

VALUE OF ONE TALENT

People Should Awaken to an Appreciation of Their Duty.

WHAT IS YOUR ONE TALENT?

Rev. Dr. Talmage Says That If All the People Who Have Only One Talent Brought It Into Use Before the Middle of This Century This Earth Would Be One of the Outskirts of Heaven.

Washington, June 2.—This is a discourse by Dr. Talmage for those given to depreciate themselves and who have an idea that their best attempts amount to little. "To another one," Matthew xxv, 15. "To another one."

Explain first from this parable of the talents the word "usury." It ought to have been translated "interest." "Usury" is finding a man in a tight place and compelling him to pay an unreasonable sum to get out. "Interest" is a righteous payment for the use of money. When the capitalist of this parable went off from home, he gave to his stewards certain sums of money, wishing to have them profitably invested. Change also your idea as to the value of one talent. You remember the capitalist gave to one of his men for business purposes five talents, to another two, to another one. What a small amount to this last, you think, and how could he be expected to do anything with only one talent? I have to tell you that when my text says, "To another one," it implies that those who have the least have much.

We better ourselves a great deal about those who are highly gifted or have large financial resources or great official position or wide reaching opportunity. We are anxious that their wealth, their eloquence, their wit, be employed on the right side. One of them makes a mistake, and we say, "What an awful disaster!" When one of them devotes all his ability to useful purposes, we celebrate it, we enlarge upon it, we speak of it as something for gratitude to God. Meanwhile we give no time at all to consider what people are doing with their one talent, not realizing that ten people of one talent are quite as important as one man with ten talents. In the one case the advantage or opportunity is concentrated in a single personality, while in another it is divided among ten individuals. Now, what we want to do in this sermon is to wake people of only one talent to appreciation of their duty. Only a few people have five talents or ten talents, while millions have one. My short text is like a galvanic shock. "To another one."

The most difficult thing in the world is to make an accurate estimate of ourselves. Our friends value us too high, our enemies too low. To find out what we are worth morally and mentally is almost impossible. We are apt to measure ourselves by those around us, but this is not fair, as they may be very brilliant, or very dull, very good or very bad. Indeed there are no human scales that can tell our exact moral and mental weight, nor is there a standard by which we can measure our exact intellectual height, so the hardest thing to do is to calculate our real stature or height. But it will be no evidence of egotism in any of us if we say that we have at least one talent. What is it, and finding what it is, what use shall we make of it? The most of the people, finding that they have only one talent, do as the man spoken of in the parable, they hide it. But if all of the people who have one talent brought it out for use before this century is half past and correspondents begin to write at the head of their letters "1900 the earth would be one of the outskirts of heaven. I ask you again. What is your one talent?"

Is it a cheerful look? Carry that look wherever you go. It must come from a cheerful heart. It is not that innate smile which we sometimes see which is an irritation. In other words, it must be a light within us so bright that it illumines eyes, cheeks, nostrils and mouth. Let ten men who are accustomed to walking a certain street every day resolve upon a cheerful countenance as a result of a cheerful heart, and the influence of such a facial irradiation

will not only be in that street but throughout the town. Cheerfulness is catching. But a cheerful look is exceptional.

In one of the towns of New York state an inhabitant said to a friend of mine, "I do not believe as that man does, but I cannot despise a religion that makes a man look as happy as he seems to be." If we have a rough visage, we cannot help that God so made us; if accident or battle have so defaced us, that is no fault of ours; if strabismus has buried our eyes, no one will satirize us; if our features were not suited for Lavator's physiognomy, no one could blame us for that. The jaw may too much project or retreat, the forehead may not be Shakespearean, but a cheerful spirit in that man will triumph over all defects and pour around all who meet him a supernal influence. If that cheerful look be your only talent, use it for the world's consolation. There will be a hundred people whom you will meet this week to whom you will have no right to speak. It would be an impertinence. You have never been introduced to them, they were never introduced to you. You have no right to stop them on their way, as they have no right to stop you on your way. But you have a right to look at them. Then look with a faith in God at a holy purpose and a manliness and a good cheer that will keep them thinking all that day and wondering who you are and what is the cause of the victory which they saw depicted between the top of your forehead and the round of your chin. If you are the right kind of a man, the right kind of a woman, something has happened to you that ought to fill your

soul with courage and your face with glorious sunrise. Your sins all forgiven, that makes you all right with the past; an eternal heaven promised to your soul, that makes you all right with the future.

