

TALMAGE ON THE SWORD OF ELEAZER.

"His hand clave unto the sword."—2 Samuel XXIII. 10.

A great general of King David was Eleazer the hero of the text. The Philistines had opened battle against him, and his troops ran; but he with three others held the field. He fought with such ferocity that the Philistines were appalled and routed. Putting his hand on the hilt of his sword, he swept the fingers around until the tip of his fingers were clenched on the other side. Now with a down stroke laying open the head of the Lord's enemies from cranium to chin; now coming in upon them with a sharp thrust at the vitals, and now, with swift, keen, glittering stroke, leaving the carcasses of his enemies by the roadside. "Fall back!" shouted the officers of the Philistine army. The cry rang all along the line. "Fall back!" Eleazer having cleared the field, throws himself upon the ground to rest; but the sinews of his hand having been so long clenched around the sword that the hilt of it has entered the palm of the hand, and the gold wire around the hilt has broken the skin of the palm until he cannot drop the sword which he has so illustriously wielded. That is what I call magnificent fighting for the Lord God of Israel, and we want more of it. I am going to take your time this morning in showing how Eleazer took hold of the sword, and how the sword took hold of him.

In the first place, I noticed that he took hold of that sword with a very tight grip. The soldiers in his army who ran away could easily drop their weapons whenever they wanted to do so. I hear their swords clanging on the rocks as they throw them down in fright. But Eleazer's hand clave unto his sword. The fact is that in this Christian conflict we want a tighter grip of the gospel weapon—two-edged sword of God's truth. I am sick and tired of seeing people with only half and half a hold. They take hold of a part of God's word and let the rest go, and the Philistines, seeing their loose grip, wrench the sword away. The only safe thing for us to do is to put our thumb down on the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis, and sweep our hand around until the New Testament shall come in the palm and sweep the fingers still on around until the tips of the fingers clutch on the words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." I like an infidel a great deal better than I do one of these pumby Christians who takes hold of God's word with the tips of the fingers, and knows what part to keep and what part to let go. God, by positive miracle has kept this book together, and it is a Damascus blade. In a sword factory the severest test they can apply to a sword is the winding of the blade around a gun-barrel like a ribbon, and then when the sword is let loose it springs back to its old shape. The sword of God's word has been put to that test, and it has been bent this way and bent that way, and wound this way and wound that way; but it always springs back again. Just think of it. A book written eighteen centuries ago, and some of it thousands of years ago, yet published to-day, at the rate of twenty thousand copies a week, and more than one million copies a year. A book miraculously written, miraculously preserved, and miraculously scattered is a book that you want to keep a tight grip of. Bishop Colenso will try to wrench out from your fingers the five books of Moses; Strauss will try to wrench out of your fingers the miracles; Renan will try to wrench out of your hand the entire life of Christ; your infidel friend will try to wrench out of your hand all the Bible. But with Eleazer's grip and in the strength of the Lord God of Israel, hold on to it! He who give up the Bible or any part of it, gives up pardon and life and peace and heaven.

Again I notice in Eleazer's grip of the sword an entire self-forgetfulness. He did not realize that the hilt of the sword was eating down into the palm of his hand, and that while he was taking hold of the sword, the sword was taking hold of him. He forgot the pain in his hand in his desire to destroy the Philistines. His hand clave unto

his sword. Now in our Christian work we want self-forgetfulness. If we are all the time afraid we are going to get hurt, we will not kill the Philistines. Who cares whether our hand is hurt or not? When we are battling in such a glorious conflict, let us throw our whole nature into it, in entire self-abnegation and self-forgetfulness. I would rather live five years more and have them industrious and consecrated to Christ, than to live fifty years more and have them indolent or useless. What are pain and persecution, and misrepresentation and falsehood, when we are engaged in the service of such a Master? Do not be groaning because you meet with such severe rebukes from the world. Stop thinking of your wounded hand and think of victory.

