

## THEY ARE THE JOKE OF HELL

Theater-Going Christians Will Never Be Persecuted For Religion's Sake—Pillars of Smoke That Indicate the Suffering of God's Church.

Washington report says: The trials through which the truth has struggled are by Dr. Talmage here set forth under a Bible symbol of great suggestiveness and power; text: Solomon's Song III, 6, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?"

The architecture of the smoke is wondrous, whether God with His finger curves it into a cloud, or rounds it into a dome, or points it in a spire, or spreads it in a wing, or, as in the text, hoists it in a pillar. Watch it winding up from the country farhouses in the early morning, showing that the pastoral industries have begun, or see it ascending from the chimneys of the city, telling of the homes fed, the factories turning out valuable fabrics, the printing presses preparing book and newspaper, and all the 10,000 wheels of works in motion. On a clear day this vapor spoken of mounts with such buoyancy and spreads such a delicate veil across the sky and traces such graceful lines of circle and semicircle and waves and tinkles and soars and scatters with such affluence of shape and color and suggestiveness that if you have never noticed it you are like a man who has all his life lived in Paris and yet never seen the Luxembourg, or all his life in Rome and never seen the Vatican, or all his life at Lockport and never seen Niagara. Forty-four times the Bible speaks of the smoke, and it is about time that somebody preached a sermon recognising this strange, weird, beautiful, elastic, charming, terrific and fascinating vapor. Across the Bible sky floats the smoke of Sinai, the smoke of Sodom, the smoke of Ai, the smoke of the pit, the smoke of the volcanic hills when God touches them, and in my text the glorious church of God coming up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke.

In the first place, these pillars of smoke in my text indicate the suffering of the church of God as endured. What do I mean by the church? I mean not a building, not a sect, but those who in all ages and all lands and of all beliefs love God and are trying to do right. For many centuries the heavens have been black with the smoke of martyrdom. If set side by side, you could girdle the earth with the fires of persecution—Rowland Taylor burned at Hadleigh, Latimer burned at Oxford, John Rogers burned at Smithfield, John Hooper burned at Gloucester, John Huss burned at Constance, Lawrence Saunders burned at Coventry, Joan of Arc burned at Rouen.

Catholicism as well as Protestantism has had its martyrs. It does seem as if when any one sect got complete domination in any land the devil of persecution and cruelty took possession of that sect. See the Catholics after the Huguenots. See the Gentiles after the Jews in Tournai, where a great pit was dug and fire lighted at the bottom of the pit, and 150 Jewish victims were consumed. See the Presbyterian parliament of England, more tyrannical in their treatment of opponents than had been the criminal courts. Persecution against the Baptists by Pseudo-Baptists. Persecution of the Established church against the Methodist church. Persecution against the Presbyterians. Under Emperor Diocletian 144,000 Christians were massacred and 700,000 more of them died from banishment and exposure.

Witness the sufferings of the Waldenses, of the Albigenses, of the Nestorians. Witness St. Bartholomew's massacre. Witness the Duke of Alva driving out of life 18,000 Christians. Witness Herod and Nero and Decius and Hildebrand and Torquemada and Earl of Montfort and Lord Overbury, who, when told that he must give account for his cruelties, said: "I have no need to account to man, and, as for God, I will take Him in my own hands." A red line runs through the church history of 1,900 years, a line of blood. Not by the hundreds of thousands, but by the millions, must we count those slain for Christ's sake. No wonder John Milton put the groans of the martyrs to an immortal tune, writing:

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold.

The smoke of martyrs' homes and martyrs' bodies is billowing up all at once would have eclipsed the noonday sun and turned the brightest day the world ever saw into a midnight. "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?"

