

THE LAW OF HEREDITY.

Dr. Talmage Says It is Largely Responsible for Crime.

While Condemning the Misdemeanors of Others We Should Exercise Charity and be Careful to Temper Our Judgment With Mercy.

In the following sermon Rev. T. De Witt Talmage explains how the condition of the world could be improved. His text is Matt. 7: 2: "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again."

In the greatest sermon ever preached—a sermon about fifteen minutes long according to the ordinary rate of speech—a sermon on the Mount of Olives, the preacher sitting while he spoke, according to the ancient mode of oratory, the people were given to understand that the same yardstick that they employed upon others would be employed upon themselves. Measure others by a harsh rule and you will be measured by a harsh rule. There is a great deal of unfairness in criticism in human conduct. It was to smite that unfairness that Christ uttered the words of the text, and my sermon will be a re-echo of the divine sentiment. In estimating the misbehavior of others, we must take into consideration the pressure of circumstances. It is never right to do wrong, but there are degrees of culpability. When men misbehave or commit some atrocious wickedness we are disposed indiscriminately to tumble them all over the bank of condemnation. Suffer they ought and suffer they must, but in a difference of degree.

In the first place, in estimating the misbehavior of others, we must take into calculation the hereditary tendency. There is such a thing as good blood and there is such a thing as bad blood. There are families that have had a moral twist in them for a hundred years back. They have not been careful to keep the family record in that regard. There have been escapades, and maraudings, and scoundrelisms, and moral deficits all the way back, whether you call it kleptomania, or pyromania, or dipsomania, or whether it be in a milder form, and amount to no mania at all. The strong probability is that the present criminal started life with nerve, muscle and bone contaminated. As some start life with a natural tendency to nobility and generosity and kindness and truthfulness, there are others who start life with just the opposite tendency, and they are born liars, or born malcontents, or born outlaws, or born swindlers.

There is in England a school that is called the Princess Mary school. All the children in that school are the children of convicts. The school is under high patronage. I had the pleasure of being present at one of the anniversaries, presided over by the Earl of Kintore. By a wise law in England, after parents have committed a certain number of crimes, and thereby shown themselves incompetent rightly to bring up their children, the little ones are taken from under pernicious influences and put in reformatory schools, where all gracious and kindly influences shall be brought upon them. Of course the experiment is young, and it has got to be demonstrated how large a percentage of the children of convicts may be brought up to respectability and usefulness. But we all know that it is more difficult for children of bad parentage to do right than for children of good parentage.

In this country we are taught by the Declaration of American Independence that all people are born equal. There never was a greater misrepresentation put in one sentence than in that sentence which implies that we are all born equal. You may as well say that flowers are born equal, or trees are born equal, or animals are born equal. Why does one horse cost \$100 and another horse cost \$5,000? Why does one sheep cost \$10 and another sheep cost \$500? Difference in blood. We are wise enough to recognize it in horses, in cattle, in sheep, but we are not wise enough to make allowance for the difference in the human blood. Now I demand by the law of eternal fairness that you be more lenient in your criticism of those who were born wrong, in whose ancestral line there was a hangman's knot, or who came from a tree the fruit of which for centuries has been gnarled and worm-eaten.

Dr. Harris, a reformer, gave some marvelous statistics in his story of a woman he called "Margaret, the Mother of Criminals." Ninety years ago she lived in a village in upper New York state. She was not only poor but she was vicious. She was not well provided for. There were no almshouses at her. The public, however, somewhat looked after her, but chiefly scolded at her, and derided her, and pushed her farther down in her crime. That was ninety years ago. There have been 623 persons in that ancestral line, 299 of them criminals. In one branch of that family there were 30, and 9 of them have been in state prison, and nearly all of the others have turned out badly. It is estimated that that family cost the county and state \$100,000, to say nothing of the property they destroyed. Are you not willing, as a sensible, fair people, to acknowledge that it is a fearful disaster to be born in such an ancestral line? Does it not make a great difference whether one descends from Margaret, the mother of criminals, or from some mother in Israel? whether you are the son of Ahab or the son of Joshua?

