

THE COMMON PEOPLE

REV. DR. TALMAGE PREACHES UPON
A POPULAR SUBJECT.

Those Ordinary People Who Move in Ordinary Spheres—The Disadvantage of Being Conspicuous—The Gospel of Content—A Heavenly Elitism.

New York, July 21.—Rev. Dr. Talmage, who is still absent on his annual midsummer tour, preaching and lecturing, has prepared for to-day a sermon on "Plain People," a topic which will appeal to a very large majority of readers anywhere. The text selected was Romans vii, 15, "Salute Asyncretus, Phileon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia."

Matthew Henry, Albert Barnes, Adam Clarke, Thomas Scott and all the commentators pass by these verses without any special remark. The other 20 people mentioned in the chapter were distinguished for something and were therefore discussed by the illustrious expositors, but nothing is said about Asyncretus, Phileon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia. Where were they born? No one knows. Where did they die? There is no record of their decease. Absolutely for nothing, or the trait of character would have been brought out by the apostle. If they had been very in-trepid or opulent or hirsute or musical or cadence or crass of style, or in any way anomalous, they would have been caught by the apostolic camera. But they were good people because Paul sent to them his high Christian regards. They were ordinary people moving in ordinary sphere, attending to ordinary duty and meeting ordinary responsibilities.

What the world wants is a religion for ordinary people. If there be in the United States 85,000,000 people, there are certainly not more than 1,000,000 extraordinary, and then there are 84,000,000 ordinary, and we do well to turn our backs for a little while upon the distinguished and conspicuous people of the Bible and consider in our text the seven ordinary. We spend too much of our time in twisting garlands for magnates and sculpturing warriors and apothecizing philanthropists. The rank and file of the Lord's soldiery need special help.

The vast majority of people to whom this sermon comes will never lead an army, will never write a state constitution, will never electify a senate, will never make an important invention, will never introduce a new philosophy, will never decide the fate of a nation. You do not expect to be a Moses to lead a nation out of bondage. You will not be a Joshua to prolong the daylight until you can shut five kings in a cavern. You will not be a St. John to unveil an Apocalypse. You will not be a Paul to preside over an Apostolic College. You will not be a Mary to mother a Christ. You will more probably be Asyncretus or Phileon or Hermas or Patrobas or Hermes or Philologus or Julia.

Many of you are women at the head of households. This morning you launched the family for Sabbath observance. Your brain decided the apparel, and your judgment was final on all questions of personal attire. Every morning you plan for the day. The ordinary department of your household is in your dominion. You decide all questions of diet. All the sanitary regulations of your house are under your supervision. To regulate the food, and the apparel, and the habits, and decide the thousand questions of home life is a tax upon brain and nerve and general health absolutely appalling if there be no divine alleviation.

It does not help you much to be told that Elizabeth Fry did wonderful things amid the criminals of Newgate. It does not help you much to be told that Mrs. Judson was very brave among the Bornean cannibals. It does not help you much to be told that Florence Nightingale was very kind to the wounded in the Crimea. It would be better for me to tell you that the olive friend of Mary and Martha is your friend, and that He sees all the annoyances and disappointments and abrasions and exasperations of an ordinary housekeeper from morn till night, and from the first day of the year to the last day of the year, and at your call he is ready with help and reinforcement.

They who provide the food of the world decide the health of the world. One of the greatest battles of this century was lost because the commander that morning had a fit of indigestion. You have only to go on some errand amid the taverns and the hotels of the United States and Great Britain to appreciate the fact that a vast multitude of the human race are slaughtered by incompetent cookery. Though a young woman may have taken lessons in music and may have taken lessons in painting and lessons in astronomy, she is not well educated unless she has taken lessons in dough. They who decide the apparel of the world and the food of the world decide the endurance of the world.

An unthinking man may consider it a matter of little importance—the care of the household and the economies of domestic life—but I tell you the earth is strewn with the martyrs of kitchen and nursery. The health shattered womanhood of America cries out to God who can help ordinary women in the ordinary duties of housekeeping. The weary, grinding, unappreciated work goes on, but the same Christ who stood on the bank of Galilee in the early morning and kissed the feet and had the fish already cleaned and broiled when the sportsmen stepped ashore, chilled and hungry, will help every woman to prepare breakfast, wether by her own hand or the hand of her hired help.