Has persecution ceased? Ask that young man who is trying to be a Christian in a store or factory, where from morning to night he is the butt of all the mean witticisms of unbelieving employees. Ask that wife whose husband makes her fondness for the house of God and even her kneeling prayer by the bedside a derision and is no more fit for her holy companionship than a filthy cow would be a fit companion for a robin or a golden oriole. "Compromise with the world and surrender to its conventionalities and it may let you alone, but all who will live godly in Jesus Christ must suffer persecution. Be a theater-going, card-playing, wine-drinking, round-dancing Christian, and you may escape criticism and social pressure. But be an up and down, out and out follower of Christ, and worldling will wink to worldling as he speaks your name, and you will be put in many a doggerel and snubbed by those not worthy to blacken your oldest shoes. When the bridge at Ashtabula broke and let down the most of the carload of passengers to instant death, P. P. Bliss was seated on one side of the aisle of the car writing down a Christian song which he was composing, and on the other side a group of men were playing cards. Whose landing place in eternity would you prefer—that of P. P. Bliss, the gospel singer, or of the card players?

A great complaint comes from the theaters about the ladies' high hats because they obstruct the view of

the stage, and a lady reporter asked me what I thought about it, and I told her that if the indecent pictures of actresses in the show windows were accurate pictures of what goes on in many of the theaters night by night then it would be well if the ladies' hats were a mile high, so as to completely obstruct the vision. If professed Christians go to such places during the week, no one will ever persecute them for their religion, for they have none, and they are the joke of hell. But let them live a consecrated and Christian life, and they will soon run against sneering opposition.

For a compromise Christian character an easy time now, but for consecrated behavior grimace and caricature. For the body, thanks to the God of free America, there are now no words of division. For the souls of thousands of the good, in a figurative sense, rack and gibbet and Torquemada. The symbol of the domestic and social and private and public suffering of a great multitude of God's dear children, pillars of smoke. What an exciting scene, in India when during the Sepoy rebellion a regiment of Highlanders came up and found the dead body of one of Gen. Wheeler's daughters, who had been insulted and mauled and slain by the Sepoys. So great was the wrath against these murderers that the Scotch regiment sat down, and, cutting off the hair of this dead daughter of Gen. Wheeler, they divided it among them, and each one counted the number of hairs given him, and each took an oath, which was executed, that for each hair of the murdered daughter they would dash out the life of a bestial Sepoy. But as we look over the story of those who in all ages have suffered for the truth, while we leave vengeance to the Lord, let us band together in one solemn vow, one tremendous oath, after having counted the host of martyrs, that for each one of these glorious men and women who died for the truth an immortal shall live—live with God and live forever.

But, as I already hinted in the first sentence of this sermon, nothing can be more beautiful than the figures of smoke of a clear sky. You can see what you will in the contour of this volatile vapor, now enchanted castles, now troops of horsemen, now banners, now processions, now winged couriers, now a black angel of wrath under a spear of the sunshine turned to an angel of light, and now from horizon to horizon the air is a picture gallery filled with masterpieces of which God is the artist, morning clouds of smoke born in the sunrise and evening clouds of smoke laid in the burnished sepulchers of the sunset.

The beauty of the transfigured smoke is a divine symbol of the beauty of the church. The fairest of all the fair is he. Do not call those persecutors of whom I speak the church. They are parasites of the church, not the church itself. Her mission is to cover the earth with a supernatural gladness, to open all prison doors, to balsam all the wounds, to move all the graves, to burn up the night in the fire of a great morning, to change iron handcuffs into diamonded wristlets, to turn the whole race around, and whereas it faced death commanding it, "Right about face for heaven!" According to the number of the spires of the churches are our cities, towns and neighborhoods, are our good homes, the worldly prosperities, and the pure morals, and the happy souls.

Meet me at any depot the world over, and with my eyes closed take me by the hand and lead me so that my feet will not stumble, or looking out my once looking down or looking on the level take me to some high roof or tower and let me see the tops of the churches, and I will tell you the proportion of suicides, of arsonists, of murderers, of thieves, according as the churches are numerous or are the crimes few. According as the churches are few the crimes are numerous. The most beautiful organization the world ever saw or ever will see is the much maligned church, the friends of the church of all evil, "fair as the moon and clear as the sun." Beautiful in her Author, beautiful in her mission, the heroine of the centuries, the bride of Christ, the queen of the nations!

