

TALKS ON BIGOTRY.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Discusses a Delicate Subject.

Deplores Sectarian Difference in the Home—Cautions Parents as to Its Evil Effect on the Children.

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In this sermon Dr. Talmage discusses a topic which will interest domestic circles everywhere. The text is Genesis xlii, 8: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen. Is not the whole land before thee?"

Uncle and nephew, Abram and Lot, both pious, both millionaires, and with such large flocks of bleating sheep and lowing cattle that their herdmen got into a fight, perhaps about the best pasture, or about the best water privilege, or because the cow of one got hooked by the horns of the other. Not their poverty of opportunity, but their wealth, was the cause of controversy between these two men. To Abram, the glorious old Mesopotamian sheik, such controversy seemed absurd. It was like two ships quarrelling for sea room in the middle of the Atlantic ocean. There was a vast reach of country, cornfields, vineyards, harvests and plenty of room in illimitable acreage. "Now," said Abram, "let us agree to differ. Here are the mountain districts, swept by the tonic of sea breeze and with wide-reaching prospect, and there is the plain of Jordan, with tropical luxuriance. You may have either." Lot, who was not as rich as Abram and might have been expected to take the second choice, made the first selection, and with a modesty that must have made Abram smile, said to him:

"You may have the rocks and the fine prospect; I will take the valley of the Jordan, with all its luxuriance of cornfields, and the river to water the flocks, and the genial climate, and the wealth immeasurable." So the controversy was forever settled, and great-souled Abram carried out the suggestion of the text: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen. Is not the whole land before thee?"

Well, in this, the last decade of the nineteenth century, and in this beautiful land, which was called America, after Americus Vesputius, but should have been called Columbia, after its discoverer, Columbus, we have a wealth of religious privilege and opportunity that is positively bewildering—churches of all sorts of creeds, and of all kinds of government, and all forms of worship, and all styles of architecture. What opulence of ecclesiastical opportunity! Now, while in desolate regions there may be only one church, in the opulent districts of this country there is such a profusion that there ought to be no difficulty in making a selection. No fight about vestments, or between liturgical or nonliturgical adherents, or as to baptismal modes, or a handful of water as compared with a riverful. If Abram prefers to dwell on the heights, where he can only get a sprinkling from the clouds, let him consent that Lot have all the Jordan in which to immerse himself. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen. Is not the whole land before thee?"

Especially is it fortunate when families allow angry discussion at the breakfast or dinner or tea table as to which is the best church or denomination, one at one end of the table saying he could never endure the rigid doctrines of Presbyterianism, one at the other end responding that she never could stand the forms of Episcopacy, and one at one side of the table saying he did not understand how anybody could bear the noise in the Methodist church, and another declaring all the Baptists bigots. There are hundreds of families hopelessly split on ecclesiasticism, and in the middle of every discussion on such subjects there is a kindling of indignation, and it needs some old Father Abram to come and put his foot on the loaded fuse before the explosion takes place and say: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen. Is not the whole land before thee?"

I undertake a subject never undertaken by any other pulpit, for it is an exceedingly delicate subject, and if not rightly handled might give serious offense, but I approach it without the slightest trepidation, for I am sure I have the Divine direction in the matters I propose to present. It is a tremendous question, asked all over Christendom, often asked with tears and sobs and heartbreaks and involving the peace of families, the eternal happiness of many souls. In matters of church attendance should the wife go with the husband, or the husband go with the wife?

First, remember that all the evangelical churches have enough truth in them to save the soul and prepare us for happiness on earth and in Heaven. I will go with you into any well-selected theological library, and I will show you sermons from ministers in all denominations that set forth man as a sinner and Christ as a deliverer from sin and sorrow. That is the whole Gospel. Get that into your soul, and you are fitted for the here and the hereafter. There are differences, we admit, and some denominations we like better than others. But suppose three or four of us make solemn agreement to meet each on important business, and one goes by the New York Central railroad, another by the Erie railroad, another by the Pennsylvania railroad, another by the Baltimore & Ohio railroad. One goes this way because the mountains are grander, another takes this because the cars

are more luxurious, another that because the speed is greater, another takes the other because he has long been accustomed to that route and all the employes are familiar. So far as our engagement to meet is concerned, it makes no difference if we only get there. Now, any one of the innumerable evangelical denominations, if you practice its teaching, although some of their trains run on a broad gauge and some on a narrow gauge, will bring you out at the city of New Jerusalem.

