A PERFECT RELIGION,

In Its Exactness, Symmetry and Transparency.

Wonderful in Its Transformations and Brilliant Beauty—"The Crystal Cannot Equal It."

NEW YORK, April 19.—Dr. Talmage preached to an immense audience in the morning in the Academy of Music. His text was: "The crystal cannot equal it"—Job, xxviii., 7. Many of the precious stones of the Bible have come to prompt recognition. But for the present I take up the less valuable crystal. Job, in my text, compares saving wisdom with a specimen of topaz. An infidel chemist or a mineralogist would pronounce the latter worth more than the former, but Job makes an intelligent comparison, looks at religion and then looks at the crystal and pronounces the former as of far superior value to the latter, exclaiming, "The crystal cannot equal it." The crystal is the star of the mountain; it is the queen of the cave; it is the ear-drop of the hills; it finds its heaven in the diamond. Among all the pages of natural history there is no page more interesting to me than the page of crystallographic. But I want to show you that Job was right when taking religion in one hand and the crystal in the other, he declared that the former was of far more value and beauty than the latter, recommending it to all the people and to all the ages, declaring: "The crystal cannot equal it."

In the first place I remark that religion is superior to the crystal in exactness. That shapeless mass of crystal against which you accidentally dashed your foot is laid out with more exactness than any earthly city. There are six styles of crystallization and all of them divinely ordained. Every crystal has mathematical precision. God's geometry reaches through it, and it is a square or it is a rectangle or it is rhomboid or in some way it hath a mathematical figure. God's attributes are exact. God's law exact. God's decrees exact. God's management of the world exact. Never counting wrong, though he counts the grass-blades and the sands and the cycles. His providences never dealing with us perpendicularly when those providences ought to be oblique, nor lateral when they ought to be vertical. Everything in our life arranged without any possibility of mistake. There are no "happen so's" in our theology. There are no loose screws in the world's machinery. It did not just happen that Napoleon was attacked with indigestion at Borodino so that he became incompetent for the day. It did not just happen that John Thomas, the missionary, on a heathen island, waiting for an outfit and orders for another missionary tour, receive that outfit and those orders in a box that floated ashore, while the ship and the crew that carried the box, were never heard of. The barking of F. W. Robertson's dog, he tells us, led to a line of events which brought him from the army into the Canadian ministry, where he served God with world-renowned usefulness. It did not merely happen so. I believe in a particular providence. I believe God's geometry may be seen in all our life more beautifully than in crystallography. Job was right. "The crystal cannot equal it."

Again I remark that religion is superior to the crystal in transparency. We know not when or by whom glass was first discovered. Vases of it are brought up from the ruins of Herculaneum. There were female adornments made out of it 3,000 years ago—those adornments found now attached to the mummies of Egypt. A great many commentators believe that my text means glass. What would you do without the crystal? The crystal in the window, the crystal over the watch, the crystal over the telescope. But there is nothing so transparent in a crystal as in our holy religion. It is a transparent religion. You put it to your eye and you see man—his sin, his soul, his destiny. You look at God and you see something of the grandeur of his character. It is a transparent religion. It is a transparent Bible. While reading this Bible after our eyes have been touched by grace, we find it all transparent. The Providence that seemed dark before becomes pellucid. Now you understand why you lost that child and why you lost your property; it was to prepare you for eternal treasures. And why sickness came; it being the precursor of immortal juvenescence. And now you understand why they lied about you and tried to drive you hither and thither. It was to put you in the glorious company of such men as Ignatius, who, when he went out to be destroyed by the lions, said: "I am the wheat and the teeth of the wild beasts must first grind me before I can become pure bread for Jesus Christ." Ah, yes, it is persecution to put you in glorious company; and while there are many things that you will have to postpone to the future world for explanation, I tell you that it is the whole tendency of your religion to unravel and explain and interpret and illumine and irradiate. Job was right. It is a glorious transparency: "The crystal cannot equal it."

Then religion is beautiful in its symmetry. When it presents God's character it does not present him as having love like a great protuberance on one side of his nature, but makes that love in harmony with his justice—a love that will accept all those who come to him, and a justice that will by no means clear the guilty. Beautiful religion in the sentiment it implants! Beautiful religion in the hope it kindles! Beautiful religion in the fact that it proposes to garland and enthrone and emparadise an immortal spirit. Solomon says it is a lily. Paul says it is a crown. The Apocalypse says it is a fountain kissed of the sun. Ezekiel says it is a foliaged cedar. Christ says it is a bridegroom come to fetch home a bride. While Job in the text takes up a whole vase of precious stones and takes out of this beautiful vase just one crystal and holding it up until it gleams in the warm light of the eastern sky, he exclaims, "The crystal cannot equal it!"

