REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Subject: "Invitation to a Wedding."

TEXT: "*Come, for all things are now ready.*"—Luke xiv., 17.

Holy festivities to-day. We gather other sheaves into the spiritual garner. Our joy is like the joy of Heaven. Spread the banquet, fill all the chalices. We are not to-day at the funeral of a dead Christ; we are celebrating the marriage of the King's Son.

It was an exciting time in English history when Queen Elizabeth visited Lord Leicester at Kenilworth castle. The clocks in all the towers and throughout the castle were stopped at the moment of her arrival, so continuing to point to that moment as the one surpassing all others in interest.

The doors of the great banqueting hall were opened. The queen marched in to the sound of the trumpets. Fourteen hundred servants waited upon the guests. It was a scene that astonished all nations when they heard of it. Five thousand dollars a day did the banquet cost as it went on day after day. She was greeted to the palace gates with floating islands and torches and the thunders of cannon and fireworks that set the night ablaze, and a burst of music that lifted the whole scene into enchantment. Beginning in that way, it went on from joy to joy and from excitement to excitement and from rapture to rapture. That was the great banquet that Lord Leicester spread in Kenilworth castle.

Cardinal Wolsey entertained the French ambassadors in Hampton Court. The best cooks of all the land provided for the table. The guests were kept hunting in the parks all the day, so that their appetites might be keen, and then in the evening hour they were shown into the banqueting hall, with table aglitter with imperial plate and ablush with the very costliest wines, and the second course of the feast was made of food in all shapes, of men and birds and beasts, and dancing groups, and jousting parties riding upon each other with uplifted lances. Lords and princes and ambassadors, their cups gleaming to the brim, drank first to the health of the king of England, and then to the health of the emperor of France. That was the banquet that Cardinal Wolsey spread in Hampton Court.

But to-day, my brothers and sisters, I invite you to a grander entertainment. My Lord, the King, is the banqueter. Angels of God are the cupbearers, all the redeemed are the guests; the halls of eternal love frescoed with light and paved with joy and curtained with unfading beauty are the banqueting place, the harmonies of eternity are the music, the chalices of God are the plate, and I am one of the servants come out with invitations to all the people, and oh that you might break the seal of the invitation and read in ink of blood, and with the tremulous hand of a dying Christ, "Come, come, for all things are now ready."

Illustrating my text I go on, and in the first place say that the Lord Jesus Christ is ready. Cardinal Wolsey did not come into the banqueting hall until the second course of the feast, and when he entered, booted and spurred, all the guests arose and cheered him; but I have to tell you that our banqueter, the Lord Jesus Chris , comes in at the beginning of the feast. Ay, he has been waiting for his guests, waiting for some of them 1891 years, witing with mangled feet, waiting with hand on the punctured side, waiting with hand on the lacerated temples, waiting, waiting!

Wonder it is that the banqueter did not get weary and say, "Shut the door, and let the laggards stay out." No, he has been waiting. How much he is in earnest! Shall I show you? I gather up all the tears that flooded his cheek in sympathy, all the blood that channeled his brow and back and hand and foot to purchase our redemption I gather up all the groans coming from midnight chill, and mountain hunger, and desert loneliness, and I put them into one bitter cry. I gather up all the pangs that shot from cross and spike and spear into one groan. I take one drop of sweat on his brow, and I put it under the glass of the gospel, and it enlarges to lakes of sorrow, to oceans of agony. That Christ to-day, emaciated and worn and weary, comes here, and with a pathos in which every word is a heartbreak and every sentence a martyrdom, he says to you, and he says to me, "Come, come, for all things are now ready."

A ! there is one word of five letters that I wonie like to write, but I have no sheet fair enough to write it on, and no pencil good enough to inscribe it. Give me a sheet from the heavenly records, and some pencil used by angel in describing a victory, and then with hand struck with supernatural energy, and with pencil dipped in everlasting morning, I will write it out in capitals of love, J-E-S-U-S, Jesus! It is this One that is waiting for you an for me, for we are on the same platform before God. How long he waited for me! How long he has waited for you! Waiting as a banqueter waits for his delayed guests, the meats smoking, and the beakers brimming, and the minstrel with his finger on stiff string ready to strike at the first clash of the hoofs at the gateway. Waiting as a mother waits for a boy that ten years ago went off dragging her bleeding heart after him. Waiting. Oh, can you not give me some comparison intense enough, importunate enough, high as heaven, deep as hell, and vast as eternity? Not expecting that you can help me with such a comparison, I simply say he is waiting as only an all sympathetic Christ knows how to wait for a wandering soul.

