

What a retreat for meditation! As we behold the shadows and the sunshine, and the glistening dew-drops, and the sweet wild-flowers, and the delicate vines, and the richly shaded foliage we exclaim: "How great and good is this God who is around us, above us, beneath us, everywhere!" And then our eyes fill with tears—tears of joy—as we realize that this God is our Father. We think that we hear the voice of Jesus saying: "Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he take care of you, O ye of little faith!"

As we thus meditated, nature seems to dissolve from before our eyes and we behold a more glorious scene. There are celestial mountains, and seas of bliss, and a river of life, and a beautiful landscape, and gardens of flowers. There is a magnificent city with mansions and temples. There are loved ones all clothed in white, singing their glad songs of praise to God.

We ask: "From whence flows all this beauty and life, and all this unspeakable joy?" As we behold and listen, the mystery unfolds, and we learn that it is Jesus, heaven's sun, shining upon all this scenery that makes it so beautiful. It is Jesus, the great fountain of life, that fills the redeemed soul with such rapture and delight. How restful, to the weary traveller, are such visions of Christ and his kingdom!

We do not enjoy this beautiful sunshine of God's face, or these spiritual, heavenly surroundings with our earthly senses—these are for the enjoyment of the soul. It is the redeemed, blood-washed child of God who is filled with joy with such visions of Christ's Kingdom, and who is thrilled with delight as God unveils his face and heart and riches.

How sweet is our meditation when we realize that the God of nature and the God of heaven is our God; and that we who are tolling and suffering here in this world of anxiety and care and sickness and death are as dear to him as those who are safe within the walls of the beautiful city.

Dear fellow pilgrim: Let your thoughts be about God. Thinking of Jesus you will grow stronger to bear the pains and sorrows and cares of life. Draw nearer to him; he is close to you all the time. He is with you in the lonely watches of the night as well as in the long, weary hours of the day. When your heart is bowed down by the weight of grief, when you are passing under a cloud, then is the time to look up into his face, to listen to his voice, and to think of him as he was to the sufferers and mourners of old. While looking up into his face, and listening to his voice, and feeling the grasp of his hand, your meditation of him will be sweet.

"Midst rising winds and beating storms,  
Reclining on thy breast,  
I find in thee a hiding place,  
And there securely rest."

### A Study of Talmage.

BY REV. A. J. KEMPTON.

It is well to study great and prominent men, to learn both by their success and their mistakes.

Four remarkable preachers held the attention of the English speaking world during the latter half of the century, Beecher, Spurgeon, Moody and Talmage. That the first three were men of great ability, each in his own line, all would acknowledge. Concerning T. De Witt Talmage there is a difference of opinion. But it is undoubtedly true that he was a man of great powers and of great faults. He was a show-man preacher. He resembled the man who stands outside the tent calling peoples attention to what he had on exhibition. His language was lurid with flights of fancy; his gestures extravagant, his voice ranting and unmusical—but he drew the crowd.

He was a great painter. He stretched a huge canvas, painted striking pictures, illustrating mighty themes. He used a large brush and dipped it in bright and gaudy colors. For this very reason his pictures would not bear close examination. They were large but often coarse, but—they were seen afar, they attracted the multitudes; they did a vast amount of good and no harm, for people who didn't like them did not have to look at them.

To illustrate the effect of his preaching on some people, Talmage told this story on himself. He was preaching on his favorite subject, Heaven, and he ranged the Hallelujah choruses, oratorios, etc., and had them singing and harping, thousands upon thousands. At the close a little woman came to Dr. Talmage and said: "That's a great heaven Dr. Talmage, but how will my poor head stand it?"

He was a great optimist. He saw everything in bright colors. He saw the rainbow but neither the cloud nor the storm. This made his message attractive to a sorrow laden world. But as he was picturing things as they are not, it caused him to lose in moral earnestness. Not seeing evil to fight, Talmage was no fighter. He never took hold as Beecher did of any great moral reform. He never was on the unpopular side. There was no self-

sacrifice about Talmage. This was his greatest fault and here is where he failed. Because of this he is not held in the esteem of the church or the world as was Spurgeon, Moody or Beecher. He left a great fortune, not by his preaching, for his salary as a preacher would not much more than pay his expenses, but in lecturing, for he lectured once a week at least to great audiences, and it may be said a minister has a right to lecture and to pocket the receipts, his church agreeing; but self-sacrifice is the mark of greatness, especially in a minister of the gospel and all truly great preachers have practiced it. Spurgeon refused to come to America when Barnum offered him \$100,000 for 100 lectures, and cabled a passage of Scripture to Barnum beginning, "Thou child of the devil" because he tempted him. Moody gave all his income to the college at Northfield, Mass., and wore a suit of clothes that were ready made and cost \$15 that he might have money to put into the Lord's work.

