

THE MISSION OF ART.

A Potent Factor in Uplifting the Human Race.

Dr. Talmage Preaches on the Influence of "Pleasant Pictures" in the Development of Christian Character.

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Dr. Talmage shows in this discourse how art may become one of the mightiest agencies for the elevation and salvation of the human race.

Pictures are by some relegated to the realm of the trivial, accidental, sentimental or worldly, but my text shows that God scrutinizes pictures, and whether they are good or bad, whether used for right or wrong purposes, is a matter of Divine observation and arraignment.

The world and the church ought to come to the higher appreciation of the Divine mission of pictures, yet the authors of them have generally been left to semistarvation.

It is not in a spirit of prudery, but backed up by God's eternal truth, when I say that you have no right to hang in your art rooms or your dwelling houses that which would be offensive to good people if the figures pictured were alive in your parlor and the guests of your household.

The oldest picture in England, a portrait of Chaucer, though now of great value, was picked out of a lumber garret. Great were the trials of Quentin Matsys, who toiled on from blacksmith's anvil till, as a painter, he won wide recognition.

What a poor world this would be if it were not for what my text calls "pleasant pictures!" I refer to your memory and mine when I ask if your knowledge of the Holy Scriptures has not been mightily augmented by the wood cuts or engravings in the old family Bible which father and mother read out of and laid on the table in the old homestead when you were boys and girls.

What overwhelming commentary on the Bible, what reinforcement for patriachs, prophets, apostles and Christ, what distribution of Scriptural knowledge of all nations in the paintings and engravings therefrom of Holman Hunt's "Christ in the Temple," Paul Veronese's "Magdalen Washing the Feet of Christ," Raphael's "Michael the Archangel," Albert Durer's "Dragon of the Apocalypse," Michael Angelo's "Plague of the Fiery Serpents," Tintoretto's "Flight into Egypt," Rubens' "Descent from the Cross," Leonardo Da Vinci's "Last Supper," Claude's "Queen of Sheba," Bellini's "Madonna," at Milan; Orcagna's "Last Judgment," and hundreds of miles of pictures, if they

were put in line, illustrating, displaying, dramatizing, irradiating Bible truths until the Scriptures are not to do so much on paper as on canvas, not so much in ink as in all the colors of the spectrum. In 1833 forth from Strasburg, Germany, there came a child that was to eclipse in speed and boldness anything and everything that the world had ever seen since the first color appeared on the sky at the creation, Paul Gustave Dore. At 11 years of age he published marvelous lithographs of his own. Saying nothing of what he did for Milton's "Paradise Lost," ambazonizing it on the attention of the world, he takes up the book of books, the monarch of literature, the Bible, and in his pictures, "The Creation of Light," "The Trial of Abraham's Faith," "The Burial of Sarah," "Joseph Sold by His Brethren," "The Brazen Serpent," "Boaz and Ruth," "David and Goliath," "The Transfiguration," "The Marriage in Cana," "Babylon Fallen," and 205 Scriptural scenes in all, with a boldness and a grasp and almost supernatural afflatus that make the heart throb and the brain reel and the tears start and the cheeks blanch and the entire nature quake with the tremendous things of God and eternity and the dead. I actually staggered down the steps of the London art gallery under the power of Dore's "Christ Leaving the Praetorium." Profess you to be a Christian man or woman, and see no divine mission in art, and acknowledge you no obligation either in thanks to God or man?

The tower of David was hung with 1,000 dented shields of battle; but you, oh man of wealth, may have a grander tower named after you, one that shall be hung not with the symbols of carnage, but with the victories of that art which was so long ago recognized in my text as "pleasant pictures." Oh, the power of pictures! I cannot deride, as some have done, Cardinal Mazarin, who, when told that he must die, took his last walk through the art gallery of his palace, saying: "Must I quit all this? Look at that Titian! Look at that Correggio! Look at that deluge of Canacci! Farewell, dear pictures!"

As the day of the lord of hosts, according to this text, will scrutinize the pictures, I implore all parents to see that in their households they have neither in book nor newspaper nor on canvas anything that will deprave. Pictures are no longer the exclusive possession of the affluent. There is not a respectable home in these cities that has not specimens of woodcut or steel engraving, if not of painting, and your whole family will feel the moral uplifting or depression. Have nothing on your wall or in books that will familiarize the young with scenes of cruelty and wassail; have only those sketches made by artists in elevated moods and none of those scenes that seem the product of artistic delirium tremens. Pictures are not only a strong but a universal language. The human race is divided into almost as many languages as there are nations, but the pictures may speak to people of all tongues.