It being evident that you will be safe in any of the evangelical denominations, I proceed to remark, first, if one of the married couple be a Christian and the other not, the one a Christian is bound to go anywhere to a church where the unconverted companion is willing to go, if he or she will go to no other. You of the connubial partnership are a Christian. You are safe for the skies. Then it is your first duty to secure the eternal safety of your lifetime associate. Is not the everlasting welfare of your wife impendent on your husband's impenitent of more importance than your church relationship? Is not the condition of your companion for the next quadrillion of years a mightier consideration to you than the gratification of your ecclesiastical taste for 40 or 50 years? A man or a woman who would stop half a minute to weigh preferences as to whether he or she had better go with the unconverted companion to this or that church or denomination has no religion at all, and never has had, and I fear never will have. You are loaded up with what you suppose to be religion, but you are like Capt. Frobisher, who brought back from his voyage of discovery a shipload of what he supposed valuable minerals, yet, instead of being silver and gold, were nothing but common stones of the field, to be hurled out as finally useless.

Mighty God, in all Thy realm is there one man or woman professing religion, yet so stolid, so unfitted, so far gone unto death that there would be any hesitancy in surrendering all preferences before such an opportunity of salvation and heavenly reunion? If you, a Christian wife, are an attendant upon any church and your unconverted husband does not go there because he does not like its preacher, or its music, or its architecture, or its uncomfortable crowding, and goes not to any house of worship, but would go if you would accompany him somewhere else, change your church relations. Take your hymn book home with you to-day. Say good-by to your friends in the neighboring pews and go with him to any one of a hundred churches till his soul is saved and he joins you in the march to Heaven. More important than that ring on the third finger of your left hand it is that your Heavenly Father command the angel of mercy concerning your husband at his conversion, as in the parable of old: "Put a ring on his hand."

No letter of more importance ever came to the great city of Corinth, situated on what was called the "Bride of the Sea," and glistening with sculpture, and gated with a style of brass the magnificence of which the following ages have not been able to successfully imitate, and overshadowed by the Acro-Corinthus, a fortress of rock 2,000 feet high—I say no letter ever came to that great city of more importance than that letter in which Paul puts the two startling questions: "What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" The dearest sacrifice on the part of the one is cheap if it rescue the other. Better go to the smallest, weakest, most insignificant church on earth and be copartners in eternal bliss than pass your earthly membership in most gorgeously attractive church while your companion stays outside of evangelical privilege. Better have the drowning saved by a scow or a sloop than let him or her go down while you sail by in the gilded cabins of a Majestic or Campania.

Second remark: If both of the married couple be Christians, but one is so naturally constructed that it is impossible to enjoy the services of a particular denomination and the other is not so sectarian or punctilious, let the one less particular go with the other, who is very particular. As for myself, I feel as much at home in one denomination of evangelical Christians as another, and I think I must have been born very near the line. I like the solemn roll of the Episcopal liturgy, and I like the spontaneity of the Methodists, and I like the importance given to the ordinance of baptism by the Baptists, and I like the freedom of the Congregationalists, and I like the government and the sublime doctrine of the Presbyterians, and I like many of the others just as much as any I have mentioned, and I could happily live and preach and die and be buried from any of them. But others are born with a liking so stout, so unbending, so inexorable for some denomination that it is a positive necessity they have the advantage of that one. What they were intended to be in ecclesiasticism was written in the sides of their cradle, if the father and mother had eyes keen enough to see it. They would not stop crying until they had put in their hands as a plaything a Westminster catechism of the Thirty-nine Articles. The whole current of their temperament and thought and character runs into one sect of religionists as naturally as the James river into the Chesapeake. It would be a torture to such persons to be anywhere outside of that one church.

Now, let the wife or husband who is not so constructed sacrifice the milder preference for the one more inflexible and rigorous. Let the grapevine follow the rugosities and sinuosities of the oak or hickory. Abram, the richer in flocks of Christian grace, should say to Lot, who is built on a smaller scale: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen. Is not the whole land

before thee? As you can be edified and happy anywhere, go with your companion to the church to which he or she must go or be miserable.