You lying and hypocritical world, shut up those slanders about the church of Christ, an institution which, far from being what it is supposed to be, and never pretending to be perfect, is 500 times better than any other institution that the world ever saw or ever dreamed of. The highest honor I ever had, and the highest honor shall ever receive, and the highest honor I ever want is to have my name on her records as a member. At her altars I repented. At her sacraments I believed. In her service let me die. From her doors let me be buried. O church of God! Thou home of the righteous! Thou harbor from tempest! Thou refuge for the weary! Thou lighthouse of many nations! Thou type of heaven! I could kiss thy very dust with ecstasy of affection.

Victor Hugo, in his book entitled "Ninety-three," says: "Nothing calmer than smoke, but nothing more startling. There are peaceful smoke and there are evil ones. The thickness and color of a line of smoke make the whole difference between war and peace, between fraternity and hatred. The whole happiness of man or his complete misery is sometimes expressed in this thin vapor which the mind scatters at will." The great Frenchman was right, but I go further and say that as the kingdom of God advances like pillars of smoke the black volumes belching from batteries of war and pouring out from portholes of ships will vanish.

A distinguished general of our civil war told me that Abraham Lincoln proposed to avoid our civil conflict

by the purchase of all the slaves of the south and setting them free. He calculated what would be a reasonable price for them, and, when the number of millions of dollars that would be required for such a purchase was announced, the proposition was scouted, and the north would not have made the offer, and the south would not have accepted it if made. "But," said my military friend, "the war went on, and just the number of millions of dollars that Mr. Lincoln calculated would have been enough to make a reasonable purchase of all the slaves were spent in the war, besides all the precious lives that were hurled away in the 250 battles." In other words there ought to be some other way for men to settle their controversies without butchery.

The church of God will yet become the arbiter of nations. If the world would allow it, it could to-day step in between Germany and France and settle the troubles about Alsace and Lorraine, and between England and her antagonists, and between all the other nations that are flying at each other's throats and command peace and disarm armies and harness for the plow the war horse now being harnessed to military weapons or saddled for cavalry charge. That time must come, or through the increased facility for shooting men and blowing up cities and whelming hosts to instant death, so that we can kill a regiment easier than we could once kill a company, or we could once kill a regiment, the patent offices of the world more busy than ever in recognising new engines of destruction, the human race will after a while go fighting with one arm, and hobbling with one foot, and stumbling with one eye, and the world will be one inventor, inspired of the archangel of all mischief, will contrive a machine that will bore a hole to the earth's center, and some desperate nation will throw into that hole enough dynamite to blow this bulk of a planet into fragments, dropping the meteoric stones on surrounding stellar habitations.

But this shall not be, for whatever I let go I hang on to my Bible, which tells me that the blacksmith's shop shall yet come to its grandest use when the carrier of peace and humanity shall enter it side by side, and the soldier shall throw into its bank of fires his sword, and the farmer shall pick it up as a plowshare, and the straightest spear shall be bent into a crook at each end and then cut in two, and what was one spear shall be two pruning hooks. Down with Moloch and up with Christ! Let no more war horses eat out of the manger where Jesus was born. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men!"

It is demonstrated to all honest men that it is not so contrary to the will of Cullen Bryant, wrote "Thanatopsis," or Longfellow wrote "Hawthorne," as that God, by the hand of prophet and apostle, wrote the Bible. All the wise men in science and law and medicine and literature and merchandise are gradually coming to believe in Christianity, and soon there will be no people who disbelieve in it except those conspicuous for lack of brain or men with two families, who do not like the Bible because it rebukes their swinish propensities.

