

## TALMAGE'S SERMON.

### HE PREACHES ON THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM.

"The Lamb of God Who Takes Away the Sins of the World"—A Remarkably Powerful and Clear Bible Story—Abraham and Isaac.

#### Lesson of a Rescue.

In his sermon last Sunday Rev. Dr. Talmage chose for his subject Abraham's supreme trial of faith and the angelic scene of Isaac from being offered by his father as a sacrifice. The text was Genesis xxii, 7, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?"

Here are Abraham and Isaac, the one a kind old affectionate father, the other a brave, obedient, religious son. From his bronzed appearance you can tell that this son has been much in the fields, and from his shaggy dress you know that he has been watching the herds. The mountain air has painted his cheek ruddy. He is 20 or 25, or, as some suppose, 33 years of age, nevertheless a boy, considering the length of life to which people lived in those times and the fact that a son never is anything but a boy to a father. I remember that my father used to come into the house when the children were home on some festal occasion and say, "Where are the boys?" although the "boys" were 25 and 30 and 35 years of age. So this Isaac is only a boy to Abraham, and this father's heart is in him. It is Isaac here and Isaac there. If there is any festivity around the father's tent, Isaac must enjoy it. It is Isaac's walk and Isaac's apparel and Isaac's manners and Isaac's prospects and Isaac's prosperity. The father's heartstrings are all wrapped around that boy, and wrapped again, until nine-tenths of the old man's life is in Isaac. I can just imagine how lovingly and proudly he looked at his only son.

#### A Burnt Offering.

Well, the year of Isaac had borne a great deal of trouble, and it had left its mark upon him. In hieroglyphics of which the story was written from forehead to chin. But now his trouble seems all gone, and we are glad that he is very soon to rest forever. If the old man shall get decrepit, Isaac is strong enough to wait on him. If the father gets dim of sight, Isaac will lead him by the hand. If the father becomes destitute, Isaac will earn him bread. How glad we are that the ship that has been in such a stormy sea is coming at last into the harbor. Are you not rejoiced that glorious old Abraham is through with his troubles? No, no! A thunderbolt! From that clear eastern sky there drops into that father's tent a voice with an announcement enough to turn black hair white and to stun the patriarch into instant annihilation. God said, "Abraham!" The old man answered, "Here I am." God said to him, "Take thy son, thy only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering." In other words, say him, cut thy body into fragments, put the fragments in the fire, act as if the wood and let Isaac's body be consumed to ashes. "Cannibalism! Murder!" said some one. "Not so," said Abraham. I hear him soliloquize: "Here is the boy on whom I have depended. Oh, how I loved him! He was given in answer to prayer, and now must I surrender him? O Isaac, my son! Isaac, how shall I part with you? But then, it is always safer to do as God asks me to. I have been in dark places before, and God got me out. I will implicitly do as God has told me, although it is very dark. I can't see my way, but I know God makes no mistakes, and to him I commit myself and my darling son."

Early in the morning there is a stir around Abraham's tent. A beast of burden is fed and saddled. Abraham makes no disclosure of the awful secret. At the break of day he says, "Come, come, Isaac, get ready—we are going off on a two or three days' journey." "I hear the ax hewing and splitting amid the wood under the sticks are made the right length and the right thickness, and then they are fastened on the beast of burden. They pass on—there are four of them—Abraham, the father; Isaac, the son, and two servants. Going along the road, I see Isaac looking up into his father's face and saying: "Father, what is the matter? Are you not well? Has anything happened? Are you tired? Lean on my arm." Then, turning around to the servants, the son says, "Ah, father is getting old, and he has had trouble enough in other days to kill him!"

#### The Course of the Tragedy.

The third morning has come, and it is the day of the tragedy. The two servants are left the beast of burden, while Abraham and his son Isaac, as was the custom of good people in those times, went up on the hill to sacrifice to the Lord. The wood is taken off the beast's back and put on Isaac's back. Abraham has in one hand a pan of coals or a lamp, and in the other a sharp, keen knife. Here are all the appliances for sacrifice, you say. No, there is one thing wanting—there is no victim, no pigeons or heifer or lamb. Isaac, not knowing that he will be the victim, looks up into his father's face and asks a question which must have cut the old man to the bone—"My father, the son said, "My son Isaac, here I am." The son said, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?" The father's lip quivered, and his heart fainted, and his knees knocked together, and his entire body, mind and soul shiver in sickening anguish as he struggled to gain equipoise, for he does not want to break down. And then he looks into his son's face, and says, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb."

