

LAST HOUR OF CHRIST

Lessons of Comfort in the Scenes Found by Dr. Talmage.

Heaven's Brightest Crowns Shall Adorn the Brows of Those Who Bear Life's Burdens with Christian Fortitude.

(Washington, March 26. Copyright, 1899.)

From the pathetic scene of Christ's last hour of suffering Dr. Talmage in this sermon draws lessons of comfort for people in trouble; text, John 19:30: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar."

The brigands of Jerusalem had done their work. It was almost sundown, and Jesus was dying. Persons in crucifixion often lingered on from day to day, crying, begging, cursing, but Christ had been exhausted by years of maltreatment. Pillowed, poorly fed, flogged, as bent over and tied to a low post his bare back was inflamed with the scourges intersticed with pieces of lead and bone, and now for whole hours the weight of his body hung on delicate tendons, and, according to custom, a violent stroke under the armpits had been given by the executioner. Dizzy, nauseated, feverish, a world of agony is compressed in the two words: "I thirst!" Oh, skies of Judea, let a drop of rain strike on His burning tongue! Oh, world, with rolling rivers and sparkling lakes and spraying fountains, give Jesus something to drink! If there be any pity in earth or Heaven or hell, let it now be demonstrated in behalf of this royal sufferer.

The wealthy women of Jerusalem used to have a fund of money with which they provided wine for those people who died in crucifixion—a powerful opiate to deaden the pain—but Christ would not take it. He wanted to die sober, and so he refused the wine. But afterward they go to a cup of vinegar and soak a sponge and put it on a stick of hyssop and then press it against the hot lips of Christ. You say the wine was an anaesthetic and intended to relieve or deaden the pain. But the vinegar was an insult.

In some lives the saccharine seems to predominate. Life is sunshine on a bank of flowers. A thousand hands to clap approval. In December or in January, looking across their table, they see all their family present. Health rubicund, skies flamboyant, days resilient. But in a great many cases there are not so many sugars as acids. The annoyances and the vexations, and the disappointments of life overpower the successes. There is a gravel in almost every shoe. An Arabian legend says that there was a worm in Solomon's staff gnawing its strength away, and there is a weak spot in every earthly support that a man leans on. King George of England forgot all the grandeur of his throne because one day in an interview Beau Brummel called him by his first name and addressed him as a servant, crying: "George, ring the bell!" Miss Langdon, honored all the world over for her poetic genius, is so worried over the evil reports set afloat regarding her that she is found dead with an empty bottle of prussic acid in her hand. Goldsmith said that his life was a wretched being, and that all that want and contempt could bring to it had been brought, and cries out: "What, then, is there formidable in a jail?" Correggio's fine painting is hung up for a tavern sign. Hogarth cannot sell his best painting except through a raffle. Andrea del Sarto makes the great fresco in the Church of the Annunciata at Florence and gets for pay a sack of corn, and there are annoyances and vexations in high places as well as in low places, showing that in a great many lives are the souls greater than the sweets. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar."

It is absurd to suppose that a man who has always been well can sympathize with those who are sick, or that one who has always been honored can appreciate the sorrow of those who are despised, or that one who has been born to a great fortune can understand the distress and the straits of those who are destitute. The fact that Christ himself took the vinegar makes Him able to sympathize to-day and forever with all those whose cup is filled with the sharp acids of this life. He took the vinegar!

In the first place, there was the sourness of betrayal. The treachery of Judas hurt Christ's feelings more than all the friendship of His disciples did Him good. You have had many friends, but there was one friend upon whom you put special stress. You feasted him. You loaned him money. You befriended him in the dark passes of life, when he especially needed a friend. Afterward, he turned upon you, and he took advantage of your former intimacies. He wrote against you. He talked against you. He microscopized your faults. He flung contempt at you, when you ought to have received nothing but gratitude. At first you could not sleep at night. Then you went about with a sense of having been stung. That difficulty will never be healed, for though mutual friends may arbitrate in the matter until you shall shake hands, the old cordiality will never come back. Now I commend to all such the sympathy of a betrayed Christ. Why, they sold Him for less than our \$20! They all forsook Him and fled. They cut Him to the quick. He drank that cup to the dregs. He took the vinegar.