The God who made indestructible calvary for Hannah, who made a coat for Samuel, her son, and carried it to the temple every year, will help every woman in preparing the family wardrobe. The God who opens the Bible with the story of Abraham's entertainment of the three angels on the plain of Mamre will help every woman to provide hospitality, however rare an

embarrassing. It is high time that we give to the attention we have been giving to the remarkable women of the Bible—remarkable for their virtue or their want of it, or remarkable for their deeds, Deborah and Jael and Herodias and Athaliah and Dorcas and the Marys, excellent or abandoned—it is high time some of the attention we have been giving to these conspicuous women of the Bible be given to Julia of the text, an ordinary woman amid ordinary circumstances, attending to ordinary duties and meeting ordinary responsibilities.

Then there are all the ordinary business men. They need divine and Christian help. When we begin to talk about business life, who shoot right off and talk about men who did business on a large scale, and who sold millions of dollars of goods a year, but the vast majority of business men do not sell millions of dollars of goods, not a million, nor a quarter of a million, nor the eighth part of a million. Put all the business men of our cities, towns, villages and neighborhoods side by side, and you will find that they sell less than \$50,000 worth of goods. All these men in ordinary business life want divine help. You see how the wrinkles are printing on the countenance the story of worryment and care. You cannot tell how old a business man is by looking at him. Gray hairs at 30. A man at 45 with the stoop of a monogerman. No time to attend to his personal dentistry, the grinders cease because they are few. Actually dying of old age at 40 or 50, when they ought to be at the meridian. Many of these business men have bodies like a neglected clock to which you come, and you wind up, and it begins to buzz and roar, and then the hands start around very rapidly, and then the clock strikes 5 or 10 or 40, and strikes without any sense, and then suddenly stops. So is the body of that worn-out business man. It is a neglected clock, and though by some summer recreation it may be wound up, still the machinery is all out of gear. The hands turn around with a velocity that excites the astonishment of the world.

Men cannot understand the wonderful activity, and there is a roar, and a buzz, and a rattling about the clock of the clock, and they strike 10 when they ought to strike 5, and they strike 12 when they ought to strike 6, and they strike 40 when they ought to strike nothing, and suddenly they stop. Post-mortem examination reveals the fact that all the springs and pivots and weights and balance wheels of health are completely deranged. The human clock has simply run down. And at the time when the steady hand ought to be pointing to the industrious hours on a clear and sunlit dial, the whole machinery of body, mind and earthly capacity stops forever. The cemeteries have thousands of business men who died of old age at 30, 35, 40, 45.

Now what is wanted is grace—divine grace for ordinary business men, men who are harnessed from morn till night and the hours of their life—harnessed in business. Not grace to lose \$100,000, but grace to lose \$10. Not grace to supervise 250 employees in a factory, but grace to supervise the bookkeeper and two salesmen and the small boy that sweeps out the store. Grace to invest not the \$80,000 of net profit, but the \$2,500 of clear gain. Grace to endure the loss of a whole shipload of spices from India, but grace to endure the loss of a paper of collars from the leakage of a displaced shingle on a poor roof. Grace not to endure the tardiness of the American Congress in passing a necessary law, but grace to endure the tardiness of an errand boy stopping to play marbles when he ought to deliver the goods. Such a grace as thousands of business men have to-day—keeping them tranquil whether goods sell or do not sell, whether customers pay or do not pay, whether their tariff is up or tariff is down, whether the crops are luxuriant or a dead failure—calm in all circumstances and amid all vicissitudes. That is the kind of grace we want. Millions of men want it, and they may have it for the asking.

