

IN A FIGURATIVE SENSE

MEANING OF DICTUM OF SEER OF PATMOS, "WITHOUT ARE DOGS."

DEGRADED CURS OF ORIENT

Rev. Dr. Talmage Draws a Broad Distinction Between the Life That Is Inspired By a Love of All That Is Noble and Pure and One That Has Become Degraded and Brutal Through the Indulgence of Selfish Passions.

Maloted according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1894, by William Baily, of Toronto, at the Dept. of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Los Angeles, Cal., June 19.—Not in the literal but in the figurative sense does the preacher deal with this unusual text by drawing the broad distinction between the life that is inspired by a love of all that is noble and pure and one that has become degraded and brutal through the indulgence of selfish passions. The text is Revelations xxii, 15, "Without are dogs."

"I never could sympathize with the slur which the Bible casts upon my canine friends," once said an old man to me. "St. John in that passage of Scripture, 'Without are dogs,' seems to despise the dog, as I despise the buzzard or the hyena. He seems to picture the infernal regions as the only suitable place for their kennels. He insinuates their companionship for man to be a humiliation and a degradation. Now, in contrast to that assertion, I have far more respect for an honest dog than for a dishonest, deceitful man. I count among my dearest friends some of the representatives of the canine race. Indeed I go so far in my respect for dogs that if in that heavenly land I found one of the beautiful dogs I have owned on earth sleeping at my feet in that abode of bliss or looking up into my face with the expression of love and fidelity I have seen so often I should not feel it any slight; but rather an enhancement of my happiness."

I could understand my friend's feeling, and I love dogs well enough to sympathize with it. There are no grounds for believing in a future life for animals, but I confess that if in the boundless love of God we should find that even for the faithful dog there was a paradise I for one should rejoice. I have that affection that Sir Walter Scott had for the canine race, and I always feel a sense of companionship when a dog is doing in my study. As a boy I delighted to have a canine companion in my rambles. When we are rambling over the hills or in our city walks and my dog friends stop and listen to what I say I am always sure of one fact, that they will not betray my confidence as I have known some men to do. "Yes, yes," I said to my aged friend, "like you, I have always loved the dog; but, unlike you, I do not believe the Bible really degrades the faithfulness of a good dog." This passage of Scripture, "Without are dogs," is not casting a slur upon the dog. It is not sneering at the ancestors of some of those noble beings belonging to the royal families of dogs which we have adopted into our homes as honored habits of our firesides. The seer of Patmos had never seen such dogs as ours. The dogs with which he was familiar were such homeless, carrion eating dogs as those which to this day roam the narrow streets of Jerusalem, and Damascus, degraded curs whose presence would have been defiling to that beautiful city which he saw in vision. Therefore it is to the eastern dog, homeless and friendless, which I have so often seen in my travels and by whose howlings I have been awakened at night and have watched while standing upon the hotel porch of the Far East, when he says with evident gratification, "Without are dogs."

But I believe the apostle had a further and deeper meaning than this. I think he meant that the qualities which the dog represented to his mind were excluded from the heavenly city. Selfishness, degradation, quarrelsomeness, all that rendered dogs hateful to the Jews of the orient, whether in beast or man, were outside those heavenly walls. And, first, I believe he meant that in heaven there would be neither physical nor mental monstrosities. It is

to be a place where there would be a perfect mind in harmony with a perfect body and the perfect soul in every way shall have perfect externalities. There are some men so degraded with their vices that their very forms and features have become repulsive. They bear the same relation to good living, intelligent men that the oriental dogs bear to our household pets.

How much this transformation means to many sufferers none but they can realize. It is very hard for the deformed and the crippled to maintain spiritual and mental sweetness and serenity. It is easy for a man with a fine constitution and a perfect physical form to be cheerful and happy, but how difficult for one who has to suffer continual pain and is shut out by deformity from the sports and exercises of companions to be sweet tempered and genial to all about him. "What is the matter with So-and-So?" I once asked a dear friend of mine about a mutual acquaintance. "He is so touchy and sensitive that the least wind from the east will twist him all out of shape." "Yes," answered my friend, "that is true, but perhaps you have forgotten that that man was born lame. If you ever stop to think, you will also find that nearly all men and women born with physical infirmities are cross and crabbed and touchy and sensitive." "I never thought of it," I answered. "I believe—yes, I know you are right." Physical infirmity is accompanied by and, in fact, involves mental pain and anguish. All this will be done away with in the celestial city.

