

# DONE BY HARD HITTING.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Discourses on the Battles of Life.

A despatch from Washington says:—Rev. Dr. Talmage preached from the following text:—"His hand clave unto the sword."—2 Sam. xxiii. 10.

A great general of King David was Elisha, the hero of the text. The Philistines had opened a battle against him; and his troops ran; but he with three other men 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 tips of the 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 ran all along the line—"Fall back!" Elisha, having cleared the field, throws himself on the ground to rest; but the sinews of his hand have 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 up your time this morning in showing how Elisha took hold of the sword, and how the sword took hold of him.

In the first place, I notice that he took hold of that sword with a tight grip. The soldiers in his army who ran away could easily drop all their weapons whenever they wanted to do so. I hear their swords clanging on the rocks as they throw them down in flight. But Elisha's hand clave unto his sword. The fact is, that in this Christian conflict we want a tighter grip of the gospel weapon—the 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 grasp, wrench the entire 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 on around until the New Testament shall come in the palm, and sweep the fingers still on around until the tips of the fingers clasp the words: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." I like an infidel agent deal better than I do one of these namby-pamby Christians who takes hold of God's Word with the tips of his 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. This sword of God's Word has been put to the test, and it has been bent this way and 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, 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 you want to keep tight grip of. He who gives up the Bible, or any part of it, gives up pardon and life and peace and heaven.

Again, I notice in Elisha'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 hand 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-abandonment and self-forgetfulness. I would rather live five years more and have them in destruction and consecrated to Christ, than to live fifty years more and have them in idleness and 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 the victory. When Elisha plunged into the conflict with such a tight grip, he did not think whether he had a hand, or an arm, or a foot, or think of anything but victory. "His hand clave unto his sword."

Again I remark that Elisha's hand proves that he had done a great deal of hard hitting with his sword, and that something had got hurt. When I see Elisha and the three brave men driving back a whole army of Philistines, I am not surprised that "his hand clave unto his sword." The fact was, every time the point of the sword struck an enemy, the hilt of the sword struck deeper into Elisha's hand.

It has long ago been discovered in military life, you cannot conquer an enemy by rosewater speeches. You must have sharp and destructive work; it is only to be done by hard hitting. There are intemperance, and fraud, and gambling, and lust, and ten thousand regiments—armed regiments—of Philistine iniquity. Soft sermons in morocco cases laid down by kid gloves in the presence of an iniquitous audience will never do the work. We must hit things by their right names. We must expel from our churches the hypocrites who eat the sacrament on communion days, and then devour widows' houses between meals! We have to quit expending all our wrath on the Hittites and Jebusites and Gergashites of olden time. Let those poor wretches go, when we have so many living illustrations of appalling iniquity that need to be slain.

DRAGGED OUT AND SLAIN. Here is here, Ahab is here, Jezebel is here. The destroying angel is here. The massacre of the infants is here. We must, sandal on foot, helmet on head, spearplate over heart, Elisha-sword in the right hand, and so, the result will not only be seen in the gashes of fallen iniquity, but in the adherence of the sword to our own hand. Oh, we are so afraid somebody will criticize our sermons, or our prayers, or our exhortations, that we forget our desire for the world's conquest in the fear we will get hurt; while Elisha goes into the conflict with such enthusiasm he does not care whether he is hurt or not. "His hand clave unto his sword."

Again, I notice how hard it was for Elisha 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 three comrade warriors coming up to help him, and they bathe the back of the hand of Elisha, and they try to relax the muscles and the sinews. They cannot get it loose. The sword sticks fast. They pry open the fingers, and they pry back the thumb, and after they succeed they find the curve of the sword 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 weak or too 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 head 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. But that old, worn-out minister into a prayer-meeting, or put him in some Sunday school, or put him in a Sunday school 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 that he cannot drop it.