Again, is your one talent that of wit or humor? See it for God. Much of the world's wit is damaging. Much of satire has a sting in it. Much of caricature is malevolent. Much of smart retort is virulent. In order to say smart things how many will sacrifice the feelings of others. The sword they carry is keen, and it is employed to thrust and lacerate. But few men in all the world and in all the churches realize that if wit is bestowed it is given them for useful, for improving, for healthful purposes. I like the sarcasm of Christ when he told the self-righteous Pharisees that they were so good they needed no help. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," or when in martyrdoms he arraigns the hypocritical teachers of his day who were so particular about little things and careless about big things, saying: "Ye blind guides that strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," and the Bible is full of such epigrams, words surprisingly put and phraseology that must have made the audiences of Paul and Christ nudge each other and exchange glances and smiles and then appropriate the tremendous words of the gospel. There are some evils you can laugh down easier than you can preach down. The question is always being asked, Why do not more people go to church, pray, meet, and other religious meetings? I will tell you. We of the pulpit and the pew are so dull they cannot stand it. But when we ask why people do not go to church we ask a misleading question.

Or is your talent an opportunity to set a good example? One person doing right under adverse circumstances will accomplish more than many treatises about what is right. Many treatises about what is right have never been taken of lovely old folks. Most of us, if we have not such a one in our own house, now, have in our memory such a saint. We went to those old people with all our troubles. They were perpetual evangelists, by their soothing words, by their hopefulness of spirit, an inexpressible help. I cannot see how heaven could make any one lovelier than they are or more than they are exceptions. There is a daughter in that family whose father is impatient and the mother querulous. The passage of my years does not always improve the disposition, and there are a great many disagreeable old folks. Some of them forget that they were ever young themselves, and they become untidy in their habits and wonder how, when their asthma or rheumatism is so bad, other people can laugh or sing and go on as they do. The daughter in that family bears all the peevishness and unreasonable behavior of senility without answering back or making any kind of complaint. If you should ask her what her five talents are or her one talent is, she would answer that she has no talent at all. God's gift is taken from her. Her one talent is to forbear and treat the childishness of the old as well as she treats the childishness of the young. She is no musician, and besides there may not be a piano in the house. She cannot skillfully besing a croquet mallet or golf stick. Indeed, she seems shut up to see what she can do with a ladle and a broom and a brush and other household implements. She is the personification of patience, and her reward will be as long as heaven. Indeed, much of her reward may be given on earth. She is in a rough college, from which she may after awhile graduate into brightest domesticity. She is a heroine, though at present she may receive nothing but scolding and depreciation. Her one talent of patience may der trial will do more good than many morocco covered sermons on patience preached to-day from this tasseled cushion of the pulpit. "To another one."

There is a man in business life whose one talent is honesty. He has not the genius or the force to organize a company or plan what is called a "corner in wheat" or a "corner in stocks" or a "corner" in anything. He goes to business at a reasonable hour and returns when it is time to lock up. He never gave a check for \$20,000 in all his life, but he is known on the street and in the church and in many honorable circles as an honest man. His word is as



Cough, Cough,

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As his bond. He has for 30 years been referred to as a clean, upright, industrious, consistent Christian man. Ask him how many talents he has, and he will not claim more than one. He cannot make a speech, cannot buy a market, he cannot afford an outshining equipage, but that an example he is to the young. What an honor to his household, what a pillar to the church of God, what a specimen of truth and integrity and all roundness of character! Is there any comparison in usefulness between that man and the operator of the money market, who startles the world first with a "boom" and then with a "slump"? I tell you that the one man with the one talent will live a happier life and die a more peaceful death and go to a better place than his brilliant but reckless contemporary. "To another one."

The chief work of the people with many talents is to excite wonderment and to startle and electrify the world. What use is there in all that? No use at all. I have not so much interest in the one man out of a million as I have in the million. It does not make much difference about what the exceptional people are doing. Have all the people with the one talent enlisted for God and for righteousness, let all those with five or ten talents migrate to the north star or the moon, and this world would get on splendidly. The world could do off about 5,000 geniuses, for there are more than that on our planet. Then the man or woman of one talent would take possession of the

world and rule it in a common sense and Christian way. There would be less to amaze and startle, but more to give equipoise to church and state and world. "To another one."

