

TUTORS OF NATIONS.

NEWSPAPERS THE SUBJECT OF DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

Disseminators of Knowledge to the Multitude and an Accurate History of the Time—The Most Potent Influence For Good on Earth.

WASHINGTON, March 23.—Newspaper row, as it is called here in Washington, the long row of offices connected with prominent journals throughout the land, pays so much attention to Dr. Talmage they may be glad to hear what he thinks of them while he discusses a subject in which the whole country is interested. His text today was, "And the wheels were full of eyes" (Ezekiel x, 12), "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts xvii, 21).

What is a preacher to do when he finds two texts equally good and suggestive? In that perplexity I take both. Wheels full of eyes? What but the wheels of a newspaper printing press? Other wheels are blind. They roll on, pulling or crushing. The manufacturer's wheel—how it grinds the operator with fatigues and rolls over nerve and muscle and bone and heart, not knowing what it does. The sewing machine wheel sees not the aches and pains fastened to it—tighter than the band that moves it, sharper than the needle which it plies. Every moment of every hour of every day of every month of every year there are hundreds of thousands of wheels of mechanism, wheels of enterprise, wheels of hard work, in motion, but they are eyesless.

Not so the wheels of the printing press. Their entire business is to look and report. They are full of optic nerves, from axle to periphery. They are like those spoken of by Ezekiel as full of eyes. Sharp eyes, near sighted, far sighted. They look up. They look down. They look far away. They take in the next street and the next hemisphere. Eyes of criticism, eyes of investigation, eyes that twinkle with mirth, eyes glowing with indignation, eyes tender with love, eyes of suspicion, eyes of hope, blue eyes, black eyes, green eyes, holy eyes, evil eyes, sore eyes, political eyes, literary eyes, historical eyes, religious eyes, eyes that see everything. "And the wheels were full of eyes." But in my second text is the world's cry for the newspaper. Paul describes a class of people in Athens who spent their time either in gathering the news or telling it. Why especially in Athens? Because the more intelligent people become, the more inquisitive they are—not about small things, but great things.

Genealogy of the Newspaper.

The question then most frequently asked, What is the news? To answer that cry in the text for the newspaper the centuries have put their wits to work. China first succeeded, and has at Peking a newspaper that has been printed every week for 1,000 years, printed on silk. Rome succeeded by publishing the *Acta Diurna*, in the same column putting fires, murders, marriages and tempests. France succeeded by a physician writing out the news of the day for his patients. England succeeded under Queen Elizabeth in first publishing the news of the Spanish armada, and going on until she had enough enterprise, when the battle of Waterloo was fought, deciding the destiny of Europe, to give it one-third of a column in the *London Morning Chronicle*, about as much as the newspaper of our day gives of a small fire. America succeeded by Benjamin Harris' first weekly paper called *Public Occurrences*, published in Boston in 1690, and by the first daily, *The American Advertiser*, published in Philadelphia in 1784.

The newspaper did not suddenly spring upon the world, but came gradually. The genealogical line of the newspaper is this: The Adam of the race was a circular or news letter, created by divine impulse in human nature, and the circular begat the pamphlet, and the pamphlet begat the quarterly, and the quarterly begat the weekly, and the weekly begat the semi-weekly, and the semi-weekly begat the daily. But alas, by what a struggle it came to its present development! No sooner had its power been demonstrated than tyranny and superstition shackled it. There is nothing that despotism so fears and hates as a printing press. It has too many eyes in its wheel. A great writer declared that the king of Naples made it unsafe for him to write of anything but natural history. Austria could not endure Kosuth's journalistic pen pleading for the redemption of Hungary. Napoleon I, trying to keep his iron heel on the neck of nations, said, "Editors are the regents of sovereigns and the tutors of nations and are only fit for prison." But the battle for the freedom of the press was fought in the courtrooms of England and America and decided before this century began by Hamilton's eloquent plea for *J. Peter Zenger's* Gazette in America, and Erskine's advocacy of the freedom of publication in England. These were the *Marathon* and *Thermopylae* in which the freedom of the press was established in the United States and Great Britain, and all the powers of earth and hell will never again be able to put on the handcuffs and hoppers of literary and political despotism. It is notable that Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of American Independence, wrote also: "If I had to choose between a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should prefer the latter." Stung by some base fabrication coming to us in print, we come to write or speak of the unbridled printing press; or, our new book ground up by an unjust critic, we come to write or speak of the unfairness of the printing press; or, perhaps, through our own indistinctness of utterance, we are reported as saying just the opposite of what we did say,

and there is a small riot of semicolons, hyphens and commas, and we come to speak or write of the blundering printing press; or, seeing a paper filled with divorce cases or social scandal, we speak and write of the filthy printing press; or, seeing a journal, through bribery, wheel round from one political side to the other in one night, we speak of the corrupt printing press, and many talk about the lampoonry, and the empiricism, and the sans culottism of the printing press.

