2) The mother's response; (3) The child's safety; (4) The princess' purpose; (5) The Lord's design.

3. "The child grew." (1) Under right instruction; (2) Amid favorable surroundings; (3) For noble destiny.

### LESSON BIBLE READING.

MOSES AND THE LORD.

Of Abraham's seed (Exod. 1: 1, 2; 2: 1, 2; Matt. 1: 1).

Imperiled in infancy (Exod. 1: 22; Matt. 2: 13, 14).

Imperiled in childhood (Exod. 2: 15; John 5: 18; 11: 53).

Called from Egypt (Exod. 3: 8; Matt. 2: 15; 19: 21).

Delivered a multitude (Exod. 14: 21, 22, 29; Rev. 5, 9, 10).

Pre-eminently meek (Num. 12: 3; Matt. 11: 29).

Conspicuously faithful (Num. 12: 7; Heb. 3: 2, 5).

Intercessors (Psa. 106: 23; Heb. 7: 25).

Co-operating for salvation