Do you know what it was that saved Martin Luther? It was that one verse, "The just shall live by faith." Do you know what it was that brought Augustine from his horrible dissipations? It was that one verse, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Do you know what it was that saved Hedley Vicars, the celebrated soldier? It was the one passage, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Do you know what it was that brought Jonathan Edwards to Christ? It was the one passage, "Now unto him be glory forever and ever."

One Thanksgiving morning in church I read my text, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good," and a young man stood in the gallery and said to himself: "I have never rendered one acceptable offering of gratitude to God in all my life. Here, Lord, I am thine forever." By that one passage of Scripture he was brought into the kingdom, and if I might tell my own experience, I might tell how one Sabbath afternoon I was brought to the peace of the gospel by reading of the Syro-Phœnician's cry to Christ, where he said: "Even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table." Philosophic sermons never saved anybody. Metaphysical sermons never saved anybody. An earnest plea going right out of the heart blessed of the Holy Ghost, that is what saves, that is what brings people into the kingdom of Christ.

I suppose the world thought that Thomas Chalmers preached great sermons in his early ministry, but Thomas Chalmers says he never preached at all until years after he had occupied a pulpit he came out of his sick room, and, weak and emaciated, he stood and told the story of Christ to the people. And in the great day of eternity it will be found that not so much the eloquent sermons brought men to Christ as the story told perhaps by those who were unknown on earth, the simple story of the Saviour's love and mercy, sent by the power of the holy Ghost straight to the heart. Come, Holy Ghost. Ay, He is here this morning. He fills all the place. I tell you the Holy Ghost is ready.

Then I go on and tell you the church is ready. There are those here who say, "No one cares for my soul." We do care for it. You see a man bowing his head in prayer, and you say, "That man is indifferent." That man bows his head in prayer that the truth may go to every heart. The air is full of prayers. They are going up this morning from this assembly. Hundreds of prayers straight to the throne of a listening God. The air is full of prayers—prayers ascending noon by noon from Fulton street prayer meeting, Friday night by Friday night all over this land, going up from praying circles. Yea, there is not a minute of an hour of any day that there are not supplications ascending to the throne of mercy. The church is ready. And if you should this morning start for your Father's house there would be hundreds and thousands in this assemblage who would say if they knew it, "Make room for that man, make room for him at the holy sacrament, bring the silver bowl for his baptism; give him full right to all the privileges of the church of Jesus Christ."

Do not say you have never been invited. I invite you now to the King's feast. One and all. All! All! But I go further and tell you that the angels are ready. Some people think when we speak about angels we are getting into the region of fancy. They say it is very well for a man when he has just entered the ministry to preach about the angels in Heaven, but after he has gone on further it is hardly worth while. My friends, there is not any more evidence in the Bible that there is a God than that there are angels. Did they not swarm around Jacob's ladder? When Lazarus's soul went up did they not escort it? Did not David say, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels?" Are they not represented as the chief harvesters of the judgment day? Did not one angel in one night slay 180,000 of Sennacherib's troops?

Oh, yes, our world is in communication with two other worlds. All that communication is by angels. When a bad man is to die, a man who has despised God and rejected the Gospel, the bad spirits come on sulphurous wing and they shackle him, and try to push him off the precipices into the ruin, and they lift a guffaw of diabolical exultation. But there is a line of angels, bright and beautiful and loving angels, mighty angels, reaching all the way from earth to Heaven, and when others gather like them I suppose the air is full of them. They hover. They flit about. They push down iniquity from your heart. They are ready to rejoice.