There needs to be a concerted effort for the suffering artist of America, not sentimental discourse about what we owe to artists, but contracts that will give them a livelihood; for I am in full sympathy with the Christian farmer who was very busy gathering his fall apples and some one asked him to pray for a poor family, the father of which had broken his leg, and the busy farmer said: "I cannot stop now to pray, but you can go down into the cellar and get some corned beef and butter and eggs and potatoes; that is all I can do now." Artists may wish for our prayers, but they also want practical help from men who can give them work. You have heard scores of sermons for all other kinds of suffering men and women, but we need sermons that make pleas for the suffering men and women of American art. Their work is more true to nature and life than some of the masterpieces that have become immortal on the other side of the sea, but it is the fashion of Americans to mention foreign artists and to know little or nothing about our own Copley and Allston and Inman and Greenough and Kensett. Let the affluent fling out of their windows and into the back yard valueless daubs on canvas and call in these splendid but unrewarded men and tell them to adorn your walls not only with that which shall please the taste, but enlarge the minds and improve the morals and save the souls of those who gaze upon them. All American cities need great galleries of art, not only open annually for a few days on exhibition, but which shall stand open all the year round, and from early morning until ten o'clock at night, and free to all who would come and go.

What a preparation for the wear and tear of the day a five minutes' look in the morning at some picture that will open a door into some larger realm than that in which our population daily drudges. Or what a good thing the half hour of artistic opportunity on the way home in the evening from exhaustion that demands recuperation for mind and soul as well as body! Who will do for the city where you live what W. W. Corcoran did for Washington and what others have done for Philadelphia and Boston and New York? Men of wealth, if you are too modest to build and endow such a place during your lifetime, why not go to your iron safe and take out your last will and testament and make a codicil that shall build for the city of your residence a throne for American art? Take some of that money that would otherwise spoil your children and build an art gallery that shall associate your name forever not only with the great masters of painting who are gone, but with the great masters who are trying to live, and also win the admiration and love of tens of thousands of people, who, unable to have fine pictures of their own, would be advantaged. By your benefactions build your own monuments and not leave it to the whim of others. Some of the best people sleeping in Greenwood have no monuments at all or some crumbling stones that in a few years will let the rain wash out name and epitaph, while some men, whose death was the abatement of a nuisance, have a pile of Aberdeen granite high enough for a king and eulogies enough to embarrass a seraph. Oh, man of large wealth, instead of leaving to the whim of others your monumental commemoration and epitaphology, to be looked at when people are going to and fro at the burial of others, build right down in the heart of our great city, or the city where you live, an immense free reading-room, or a free musical conservatory, or a free art gallery, the niches for sculpture and the walls bloom with the rise and fall of nations, and lessons of courage for the disheartened, and rest for the weary, and life for the dead; and 150 years from now you will be wielding influence in this world for good. How much better than white marble, that chills you if you put your hand on it when you touch it in the cemetery, would be a monument in colors, in beaming eyes, in living possession, in splendors which under the chandelier would be glowing and warm, and looked at by strolling groups with catalogue in hand on the January night when the necropolis where the body sleeps is all snowed under!

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Furthermore, let all reformers and all Sabbath school teachers and all Christian workers realize that, if they make pictures, if not by chalk or blackboards or kindergarten designs or by pencil on canvas, then by words. Arguments are soon forgotten, but pictures, whether in language or in colors, are what produce stronger effects. Christ was always telling what a thing was like, and his sermon on the mount was a great picture gallery, beginning with a sketch of a "city on a hill that cannot be hid," and ending with a tempest beating against two houses, one on the rock and the other on the sand. The parable of the prodigal son, a picture; parable of the sower, who went forth to sow, a picture; parable of the unmerciful servant, a picture; parable of the ten virgins, a picture; parable of the talents, a picture. The world wants pictures, and the appetite begins with the child, who consents to go early to bed if the mother will sit beside him and rehearse a story, which is only a picture.

OWEN'S HARD LUCK HUNT.

His Dog, Llewellyn, Made a Mistake About a Rabbit, and Owen Went into Retirement.

Owen Owens, Esq., as he takes great pride in being called, drove into town and made his first appearance for three weeks at the post office. Mr. Owens is a prominent citizen of this farming community, being, according to his own statement, sprung from "mans an' family from Wales who was settle Remsen 'bout now century-half ago," and as his usual custom is to come to town at least every other day, no matter how deep the roads are drifted, there had been much speculation over his long absence. Therefore, when he did appear there was a general hail of: "Wa'ol, Owen Owens, Esq-ier, what's ben allin' ye?"

