

GEMS FROM TALMAGE.

MARY AND MARTHA.—Mary and Martha are necessities. There will be no dinner for Christ if there be no Martha; there will be no audience for Jesus if there be no Mary.

USE YOUR VOICE.—It is thought classic and elegant to have a delicate utterance, and that loud tones are vulgar. But we never heard of people being converted by anything they could not hear. It is said that on the Mount of Olives Christ opened his mouth and taught them, by which we conclude that He spake out distinctly. God has given most Christians plenty of lungs, but they are too lazy to use them. There are in the churches old people hard of hearing who, if the exercises be not clear and emphatic, get no advantage save that of looking at the blessed minister. People say in apology for their inaudible tones: "It is not the thunder that kills, but the lightning." True enough; but I think that God thinks well of the thunder, or He would not use so much of it.

SABBATH-BREAKING.—The man that takes down the shutters of his store on the Sabbath, takes down the curse of Almighty God. That farmer who cultures his ground on the Sabbath-day raises a crop of neuralgia, and of consumption, and of death. A farmer said: "I defy your Christian Sabbath. I will raise a Sunday crop." So he went to work and ploughed the ground on Sunday, and harrowed it on Sunday, and he planted corn on Sunday, and he reaped the corn on Sunday, and he gathered it into the barn on Sunday. "There," he said, "I have proved to you that all this idea about a fatality accompanying Sabbath work is a perfect sham. My crop is gathered, and all is well." But before many weeks passed, the Lord struck that barn with His lightnings, and away went the Sunday crop.

GOD'S MEDALS.—In 1855, when some of the soldiers came back from the Crimean War to London, the Queen of England distributed among them beautiful medals, called "Crimean medals." I think of it just now, as I recently had a book presented me representing that beautiful "Crimean medal." Galleries were erected for the two Houses of Parliament and the royal family to sit in. There was a great audience to witness the distribution of the medals. A colonel who had lost both feet in the battle of Inkermann, was pulled in on a wheel chair; others came in limping on their crutches. Then the Queen of England arose before them in the name of her Government, and uttered words of commendation to the officers and the men, and distributed these medals, inscribed with the four great battles—Sebastopol, Inkermann, Balaklava, and Alma. As the Queen gave these to the wounded men and officers, the bands of music struck up the national air, and the people, with streaming eyes, joined in the song:—

"God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!"

And then they shouted "Huzza! huzza!" Oh, it was a proud day for those returned warriors! But a brighter, better, gladder day will come, when Christ shall gather those who have toiled in His service—good soldiers of Jesus Christ. He shall rise before them, and in the presence of all the glorified of heaven, He will say: "Well done, good and faithful servants"; and then He will distribute the medals of eternal victory, not inscribed with works of righteousness which we have done, but with those four great battle-fields, dear to earth and dear to heaven: *Bethlehem! Nazareth! Gethsemane! Calvary!*

RUINED BY GAMBLING.—Sin is a scarification of the soul. Sin comes to the young man. It says: "Take a game of cards—it won't hurt you. Besides that, it is the way men make their fortunes. It is only a small stake. See how easy it is." The young man plays, and wins a horse and carriage and a house—wins a fortune. "See how easy it is," says sin; "it don't cost you anything. Look at those young men who stick to their salaries, away down at the foot of the ladder, while you are in great prosperity." The young man is encouraged. He goes on and plays larger and larger; the tide turns against him; he loses the horse, loses the carriage, loses the house, loses the fortune. Crack! goes the sheriff's mallet on the last household valuable. Down lower and lower the man falls, until he pitches pennies for a drink, or clutches for devils that trample him in wild delirium. "The way of transgressors is hard."

NO PRELIMINARIES.—First of all, make the people hear the prayer and the chapter. If you want to hold up at all, let it be on the sermon and the notices. Let the pulpit and all the pews feel that there are no "preliminaries."

GOD'S ARROWS.—Have you not noticed what homely and insignificant instrumentality the Spirit of God employs for man's conversion? There was a man on a Hudson river-boat to whom a tract was offered. With indignation he tore it up and threw it overboard. But one fragment lodged on his coat-sleeve; and he saw on it the word "eternity"; and he found no peace until he was prepared for that great future. Do you know what passage it was that caused Martin Luther to see the truth? "The just shall live by faith." Do you know there is one—just one—passage that brought Augustine from a life of dissolution? "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." It was just one passage that converted Hodley Vicars, the great soldier, to Christ: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Do you know that the Holy Spirit used one passage of Scripture to save Jonathan Edwards? "Now, unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory."

HUMILITY.—The kingdom of heaven is large enough when you get into it, but the gate is so low that you cannot come in save on your knees.

COME ON, BOYS!—When Governor Geary, of Pennsylvania, died a few days ago, I lost a good friend. He impressed me mightily with the horrors of war. In the eight hours that it takes to come from Harrisburg to New York, he recited to me the scenes through which he had passed in the last war. He said that there came one battle upon which everything seemed to pivot. Telegrams from Washington said that the life of the nation depended upon that struggle. He said to me: "I went into that battle, sir, with my son. His mother and I thought everything of him. You know how a father will feel toward his son who is coming up manly, and brave, and good. Well, the battle opened and concentrated, and it was awful! Horses and riders bent and twisted and piled up together: it was awful, sir! We quit firing, and took to the point of the bayonet. Well, sir, I didn't feel like myself that day. I had prayed to God for strength for that particular battle, and I went into it feeling that I had in my right hand the strength of ten giants"; and as the Governor brought his arm down on the back of the seat, it fairly made the car tremble. "Well," he said, "the battle was desperate, but after a while we gained little, and we marched on a little. I turned around to the troops and shouted, 'Come on, boys!' and I stepped across a dead soldier, and lo! it was my son! I saw at the first glance he was dead, and yet I didn't dare to stop a minute, for the crisis had come in the battle; so I just got down on my knees, and I threw my arms around him, and I gave him one good kiss, and said, 'Good-bye, dear,' and sprang up and shouted, 'Come on, boys!'" So it is in the Christian conflict. It is a fierce fight. Eternal ages seem depending on the strife. Heaven is waiting for the bulletins to announce the tremendous issue. Hail of shot, gash of sabre, fall of battle-axe, groaning on every side. We cannot stop for loss or bereavement, or anything else. With one ardent embrace and with one loving kiss we utter our farewells, and then cry, "Come on, boys! There are other heights to be captured, there are other foes to be conquered, there are other crowns to be won."

MINISTERING SPIRITS.—Our planet is in commerce with two worlds—heaven and hell—and all the intercommunication is by angels. Lost spirits are running a long train of darkness down to the depot of eternal night; and when a bad man is about to die, they come upon sulphurous wings, and they shake him and push him off the precipice, and with guffaw of hellish jubilation they celebrate his demotion. There is a HUE of loving, holy, mighty angels reaching to the bright world. I suppose they reach from here to the very gate, and when an audience is assembled for Christian worship, the air is full of them. If each one of you have a guardian angel, how many celestials there are here to-night! They crowd the place; they hover, they flit about, they rejoice, they batter down the evil in your heart, they light up the night. Look, that spirit is just come from the throne. A moment ago it stood before Christ, and heard the doxology of the glorified. Look! Bright immortal, what news from the golden city? Speak, spirit blest! The response comes melting on the night air: "Come, for all things are ready."