There is also the sourness of pain. There are some of you who have not seen a well day for many years. By keeping out of drafts, and by carefully studying dietetics, you continue to this time, but, oh, the headaches, and the side aches, and the backaches, and the heartaches which have been your accompaniment all the way through! You have struggled under a heavy mortgage of physical disabilities, and instead of the placidity that once characterized

you, it is now only with great effort that you keep away from irritability and sharp retort. Difficulties of respiration, of digestion, of locomotion, make up the great obstacle in your life, and you tug and sweat along the pathway and wonder when the exhaustion will end. My friends, the brightest crowns in Heaven will not be given to those who, in stirrups, dashed to the cavalry charge, while the general applauded, and the sound of clashing sabers rang through the land, but the brightest crowns in Heaven, I believe, will be given to those who trudged on amid chronic ailments which unnerved their strength, yet all the time maintaining their faith in God. It is comparatively easy to fight in a regiment of a thousand men, charging up the parapets to the sound of martial music, but it is not so easy to endure when no one but the nurse and the doctor are the witnesses of the Christian fortitude. Besides that, you never had any pains worse than Christ's. The sharpness that stung through His brain, through His hands, through His feet, through His heart, were as great as yours certainly. He was as sick and as weary. Not a nerve or muscle or ligament escaped. All the pangs of all the nations of all the ages compressed into one sour cup. He took the vinegar!

There is also the sourness of poverty. Your income does not meet your outgoings, and that always gives an honest man anxiety. There is no sign of destitution about you—pleasant appearance and a cheerful home for you—but God only knows what a time you have had to manage your private finances. Just as the bills run up the wages seem to run down. You may say nothing, but life to you is a hard push, and when you sit down with your wife and talk over the expenses you both rise up discouraged. You abridge here, and you abridge there, and you get things snug for smooth sailing, and, lo, suddenly there is a large doctor's bill to pay, or you have lost your pocketbook, or some debtor has failed, and you are thrown abeam end. Well, brother, you are in glorious company. Christ owned not the house in which He stopped, or the coat on which He rode, or the boat in which He sailed. He lived in a borrowed house; He was buried in a borrowed grave. Exposed to all kinds of weather, yet He had only one suit of clothes. He breakfasted in the morning, and no one could possibly tell where He could get anything to eat before night. He would have been pronounced a financial failure. He had to perform a miracle to get money to pay a tax bill. Not a dollar did He own. Privation of domesticity, privation of nutritious food, privation of a comfortable couch on which to sleep, privation of all worldly resources! The kings of the earth had chased chalices out of which to drink, but Christ had nothing but a plain cup set before Him, and it was very sharp, and it was very sour. He took the vinegar.

There were years that passed along before your family circle was invaded by death, but the moment the charmed circle was broken everything seemed to dissolve. Hardly have you put the black apparel in the wardrobe before you have again to take it out. Great and rapid changes in your family record. You got the house and rejoiced in it, but the charm was gone as soon as the crape hung on the doorbell. The one upon whom you most depended was taken away from you. A cold marble slab lies on your heart to-day. Once, as the children romped through the house, you put your hand over your aching head and said: "Oh, if I could only have it still!" Oh, it is too still now! You lost your patience when the tops and the strings and the shells were laid amid floor, but, oh, you would be willing to have the trinkets scattered all over the floor again if they were scattered by the same hands.

With what a ruthless plowshare bereavement rips up the heart! But Jesus knows all about that. You cannot tell Him anything new in regard to bereavement. He had only a few friends, and when He lost one it brought tears to His eyes. Lazarus had often entertained Him at his home. Now Lazarus is dead and buried, and Christ breaks down with emotion, the convulsion of grief shuddering through all the ages of bereavement. Christ knows what it is to go through the house missing a familiar intimate. Christ knows what it is to see an unoccupied place at the table. Were there not four of them—Mary and Martha and Christ and Lazarus? Four of them. But where is Lazarus? Lonely and afflicted Christ, His great, loving eyes filled with tears! Oh, yes, yes! He knows all about loneliness and the heartbreak. He took the vinegar!

Then there is the sourness of the death hour. Whatever else we may escape, that acid poison will be pressed to our lips. I sometimes have a curiosity to know how I will behave when I come to die. Whether I will be calm or excited, whether I will be filled with reminiscence or with anticipation, I cannot say. But come to the point I must and you must. An officer from the future world will knock at the door of our hearts and serve on us the writ of ejectment, and we will have to surrender. And we will wake up after these autumnal and wintry and vernal and summery glories have vanished from our vision. We will wake up into a realm which has only one season and that the season of everlasting love.