HE CANNOT DROP IT. I preach this sermon this morning as a tonic. I want you to take hold of God's truth with such an ineradicable grip that all the forces of earth and hell cannot loosen it, and I want you to strike so hard for God that he will react, and while you take the sword, the sword of God's truth will take you. After the battle is over and the war is gone soldiers gather together, and they show their scars. The soldier rolls up his coat sleeve, and he says: "There I was wounded in the arm; and another soldier pulls down his collar, and he says: "There I was wounded in the neck; and another soldier says: "I have never had any use of that limb, since the gunshot fracture." Oh, my Christian friends, when we get back our bodies on the resurrection day I wonder if we will have any scars to prove our spiritual bravery! Jesus will stand there, scars on his hands, scars on his feet, scars on his brow, scars over his heart, won in the great battle of redemption, and all heaven will shout aloud with emotion and gratitude. And all who have nursed the sick and the poor will show the evidences of earthly exhaustion, and Christ shall wave his scarred hand over the scarred multitude, saying: "Ye suffered with me on earth, now be glorified with me in heaven." And the great organs of eternity will take up the chant, and St. John the martyr will sweep the keys with his fingers: "These are they who came out of great tribulation, and had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." But on that day what will be your chagrin and mine if it shall be told on the streets of heaven that in this world we shrank back from all toil, from all hardship, from all fatigue? No battle-scars to show the glorified; not so much as one ridge on the palm of the hand to show that just once in all this great battle for God and the truth we clutched so tight and struck so hard that the hand clave unto the sword.

A GOOD REASON. Papa—You know, James, how much I disapprove of fighting—still it is gratifying to know that you have beaten a bigger boy than yourself. Why did you fight him? James—E said I looked like you, dad.

TOOK UP ROOM. Willie, to his stout aunt, Aunt Susan, I didn't know you could talk. Aunt Susan on the mother's side—Why, Willie, what do you mean? Willie—Papa said that all g did was to take up room.

## THE S. S. LESSON.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, APRIL 28

"Jesus Appears to the Apostles," John 20. 19-29. Golden Text, 29. 29.

PRACTICAL NOTES.

[Verse 19. The same day. The day of the resurrection, during which he had already appeared to the group of women who first visited the sepulchre, to Mary Magdalene, to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and to Peter. Strange indeed would it have been if with the abundance and sevenfold consecration of the first day of the week it had not been at once known as preeminently the Lord's Day and held sacred. At evening. But before sundown. The doors were shut where the disciples were assembled. The gospel accounts taken together point to one place of assembly—the upper room, which is repeatedly alluded to and which may have been in the house of the mother of John Mark. It was for fear of the Jews that the disciples met here and not in the temple courts as heretofore and as afterward. "The Jews" mean the chief ecclesiastical authorities—the enemies of Jesus. Came Jesus and stood in the midst. A statement which, taken in its natural meaning, asserts that our Lord suddenly and silently opened the door. No miracle is implied. Peace be unto you. Words which could not be pronounced by Jesus in the hearing of his disciples without their quickly remembering the other statement, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." In the ancient East everybody gave everybody his "peace." It was the common exchange of courtesy. But when Jesus used common phrases he put uncommon meaning and uncommon force into them, and we are to understand that immediately through the hearts of these disciples flowed like a river the "peace which passeth understanding."

20. He showed unto them his hands and his side. Anticipating their reasonable doubt, "Then were the disciples glad." Fulfilling our Lord's words, John 16. 22. 21. Peace be unto you. "A second blessing." As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. The Greek for "hath sent" is the verb from which our word "apostle" is derived. "I am my Father's apostle; you are mine."

22. He breathed on them. Following in this as in so many other instances, Jesus condescended to the familiar to his disciples. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. And doubtless they then and there came into closer communion with the divine Being than ever before. Christendom rigidly limits these words to the Pentecost. Spirit was not given before the ascension, Jesus here merely declares the apostles to be approved men and makes them capable of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is short for "the Holy Spirit." But such an interpretation seems to be hampered by the limitation of the senses. One must have exceedingly material conceptions of the Holy Spirit if one cannot understand that the disciples may now have received the Holy Ghost in deed and in truth, and have had to wait for the fitness which came with the fuller outpouring of the blessing at Pentecost.

23. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. "Remit" here means "forgive." This is a text which has been much misused. The Catholic Church understands that the apostles were here given power by the utterance of a word to shut in or out of God's kingdom an eternal life. But a close study of the Bible dispenses many of the difficulties that are on the surface. A careful reading of Luke 24. 33-35. convinces us that others besides apostles were present, and certainly one of the apostles was absent; so that at the outset we cannot believe that Jesus here gave a power to the apostles to be transmitted by "apostolic succession" through the priesthood. In the second place, "forgiveness" is everywhere throughout the New Testament made dependent on repentance and faith, and there is no indication at this time or at any other that the apostles had an absolute knowledge of the human heart. Certainly modern ministers and priests have not. But the terms of salvation the apostles were to proclaim were to be confirmed by divine power.

24. Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus. Didymus and Thomas have the same meaning—"a twin." We are not with them. So only ten of the apostles received this power, whatever it was. 25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. This statement is like that in our lesson, that the women told the apostles of the angels; it does not mean that the disciples all together recited in concert this remarkable statement, but that one by one as they told him they told him the wonderful story. Except I shall see, etc. These words have often been quoted as showing a wrong spirit, but this does great injustice to Thomas. There is a type of mind hungry for new things to believe. There have been in all ages credulous Christians, and they are often uncharitable toward those who require reason for their belief. It is well to emphasize the truth, but Christianity puts no premium on credulity. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" is its essential meaning. "Commit yourself to him." Every man being consoled there is a right and a wrong way to choose the right and declares undying hostility to the wrong will have no trouble about his belief. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." Thomas had not yet had satisfactory evidence of an astounding miracle, and very properly he withheld his belief. But Thomas believed in Christ. All of Thomas's ideals had been found in Christ, and

he was as true a Christian in his doubts as Peter was in his confidence. 26. After eight days. We would say seven days. The event we are now following week, the next Lord's Day. The peculiar Jewish method of reckoning we have already noted. With-in. Hidden again for fear of the Jews. The doors being shut. Closed and barred as before. Peace be unto you. The same courtesy, and the same benediction, and doubtless the same conscious blessing to the disciples.

27. Reach hither. Our Lord shows his knowledge of the words which the doubting disciples had spoken in his absence. He not faithless, but believing. More literally, "Be not faithless, but faithful." Thomas had shown his faithfulness as a leader of the apostles when Jesus proposed to go into what seemed certain death at Bethany. He was then willing almost eager to die with his Lord. But now that his Lord was dead, and he left alive, a hopelessness had arisen in his soul which endangered his faith.

28. My Lord and my God. Augustine suggests that Thomas did not dare to touch and did not need the evidence of touch when he once saw his Lord and heard his words. The painters usually represent Thomas as pressing his finger into the wound, or as about to do so, but his "full and free confession," as Dr. Churton says, "is not that of a man who had waited for the evidence of touch. It is a confession of faith. He had seen and yet he believed. Believing in Jesus includes both a belief in the narrative of his career and a belief in a moral choice of these holy qualities of which he is the embodiment. No one with open mind could have watched him in the days of his flesh and not recognized the purity and goodness of which he was the incarnation. Thomas was peculiarly blessed in having been associated with this holy One for three years, and he loved the qualities for which Jesus stood. Calphas and his crowds saw the same deeds and heard the same words, but because with their hearts they had made a vicious moral choice they did not "believe" in him, although of course, they had no doubt about his existence. We, though distant from Jesus, by eighteen centuries and more, may also believe in him, both in his historic reality and in his goodness and atoning power. There are two ways of possible approach to Jesus: by making the absolute choice of his goodness and more slowly accepting him as an historic person; and, as is much more frequent, especially among those brought up within the Christian Church, by accepting the story first and later learning to love the God thus revealed. All Christians should have a brotherly reverence for the experience of all other Christians, regardless of how that experience began.

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Misunderstood. "As I understand it you and George were riding along in the sleigh thinking of nothing when—" "Oh, no, not thinking of nothing, not by a good deal."

"Nothing connected with your surroundings, I mean."

"Well, maybe he didn't think of his surroundings, but I just had to think a little of what surrounded me."

"Oh, well, you weren't looking for any interruption, at any rate, when the man sprang out into the road and tried to stop you."

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Then somehow she blushed.

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## PERCY GOOD'S DILEMMA.

Young Percy Good, be it understood, was a last-ling son of a noble house, and his good latent was severely bent when he went to Amsterdam.

It is nice to say that he had a way of avoiding words spoken, yet it's sad to tell of just what befell when he went to take the train.

The town's queer name was to him the same as a swear word of bad rank; so he murmured low, "I would like to go to the town of Amster-blank."

Then the ticket man—as they often can—gave a hoarse and angry hoot and severely growled as at God he scowled, "No such town is on this route."

Young Good grew red; then he hung his head and away began to turn, but a happy thought came to him unthought, and he said, "To Amster-dum."