The time is hastening when there will be no infidels left except libertines and harlots and murderers. Millions of Christians where once there were thousands, and thousands where once there were hundreds. What a bright evening this, the evening of the nineteenth century! And the twentieth century, which is about to dawn, will, in my opinion, bring universal victory for Christ and the church, that now is marching on with step double quick or, if you prefer the figure of the text, is going swept on in the mighty gales of hissing, impetuous and grand and majestic and swift like pillars of smoke.

Oh, come into the church through Christ the door, a door more glorious than that of the temple of Hercules, than that of the temple of Minerva, than that of the temple of Mars, and one was gold and the other was silver, and today! The world you leave behind is a poor world, and it will burn and pass off like pillars of smoke. Whether the final conflagration will start in the coal mines of Pennsylvania, which, in some places, have for many years been burning and eating into the heart of the mountains, or whether it shall begin near the California geysers, or whether from out the furnaces of Cotopaxi and Vesuvius and Stromboli it shall burst forth upon the astonished nations I make no prophecy, but all good spirits tell us that we stand on the lid of a world, and the heart of which is a raging, roaring, awful flame, and some day God will let the red molten stars out of their imprisonment of centuries, and New York on fire in 1835, and Chicago on fire in 1857, and Boston on fire in 1872 were only like one spark from a blacksmith's forge as compared with that last universal blaze which will be seen in other worlds. But gradually the flames will lessen, and the world will become a great living coal, and then our ruined planet will begin to smoke, and the mountains will smoke, and the valleys will smoke, and the islands will smoke, and the seas will smoke, and the cities will smoke, and the five continents will be five pillars of smoke.

But that will not interfere with your investments if you have taken Christ as your savior. Secure heaven as your eternal home, and you can look upon a dismantled, disrupted and demolished earth without any perturbation. When wrapped in fire the realms of ether glow, and heaven's last thunders shake the earth below, Thou, undismayed, shalt o'er the ruins smile. And light thy torch at Nature's funeral pile.

An Obliging Artist. Lady (sitting for portrait)—And make my mouth small will you, ever so small? I know it is quite large, really, but make it quite tiny, will you?

Artist (politely)—Certainly, madam. If you prefer it I will leave it out altogether.

According to the report of the horticultural college at Swanley, England, there is a greater demand for women gardeners than the institution can supply. Every student from the college has found remunerative employment, and has given satisfaction to her employer.

A man of integrity will never listen to any plea against conscience.—Horne.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON NO. 1.  
JAN. 7, 1900.

The Birth of Jesus.—Luke 2: 1-16.

Supt.—What is the Golden Text? School.—Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Matt. 1: 21.

What is the Central Truth? Christ voluntarily humbled Himself to bring salvation to a lost world.

What is the topic? Christ's birth. What is the Outline? I. the taxing. II. the child born. III. the announcement to the shepherds. IV. the child found.

When was the time? Uncertain. Probably Dec. 25, B. C. 5. Jesus was born four years before the time from which we count His birth in our common reckoning.

Where was the place? Bethlehem of Judea, six miles south of Jerusalem. Who were the persons? Caesar Augustus, Cyrenius, Joseph, Mary, the infant Jesus, the shepherds, the angel of the Lord, a multitude of the heavenly host.

What are the Special Readings? Luke 1, John 1, 1: 18.

Commentary.—I. In those days—that is, about the time John the Baptist was born and the events took place as related in the preceding chapter.

2. First made.—It seems there were two enrollments, Cyrenius—or Quirinius. There is a chronological difficulty here. Quirinius was Governor of Syria in A. D. 6, ten years later than this, and at the time he took a census to which St. Luke refers in Acts v. 37.

3. Into his own city.—The Roman custom was to enrol persons at the place of residence, but the Jewish custom required the enrolment to take place in the native city.

4. Went up.—From Galilee to the much more elevated region of Bethlehem. City of David.—Where David was born.

5. With Mary.—It is uncertain whether her presence was obligatory or voluntary, but it is obvious that, after what she had suffered (Matt. 1: 19), she chose to cling to the presence and protection of her husband. —Farrar. Espoused wife.—Better, "who was betrothed to him."—R. V.