Let me illustrate my thought in another way. The thought that a healthy body is very apt to be the incarnation of a healthy mind and soul. Here is a little child born into my home. You look in wonderment upon that child. For weeks and months you go among your friends boasting about that baby. "Why," you say, "that is the most perfect dispositioned child I ever knew. She never cries. She is always smiling and cooing. She never awakens us at night. She is as happy as a sunbeam creeping into our bedroom in the early morning." But after that little child has been in your home eight or ten months suddenly her nature seems to undergo a radical change. The hot hand of fever touches her forehead. The red marks blotch her fair skin. Raked and twisted with pain, she cries all the day and most of the night, and even in her sleep she continually utters low, moaning whine. "What is the matter? Has the child's disposition changed? Oh, no. The physical body has become diseased, and now the mind is fretting in sympathy. Thus we find that a perfect body is apt to have a perfect mind and an imperfect body an imperfect mind. So, when St. John says, "Without are dogs," I believe he means that in heaven we shall have no physical infirmities, no club-foot like Lord Byron, no gnarled and twisted nervous organization like Alexander Pope, no blinded eyes like John Milton, no deaf ears like Beethoven, no skin leprosy and covered with sores. It shall be physically a "dogless heaven."

Roaming again through the crowded streets of Palestine, I find that the same merciless tribal bitterness and mortal enmities which were once rife among the North American Indians are prevalent among the dogs of the east. A each Indian tribe owned its own territory and in time of war it meant death for a member of one tribe to be found wandering about in the "land of strangers," so the dogs of the east take possession of the different streets of the great cities. Each canine tribe has its sentinels standing guard at the end of the streets. Then if one dog of another tribe enters that street the howl of warning is given. At once all the other dogs of that tribe leap to their feet and, as a pack of hungry wolves, make a mad rush for that stranger to tear him limb from limb.

We must study my text in the canine language of the east. Old hunters tell us that no man has truly heard a lion roar unless he has heard the king of the forest sound his call of defiance in the dark jungles of the African continent. Then the awe striking power of that voice seems to come from everywhere and yet from nowhere. The hills are sounding boards which toss the echoes as the battledores throw the shuttles backward and forward. Then the fawns squat down, with fright,

and the "muttier birds" press lower upon their nests, and the very leaves of the trees seem too terror stricken to move. Like the roaring lions in the African forests, are the howling of the dogs in the streets of Damascus and Jerusalem. When one canine tribe plunges upon a dog of another tribe which wanders into their street or territory it seems as though all the demoniacal voices of the infernal regions are let loose. First there comes the sharp, angry bark, then the picket line of a great army has fired a gun to call the host to arms, then muttered growls, then the frightened bark of the pursued dog, then a very pandemonium of barking and growlings and angry, snarling canine voices. They awake the sleeping tourist so suddenly that at first he will start up from his bed with fright. Then follows the suggestive silence as the battle evidently ends by the death of the victim or by the escape of the pursued.

What is the Johannian meaning of this mortal combat between the tribal dogs of the east? Why, it means that in heaven there are to be no family meannesses, no contemptible meannesses, such as are often found at the earthly fireside. It means that instead of one father and one mother gathering their own children about them in one "Mansion of Light," and saying to one of themselves: "Shut the door and keep every one else out. We have enough, and more than enough now. Let all others take care of themselves as best they can," all men will be brothers, and all women sisters. There shall all be sons and daughters of one God, who is the Father, and have kinship to one Christ, who is the Elder Brother. It means that in heaven there will be no wealthy man's wife will be able to suck out the life of a poor sewing girl merely because she is poor, no employer will be able to grind his employees down until it means physical and mental and often spiritual death. It means no vendetta or blood feud, it also means no financial vendetta or money feud.

Roaming again through the dark, narrow, crowded streets of eastern Palestine, I surmise, from the words of my text, that heaven is to be a place of honored and jubilant occupations. It is to be a place where the words "menial" and "servile," "scavenger" and "scullion," "hireling" and "dependent," "lackey" and "underling" will be unknown. All words signifying a degraded work will forever disappear when the lexicon of earth shall be consumed upon the funeral pyre of a burning world. It does not mean that heaven is to be a place of inaction and stagnation and stupidity. But it does mean that heaven is to be a place where all workmen shall be honored alike and where the duties of one immortal shall be respected as much as are the occupations of other immortals.