Russell Conwell, who probably earns more money lecturing than any man in America, puts every cent of it in his hospital and college for poor boys in Philadelphia. But Talmage put his in the bank, and the result is, he leaves no monument, no college, no hospital, not even a church, nothing but a few volumes of sermons and a memory that will soon fade and a reputation for selfishness that is very easily attacked by any one, friend or foe of the cause of Christ. His lack of self-sacrifice was shown in his church which contributed nothing to missions.

Talmage knew how to ride the wave. He spoke before kings and dined with the great. 2,000 papers at one time printed his sermons every week in America and England and it is estimated that 30,000,000 people read his sermons. In spite of the grave fault for which he is freely criticized, he did a vast amount of good. While not deeply spiritual as Spurgeon or Moody, he was deeper than most of his readers, and many who were really his superiors in spirituality could pass by his more grotesque utterances and appreciate the really fine things contained in almost every sermon.

Many a helpless invalid or aged person, shut in from the privilege of attending a place of worship, received help and encouragement from Talmage's cheery sermons.

His sermons inspired these qualities: Reverence of the Bible; domestic virtues; love of home; respect to parents; love of one's country; honesty in business; shame on fraud; industry, without which no young man could succeed and which he himself illustrated, for he was an untiring worker; faith in God and faith in man; cheerfulness in the presence of sickness, pain, unpleasant duties; courage for all the work of life and chiefly among all his teachings, a belief in immortality, which subject was his pet and on which theme he was always at his best.

To have impressed these great truths every week for thirty years on millions of minds, was certainly a feat most wonderful and must accomplish good inestimable. And while it is easy to point out the errors, mistakes and flaws of a great man, it becomes us to speak kindly till we ourselves have accomplished more good.

### Three Trammels Upon Christian Truth.

BY PROF. S. C. MITCHELL.

Whether or not we believe in the transmigration of souls, we are forced to believe in the transmigration of the truth. It has already tenanted many bodies, both ecclesiastical and scientific, incarnating itself now in this form of society and in that conception of science, then in this phase of dogma and in that aspiring faith. Delicate adaptation to an ever-changing environment is the game in which truth chiefly delights, in which indeed it finds its life. It is instinct with a divine discontent with fixity in form. Kaleidoscope-like, it loves change, and brings beauty out of every transient reformation of the time elements. Truth gazes upon passivity as the picture of death, and seeks activity as persistently as water tends to run down hill. It was by birth endowed with the restless and aggressive energy of the pioneer and has ever struck its tent so soon as advancing civilization encroached upon its freedom of initiative.

The chick pips the egg only once, but Christianity has had to break through three different shells that have at successive stages hardened about its nascent and expansive spirit. While Christianity has, on the one hand, been historical in its inception and development, it is, on the other, essentially spirit in its force and purposes. This spiritual content in the religion of Jesus has been caught in three great drifts, and has barely escaped being fossilized in the mental and social strata that were gradually petrifying about it. Or, to change the figure, spiritual truth has suffered three trammels, three shackles riveted upon it by time and circumstance; and painful has been its captivity and preternatural seemed its release. Truth, imprisoned in the dungeon of error, sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, has in each instance been awakened by the angel of the Lord: its chains have fallen off and it has been led forth to gladden the hearts of the little band of disciples who were praying for its rescue. Customs, however stiffening

they may have been, have not been able to cramp permanently the self-assertive vitality of the spirit of truth. Pent up long though it may be in narrow tribal sympathies, in imperial tyrannies, and in crude notions of nature, it has burst forth at last to assert its freedom and power.