Again, I notice how hard it was for Eleazer to get his hand and his sword parted. He had been fighting against the Philistines so long that the sinews had clutched around the sword and it became rigid, and when he gets through with the conflict, he cannot drop it. And I see his three comrade warriors coming up to help him, and they bathe the hand of Eleazer, and they try to relax the muscles and sinews. They cannot get it loose. The sword sticks fast. They pry open the fingers, and they pry open the thumb, and after they succeed they find the curve of the wound corresponds with the curve of the hilt. "His hand clave unto the sword." You and I have seen the same thing many a time. There are in the United States a great many aged ministers. They are too decrepit or invalid to take parishes. They fought a mighty battle for God in other days. Their names are in the church records styled "Emeritus," or the words are put down, a minister without a charge. They have taken off the heads of more Philistine iniquities than you could count from noon until sundown. They were a self-denying race of ministers. They had few books and small salaries, and they swam spring freshets to meet their appointments, and having no police when any one disturbed the meeting, they would just take off coat and go down into the audience to thrash into silence the disturber of the peace, and then go back again to the pulpit, and put on their coat and pray the Lord that he would by his grace complete the work of subjection so vigorously begun! Put that old, worn out minister into a prayer meeting, or put him some Sunday into the pulpit, or put him in a sick room where a dying man wants consolation, and it is the same old gospel ring of admonition and petition. The sword which for half a century has been wielded against the Philistines is so imbedded in the old man's hand he cannot drop it. If any man ever had a right to quit earthly conflict it was Joshua. You know when soldiers come home from battle they have on their flags the names of the battle fields where they distinguished themselves, and that is appropriate. I see inscribed on the flag of old Joshua, Jordan, Jericho, Gibeon, Hazar, City of Ai, and instead of having the flag sprinkled with stars, it has on it the sun and moon that stood still. He is a hundred and ten years old. He is flat on his back, but he is preaching. His dying words are a battle against idolatry, and the rallying of the hosts of Israel. "Behold! I go this day the way of all the earth, and God hath not failed to perform anything he hath promised concerning Israel." The old man's hand clave to his sword. There lies the headless body of Paul on the road to Oostea. His great brain and his great heart have been severed. His last days were full of triumph. "O!" you say, "he is emeritus; he ought to stop preaching." His back has been stung with the merciless elm-wood rods. When the corn-ship broke up he swam ashore, coming up drenched in the brine. He is an old man, worn out and decrepit with the damp cells of the Mamertine. Ever since the day when his horse reared under him in the suburbs of Damascus, as the supernatural light fell, until now in his sixty-eight year, he has been outrageously abused, and he is waiting to die. Does he spend his last days in telling people how badly he feels, in describing the rheumatism in the limbs, or the neuralgia in the temples, or the feverish thirst on his tongue? O no. He spends his last days in giving the

battle about to all Christian ages: "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight." You see the old man's hand clave to the sword.

VOLTAIRE'S LAST DAYS AND DEATH.

Rev. Andrew F. West, in a paper published in the Cincinnati Gazette, enters upon an historical examination of the last days and death of Voltaire. The assertion has been freely made, and as freely denied, that the manner of his death was a startling rebuke to the course of his life and his belief. Mr. West introduces letters of D'Alembert, Condorcet and others, giving satisfactory evidence that Voltaire did certainly recant, and expressed a desire to die in the bosom of the Roman Church. He did this, some of his followers say, merely to obtain a Christian burial, which would indeed be in keeping with some phases of his character.

In regard to the alleged horrors attending his death, during his last days he was much of the time in a stupor, produced by opiates. D'Alembert says, that during his last illness he showed "as much tranquility of mind as his situation would permit, though he seemed to regret life." He refused to receive attention from a priest who was admitted to his chamber, and when asked to acknowledge the divinity of Christ, he resented the effort, and asked to be permitted to "die in peace." Baron de Grimm, one of his best friends and admirers, says: "It is well known that this great man regretted life exceedingly. . . . But it was not from the fear of death and its consequences." The fact is, Voltaire's last days were not such as one would wish for himself. His physician, Tröchin, who was also his personal friend, refers to his death as follows:

"If the knot of my principles required tightening, the man whom I have seen wasting away, agonizing and dying before my eyes, would have made of it a Gordian knot; and, in comparing the death of the good man, which is but the end of a beautiful day, with that of Voltaire, I should have seen plainly the difference there is between a sunny day and a stormy one. He was destined to die in my hands. I spoke truth to him, and unfortunately for him, I was the only one. . . . 'Yes, my friend,' he often said to me, 'you alone have given me good advice. If I had followed your counsel, I should not be in this horrible condition now, I should have returned to Ferney. I would not have intoxicated myself with the smoke that made me mad. Yes, I have swallowed the smoke; you can no longer be of any benefit to me. Send me a doctor who will cure my madness. Pity me, I am mad.'"