But, supposing now, that in this age, when there are so many people, that I come down into this audience and select the very best man in it. I do not mean the man who would style himself the best, for probably he is a hypocrite; but I mean the man who before God is really the best. I will take you out from all your Christian surroundings. I will take you back to boyhood. I will put you in a deprived home. I will put you in a cradle of iniquity. Who is bending over that cradle? An intoxicated mother. Who

is that swearing in the next room? Your father. The neighbors come in to talk, and their jokes are unclean. There is not in the house a Bible or a moral treatise, but only a few scraps of an old pictorial.

After awhile you are old enough to get out of the cradle, and you are struck across the head for naughtiness, but never in any kindly manner reprimanded. After awhile you are old enough to go abroad, and you are sent out with a basket to steal. If you come home without any spoil you are whipped until the blood comes. At 15 years of age you go out to fight your own battles in this world, which seems to care no more for you than the dog that has died of a fit under the fence. You are kicked and cuffed and buffeted. Some day, rallying your courage, you resent some wrong. A man says: "Who are you? I know who you are. Your father had free lodgings at Sing Sing. Your mother, she was up for drunkenness at the criminal court. Get out of my way, you low-lived wretch! My brother, suppose that had been the history of your advent, and the history of your earlier surroundings, would you have been the Christian man you are to-day, seated in this Christian assembly? I tell you nay. You would have been a vagabond, an outlaw, a murderer on all the scaffold atoning for your crime. All these considerations ought to make us merciful in our dealings with the wandering and the lost.

Again, I have to remark, that in our estimation the misdoing of people who have fallen from high respectability and usefulness we must take into consideration the conjunction of circumstances. In nine cases out of ten a man who goes astray does not intend any positive wrong. He has trust funds. He risks a part of these funds in investment. He says: "Now, if I should lose that investment I have of my own property five times as much, and if this investment should go wrong I could easily make it up; I could five times make it up." With that wrong reasoning he goes on and makes the investment, and it does not turn out quite as well as he expected, and he makes another investment, and strange to say at the same time all his other affairs get entangled, and all his other resources fall, and his hands are tied. Now he wants to extricate himself. He goes a little further on in the wrong investment. He takes a plunge further ahead, for he wants to save his home, he wants to save his membership in the church. He takes one more plunge and all is lost.

Some morning at 10 o'clock the bank door is not opened, and there is a card on the door signed by an officer of the bank, indicating there is trouble, and the name of the defaulter or the defrauder heads the newspaper column, and hundreds of men say: "Good for him," hundreds of other men say: "I'm glad he's found out at last," hundreds of other men say: "Just as I told you," hundreds of other men say: "We couldn't possibly have been tempted to do that—no conjunction of circumstances could ever have overthrown me," and there is a superabundance of indignation, but no pity. The heavens full of lightning, but not one drop of dew. If God treated us as society treats that man we would all have been in hell long ago!

Wait for the alleviating circumstances. Perhaps he may have been the dupe of others. Before you let all the hounds out from their kennel to maul and tear that man, find out if he has not been brought up in a commercial establishment where there was a wrong system of ethics taught; find out whether that man has not an extravagant wife who is not satisfied with his honest earnings, and in the temptation to please her he has gone into that ruin into which enough men have fallen, and by the same temptation, to make a procession of many miles. Perhaps some sudden sickness may have touched his brain, and his judgment may be unbalanced. He is wrong, he is awfully wrong, and he must be condemned, but there may be mitigating circumstances. Perhaps under the same temptation you might have fallen. The reason some men do not steal \$200,000 is because they do not get a chance! Have righteous indignation, you must about that man's conduct, but temper it with mercy.

But, you say: "I am sorry that the innocent should suffer." Yes, I am too—sorry for the widows and orphans who lost their all by that defalcation. I am sorry also for the business men, the honest business men, who have had their affairs all crippled by that defalcation. I am sorry for the venerable bank president to whom the credit of that bank was matter of pride. Yes, I am sorry also for that man who brought all the distress; sorry that he sacrificed body, mind, soul, reputation, Heaven, and went into the blackness of darkness forever.