Owen took off his big fur cap and scratched his head with a sad expression.

"Plenty troubles, plenty troubles," he said.

"What's wrong? Wife ain't sick, is she?"

"No, no. She all right."

Owen took a long breath and looked at the circle of surrounding faces.

"Well, I tell you all about it an' you make laugh by it, only I don't make so much laugh, whatever. It was all by fault my dog Llewellyn. Nice birds dog, Llewellyn; part s'leep an' lound an' some-what you say-mongril, but he firs'-rate on mus'rat an' woodchuck an' chase rabbit jus' same as other two of it. There was fellow from city stay by my house for week an' pay boardin' while he make huntin' round, an' when he go 'way he leavin' his gun an' some powder-shell an' tell me for use him, an' he come again pretty soon some few day. So I say:

"Here pretty good chances for cheap hunt, so I guess I take him."

"Well, I get Bob Hughes an' we go in. Bob wasn't have no guns, but carry a bags for a games. He say maybe he hit him with bags if I wasn't bag him with guns. He jus' make that for little joke, look you. Well, we go 'long out by my brus' lot an' goin' by brus' heap when Llewellyn make loud barks an' out go rabbit by stump-an' white tail wavin' jus' like he wavin' on his hand-checkup-pockets for me like sayin': 'S'oot away, Owen, s'oot away.' Way he go bounce over leaf an' ground, an' I thinkin' charge ain't cos' me nutthin' so, by gos', anyway I let fly it, only I forget for make aims. Make good deal noise, tho', whatever, an' do somethin' pretty hard on my right soldier, I tell you. Well, Llewellyn he chasin' a rabbits an' Bob Hughes he chasin' Llewellyn, so I rub soldier an' chasin' Hughes, an' pretty soon we all catch him, on'y he go under stones pile. On far side stones pile was big log an' brus' heap, an' Llewellyn he in by there scrapec an' bark, I tell you. I say:

"Bob, gat ready a bags-I crawl in by Llewellyn an' s'oot him a rabbits."

"So I crawl by log an' make aim in thick part, little 'head of Llewellyn, an' let fly it both barrel by one times. Was big noises, I tell you, an' smokes an' soldier hurtin', so I roll off logs an' rabbit runnin' right from under me, an' he turn color to white an' blacks an' I see rabbit change himself for skunks, an' by gos', anyway I have pretty bad luck, whatever."

"I don't know what come by first rabbits, but Llewellyn he make jumps an' shake a skunks till he smell himself for three weeks. Well, Hughes he skin skunk, so he pretty bad too, an' we thinkin' we best for goin' home. So we comin' pretty close by woodshed's door my womans she come runnin'."

"My grassious me! I was never hear such smell! You spoillin' milks, skim cheese an' butter. You go out back barn an' stay in."

"Well, me an' Bob, we got to run pretty quicks now, I tell you, an' then we smash up onion an' rub ourself, both two of him, with a onion's juice all over skins, an' then we take shovel an' bury clothes an' bag, an' I ben livin' in barn ever since. That's why I don't come down to Remsen."

"But when we was goin' by rabbit hunt again, Llewellyn, I guess I leave him by home, for he bark jus' a same oy skunk as by rabbit or Jackey, so how man goin' for tell till he close by, an' then he don't get times for clear way."—N. Y. Sun.

Loss of Gutturals.

A word in constant use, which has lost a guttural, is "not." This is contracted from "nought," in old English often written "noht," and having, as now, a more emphatic signification than merely "not." The simple negative adverb was "ne," as we find it continually in Chaucer, and in Spencer also, but this is well known to be an archaism. Chaucer, however, sometimes uses "nat," or "nought," in cases where the negative would seem to be enough; and we can easily see how, from being often used, the word would lose its guttural, and become "not," and that, as in the case of "he" and "him," the greater emphasis laid on the word, when it had a substantial meaning, would cause the guttural to be sounded to a later period, and thus to be permanently settled in writing; while, when it was simply a negative, the consonant would disappear, like the initial of "hit," from the word having less emphasis. In German the adverb is still "nicht," often, indeed, pronounced "nit," while the substantive has "a" added. "Nichts."—Gentleman's Magazine.

Female Robber Chief.

The central provinces seem to be distinguished for peculiar crimes and peculiar criminals. On one page of the report on the police administration there are details of a raid on a village by a band of Dacoits "led by a woman who carried a sword!" And yet it is said that there is no hope for the emancipation of the women of India.—Times of India.

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