"He was to leave two days after the follies of his crowning at the Comedie Francaise, but he received a deputation from the academy, which begged him to honor the assembly by his presence before his departure. He went, and then by acclamation was made Director of the Assembly. He accepted the Directorship. . . . From that time, on to his death, his life was but a storm of follies. He used to be ashamed of them when he saw me, begged me to forgive him, to pity him, not to forsake him, especially since he was trying to have the Academy work at a dictionary. This dictionary was his last thought, his last ruling passion. He had taken in charge the letter A, and had allotted the others to twenty-three academicians, several of whom, after accepting with a bad grace, had strangely irritated him. 'They are sluggards,' he said, 'but I will make them work,' and it was to 'make them work' that, in the interval between the two sessions, he took so many drugs and did all the foolish things that threw him into the most terrible condition of despair and madness. I do not remember him without horror. As soon as he saw that everything he did to increase his strength produced the contrary effect, death was always before him. . . . From that time on, rage took possession of his soul. Recall the furies of Orestes."

There is other testimony, notably that of the Abbe Barruel, more explicit than this, but perhaps some of it ought to be taken with great allowance, for it

was produced after some considerable discussion had sprung up on the subject. Even Richelieu described his last days as contemptible; saying, as he referred to his own death, "If I keep my senses, I shall not play the baby, like Voltaire." His death was not that of a philosopher. It had none of the calmness and confidence that his followers have been taught to believe follows upon the denial of God and immortality. The fact is established beyond a doubt, that Voltaire did not die well.—Central Advocate.

MODE OF BAPTISM.

Returning to the question of mode we have, in the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, an irrefutable and irresistible argument in favor of *affusion*. The subject admits of positive proof. The demonstration is just as complete as the force of language and the well authenticated facts of history, by possibility, can make it. John's baptism was with water; and the baptism of Pentecost was with the Holy Ghost and with fire. "But this," said the Apostle Peter, with wondrous illumination, in undiminished freshness and undiminished power, "is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." The baptismal element came in contact with the disciples; but in what mode? Were the disciples plunged into the element? Did the baptismal element flow down upon the disciples? Have we any indication of mode? Any "Thus saith the Lord?" Could historic narrative be more intelligible? Could it be more transparent? The Holy Ghost was poured out—fell on them—was shed down; and therefore was baptism with the Holy Ghost.

There is no ambiguity. Suppose that a person in perplexity on this point were invited to that upper room; and were permitted to witness the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost. The only thing visible in connection with that rush of energy of which he becomes conscious, is the tongue of fire—the lightness as of flame. Yes, he would say, I understand it now; I have been in doubt as to the New Testament meaning of that Greek verb *baptizo*. I have been undecided in relation to action and mode—implied and required. The baptism comprehends things of vital essential importance, of which no external symbol can afford adequate interpretation; but in relation to mode it is luminous as the flame upon the forehead. I understand it all now; the baptismal element was applied to the heads of the disciples.

This anxious inquirer you next take down to the sea shore, to the rushing river, or to the somewhat impure waters of the deep font, into which the shivering candidates are in succession thrust beneath the flood. He might say at once, I am perplexed more than ever. In that upper room all was clear; it is now confusion worse confounded. The mode is reversed. Instead of the element being applied to the candidate, the candidate is plunged into the element.

In contrast with that immersion in water, we are called to witness another baptismal scene. The service is impressive. There is no disturbing influence. There is nothing to shock the sensibilities—even of the most refined taste, or of feminine delicacy of feeling. The deep silent hush has settled over the great congregation. The baptismal element is applied to the candidates. That is sufficient for satisfaction. The correspondence is perfect. It harmonizes completely with God's baptism. In that case it was fire; in this case water. The element differs; but the mode is the same: baptism with water, and with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.—Rev. J. L. in Baptisma.

MISSIONARY MEETING, MONTREAL.