Remark the third: If both the married couple are very strong in their sectarianism, let them attend the different churches preferred. It is not necessary that you attend the same church. Religion is between your conscience and your God. Like Abram and Lot, agree to suffer. When on Sabbath morning you come out of your home together and one goes one way and the other the other, heartily wish each other a good sermon and a time of profitable devotion, and when you meet again at the noonday repast let it be evident, each to each and to your children and to the hired help, that you have both been on the Mount of Transfiguration, although you went up by different paths, and that you have both been fed by the bread of life, though kneaded by different hands in different trays and baked in different ovens. "But how about the children?" I am often asked by scores of parents. Let them also make their own choice. They will grow up with reverence for both the denominations represented by father and mother if you by holy lives commend those denominations. If the father lives the better life, they will have the more favorable opinion of his denomination. And some day both the parents will for at least one service, go to the same church. The neighbors will say: "I wonder what is going on to-day, for I saw our neighbor and his wife, who always go to different churches, going arm in arm to the same sanctuary?" Well, I will tell you what has brought them arm in arm to the same altar. Something very important has happened. Their son is standing in the aisle, taking the vows of a Christian. He has been somewhat wayward and gave father and mother a good deal of anxiety, but their prayers have been answered in his conversion, and as he stands in the aisle and the minister of religion says: "Do you consecrate yourself to the God who made and redeemed you, and do you promise to serve Him all your days?" and with manly voice he answers: "I do," there is an April shower in the pew where father and mother sit and a rainbow of joy which arches both their souls that makes all the difference of creed infinitesimal. And the daughter, who has been very worldly and gay and thoughtless, puts her life on the altar of consecration, and as the sunlight of that Sabbath streams through the church window and falls upon her brow and cheek she looks like their other daughter, whose face was illuminated with the brightness of another world on the day when the Lord took her into His heavenly keeping years ago.

I should not wonder if, after all, these parents pass the evening of their life in the same church, all differences of church preference overcome by the joy of being in the house of God where their children were prepared for usefulness and Heaven. But I can give you a recipe for ruining your children. Angriely contend in the household that your church is right and the church of your companion is wrong. Bring sneer and caricature to emphasize your opinions, and your children will make up their minds that religion is a sham, and they will have none of it. In the northeast storm of domestic controversy the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley will not grow. Fight about apostolic succession, fight about election and free agency, fight about baptism, fight about the bishopric, fight about gown and surplice, and the religious prospect of your children will be left dead on the field. You will be as unfortunate as Charles, duke of Burgundy, who in battle lost a diamond the value of a kingdom, for in your fight you will lose the jewel of salvation for your entire household. This is nothing against the advocacy of your own religious theories. Use all forcible argument, bring all telling illustration, array all demonstrative facts, but let there be no acerbity, no stinging retort, no mean insinuation, no superciliousness, as though all others were wrong and you infallibly right.

But do not reject Christianity, as many do, because there are so many sects. Standing in Westminster hotel, London, I looked out of the window and saw three clocks, as near as I can remember—one on the parliament house, another on St. Margaret's chapel, another on Westminster abbey—and they were all different. One said 12 o'clock at noon, another said five minutes before 12, another said five minutes after 12. I might as well have concluded that there is no such thing as time because the three timepieces were different as for you to conclude that there is no such thing as pure Christianity because the churches differ in their statement of it.

But let us all rejoice that, although part of our family may worship on earth in one church and part in another church or bowed at the same altar in a compromise of preferences, we are, if redeemed, on the way to a perfect church, where all our preferences will be fully gratified. Great cathedral of eternity, with arches of amethysts and pillars of sapphires, with floors of emerald and windows aglow with the sunrise of Heaven! What stupendous towers, with chimera angel hoisted and angel rung! What myriads of worshippers, white robed and coroneted! What an officiator at the altar, even "the great High Priest of our profession!" What walls, hung with the captured shields and flags, by the church militant passed up to the church triumphant! What dogologies of all nations! Coronet to coronet, cymbal to cymbal, harp to harp, organ to organ! Pull out the tremulant stop to recall the sufferings past! Pull out the trumpet stop to recall the victory! When shall these eyes Thy Heaven built walls And pearly gates behold, Thy bulwarks, with salvation strong, And streets of shining gold? Pretty girls, as a rule, are not fit for much else.—Athenian Globe.

WHY IT IS "SHE."

Simple Explanation of a Puzzling Use of the Feminine Pronoun.