Look! There is an angel from the throne of God. One moment ago it stood before Christ and heard the doxology of the redeemed. It is here now. Bright immortal, what news from the golden city? Speak, spirit blest. The answer comes melting on the air, "Come, come, for all things are now ready." Angels ready to bear the tidings. Angels ready to drop the benediction. Angels ready to kindle the joy. All ready. Ready, cherubim and seraphim. Ready, thrones and principalities and powers. Ready, Michael the archangel.

Yes, I go further and say that your glorified kindred are ready. I have not any sympathy with modern spiritualism. I believe it is born in perdition. When I see the ravages it makes with human intellects, when I see the homes it has devastated, when I see the bad morals that very often follow in its wake, I have no faith in modern spiritualism. I think if John Milton and George Whitfield have not anything better to do than to crawl under Rochester tables and rattle the leaves, they had better stay home in glory. But the Bible distinctly teaches that the glorified in heaven are in sympathy with our redemption.

Now, suppose you should pass into the kingdom of God this morning, suppose you should say, "I am done with the sins of this world. Fie upon all these follies. O Christ! I take thee now, I take thy service, I respond to thy love, thine am I forever." Why, before the tear of repentance had dried on your cheek, before your first prayer had closed, the angel standing with the message for thy soul would cry upward, "He is coming!" and angels poising in midair would cry upward, "He is coming!" all along the line of light from doorway to doorway, from wing tip to wing tip, the news would go upward till it reached the gate, and then it would flash to the house of many mansions and find your kindred out, and those before the throne would say: "Rejoice with me, my prayers are answered. Give me another harp with which to strike the joy. Saved, saved, saved!"

Now, my friends, if Christ is ready, and the Holy Ghost is ready, and the church is ready, and the angels of God are ready, and your glorified kindred are ready, are you ready? I give with the emphasis of my soul the question, "Are you ready?" If you do not get into the king's feast it will be because you do not accept the earnest invitation. Arm stretched out soaked with blood from elbow to finger tip, lips quivering in mortal anguish, two eyes beaming everlasting love while he says, "Come, come, come, for all things are now ready."

Old man, God has been waiting for thee long years. Would that some tear of repentance might trickle down thy wrinkled cheek. Has not Christ done enough in feeding thee and clothing thee all these years to win from thee one word of gratitude? Come, all the young. Christ is the fairest of the fair. Wait not till thy heart gets hard. Come, the farthest away from Christ. Drunkard, Christ can put out the fire of that thirst. He can restore thy broken home. He can break that shackle. Come now, to-day, and get his pardon and its strength. Libertine, Christ knew where you were last night. He knows all the story of thy sin. Come to him this day. He will wash away thy sin, and he will throw around thee the robe of his pardon Harlot, thy feet foul with hell, thy laughter the horror of the street—O Mary Magdalen! Christ waits for thee.

And the one farther off, farther off than I have mentioned, a case not so hopeful as any I have mentioned, self-righteous man, feeling thyself all right, having no need of Christ, no need of pardon, no need of help—O self-righteous man! dost thou think in those rags thou canst enter the feast? Thou canst not. God's servants at the gate would tear off thy robe and leave thee naked at the gate. O self-righteous man! the last to come. Come to the feast. Come, repeat of thy sin. Come, take Christ for thy portion.

Day of grace going away. Shadows on the cliff reaching farther and farther over the plain. The banquet has already begun. Christ has entered into that banquet to which you are invited. The guests are taking their places. The servant of the king has his hand on the door of the banqueting-room, and he begins to swing it shut. Now is your time to go in. Now is my time to enter. I must go in. You must go in. He is swinging the door shut. Now, it is half shut. Now it is three-fourths shut. Now, it is just ajar After awhile it will be forever shut!

Why will ye waste on trifling cares
That life which God's compassion spares?
While in the endless round of thought
The one thing needful is forgot.

TWO CHEMISTS are experimenting at Freeport, Pa., with a view of producing carbon points for electric lighting from natural gas. It is said that by burning the gas in a specially prepared furnace pure carbon is obtained, but as yet at a cost too great for practical purposes.

YOUNG men in Mexico, when paying attentions to the young ladies, can do so at very little expense. They are quite eager to invite them to theaters, parties, etc. And no wonder; for it is the custom in that country for the lady's father to pay for the tickets, furnish the carriage, etc.