But you say: "I don't want to break out from my present associations. It is so chilly and so damp to go down the stairs of that vault. I don't want anything drawn so tightly over my eyes. If there were only some way of breaking through the partition between worlds without tearing this body all to shreds! I wonder if the surgeons and the doctors cannot compound a mixture by which this body and soul can all the time be kept together? Is there no escape from this separation?" None, absolutely none. A great many men tumble through the gates of the

future, as it were, and we do not know where they have gone, and they only add gloom and mystery to the passage, but Jesus Christ so mightily stormed the gates of that future world that they have never since been closely shut. Christ knows what it is to leave this world, of the beauty of which He was more appreciative than we ever could be. He knows the exquisiteness of the phosphorescence of the sea. He trod it. He knows the glories of the midnight heavens, for they were the spangled canopy of His wilderness pillow. He knows about the lilies. He twisted them into His sermon. He knows about the fowls of the air. They whirred their way through His discourse. He knows about the sorrows of leaving this beautiful world. Not a tear was kindled in the darkness. He died physicianless. He died in cold sweat and dizziness and hemorrhage and agony, that have put Him in sympathy with all the dying. He goes through Christendom, and He gathers up the stings out of all the death pillows, and He puts them under His own neck and head. He gathers on His own tongue the burning thirsts of many generations. The sponge is soaked in the sorrow of all those who have died in their beds, as well as soaked in the sorrows of all those who perished in icy or fiery martyrdom. While Heaven was pitying, and earth was mocking, and hell was deriding, He took the vinegar.

To all those to whom life has been an acerbity—a dose they could not swallow, a draft that set their teeth on edge and a rasping—I preach the omnipotent sympathy of Jesus Christ. The sister of Herschel, the astronomer, used to spend much of her time polishing the telescopes through which he brought the distant worlds nigh, and it is my ambition now this hour to clear the lens of your spiritual vision, so that, looking through the dark night of your earthly troubles, you may behold the glorious constellation of a Saviour's mercy and a Saviour's love. Oh, my friends, do not try to carry all your ills alone. Do not put your poor shoulder under the Appennines, when the Almighty Christ is ready to lift up all your burdens. When you have a trouble of any kind you rush this way and that way, and you wonder what this man will say about it, and you try this prescription and that prescription and the other prescription. Oh, why do you not go straight to the Heart of Christ, knowing that for our own sinning and suffering race He took the vinegar?

There was a vessel that had been tossed of the sea for a great many weeks and been disabled, and the supply of water gave out, and the crew were dying of thirst. After many days they saw a sail against the sky. They signalled it. When the vessel came nearer the people on the suffering ship cried to the captain of the other vessel: "Send us some water. We are dying for lack of water." And the captain of the vessel that was hailed responded: "Dip your buckets where you are. You are in the mouth of the Amazon, and there are scores of miles of fresh water all around about you and hundreds of feet deep." And then they dropped their buckets over the side of the vessel and brought up the clear, bright, fresh water and put out the fire of their thirst. So I hail you to-day, after a long and perilous voyage, thirsting for comfort and thirsting for eternal life, and I ask you what is the use of going in that death-struck state while all around you is the deep, clear, wide, sparkling flood of God's sympathetic mercy. Oh, dip your buckets and drink and live forever. "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

Yet there are people who refuse this Divine sympathy, and they try to fight their own battles, and drink their own vinegar, and carry their own burdens, and their life, instead of being a triumphal march from victory to victory, will be a hobbling on from defeat to defeat, until they make a final surrender to retributive disaster. Oh, I wish I could to-day gather up in my arms all the woes of men and women, all their heartaches, all their disappointments, all their chagrins, and just take them right to the feet of a sympathizing Jesus. He took the vinegar. Nana Sahib, after he had lost his last battle in India, fell back into the jungles of Iheri—jungles so full of malaria that no mortal can live there. He carried with him also a ruby of great luster and of great value. He died in those jungles. His body was never found, and the ruby has never yet been recovered. And I fear that to-day there are some who will fall back from this subject into the sickening, killing jungles of their sin, carrying a gem of infinite value—a priceless soul—to be lost forever. Oh, that that ruby might flash in the eternal coronation! But, no! There are some, I fear, who turn away from this offered mercy and comfort and Divine sympathy, notwithstanding that Christ, for all who would accept His grace, trod the long way, and suffered the leaching thorns, and received in His face the expectations of the filthy mob, and for the guilty, and the discouraged, and the discomfited of the race, took the vinegar. May God Almighty break the infatuation and lead you out into the strong hope, and the good cheer, and the glorious sunshine of this triumphant Gospel!