Some hero or heroine comes along, and as the procession passes through the street the business men come out and stand on tiptoe on their steps to look at some one who in arctic climate, or in ocean storm, or in day of battle and in hospital armor, did the "brave thing," not realizing that they, the enthusiastic spectators, have gone through trials in business life that are just as great before God. There are men who have gone through freezing plagues and burning torrids and awful mazes of experience without moving five miles from their desks and tops. Now, what ordinary business men need is to realize that they have the friendship of that Christ who looked after the religious interests of Matthew, the custom house clerk, and helped Lydia of Thyatira to sell the dry goods, and who opened a bakery and fish market in the wilderness of Asia Minor to feed the 7,000 who had come out on a religious picnic, and who counts the hairs of your head with as much particularity as though they were the plumes of a coronation, and who took the trouble to stoop down with his finger writing on the ground, although the first shuffle of feet obliterated the divine calligraphy, and who knows just how many locusts there were in the Egyptian plague and knows just how many ravens were necessary to supply Elijah's pantry by the brook Cherith, and who, as floral commander, leads forth all the regiments of primroses, foxgloves, daffodils, hyacinths and lilies which, with their colors of beauty and kindle their campfires of cheer all around the hemisphere; that that Christ and the God knows the most minute affairs of your business life, and however inconsiderable, understanding all the affairs of that woman who keeps a thread and needle as well as all the affairs of a Rothschild and a Stewart.

Then there are all the ordinary farmers. We talk about agricultural life, and we immediately stop to talk about Cincinnatus, the politician, who went from the plow to a high position, and after he got through the dictatorship in 21 days went back again to the plow. What encouragement is that to ordinary farmers? The vast majority of them, none of them, will be patriots. Perhaps none of them will be patriots. If any of them have a dictatorial power, it will be 40 or 50 or 100 head of oxen, at which they

men want is grace to keep their patience while plowing with a lily oxen, and to keep cheerful amid the drought that destroys the corn crop, and that enables them to restore the garden that day after the neighbors' cattle have broken in and trampled out the strawberry bed and gone through the lime bean patch and eaten up the sweet corn in such large quantities that they must be kept from the water lest they swell up and die; grace in catching weather that enables them, without imprecation, to spread out the hay the third time, although again and again and again it has been almost ready for the mow; a grace to doctor the cow with a hollow horn and the sheep with the foot rot, and the horse with the distemper and to compel the unwilling acres to yield a livelihood for the family. Life is not a picnic, and a little extra to help the older boy in business and something for the daughter's wedding outfit, and a little surplus for the time when the ankles will get stiff with age, and the breath will be a little short, and the swinging of the scythe will be a little weary. Better close up about Cincinnatus. I know 500 farmers just as noble as he was.

What they want is to know that they have the friendship of that Christ who often drew his smiles about the farm. Life is not a picnic, and a little extra to help the older boy in business and something for the daughter's wedding outfit, and a little surplus for the time when the ankles will get stiff with age, and the breath will be a little short, and the swinging of the scythe will be a little weary. Better close up about Cincinnatus. I know 500 farmers just as noble as he was.

Those stonemasons do not want to hear about Christopher Wren, the architect, who built St. Paul's cathedral. It would be better to tell them how to build a house of brick up the ladder without slipping and down on a morning with the brick to smooth off the mortar and keep cheerful and how to be thankful to God for the plain food taken from the pail by the road side. Carpenters standing amid the saw and the bit, and the plane, and the broad and the square, and the chisel, and the carpenter, with his own hand wielding saw and hammer. Oh, this is a tired world, and it is an overworked world, and it is an underfed world, and it is a wrung out world, and men and women need to know that there is rest and refreshment in God and in that religion which was not so much intended for extraordinary people as for ordinary people, because there are more of them.

The healing profession has had its Abernethies, and its Abernethies, and its Valentinus Mottis, and its Willard Parkers, but the common people need the most of the world's medicine, and they need to understand that while taking diagnosis or prognosis, or writing prescription, or compounding medicine, or holding the delicate pulse of a patient, they may have the presence and the aid of the Almighty Doctor, who took the case of the madman, and after he had torn off his garments in foaming delirium clothed him again, body and mind, and who lifted up the woman who for 18 years had been in the grip of the most terrible rheumatism into graceful stature, who turned the scabs of leprosy into ruddy complexion, and who rubbed the numbness out of paralysis, and who swung wide open the closed windows of hereditary or accidental blindness, until the morning light came streaming through the fleshy casements, and he knows all the diseases, and all the remedies, and all the herbs, and all the cathecolons and is monarch of pharmacy and therapeutics, and who has sold out 10,000 doctors of whom the world is sick, but to prove that they are angels or not, he makes the thousands of men whose ailments have been assuaged and the thousands of women to whom in crisis of pain they have been next to God in beneficence.