ON only one occasion, and that probably as an experiment, Northern Minnesota showed 44 degrees below zero. Horses froze to death under two blankets, and deer were found frozen stiff in the forest. Three days of it would have paralyzed whole counties.

MORE land is owned by railroad companies (211,000,000 acres) than would make six States as large as Iowa. Since 1861 no less than 181,000,000 acres of land have been given to railroad companies.

THE atmosphere of London is said to be gradually becoming more and more harmful to plant life, and it is attributed in a large measure to the thick fogs.

SABBATH SCHOOL.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON FOR MAY 17.

Lesson Text: "Sin the Cause of Sorrow," Hosea x., 1-15—Golden Text: Isaiah lix., 2—Commentary.

1. "Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit unto himself." In Ps. lxxx., 9-11, and Isa. v., 1-7, Israel is compared to a vine for which everything possible has been done, but which after all yieldeth no fruit, or if any, only sour grapes. In Matt. xxi., 33-41, our Lord Jesus, in the parable of the vineyard, describes God's love to Israel and her treatment of Him and His servants and His Son. They were chosen as a people to make Him a name, and that they might be a holy people unto Him above all other nations, serving Him only, and thus making known to other nations the one only living and true God (Ex. xix., 5, 6; Deut. vii., 6; II. Sam. vii., 23, 24). But all God's goodness to them only caused them to multiply their idols and worship images (chap. ii., 8).

2. "Their heart is divided." "With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezek. xxxiii., 31). They were like those who try to serve God and mammon, to love God and at the same time love the world that hates God. The opposite of a divided heart is a whole heart, and nothing less than whole hearted service can be acceptable to Him.

3. "For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the Lord." Jehovah was their king. He brought them out of Egypt, and they accepted Him as such; but when they wanted a king like other nations then they were guilty of rejecting the Lord as their king. Yet even after that, if they had only with their king served the Lord and kept His commandments, it might have been well with them; but they left off to take heed to the Lord, and became joined to their idols (chap. iv., 10, 17), and their doings would not suffer them to turn unto their God.

4. "They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant." In chapter i., 1, we read that Hosea prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah; and in II. Chron. xxvi., 16, we read that Uzziah, although for a while trusting in God, afterward transgressed against the Lord his God. And although Jotham did right in the sight of the Lord, yet the people did corruptly (II. Chron. xxvii., 2). In the reign of the next king the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz, king of Israel (II. Chron. xxviii., 19), and even the great and good Hezekiah failed sadly before he died.

5. "The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Beth-aven." The abounding judgment spoken of in the last clause of the previous verse (with which compares Amos vi., 12) would cause both people and priests to turn to their idols, the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, here spoken of as Beth-aven (the house of iniquity), but they would find no help from them.

6. "Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel." Ephraim seems to stand here for the ten tribes, and Israel for the whole nation. Ephraim had relied upon Jareb the Assyrian instead of upon Jehovah (chap. v., 13), and the result was that the Assyrian would receive for himself that which Ephraim so highly prized. If a child of God leans for help upon an enemy of God the result will be shame and confusion of face.

7. "As for Samaria her king is cut off as the foam upon the water." Quickly cut off as the crest of the wave which is gone in a moment. In chap. vi., 4, the goodness of the nation is compared to a morning cloud and the early dew. If we have Christ as our life, and delight to trust in Him and do His will, then come what may, nothing can affect our welfare; but the ungodly when taken from this present life lose everything.

8. "They shall say to the mountain, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us." In I. Kings xii., 30, the calves at Dan and Bethel are called a sin. While God may bear long with sin He will in due time surely destroy it. Either our sins must be destroyed or they will destroy us.

9. "O Israel, thou has sinned from the days of Gibeah." The earliest story of Gibeah is in Judg. xx., where the sinful people gained two great victories over those who wanted the sin put away. The sense of this verse seems to be that because God in mercy restrained His wrath, Israel, instead of being by His goodness led to repentance, only increased in sin and defied Him the more (Rom. ii., 4, 5). As then, so now, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. viii., 11).