Is your talent that of persuasion? Good good use of it. We all have it to some extent, yet none of us thinks of it as a talent. But it is the mightiest of talents. Do you know that this one talent will fetch the world back to God? Do you know it is the mightiest talent of the high heavens? Do you know that it is the one talent chiefly employed by all the angels of God when they descend to our world—the talent of persuasion? Do you realize that the rough lumber lifted into a cross on the hill back of Jerusalem was in persuasion as well as sacrifice? That is the only, absolutely the only, persuasion that will ever induce the human race to stop its march toward the city of destruction and

when around and start for the city of light. Now may the Lord this moment show each one of us that to a greater or less extent we have that one talent of persuasion and impel us to the right use of it.

Among the 114,000 words of Noah Webster's vocabulary and the thousands of words since then added to our English vocabulary there is one outmastering word the power of which cannot be estimated, and it reaches so far up and so far down, and that is the word "come." It has drawn more people away from the wrong and toward the right than any word I now think of. It has at times crowded all the twelve gates of heaven with fresh arrivals. It will rob the path of death of the last pedestrians. It will yet chime so loudly and gladly that all the tolling bells of sorrow will be drowned with the music. It is piled up in the Bible's climax and peroration. "And the apostle and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come." Have it on the point of your pen, have it on the tip of your tongue. Monosyllables are the mightiest of polysyllables, and that word "come" is the mightiest of monosyllables. Shakespeare says of one of his characters, "She speaks pithily, and every word stabs." We may say of others, they speak words which are of balm and music, are light and life. Master one of those words, project one of those words, prove the full plenitude and power of one of those words.

If you cannot do anything else, go around and feel sorry for somebody. When somebody asked, "What is the secret of William Wilberforce's power?" the answer was, "His power of sympathy." And there are 10,000,000 people who have the same qualifications if they only knew it. Sympathy! If you cannot restore the child to that bereft parent or the fortune to that bankrupt financier or health to that confirmed invalid or a higher table than to that wrecked character, you can at least feel sorry for the misfortune or the bereavement or the suffering. Sympathy! If you have not the means to do anything else, go and sit down and cry with them. That is the way Christ did when he went out to the desolate home in Bethany and the sisters told their sad story. He cried with them. Oh, cultivate that one talent of sympathy!

After the resurrection day, all heaven is made up, resurrected bodies joined to ransomed souls, and the gates which were so long open are shut there may be some day when all the redeemed may pass review before the great white throne. If so, I think the hosts passing before the King will move in different divisions. With the first division will pass the mighty ones of earth who were good and wise as they were great. Their genius never spoiled them. They were as humble as they were gifted or opulent. They were great on earth, and now they are great in heaven. The saints of the past and the saints of the future were all used for the world's betterment. As they pass in review before the King on the great white throne to higher and higher rewards it makes me think of the parable of the talents. "To another one." I stand and watch the other divisions as they go by, division after division, until the largest of all the divisions comes in sight. It is a hundred thousand to one, larger than the other divisions. It is made up of men who never did anything but support their families and give whatever of their limited means they could spare for the relief of poverty and sickness and the salvation of the world, mothers who took good care of children by example and precept, starting them on the road to heaven, ministers of the Sabbath school, who sacrificed an afternoon's leisure for the listening class of young immortals, women who declined the making of homes for themselves that they might take care of the old, ministers of the gospel who on niggardly stipend preached in the backwoods meeting houses, souls who for long years did nothing but suffer, yet suffered with so much cheerful patience that it became a helpful lesson to all who heard of it; those who served God faithfully all their lives and whose names never but once appeared in print and that time in the three lines of the death column which some survivor paid for, sailors who perished in the storm while trying to get the life line out to the drowning, persecuted and tried souls who endured without complaint malignity and abuse, those who had only ordinary equipment for body and ordinary endowment of intellect, yet devoted all they had to holy purposes and spiritual achievement. As I see this, the largest of all the divisions, from all lands and from all ages, pass in review before the King on the great white throne I am reminded of the wonderful parable of the talents and more especially of my text, "To another one."

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