You defiantly say: "I could not be tempted in that way." Perhaps you may be tested after awhile. God has a very good memory, and he sometimes seems to say: "This man feels so strong in his innate power and goodness he shall be tested; he is so full of bitter invective against that unfortunate it shall be shown now whether he has the power to stand." Fifteen years go by. The wheel of fortune turns several times, and you are in a crisis that you never could have anticipated. Now, all the powers of darkness come around, and they chuckle and they chatter and they say: "Aha! here is the old fellow who was so proud of his integrity, and who bragged he couldn't be overthrown by temptation, and was so uproarious in his demonstrations of indignation at the defalcation 15 years ago. Let us see!"

God lets the mango. God, who had kept that man under His protecting care, lets the mango go and try for himself the majesty of his integrity. God letting the mango go, the powers of darkness pounce upon him. I see you some day in your office in great excitement. One of two things you can do. Be honest and be pauperized, and have your children brought home from school, your family dethroned in social disgrace. The other thing is, you can

step a little aside from that which is right, you can only go just half an inch out of the proper path, you can only take a little risk, and then you have all your finances fair and right. You will have a large property. You can leave a fortune for your children, and endow a college, and build a public library in your native town. You halt and wait, and halt and wait until your lips get white. You decide to risk it. Only a few strokes of the pen now. But oh, how your hand trembles, how dreadfully it trembles! The die is cast. By the strangest and most awful conjunction of circumstances anyone could have imagined you are prostrated. Bankruptcy, commercial annihilation, exposure, crime. Good men mourn and devils hold carnival, and you see your own name at the head of the newspaper column in a whole congress of exclamation points; and while you are reading the anathema in the reportorial and editorial paragraph it occurs to you how much this story is like that of the defalcation 15 years ago, and a clap of thunder shakes the window sill, saying: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again!"

You look in another direction. There is nothing like ebullitions of temper to put a man to disadvantage. You, a man with calm pulse and a fine digestion and perfect health, cannot understand how anyone should be capzined in temper by an infinitesimal annoyance. You say: "I couldn't be unbalanced in that way." Perhaps you smile at a provocation that makes another man swear. You pride yourself on your imperturbability. You say with your manner, though you have too much good taste to say it with your words: "I have a great deal more sense than that man has; I have a great deal more equispose of temper than that man has; I never could make such a puerile exhibition of myself as that man has made."

Let me see. Did you not say that you could not be tempted to an ebullition of temper. Some September you come home from your summer watering-place and you have inside, away back in your liver or spleen, what we call in our day malaria, but what the old folks called chills and fever. You take quinine until your ears are first buzzing beehives and then roaring Niagara. You take roots and herbs, you take everything. You get well. But the next day you feel uncomfortable, and you yawn, and you stretch, and you suffer. Vexed more than you can tell, you cannot sleep, you cannot eat, you cannot bear to see anything that looks happy, you go out to kick the cat that is asleep in the sun. Your children's mirth was once music to you; now, it is deafening. You turn: "Boys, stop that racket!" You turn back from June to March. In the family and in the neighborhood your popularity is 95 per cent. off. The world says: "What is the matter with that disagreeable man? What a woe-begone countenance? I can't bear the sight of him." You have got your pay at last—got your pay. You feel just as the man felt, that man for whom you had no mercy, and my text comes in with marvelous appositeness: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

In the study of society I have come to this conclusion, that the most of the people want to be good, but they do not exactly know how to make it out. They make enough good resolutions to lift them into angelhood. The vast majority of people who fall are the victims of circumstances. They are captured by ambuscade. If their temptations should come out in a regiment and fight them in a fair field they would go out in the strength and the triumph of David against Goliath. But they do not see the giants and they do not see the regiment. Temptation comes and says: "Take these biters, take this nerve, take this aid to digestion, take this nightcap." The vast majority of men and women who are destroyed by opium and by rum first take them as medicines. In making up your dish of criticism in regard to them, take from the castrer and the cruet of sweet oil and not the cruet of cayenne pepper.