#### THE TRAMMEL OF JUDAISM.

The seed of Christianity was planted in the flower-pot of Judaism; but as it grew, oak-like, it rent the fragile jar. It must be transplanted into mother earth. Hebrewism was tribal, Christianity is universal. Is the circle of Christianity coincident with the circle of Judaism? That was the question in Peter's mind when, on the house-top at Joppa by the sea, he saw the vision of the sheet, wherein, though there were all manner of animals, the Divine Voice declared that there was nothing common or unclean. But Peter was disobedient unto the heavenly vision, as we know by his conduct afterwards at Antioch. Hence it became the special mission of Paul to universalize Christianity; that incomparable work he grasped with a clearness of insight and executed with a steadfastness of purpose that pass comment. He was great as a thinker. The order of thinkers, however, to which Paul belongs, is not the speculative type of Plato, Descartes, and Bacon; but to the order of practical thinkers, or actors, such as Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon. Paul expanded a spiritual province into a world-wide empire. He broke off the trammels of Judaism and made the religion of Jesus good for all men.

#### THE TRAMMEL OF ROMANISM.

The second trammel was the enforced supremacy of Rome. Unity in political organization was the goal achieved by the genius of pagan Rome, and uniformity in religious matters was the inherited instinct of papal Rome, which worked itself out steadily for a thousand years. As we recognize the wisdom of planting the first seed of pure religion in Hebrewism, so we need not be less slow to interpret a divine providence in Rome's mission to unify the rude peoples of Europe in spirit and in faith. Both steps were tentative, but God-ordained. By the fall of the Roman Empire, in 476, the world was turned topsy-turvy. The Catholic church at once became the centre of gravity. It sought to bring order out of chaos. In its attempt to civilize the barbarians, the church itself became secularized, and, wedded to empire, it conceived a passion to rule supreme. In this high endeavor it so far succeeded that the mightiest kings and emperors knuckled to its will. In Innocent III. the Roman see enjoyed a supremacy not unworthy to be compared in extent and power with the sovereignty of the Caesars. Rome had become to Christendom what Jerusalem had meant to Hebrewism—the sole gate to heaven.

To break this trammel of Roman uniformity was the work of Martin Luther. Coinciding with the insistent tendencies toward nationalization that were then culminating in France, Spain, and in England—but not, alas! in his own fatherland—Luther, like another Arminius, stood for nationality in politics and nonconformity, or private judgment, in religion. Historical forces were behind his strong personality, and he won. The shackles of Roman unity and uniformity fell off from the Teutonic peoples. Paul universalized Christian truth, Luther liberalized it.

#### THE TRAMMEL OF SCHOLASTICISM.

As spiritual truth had become identified with the blood of the Jew and afterwards with the rule of the Roman, so it became identified with the regnant philosophy of the ancient world. Chaldean cosmology and Greek science were interwoven so vitally with the religion of Jesus that they seemed inseparable. To amputate an erroneous philosophic limb would cause, it was feared, the whole body of Christian truth to bleed to death. To disbelieve in the flatness of the earth was to reject Jesus. As Bruno doubted that the sun moves, he was burnt as a heretic. It was no less dangerous to question Aristotle than an apostle. To accept Christ was to accept also a system of science. Calvin burnt Servetus, not because he was a bad man, but because he perversely rejected certain philosophic concepts, which were in the mind of both Protestant and Catholic blended with the religion of Jesus.

As Paul detached Christianity from Judaism, as Luther detached it from Romanism, so modern thought is detaching it from scholasticism. We now discern that spiritual truth is no more vitally connected in science with the Ptolemaic astronomy than it was in the state with monarchy, or in society with polygamy. The diamond of spiritual truth, says one, may exist without a setting; and it may be placed in a glittering unsubstantial foil, of which people may come to have so great conceit as to lose sight of the value of the jewel itself; and the diamond may therefore be transferred to a solid setting befitting its preciousness. The teaching of Jesus was at first without a setting, either scientific or philosophic. Later it was embedded in a system built up by Chaldean, Greek, and schoolman. This age, appreciating the supreme value of the jewel and detecting the worthlessness of the foil, is seeking to free the truth from its transient setting. Evolution no more threatens Christianity now than the Copernican astronomy formerly threatened it. As spiritual religion is the gainer by the luminous conceptions of the Copernican system, so it will be the gainer by the order which evolution seeks to introduce into the natural world. Of one thing every Christian may be sure: The truth in religion has nothing to fear from the truth in nature. They are not merely allies, but children of the same father.

"Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be;  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

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—Standard.