An Everlasting Blessing.

But I discourse now on a subject you have never heard—the immeasurable and everlasting blessing of a good newspaper. Thank God for the wheel full of eyes. Thank God that we do not have, like the Athenians, to go about to gather up and relate the tidings of the day, since the omnivorous newspaper does both for us. The grandest temporal blessing that God has given to the nineteenth century is the newspaper. We would have better appreciation of this blessing if we knew the money, the brain, the losses, the exasperations, the anxieties, the wear and tear of heart-strings, involved in the production of a good newspaper. Under the impression that almost anybody can make a newspaper, scores of inexperienced capitalists every year enter the lists, and consequently during the last few years a newspaper has died almost every day. The disease is epidemic. The larger papers swallow the smaller ones, the whale taking down 50 minnows at one swallow. With more than 7,000 dailies and weeklies in the United States and Canada, there are but 36 a half century old. Newspapers do not average more than five years' existence. The most of them die of cholera infantum. It is high time that the people found out that the most successful way to sink money and keep it sunk is to start a newspaper. There comes a time when almost every one is smitten with the newspaper mania and starts one, or have stock in one he must or die.

The course of procedure is about this: A literary man has an agricultural or scientific or political or religious idea which he wants to ventilate. He has no money of his own—literary men seldom have. But he talks of his ideas among confidential friends until they become inflamed with the idea, and forthwith they buy type and press and rent composing room and gather a corps of editors, and with a prospectus that proposes to cure everything the first copy is flung on the attention of an admiring world. After awhile one of the plain stockholders finds that no great revolution has been effected by this daily or weekly publication; that neither sun nor moon stands still; that the world goes on lying and cheating and stealing just as it did before the first issue. The aforesaid matter of fact stockholder wants to sell out his stock, but nobody wants to buy, and other stockholders get infected and sick of newspaperdom, and an enormous bill at the paper factory rolls into an avalanche, and the printers refuse to work until back wages are paid up, and the compositor bows to the managing editor, and the managing editor bows to the editor in chief, and the editor in chief bows to the directors, and the directors bow to the world at large, and all the subscribers wonder why their paper doesn't come. The world will have to learn that a newspaper is as much of an institution as the Bank of England or Yale college and is not an enterprise. If you have the aforesaid agricultural or scientific or religious or political idea to ventilate, you had better charge upon the world through the columns already established. It is folly for any one who cannot succeed at anything else to try newspaperdom. If you cannot climb the hill back of your house, it is folly to try the sides of the Matterhorn.

Comes Through Fire.

To publish a newspaper requires the skill, the precision, the boldness, the vigilance, the strategy of a commander in chief. To edit a newspaper requires that one be a statesman, an essayist, a geographer, a statistician, and in acquisition encyclopaedic. To man, to govern, to propel a newspaper until it shall be a fixed institution, a national fact, demand more qualities than any business on earth. If you feel like starting any newspaper, secular or religious, understand that you are being threatened with softening of the brain or lunacy, and, throwing your pocketbook into your wife's lap, start for some insane asylum before you do something desperate. Meanwhile, as the dead newspapers, week by week, are carried out to the burial, all the living newspapers give respectful obituary, telling when they were born and when they died. The best printers' ink should give at least one stickful of epitaph. If it was a good paper, say, "Peace to its ashes." If it was a bad paper, I suggest the epitaph written for Francis Chautreaux: "Here continueth to rot the body of Francis Chautreaux, who, with an inflexible constancy and uniformity of life, persisted in the practice of every human vice, excepting prodigality and hypocrisy. His insatiable avarice exempted him from the first, his matchless impudence from the second." I say this because I want you to know that a good, healthy, long lived, entertaining newspaper is not an easy blessing, but one that comes to us through the fire.

First of all, newspapers make knowledge democratic and for the multitude. The public library is a haymow so high up that few can reach it, while the newspaper throws down the forage to our feet. Public libraries are the reservoirs where the great floods are stored high up and away off. The newspaper is the tunnel that brings them down to the pitchers of all the people. The chief use of great libraries is to make newspapers out of. Great libraries make a few men and women very wise. Newspapers lift whole nations into the sunlight. Better have 50,000,000 people moderately intelligent than 100,000 tons.