10. "It is in my desire that I should chastise them." The last clause of the verse is in the R. V. translated, "When they are bound to their two transgressions," referring, no doubt to Dan and Bethel as the two centers of their idol worship. He will chasten them that He may win them back to Himself, as when He says in Amos iii., 2, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

11. "I will make Ephriam to ride, Judah shall plow and Jacob shall break his clods." The R. V. says, "I will set a rider upon Ephriam." The people have been unsubdued, left to themselves, enjoying God's goodness to the full, but rebelling against Him. But now if they will not turn to Him, He will by their enemies subdue them.

12. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground." The expression "fallow ground" is found only here and in Jer. iv., 3; but the same word is found in one other place and translated "tillage." "Much food is in the tillage of the poor, but there that is destroyed for want of judgment" (Prov. xiii., 23). The last clause of this verse just describes the case in hand. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" Hos. iv., 6). Had they only been poor in spirit they would have known the riches of His grace.

"It is time to seek the Lord till He come and rain righteousness upon you." "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Ps. xi., 7), and the righteousness which He loves and requires of His people He provides for them. He himself is our righteousness.

13. "Thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men." And therefore they reaped iniquity and reaped the fruit of lies.

14. "Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled." Their God and King is the Prince of Peace; the Lord will bless His people with peace; He will speak peace unto His people; but if they will not have Him, and choose lies instead of truth, they must accept tumult and spoilation as the consequence.

15. "So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness, in the morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off." While this had a literal fulfillment a few years later, we are carried forward in thought to the great fulfillment when "the Prince that shall come," "the man of sin," "the one coming in his own name" (Dan., ix., 26, 27; II. Thess. ii., 3; John, v., 43), shall make the seven years covenant with Israel, break it after three and a half years, and bring in the time of Jacob's trouble, after which he (the beast of Rev. xi., 4-6; xix., 20) shall go to the lake of fire, cut off in that morning when Jesus shall appear in power and glory as Israel's Messiah, and then shall He bring in everlasting righteousness.—*Lesson Helper.*

"DEAR wife," said Sam Jones, in a dispatch to his wife the other day, "I licked the Mayor of Palestine, Tex., this morning; will preach in Taylor to-night."

"THIS," said the poor victim of strong drink, as he looked about him at the Inebriates' Home, "is the house that jag built."

The "Water-Cask" Plant.

A celebrated African traveler mentions that in crossing one of the many sandy deserts in that country he came across the only known living species of aqua bulbo, the "water-cask" plant. The region it inhabits is far from any stream of water, where, as far as the eye can reach, nothing can be seen but heaps of sand. "The sight of this little green creeper, which resembles the common ground ivy in some respects," he says, "filled me with an intense longing to once more see the green meadows and cool, shady forests which we had now left at least 300 miles behind. For four days we had not seen even so much as a spear of grass or a dried-up cactus, the latter having been quite plentiful the week before. The botanist of the company, in examining one of the plants, found thus unexpectedly growing in the centre of a sandy African desert, noticed what he supposed was a green, bulbous fruit growing under the thick leaves of the creeper, almost resting upon the sand underneath. In making an effort to pluck one of these for preservation it burst with a smart report, throwing water in the face and over the clothes of the intruding naturalist. Here, surely, we had a first-class wonder; a plant growing in the desert with no other green thing in sight, carrying its own water-bags with it. Parvin, our chemist, analyzed the water found in some of the bulbs picked for his inspection, and declared it to be absolutely pure, as much so as distilled rain water. Each bulb or berry contained about two to four tablespoonfuls of water. As it happened, we had a supply of water sufficient for our journey and to spare, but Williamson, the botanist, and Parvin, the chemist, with all the enthusiasm of true scientists, plucked about a quart of the waterberries and extracted the water, something over a pint, and drank it with apparent relish."—*St. Louis Republic.*

Bears and Telegraph Poles.

It is said that every telegraph pole in the remote country districts of Norway has to be continually watched on account of the bears. These animals have a mania for climbing the poles and sitting on the cross beams, swaying backward and forward until the pole finally falls.

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N Y N U—19

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