When one applies the third personal pronoun to a city, ship, car, country, to any one of a thousand different things, why is the feminine form so generally selected? Why does Kansas City invariably rejoice in "her" unrivaled location, never in "his"? To say of Missouri: "He is a noble state" would be a frightful solecism. Why? Why shouldn't a state be a he, or at any rate an it? Why should Germany, Russia, France, the United States, China, all the nations, be without an exception personified as she? Why should a ship, even when her sides bristle with the reeking tubes of war, invariably plow "her" way across the deep; never "his" way? Often the vessel's name will be distinctly masculine, as the Admiral Oquendo, or the Alfonso XIII, but both are she in type and speech just the same. Is it not a puzzle?

Of course, it is no trouble at all for the superficial student to explain. A ship is a she because the Latin word for ship, Navis, was feminine. Germany and other countries are she because in Latin they were Germania, Britannia, etc., all feminine. Cities are feminine because the Latin urbs was feminine, and so was civitas. It is too easy. Proof? Why, there is the Latin for sun, sol; that is masculine, and to this day the only object in nature that gets a masculine personification is the sun. But this is only moving the question back a few centuries. It is not an answer. On what theory did the old Romans base their selection of genders for these inanimate objects? It is useless to talk of their having received the idea in turn from the Greeks, or other peoples. Where did these get it from? How did its originators hit upon it? Of a certainty, at some time or other, away back in the misty past, there was a reason, but it would seem that now this reason has been forgotten. One man has about as much right to speculate on what it was as another, whether he is a linguist or not.

In fact it will probably be futile to attempt to be too scientific. For example, nine people out of ten nowadays will call a car she. Yet the old Roman word was carrus, or carrum, either he or it, never she. Such a change is difficult to account for. It is probably well not to bother much about it.—Kansas City Star.

MOUNT VERNON TO-DAY.

Interior of the Old Mansion in Which Washington Lived Unchanged Since His Day.

Those who go to the old world make a point of visiting every house and tomb associated with the name of a great man. The smallest number put into practice this same habit at home. By comparison few are the pilgrimages made to Mount Vernon, though the old estate of Washington is fuller of interest to the American than the Castle of Chillon on the field of Waterloo. The old mansion, with its heavy brass knocker, stands to-day with its living rooms nearly as they were in the days of the master.

Of true colonial architecture, upon entrance the broad paneled hall, with its platform stairway, is a prominent feature. The music-room, to the right, with its harpsichord and quaint bits of handwork, is teeming with memories of its distinguished mistress, as well as of Nellie Custis—the sunshine of the house. The carpet in the family dining-room, a gift of the French king, is as bright as though but just woven, and adds splendor to a room full of old bits of china and glass. In the guest chamber there is a strange device for holding lights, consisting of an upright wrought iron, about three feet high, with outstretched arms, in each of which is held a candle.

The view from the broad old portico, over the deer park and the hedge-grown garden, past the old family tomb, overgrown with clinging mosses and vines, down to the Potomac beyond, that lies like a ribbon of silver, is one at once so peaceful and picturesque that you can well realize why this was the favorite home of President Washington.

The tomb of Washington is as simple as was his life, only a bricked vault, trimmed in limestone; within the two painfully plain sarcophagi, bearing only the names and dates of burial. On the walls are slabs indicating the resting places of other members of the family. There is a story to the effect that so many applications for burial in the tomb were received from persons claiming to be of the Washington family that the key to the gates of the vault was thrown into the Potomac, and the vault itself is never to be opened again.—N. Y. Herald.

Unique New Year's Greeting. This is the New Year's address of the Porto Rican band of San Juan to Gen. Henry: "The portorican band of music who translate from the soul that loves dream the harmony of the sun and the light of day; who interpret with sweetness the high sentiments of that who devoted his fondness to the native land, respectfully and filled with fervor, take pleasure in congratulating you, and ask from the Creator everlasting happiness for you. In this dawn of our new era, full of deep solicitude, long for the praise of the whole world to make of it a present for you. Porto Rico, January 1, 1899."—Chicago Chronicle.

The Needful Quality. Jones—Dear me! You say you often lay down the law to your wife. How do you go about it? Bones—Why, all you need is firmness! I usually go into my study, lock the door, and do it over the transom;—if you need is firmness—in the door!—Puck.



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