6. While there.—Caesar Augustus was but an instrument in the hand of Providence to fulfill the prophecy of Micah (chap. v. 2) with respect to the birthplace of the Messiah.—Lange.

7. Her firstborn son.—That excellent and glorious person, who was the first-born of every creature, and the heir of all things. In a manger.—Probably some cave or grotto used for sheltering cattle, and perhaps belonging to the same shepherds to whom the "glad tidings" were first brought.

8. Same country.—Near, probably not a mile away. Shepherds.—It was very proper that the announcement should be made to shepherds. Abraham and David, to whom the promise of the Messiah was first made, were shepherds, and now the Chief Shepherd is about to appear and the shepherds are the first to receive the glad news. In the field.—They undoubtedly had tents or booths under which they dwelt.—Clarke. Keeping watch.—By night.—Or, "keeping nightwatches."—R. V. Mar. They watched by turns, against wild beasts and robbers.

9. Angel.—Divine messenger. Came upon them.—Stood over them.—Clarke. Glory of the Lord.—That extreme splendor in which the Deity is represented as appearing to men, and sometimes called the Shechinah—an appearance frequently attended, as in this case, by a company of angels.—Bloomfield. Sore afraid.—"Terrified with the appearance of so glorious a being." There is no proof here that the shepherds were morally impure and afraid that divine justice was about to be meted out to them. Even holy men tremble when they come in contact with the supernatural.

10. Good tidings.—The literal meaning of Gospel. "I am come to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord. My message will cause great joy. It is a message to you (Jews) first, and it also reaches to 'all the people.'"—R. V.

11. Is born.—Is: 6; John 1: 14. "David's greater Son" begins His earthly career in His ancestor's home. Seven hundred years before, a prophet had predicted the Messiah's birth at Bethlehem. Mic. v. 2. "A Saviour—1. A deliverer. 2. A restorer. 3. A preserver. Matt. 1: 21. 'Not, shall be a Saviour, but, 'born a Saviour.'" Christ—The Anointed One. Christ is the Greek word corresponding to the Hebrew word Messiah.

12. A sign.—The very thing that would have caused them to doubt was made the sign unto them. "Any fear as to whether they may approach the newborn King and offer Him their homage is dispelled by the intimation of His lowly condition, while their carnal views of the nature of His kingdom are thereby counteracted."—Lange.

13. A multitude.—They descended to honor the Prince of Peace. Heavenly host.—The army of angels which is represented as surrounding the throne of God.

14. Glory.—In the highest—Christ is the highest glory of God. On earth peace.—Peace to man; peace with God; peace of conscience. Good will.—God has shown His good will by sending the Messiah.

15. Let us now go.—There is no time to lose. Let us go now. "This is the language of obedience, desiring to receive assurance and strength," by seeing for themselves "this thing which is come to pass."

16. With haste.—Filled and thrilled with holy joy they could not linger. And found.—It is probable that by communicating their experiences to each other their faith was greatly strengthened.

Teachings.—Providence orders all things for the fulfilling of the Scriptures. God makes use of human projects to accomplish divine plans. Jesus in His birth reproves the pride of this world. It is not so much where

a person is born as what he is after he is born.

## PRACTICAL SURVEY.

Christ is born. Hallelujah! Let all the earth rejoice. The world had waited long. The prophets had foretold His coming, every lamb slain has pointed to His coming, and at last the day arrives when the announcement is made that He has arrived.

The event.—In compliance with a decree made by Caesar Augustus, Joseph and Mary journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a distance of about 70 miles, for the purpose of being registered. But in this God was working out His plan, for it had been distinctly stated by Micah that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem.

Angels are sent.—Angels have always taken a lively interest in the things of this world. We frequently read of them in the Old Testament. It was an angel that appeared unto Zacharias announcing the birth of John, and to Mary with a similar mission regarding the birth of Christ.