A false impression is abroad that newspaper knowledge is ephemeral because periodicals are thrown aside, and

not one out of ten thousand people files them for future reference. Such knowledge, so far from being ephemeral, goes into the very structure of the world's heart and brain and decides the destiny of churches and nations. Knowledge on the shelf is of little worth. It is knowledge afoot, knowledge harnessed, knowledge in revolution, knowledge winged, knowledge projected, knowledge thunderbolted. So far from being ephemeral, nearly all the best minds and hearts have their hands on the printing press today and have had since it got emancipated. Adams and Hancock and Otis used to go to the *Boston Gazette* and compose articles on the rights of the people. Benjamin Franklin, De Witt Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Quincy, were strong in newspaperdom. Many of the immortal things that have been published in book form first appeared in what you may call the ephemeral periodical. All Macaulay's essays first appeared in a review. All Carlyle's, all Ruskin's, all McIntosh's, all Sydney Smith's, all Hazlitt's, all Thackeray's, all the elevated works of fiction in our day, are reprints from periodicals in which they appeared as serials. Tennyson's poems, Burns' poems, Longfellow's poems, Emerson's poems, Lowell's poems, Whittier's poems, were once fugitive pieces. You cannot find ten literary men in Christendom, with strong minds and great hearts, but are or have been somehow connected with the newspaper printing press. While the book will always have its place, the newspaper is more potent. Because the latter is multitudinous do not conclude it is necessarily superficial. If a man should from childhood to old age see only his Bible, Webster's Dictionary and his newspaper, he could be prepared for all the duties of this life and all the happiness of the next.

A Mirror of Life.

Again, a good newspaper is a useful mirror of life as it is. It is sometimes complained that newspapers report the evil when they ought only to report the good. They must report the evil as well as the good, or how shall we know what is to be reformed, what guarded against, what fought down? A newspaper that pictures only the honesty and virtue of society is a misrepresentation. That family is best prepared for the duties of life which, knowing the evil, is taught to select the good. Keep children under the impression that all is fair and right in the world, and when they go out into it they will be as poorly prepared to struggle with it as a child who is thrown into the middle of the Atlantic and told to learn how to swim. Our only complaint is when sin is made attractive and morality dull, when vice is painted with great headings and good deeds are put in obscure corners, iniquity set up in great primer and righteousness in nonpareil. Sin is loathsome; make it loathsome. Virtue is beautiful; make it beautiful.

It would work a vast improvement if all our papers—religious, political, literary—should for the most part drop their impersonality. This would do better justice to newspaper writers. Many of the strongest and best writers of the country live and die unknown and are denied their just fame. The vast public never learns who they are. Most of them are on comparatively small income, and after awhile their hand forgets it cunning, and they are without resources, left to die. Why not, at least, have his initial attached to his most important work? It always gave additional force to an article when you occasionally saw added to some significant article in the old New York *Courier* and *Enquirer* J. W. W., or in *The Tribune* H. G., or in *The Herald* J. G. B., or in *The Times* H. J. R., or in *The Evening Post* W. C. B., or in *The Evening Express* E. B.

The Most Potent Influence.

Another step forward for newspaperdom will be when in our colleges and universities we open opportunities for preparing candidates for the editorial chair. We have in such institutions medical departments, law departments. Why not editorial departments? Do the legal and healing professions demand more culture and careful training than the editorial or reportorial professions? I know men may tumble by what seems accident into a newspaper office as they may tumble into other occupations, but it would be an incalculable advantage if those proposing a newspaper life had an institution to which they might go to learn the qualifications, the responsibilities, the temptations, the dangers, the magnificent opportunities, of newspaper life. Let there be a lectureship in which there shall appear the leading editors of the United States telling the story of their struggles, their victories, their mistakes, how they worked and what they found out to be the best way of working. There will be strong men who will climb up without such aid into editorial power and efficiency. So do men climb up to success in other branches by sheer grit. But if we want learned institutions to make lawyers and artists and doctors and ministers, we make more need learned institutions to make editors, who occupy a position of influence a hundredfold greater. I do not put the truth too strongly when I say the most potent influence for good on earth is a good editor and the most potent influence for evil is a bad one. The best way to re-enforce and improve the newspaper is to endow editorial professorates. When will Princeton or Harvard or Yale or Rochester lead the way?