Do you know how that physician, that lawyer, that journalist became the victim of dissipation? Why, the physician was kept up, night by night, on professional duty. Life and death hovered in the balance. His nervous system was exhausted. There came a time of epidemic and whole families were prostrated, and his nervous strength was gone. He was all worn out in the service of the public. Now he must brace himself up. Now he stimulates. The life of this mother, the life of this child, the life of this whole family must be saved, and he stimulates, and he does it again and again. You may criticize his judgment, but remember the process. It was not a selfish process by which he went down. It was magnificent generosity through which he fell.

Oh, my friends, let us be resolved to scold less and pray more! What headway will we make in the judgment if in this world we have been hard on those who have gone astray? What headway will you and I make in the last great judgment, when we must have mercy or perish? The Bible says: "They shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy."

I see the scribes of Heaven looking up into the face of such a man, saying: "What? you plead for mercy, you who in all your life never had any mercy on your fellows? Don't you remember how hard you were in your opinions of those who were astray? Don't you remember when you ought to have given a helping hand you employed a hard heel? Mercy! You must mis-spoken yourself when you plead for mercy here. Mercy for others, but no mercy for you. Look," say the scribes of Heaven, "look at that inscription over the throne of judgment, the throne of God's judgment." See it coming out letter by letter, word by word, sentence by sentence, until your startled vision reads it and your remorseful spirit appreciates it: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. Depart, ye cursed!"

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RAILROAD SCHEDULES

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD AND BRANCHES. In effect on and after May 17, 1897. **VIA TYONE—WESTWARD.** Leave Bellefonte 9:53 a.m., arrive at Tyone 11:04 a.m.; at Altoona, 1:00 p.m.; at Pittsburg 2:05 p.m.; at Harrisburg 7:00 p.m.; at Philadelphia 11:15 p.m. **VIA TYONE—EASTWARD.** Leave Bellefonte 6:44 p.m.; arrive at Tyone 8:00 a.m.; at Altoona 9:55 a.m.; at Pittsburg 11:30 a.m. **VIA TYONE—WESTWARD.** Leave Bellefonte 9:53 a.m., arrive at Tyone 11:04 a.m.; at Harrisburg 2:40 p.m.; at Philadelphia 5:47 p.m. **VIA TYONE—EASTWARD.** Leave Bellefonte 6:44 p.m., arrive at Tyone 8:00 a.m.; at Harrisburg 7:00 p.m.; at Philadelphia 11:15 p.m. **VIA LOCK HAVEN—WESTWARD.** Leave Bellefonte 9:22 a.m., arrive at Lock Haven 10:30 a.m. **VIA LOCK HAVEN—EASTWARD.** Leave Bellefonte 6:23 a.m., arrive at Lock Haven 7:30 a.m.; at Williamsport 9:30 p.m.; at Harrisburg 1:15 p.m.; at Philadelphia 6:52 a.m. **VIA LEWISBURG.** Leave Bellefonte at 6:30 a.m., arrive at Lewisburg at 9:15 a.m., Harrisburg, 11:30 a.m., Philadelphia, 2:00 p.m. **LEWISBURG & TYONE RAILROAD.** In effect May 17, 1897.

WESTWARD.		EASTWARD.	
STATIONS.	TIME.	STATIONS.	TIME.
P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.
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1:45	6:15	2:45	5:15
1:52	6:21	3:01	5:29
1:56	6:29	3:06	5:35
2:07	6:38	3:14	5:42
2:18	6:51	3:25	5:55
2:25	7:02	3:31	6:07
2:32	7:14	3:38	6:19
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2:41	7:28	3:47	6:31
2:44	7:33	3:50	6:36
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4:08	8:58	4:34	8:01
4:09	8:59	4:35	8:02
4:10	9:00	4:36	8:03

WESTWARD.		EASTWARD.	
STATIONS.	TIME.	STATIONS.	TIME.
P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.
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7:40	12:50	9:50	2:00
7:45	12:55	9:55	2:05
7:50	13:00	10:00	2:10