The missionary society connected with the Sherbrooke street Methodist Church, held its annual meeting last evening, Hon. James Ferrier presiding. Upon the platform were Rev. Messrs. Allen, Whiting, George H. Wells, Botterill, Forsay, Shaw, Bland and Pearson, and Messrs. Bishop and R. Miller and Ald. Clendinning and others. Hon. Mr. Ferrier in his opening address referred to the small salary paid the missionaries of the church, and stated that small as was their stipends it had been found necessary to reduce them very much because the society was \$52,000 in debt. The church was bound to sustain her missionaries. For years past he had witnessed the work now being carried on in Ontario and the West by them amid hardships of many kinds. It specially rested with the Methodist Church to carry out what she had been doing from the

beginning. Much money had been raised through the Sabbath-schools, and they should look upon it as part of the children's education to be taught to give to the cause of God.

Mr. Adam Miller, the Secretary, read the 53rd annual report of the parent society, which, after referring to the Otta not much interest was shown in the meetings of the missionaries. At St. R. thirty had been converted. These labors among the French of this city had been greatly encouraged. There were three stations, namely: 1. At the corner of St. Charles Boulevard and Dufferin streets; 2. St. Jean Baptiste Village; 3. Tremblay West. This mission is in charge of Rev. L. N. Beatty, who is assisted by several of his countrymen. About 50 attend No. 1. station, and at times not less than 500 are present at No. 3. At Sherbrooke Rev. Mr. Charbonneau has been well received by 200 families, and a building is being built there for church purposes. The report from Japan was pleasing. The amount contributed towards the mission in this city and vicinity was \$8,829, of which St. Charles Street Church gave \$471. The total income of the Dominion for the year ending 30th June last is \$145,993.92, and the total expenditure \$174,255.92, showing a debt for the year of \$28,257, which, added to the debt of June 30th, 1876, amounting to \$25,338.77, left a deficit of \$53,595.77.

After the reading of the report eloquent addresses were delivered by Rev. G. H. Wells, Rev. H. F. Bland and Rev. G. Forsay, and the meeting closed about ten o'clock.—Witness.

From the New York correspondent of the Pittsburg Advocate, we quote an interesting item: It seems that I narrate after all, the effect which the existence of the Reformed Episcopal Church (as a convenient city of refuge for persecuted Evangelicalism) has upon the wilful intolerance and arrogance of the dominant high church party in the parent organization. Bishop Potter—the same who punished Dr. Tyng, Jr., for officiating in a Methodist Church—last Sunday gave his apostolic sanction, in the same Dr. Tyng's church, to the same Dr. Tyng's introduction of a Presbyterian layman into his own consecrated pulpit, as the leader of the most unubiquitous services ever seen in an Episcopal sanctuary. The work now goes quietly but bravely on, and will be done. The large debt is really small, in proportion to the remarkable expansion of Christian work for which it has been accumulated. Beside the parent church at Madison avenue and forty-second street, with its college for Christian Workers near by, the corporation has, I believe, some half-dozen city mission properties running, including the church of the Mediator, in Eleventh avenue, the church of the Reformation, in Stanton street, an Orphan Asylum, in east Fifty-third street, and a Reformatory farm at Sing Sing.

PROFESSOR TYNDALL ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BACTERIA.

Professor Tyndall has recently addressed a letter to Professor Huxley in which he details the results of experiments on the development of bacteria which he thinks settles the question of spontaneous generation, to the destruction of that hypothesis. Fifty flasks containing various organic infusions were sterilized by boiling. Twenty-three were then opened in a hayloft, and the remaining twenty-seven (with special precautions that the air should be uncontaminated by his own presence) were opened by Professor Tyndall on the edge of an Alpine cliff. Both were then placed in a warm room, with the result that twenty-one of the twenty-three flasks opened in the hayloft became speedily filled with organisms, while all the flasks opened on the edge of the precipice remained as clear as distilled water. This furnishes remarkable evidence on the influence of the air on the development of the bacteria, but biologists will hardly acquiesce in Professor Tyndall's rather sanguine assertion until his no less positive opponents, and most especially Dr. Bastian, are heard from.—Scientific American.

Sometimes there are living beings in nature as beautiful as in romance. Reality surpasses imagination, and we see breathing, brightening and moving before our eyes, sights dearer to our hearts than any we ever beheld in the land of sleep.

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