The Shepherds.—The employment of tending sheep had been honored in the earlier times of the Jewish people. Jacob, Moses and David were shepherds. But now it was a calling that was looked upon by the Jews with contempt. Why was the announcement made to shepherds? 1. The announcement of his advent was not to be made to the rulers of the people, or to the priests, for these men were under the influence of worldly and selfish ambitions and could not discern spiritual things. The shepherds were humble men, "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and were in a state of mind to accept the heavenly announcement. 2. God has seen fit to appear to the weak instead of the mighty. Read I. Cor. 1: 19-31; Psal. xlii. 2. 3. God had always blessed the shepherds.

The announcement, "Fear not," "The first words serve to allay their fears, and then the glad tidings are fully unfolded." "Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Our Saviour is no one less than the Anointed One, the Lord—Jehovah. Those who rob Him of His divinity rob the world of its Saviour. As "the Christ" He is our Prophet, Priest and King. "He is a prophet to reveal the will of God and instruct men in it. He is a priest to offer up sacrament and make atonement for the sin of the world. He is a king to rule over and rule in the souls of men. He is the Saviour to deliver from the power, guilt and pollution of sin."

## BUREAU OF MINES REPORT.

Deals With the Mineral Deposits of the Province.

The Bureau of Mines has issued the second part of its annual report, which deals largely with the copper regions of the upper lakes, the Apishsing, Algoma boundary, Goulais River, Daulton; corundum in Ontario, Michipicoten, Larry Sound district copper, gold in the Lower Seine, and a lot of other information concerning the mineral wealth of the Province.

A table is given showing that for the first nine months of this year 20,210 ounces of gold was taken out, being valued at \$318,212, as against 7,154 ounces in 1896. The total value of metallic products in 1893 was \$62,832, and in 1896 \$96,288. For the nine months of the present year it has been \$1,637,100, and if the same rate of production be maintained to the end of the year, it will reach \$2,200,000. The total value of the metals produced in the Province for the twelve months of last year was \$1,655,968, made up of \$290,319 gold, \$51,960 silver, \$514,220 nickel, \$268,080 copper and \$530,789 pig iron. The revenue from sales and leases of mineral lands has been \$147,666 for the nine months of the present year, as compared with \$97,762 for the whole of 1898, \$40,588 for 1896, and \$26,159 for 1893.

Silver to the amount of 98,000 ounces was taken out this year, valued at \$58,800. Nickel and copper brought \$566,633, as against \$487,650 for the whole of 1896.

Prof. A. P. Coleman reports on his trip to the north channel on the northeast of Lake Huron, and the northeast shore of Lake Superior. He says a few properties are likely to develop into valuable copper mines, but that a large majority do not look particularly promising. Mr. A. J. Bow reports on the Lower Seine gold mines, where the average value of 170 samples of ore was \$10.31 gold quartz. Several properties and their possibilities are described.

## Charley's Girl.

She sailed into the telegraph office rapped on the counter. The clerk remembered that she had been there about 10 minutes before as he came forward to meet her. He wondered what she wanted this time.

"Oh," she said, "let me have that telegram I wrote just now. I forgot something very important. I wanted to underscore the words 'perfectly lovely' in acknowledging the receipt of that bracelet. Will it cost anything extra?"

"No, ma'am," said the clerk, as he handed her the message.

The young lady drew two "heavy lines" beneath the words, and said: "It's awfully good of you to let me do that. It will please Charley so much."

"Don't mention it," said the clerk. "If you would like it I will drop a few drops of nice violet extract on the telegram at the same rates."

"Oh, thank you, sir. You don't know how much I would appreciate it. I'm going to send all my telegrams through this office, you are so obliging."

And the smile she gave him would have done anyone good, with the possible exception of Charley—Collier's Weekly.

From an interpretation of a passage in the Koran, Moslems are forbidden to have shades to their eyes, hence the absence of the peak from both the fez and the turban.