Come, now, let us have a religion for the common people in professions, in occupations, in industries, in trades, in hold, in merchandise—in everything. I salute across the centuries Asyncretus, Phileon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia.

First of all, if you feel that you are weary, and that you are not extraordinary, and that you are not bored almost to death with extraordinary people, they take all their time to tell us how very extraordinary they really are. You know as well as I do, my brother and sister, that the most of the useful work of the world is done by unpretentious men who toll right on by people who do not seek much approval, and no one seems to say, "That is well done."

Phenomena are of but little use. Things that are exceptional cannot be depended on. Better trust the smallest pen comet shooting in its orbit than impelling the longevity of words that, tending to their own business, for steady illumination better is a lamp than a rocket. Then, you feel that you are ordinary, remember that your position is not invulnerable. Conspicuous people—they have to take it. How they are misrepresented and abused and shot at. The higher the horns of a reebuck the easier to track them down. What a delicious thing it must be to be a candidate for President of the United States! It must be something to the most of men, to pour into the soul of a candidate a sense of serenity when he reads blessed newspapers!

I came into the possession of the abusive cartoons in the time of Napoleon I, printed as he was yet alive. The great army of the Moscovites, one of the most awful tragedies of the centuries, represented under the figure of a monster called General Frost shaving the French Emperor—with a bayonet in his hand, and shaving him, after page, Emperor, and then the Russia cursing him, Europe cursing him, North and South America cursing him, the most remarkable man of this day, and the most abused. All those men in history who now have a halo around their names on earth were a crowd of thorns. Take the few extraordinary railroadmen of our time and what abuse comes upon them, what

thousands of stockholders escape. All the world took after Thomas Scott, president of the Pennsylvania railroad, abused him until he got under the ground. Thousands of stockholders in that company. All the blame on one man! The Central Pacific Railroad—two or three men get all the blame if anything goes wrong. There are 10,000 in that company.

I mention these things to prove it is extraordinary people who get abused while the ordinary escape. The weather of life is not so severe on the plain as it is on the man who knows his gains or loses more than it can know or gain or do. Parents sometimes give confectionery to their children as an inducement to take bitter medicine, and the world's sugar plump precedes the world's sorrows. The man who knows in regard to Christ, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" And they had to say it twice to be understood, for they were so hoarse, and they got their hoarseness by crying a little while before at the top of their voice, "Hosanna!" The river Rhine is full of the ice of men like Lemmon, but crystalline when it came out on the other side. But there are those who have entered the bright lake of wealthy prosperity crystalline and came out terribly riled. If, therefore, you feel that you are ordinary, thank God for the defenses and the tranquillity of your position.

Then remember, if you have only what is called an ordinary home, that the great deliverers of the world have all come from such a house. And there may be seated, reading at your evening stand, a child who shall be potent for good. The scroll of the scroll of men, mighty in church and state, and you will find they nearly all came from log cabin or poor homes. Genius almost runs out in the third or fourth generation. You cannot find in all history an instance where the fourth generation of extraordinary people amount to anything. Columbus the explorer, Demosthenes from a cutter's cellar, Bloomfield and Missionary Carey from a shoemaker's bench, Arkwright from a barber's shop, and he whose name is high over all in earth and air and sky came from a manger.

At an anniversary of a deaf and dumb girl who wrote upon the blackboard, "I am dumb, but I can write." The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'divine'?" She wrote 'God'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Christ'?" She wrote 'Jesus'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Heaven'?" She wrote 'Paradise'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Hell'?" She wrote 'Dante's Inferno'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Love'?" She wrote 'Agape'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Grace'?" She wrote 'Unmerited favor'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Faith'?" She wrote 'Trust'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Hope'?" She wrote 'Expectation'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Joy'?" She wrote 'Bliss'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Peace'?" She wrote 'Harmony'. The examiner asked her, "What is the word for 'Wisdom'?" She wrote 'Knowledge'. 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