Another blessing of the newspaper is the foundation it lays for accurate history of the time in which we live. We for the most part blindly guess about the ages that antedate the newspaper and are dependent upon the prejudices of this or that historian. But after a hundred or two years what a splendid opportunity the historian will have to teach the people the lesson of this day. Our Bancrofts got from the early newspapers of this country, from the *Boston News-Letter*, the *New York Gazette*, and *The American Rag Bag*; and *Royal Gazetteer* and *Independent Chronicle*, and *Massachusetts Spy*, and the *Philadelphia Aurora*, accounts of Perry's vic-

tory, and Hamilton's duel, and Washington's death, and Boston massacre, and the oppressive foreign tax on luxuries which turned Boston harbor into a teapot, and Paul Revere's midnight ride, and Rhode Island rebellion, and South Carolina nullification. But what a field for the chronicler of the great future when he opens the files of a hundred standard American newspapers, giving the minutiae of all things occurring under the social, political, ecclesiastical, international headings! Five hundred years from now, if the world lasts so long, the student looking for stirring, decisive history will pass by the misty corridors of other centuries and say to the librarians, "Find me the volumes that give the century in which the American presidents were assassinated, the civil war enacted and the cotton gin, the steam locomotive and telegraph and electric pen and telephone and cylinder presses were invented."

Front Wheel of the Lord's Chariot. Once more I remark that a good newspaper is a blessing as an evangelistic influence. You know there is a great change in our day taking place. All the secular newspapers of the day—for I am not speaking now of the religious newspapers—all the secular newspapers of the day discuss all the questions of God, eternity and the dead, and all the questions of the past, present and future. There is not a single doctrine of theology but has been discussed in the last ten years by the secular newspapers of the country. They gather up all the news of all the earth bearing on religious subjects, and then they scatter the news abroad again.

The Christian newspaper will be the right wing of the apocalyptic angel. The cylinder of the Christianized printing press will be the front wheel of the Lord's chariot. I take the music of this day, and I do not mark it diminuendo—I mark it crescendo. A pastor on a Sabbath preaches to a few hundred, or a few thousand people, and on Monday, or during the week, the printing press will take the same sermon and preach it to millions of people. God speed the printing press! God save the printing press! God Christianize the printing press!

When I see the printing press standing with the electric telegraph on the one side gathering up material, and the lightning express train on the other side waiting for the tons of folded sheets of newspapers, I pronounce it the mightiest force in our civilization. So I commend you to pray for all those who manage the newspapers of the land, for all typesetters, for all reporters, for all editors, for all publishers, that, sitting or standing in positions of such great influence, they may give all that influence for God and the betterment of the human race. An aged woman making her living by knitting, unwound the yarn from the ball until she found in the center of the ball there was an old piece of newspaper. She opened it and read an advertisement which announced that she had become heiress to a large property and that fragment of a newspaper lifted her from pauperism to affluence. And I do not know but as the thread of time unrolls and unwinds a little further through the silent yet speaking newspaper may be found the vast inheritance of the world's redemption.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Down his successive journeys run.
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

RIGHTS IN HOLDING A TITLE

The Question Mooted in Connection With Governor Atkinson's Appointment.

The question of how a woman's right to preserve her own individuality may or may not be changed by her marriage has been much mooted in connection with the titled conferred upon Miss Lewis Butt, of Augusta, Ga.

At the time of the unveiling in Richmond, Va., of the Jefferson Davis monument, Miss Butt, who was on a visit in that city, was surprised that among the many Southern States represented in the decorations Georgia had no place. The day before the ceremonial was to come off she got permission of herself undertake the ornamentation of the exterior of one of the handsomest houses in the town, and at night held a large reception, at which she was congratulated and lauded by Governor Atkinson of Georgia, who declared that she had rendered the State a political service. Miss Butt replied that she should be made a member of the Governor's staff. The Governor agreed that such an acknowledgment should be made, and that if he were re-elected he would make the appointment.

Last autumn saw Governor Atkinson again installed in office, and Miss Butt received an appointment to the staff. She began to fulfil the duties of her post, riding with the staff on parades and receiving with them, and several times represented the Governor at functions he could not attend, bearing always, of course, the title of colonel. The young woman's marriage some two months ago brought about a complication in the matter of names, for inquisitive people began to demand whether she should be called Colonel Butt or Cunningham, or whether she had a right to the title at all. The question is still unsettled, but Mrs. Cunningham is in possession of the sword of office, the only portion of uniform she assumed. It is a handsome jewelled affair, which was presented to her by the staff.

Turkey's Postal System.

Although Turkey some years ago engaged a German official to reorganize its postal system, it has not yet been able to win the confidence of foreign residents, who continue to make use of the Austrian, German, English, French and Russian postoffices in preference to the Turkish.

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