Why do I make these two astounding statements? First, because I find recorded in the eighth chapter of Revelation the startling fact that "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." If heaven was always still peace would St. John have written that sentence in reference to the day of judgment. If you would interpret that passage in a common sense way would you not practically say, "Why, heaven is such a busy place that all the angels and archangels and redeemed immortals are working and working all the time? But when St. John saw the books of the judgment opened then there was an awful stillness. Every winged messenger kept still, every work ceased, every occupation was suspended." As Albert Barnes interpreted this passage, "Then there was an awful stillness, as if all heaven was reverently waiting for the development." Oh, yes, heaven is to be a busy place. It has been very busy during all the years and the millenniums that are past. It will be very busy during all the eternities that are to come, with the exception of one cessation of work for a short time, when there shall be "silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour."

Following my first premise that heaven is to be a busy place my second premise is likewise true. How do I know that the busy occupations of heaven will never offer despised work for the redeemed immortals? The words of my text prove that. The dogs of the east were the scavengers. The eastern people had no wonderful systems of sewerage as have we. They had no means of carrying away by subterranean pipes the refuse of their large towns. But all the refuse of the kitchens and the homes and the barns were and are thrown into the streets where the dogs devour them. In heaven, however, we shall have none of the repulsive and abhorrent occupations with which this earth has been cursed.

The eastern dog's death is a gloomy picture. He dies the death of all wild beasts, and that death is a tragedy. Some years ago the author of a history of the beasts of the African forests made this statement, which will long live in my memory: "No beast of the kind or reptile in all the dark continent dies a natural death. No sooner does his physical strength weaken than there are some bestial or serpentine cannibals or some enemy of his species ready to feed upon his dying body and still the feeble or the quick being of his heart." That means every deer or fawn that dies, dies a tragic death. Every quick-eyed and sharp-clawed lynx must fall in time before a mortal foe. Every monster leader of the elephantine herd, every shaggy-maned Bengal king, must die a violent death. So the dog, but thank God, no dog does not die the Christian.

John B. Gough in one of his wonderful lectures gives a description of the remarkable escape of his father, who was an old English soldier, from dying a horrible death. It was during the famous Franco-English war of 1809, when the British troops were retreating before lightning-

bolts Marshal Soult. Hungry and faint and sick from exposure and lack of food and also from loss of blood from a wound in the chest, young Gough staggered along with his regiment as long as he could and then fell by the roadside to die. "He must die," said his son. "It seemed inevitable that he must die. Suddenly, as he lay upon the ground, a large bird of prey, with a red neck growing out of a ruff of feathers, came swooping along, almost touching my father's body with its wings, and then, circling up, it alighted on a point of a rock and turned its blood red eye on its intended victim. As my father saw that horrible thing watching and waiting to tear him in pieces, even before life was extinct, it so filled him with horror that he cried: 'I cannot endure this. When I am unable to drive that fearful thing away, it will be tearing my flesh.' He rose to his feet and crawled and struggled on, till at length he crept into a hut and found safety." The death which menaced that wounded man is the death which awaits the eastern dog. Who he is incapable of defending himself he is torn to pieces. Men, too, have perished through the vindictive passions of their fellows. Some have been crucified, as was Christ; some have been stoned, as was Stephen; some have been beheaded, as was Paul; some have been hanged at the stake, as were Ridley and Latimer. But how different was their future from that of the dog! From out those crushed and mutilated bodies the martyr spirits have gone up, redeemed and glorified, to dwell forever before the throne.

Oh, ye mortals, destined to live forever either in bliss or in misery, does not the offer that Christ makes you stir your desire for salvation? Accept his proffered gift, and then be your end what it may, your being rooted up from this world, with its bitter fruits of sorrow and pain and misery, will mean nothing more than your being transplanted into that supernal garden in which you will grow and flourish and bear fruit to the honor and glory of God.

The seed of eternal life planted by the Holy Spirit in your heart can change your whole nature. Instead of those qualities which degrade you to the level of the brute, instead of the sinful propensities which distort and deform your being, there shall grow from that divine seed a plant of beauty, gracefulness and glorious with heavenly loveliness and eternal in ever developing life. "Ye shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season; and whatsoever ye do shall prosper." What is your choice? Will you live a life of beauty and usefulness, a life patterned on that divine life which Christ lived on earth, ending in a triumphant resurrection, or will you choose the wickedness, the vice, the corruption, the world, feeding like the eastern dog on the carrion of life and becoming in nature like him? Remember, if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, and from that abode of bliss, where there are joys forever more, you will be excluded with all those natures have grown fierce and cruel and debased. "Without are dogs."

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