Curbing Talk Over Telephones. People who have a grudge against telephone companies in general will be pleased to know that the women of New South Wales refused to be ground down by any soulless corporation. They determined to get the worth of the telephone rent, no matter how much time it took, so they conversed over the wires by the hour until the central office people were driven to distraction. Things got to such a point that the postmaster-general in Sydney was appealed to, and he issued an order forbidding loquacious women from monopolizing a telephone for more than ten minutes at a time.



POULTRY FOR PROFIT.

Investment Is Worth at Least One Hundred Per Cent.

There are few farmers who rightly estimate the poultry and eggs that are produced on the farm. If they study the matter up, they will find that the hens in the barn yard pay more for the food they consume than almost anything else, in fact, except the indispensable horse, whose value is hard to compute, being so much depended upon. The farmer can keep a hen for less than fifty cents per year. This has been proved time and again, and it is a poor sort of a hen that will not produce ten dozen eggs a year. The average price is about ten cents a dozen. Allowing the cost of keeping is fifty cents, and that eggs average at ten cents a dozen the year through, it will be seen the income is one hundred per cent on the investment of keep. If he keeps his poultry as he should, the average price will be nearer twenty cents a dozen than ten cents, for he will get eggs in the winter when prices are high.

With all the increase in the products of the poultry yards of the country, there has never been a year when we did not import eggs, and this importation has not fallen off, except as the tariff affected it, and the tariff of five cents a dozen did not cut off importation entirely. The United States is fast becoming a nation of poultry and egg eaters, because the wholesomeness of poultry and the relative cheapness of eggs as compared with meats, are becoming better understood all the time, and the result is that the demand for poultry and eggs grows nearly as fast as the supply is increased, and the average rises slowly year by year. No one need hesitate about going into the business of raising poultry from any fear that there will be an over supply. A low price always meets an increased demand, and this fosters an appetite for eggs and poultry, which is satisfied when eggs go up again, and the business keeps on growing. It will keep on indefinitely, for poultry can and will be kept with profit when the country is much more thickly populated than it is now.

The Cochins for the Table. The cut gives an outline, from a photographic reproduction, of a prize-winning Buff Cochins pullet at the great New York show. This outline is given here to call attention to the excellent meat qualities of the Cochins. It would be hard to find a fowl, whatever its breed, that will excel in appearance the dressed carcass of a well developed Cochin.



A PRIZE-WINNING COCHIN.

Angora Goats and Mohair. These goats furnish what is known commercially as mohair, and there are several factories in the United States using this product exclusively in the manufacture of plush goods and the like. The plush coverings on the seats of Pullman cars and other public conveyances are made of mohair, which is the most durable of animal fabrics. Texas raises the staple in considerable quantities. About 2,000,000 pounds of mohair are used annually in America, most of which comes from Turkey and South Africa, as the present home production is only about one-fourth of the consumption. This emphasizes the fact that the raising of Angora goats is far from being overdone in this country.

Beginning With Turkeys. The first requisite in turkey raising is good stock. The fowls should be healthy, of good shape, with heavy bodies and not too much leg; the hens either one or two years old. If older the eggs are fewer in number and more likely to have soft shells. The gobblers should be well matured and weigh not less than 18 or 20 pounds. Gobblers and hens should never be selected from the same flock. As to color, one may choose according to fancy. I prefer a bronze or a black

Catch Cold Easily?

Are you frequently hoarse? Do you have that annoying tickling in your throat? Would you feel relieved if you could raise something? Does your cough annoy you at night, and do you raise more mucus in the morning? Then you should always keep on hand a bottle of

Ayer's Cherry Pectoral

If you have a weak throat you cannot be too careful. You cannot begin treatment too early. Each cold makes you more liable to another, and the last one is always harder to cure than the one before it.

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Help at Hand.

If you have any complaint whatever and desire the best medical advice you can possibly obtain, write the doctor freely. You will receive a prompt reply. Address, DR. J. C. AYER, Lowell, Mass.

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Advertisement for a Driving Lamp. Includes text about the lamp's features and a small illustration.

RAILROAD SCHEDULES

Table of railroad schedules for Pennsylvania Railroad and Branches, including routes like Tyrore-Westward and Tyrore-Eastward.

Table of railroad schedules for Lewisburg & Tyrore Railroad, including Westward and Eastward routes.

Table of railroad schedules for Bellefonte & Snow Shoe Branch, including Westward and Eastward routes.

Table of railroad schedules for Bellefonte Central Railroad, including Westward and Eastward routes.

Table of railroad schedules for The Central Railroad of Pennsylvania, including Read Down and Read Up routes.

Table of railroad schedules for Garman's Empire House, including Main Street, Tyrore, Pa. routes.

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