"Umph! No such place!" And the agent's face was fierce as he said, "Such blash!" Then our Percy smiled like a gentle child and suggested, "Amster-gosh."

"What's wrong with you?" yelled the agent through the window. "Slipped your trolley?" "No, sir," said Good, "but, indeed, I should like to go to Amster-golly."

"Get out of here!" with a scornful sneer, the ticket man said. "Scat!" Then Percy moaned in a voice that groaned, "Do you know of Amster-drat?"

Then the ticket man understood his plan and suggested, with a wink, "I believe that you want a ticket to Amster-blankety-blank-dash-blank!"

"Yes, yes," said Good, "you have understood." And he hurried to the train, but the agent's face, as he left the place, was that of a man in pain.

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## THE ARIZONA KICKER.

A NUMBER OF LIVELY ITEMS FROM A HUSTLING WEEKLY.

The Easy Editor Is Still Dodging Bullets and Doing Business at the Old Stand in Spite of His Enemies and Is as Defiant as Ever.

[Copyright, 1901, by C. B. Lewis.] An eastern paper says that an Arizona editor who was in Chicago this winter blew out the gas and was almost a goner when his room was broken into. It wasn't us. We always light our way with a tallow candle when in Chicago.

Some 450 of our local subscribers are in arrears from \$1 to \$3 each. Next week we shall start out on a collecting tour, and our guns will be well oiled and loaded. Have your money ready when we call.

In trying to shoot a jack rabbit in the suburbs of the town yesterday James Daily killed and had to pay for

KILLED AND HAD TO PAY FOR A \$75 MULE. A \$75 mule belonging to Captain Childers. If Mr. Daily had carried out the threat he once made of shooting us on sight, we wonder how many innocent citizens would have gone down before his fusillade.

Old Major Harrington came into The Kicker office the other day to ask why America hadn't gone ahead and licked China out of her boots. We started in to explain matters as best we could, but he got impatient and fired three bullets at us and left. The major was never a hand to understand statesmanship.

There was a rumor around town the other day that Dave Sullivan, the ex-stage driver, had been devoured by a mountain lion in the Red Tree hills. As Dave isn't to be found at any of his haunts, the story may be true, but we'll bet the lion passed a bad hour after his meal. Dave is about the toughest thing we know of in Arizona, and the wolves and bears have studiously avoided him.

Last week we were one of the committee of four that sought to raise \$15,000 to give the town waterworks. The total sum subscribed in the entire week was \$1,000, and, as for ourselves, we'll be hanged if we waste any more wind over the matter. If a citizen wants to lie down on his stomach and collect microbes from Tomahawk creek, let him go ahead and imbibe.

Our esteemed contemporary denies that he was ever in Indiana for stealing a cow. Of course not. A man who steals a cow and drives her off has got to hustle around and have common sense enough to dodge the mudholes and thistle patches along the highway. Who could have started such a baseless rumor?

His honor the mayor (who is onself) was obliged to throw Jim Carver down stairs in the city hall the other day and break his leg. Jim had got too fresh and was playing the part of mayor or sitting with his feet all over our official desk. We don't like to go back on any of the boys, but we have a certain official dignity to maintain.

Three nights ago as we were returning at a late hour from Mrs. Judge Glider's soiree we fell over a hog lying on the sidewalk and landed on our head and remained in a dazed condition for ten minutes. If this were a twentieth century community, we should ask, "Can such things be?" As it is not, we warn all hog owners that we shall open fire on the next porker which lies in ambush for us.

If the critter who fired a bullet into the postoffice window Tuesday evening as we lay dreaming on our cot will call again, we will try to make things pleasant for him. His bullet missed our head by only an inch, which was pretty fair for a random shot. We got tangled up in our nightshirt or he would be walking with a limp today.

Logical Inference. "Nonsense! How can anybody know the sex of the dove that brought the olive branch to Noah?"

"It was a male according to the story, for otherwise it would not have kept its bill shut long enough to carry it to the ark."

TREES AS PURIFIERS. There is nothing like a tree to keep air pure, remarks a scientist. Its leaves decompose carbonic acid. The volume of carbonic acid exhaled by a human being in 24 hours is roughly estimated at 100 gallons. If a single tree of moderate size were growing where a dozen or 20 men were sleeping the purifying action of its leaves would insure the air being kept fresh.

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