Again, religion is superior to the crystal in its transformations. The diamond is only a crystallization of coal. Carbonate of lime rises till it becomes calcite of aragonite. Red oxide of copper crystallizes into cubes and octachedrons. Those crystals which adorn our persons and our homes and our museums have only been resurrected from forms that were far from lustrous; but in the gospel of the Son of God there is a more wonderful transformation. Over souls, by reason of sin black as coal and hard as iron, God, by his comforting grace, stoops and says: "They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels." When God wants jewelry he comes down and digs it out of the depths and darkness of sin. These souls are all crystallizations of mercy. "They shall be mine," saith the Lord, "in the day when I make up my jewels." Wonderful transformation! There she is, a waif of the street; but she shall be a sister of charity. There he is, a sot in the ditch, but he shall preach the Gospel. There, behind the bars of prison, but he shall reign with Christ forever. Where sin abounded grace shall much more abound. The carbon becomes the solitaire "The crystal cannot equal it." Now, I have no liking for those people who are always enlarging in Christian meetings about their early dissipation. Do not go into the particulars, my brothers. Simply say you were sick, but make no display of your ulcers. The number of pocket you picked and the number of chickens you stole make very poor prayer-meeting rhetoric. Besides that, it discourages other Christian people who never got drunk or stole anything. But it is pleasant to know that those who were farthest down have been brought highest up. Out of infernal serfdom into eternal liberty. Out of darkness into light. From coal to the solitaire. "The crystal cannot equal it."

But, my friends, the chief transforming power of the Gospel will not be seen until heaven breaks upon the soul. When that light falls upon the soul then you will see the crystals. Oh, what a magnificent sorting for these jewels of eternity! John represents heaven as exquisitely beautiful. Three crystals. In one place he says: "Her light was like a precious stone, clear as crystal." In another place he says: "I saw a pure river from under the throne, clear as crystal." In another place he says: "Before the throne there was a sea of glass clear as crystal." John says crystal atmosphere. That means health. Balm of eternal June. What weather after the world's east wind! No rack of storm clouds. One breath of that air will cure the worst tubercle. Crystal light on all the leaves. Crystal light shimmering on the topaz of the temples. Crystal light tossing in the plumes of the equestrians of heaven on white horses. John says crystal river. That means joy. Not one tear of human sorrow to embitter it. John says crystal sea. That means multitudinously vast. Rapture vast as the sea, deep as the sea, strong as the sea, ever changing as the sea. Billows of light. Billows of beauty, blue with skies that were never clouded, and green with depths that were never fathomed. Arctics and Atlantics and Mediterraneans and Atlantics and Pacifics in crystalline magnificence. Three crystals. Crystal light falling on a crystal river. Crystal river rolling into a crystal sea. But "the crystal cannot equal it."

A LA ADAM.

Singular Proceedings of a Young Man on the Eve of His Wedding.

DURHAM, April 17.—A most extraordinary and exciting incident occurred at Durham yesterday afternoon. A young man who lived at West Stanley came to Durham Wednesday morning with a young woman, who came from Kimblesworth for the purpose of being married at the registry office. Owing to some cause the wedding, it was found, could not take place that day, and it was put off. The young couple went from the registry office into the Banks and sat down on a seat. They had not been there long when the girl noticed something strange in the demeanor of her companion. He went away from where they were sitting, and having divested himself of all his clothing was running about Prehend's bridge completely naked. The police were sent for, and the young man, who was inclined to be violent, was removed to the police station in the ambulance cart. The young woman followed to the station, and said she could not account for the behavior of her sweetheart. The young man is stated to have been of a religious turn of mind for the last eight or nine years. He was detained at the police station.

The man was released and next day on the road near Kimblesworth he stripped off the whole of his clothes and proceeded to the village in a nude condition, much to the alarm of the inhabitants, who ran away in terror at the sight of the big, powerful young fellow in that state. When he got to the house of his intended wife's parents he knocked out of the window a pane of glass eleven inches by fifteen, and crept through into the house; then from the inside he knocked out the remainder of the panes and crept out again. By this time there was help at hand, and the poor fellow was taken to a neighboring house and attended to, a medical man being summoned at once. His two passages through the broken glass had inflicted frightful lacerations all over his body, and at last accounts he was in a critical condition.

Mad Mothers.

SIOUX FALLS, S. D., April 20.—Mrs. Frank Myde Saturday night administered morphine to her two young children and then committed suicide. She left a note for her husband stating that insanity was hereditary in her family, and she thought it better to end the lives of all.

FORT WAYNE, Ind., April 20.—The wife of George Murphy, of Leo township, near here, placed a revolver against the head of her sleeping 5-year-old daughter Saturday morning and sent a bullet through her head, killing her instantly. Mrs. Murphy, who is crazy, then turned on the other members of the household, but was overpowered and disarmed. She says her daughter will be better off now. About a year ago Mrs. Murray attempted to take the lives of her children.

Sara Bernhardt as Theodore.

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WRITES A LETTER.

DEAR MADAME.—The Recamier Preparations are the perfection of toilet articles. Please send me without fail, to-morrow two dozen assorted for immediate use.

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From 30 to 60 drops in half a tumbler of water will in a few moments cure Cramps, Spasms, Sour Stomach, Nausea, Vomiting, Heartburn, Nervousness, Sleeplessness, Sick Headache, Dirrhœa, Dysentery, Colic, Flatulency and all Internal Pains.

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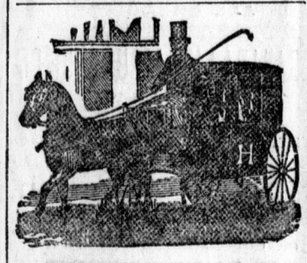

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