The twain are now at the foot of the hill, the place which is to be famous for a most transcendent occurrence. They gather some stones out of the field and build an altar three or four feet high. Then they take this wood off Isaac's back and sprinkle it over the stones, so as to help and invite the flame. The altar is done—it is all done. Isaac has helped to build it. With his father he had discussed whether the top of the table is even and whether the wood is properly prepared. Then there is a pause. The son looks around to see if there is not some living animal that can be caught and butchered for the offering. Abraham tries to choke down his fatherly feelings and suppress his grief, in order that he may break to his son the terrific news that he is to be the victim.

Ah! Isaac never looked more beautiful than on that day to his father. As the old man ran his emaciated fingers through his son's hair he said to himself: "How shall I give him up? What will his mother say when I come back without my boy? I thought he would have been the comfort of my declining days. I thought he would have been the hope of ages to come. Beautiful and loving and yet to die under my own hand. O God, is there not some other sacrifice that will do? Take my life and save his! Pour out my blood and save Isaac for his mother and the world!" But this was an inward struggle. The father controls his feelings and looks into his son's face and says, "Isaac, must I tell you all?" His son said: "Yes, father. I thought you had something on your mind. Tell it." The father said: "My son Isaac, thou art the lamb!" "Oh," you say, "why didn't that young man, if he was 20 or 30 years of age, snite into the dust his infirm father? He could have done it!" Ah! Isaac knew by this time that the scene

was typical of a Messiah who was to come, and so he made no struggle. They fall on each other's necks and waited on the parting. Awful and matchless scene of the wilderness. The rocks echo back the breaking of their hearts. The cry: "My son! My son!" The answer: "My father! My father!"

#### The Arm of God.

Do not compare this, as some people do, to Agamemnon, willing to offer up his daughter, Iphigenia, to please the gods. There is nothing comparable to this wonderful obedience to the true God. You know that victims for sacrifice were always offered, so that the right not to struggle away from the altar's side when he was dying for Christ's sake, said to the blacksmith who held the manacles. "Fasten those chains tight now, for my flesh may struggle mightily." So Isaac's arms are fastened, his feet are tied. The old man, rallying all his strength, lifts him on a pile of wood. Fastening a thong on one side of the altar, he makes it span the body of Isaac, and fastens the thong at the other side of the altar, and another thong, and another thong. There is the lamp flickering in the wind, ready to be put on the brushwood of the altar. There is the knife, sharp and keen. Abraham—struggling with his mortal feelings on the one side and the commands of God on the other—takes that knife, rubs the flat of it on the palm of his hand, cries to God for help, comes up to the side of the altar, puts a parting kiss on the brow of his boy, takes a message from him for mother and home, and then, lifting the glittering weapon for the plunge of the death stroke—his muscles knitting for the work—the hand begins to descend. It fails! Not on the heart of Isaac, but on the arm of God, who arrests the stroke, shaking the wilderness quake with the cry: "Abraham! Abraham! Lay not thy hand upon the lad nor do him any harm!"

What is this sound back in the woods! It is a crackling as of tree branches, a bleating and a struggle. Go, Abraham, and see what it is. Oh, it was a ram that, going through the woods, has its crooked horns fastened and entangled in the brushwood and could not get loose, and Abraham seizes it gladly and quickly unlooses Isaac from the altar, puts the ram on his place, sets the lamp under the brushwood of the altar, and as the dense smoke of the sacrifice begins to rise the blood runs down the sides of the altar and drops hissing into the fire, and I hear the words, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."

Well, what are you going to get out of this? There is an aged minister of the gospel. He says: "I should get out of it that when God tells you to do something, whether it seems reasonable to you or not, go ahead and do it. Here Abraham couldn't have been mistaken. God didn't speak so distinctly that it was not certain whether he called Sarah or Abraham, but he probably called Abraham, articulation, divine intonation, divine emphasis, he said, "Abraham." Abraham rushed blindly ahead to do his duty, knowing that things would come out right. Likewise do you yourselves. There is a mystery of your life. There is some burden you have to carry. You don't know why God has put it on you. There is some persecution, some trial, and you don't know why God allows it. There is a work for you to do, and you have not enough grace, you think, to do it. Do as Abraham did. Advance, and do your whole duty. Be willing to give up Isaac, and perhaps you will not have to give up anything. "Jehovah-jireh—the Lord will provide." A capital lesson this old minister gives us.

#### God Will Provide.

Out yonder in his house is an aged woman. The light of heaven in her face, she is half way through the door; she has her hand on the pearl of the gate. Mother, what would you get out of this subject? "Oh," she says, "I would learn that it is in the last pinch that God comes to the relief. You see the altar was ready, and Isaac was fastened on it, and the knife was lifted, and just at the last moment God broke in and stopped proceedings. So it was in my life of seventy years. Why, sir, there was a time when the flour was out of the house, and I set the table at noon and had nothing to put on it, but five minutes of 1 o'clock a loaf of bread came. The Lord will provide. My son was very sick, and I said: 'Dear Lord, you don't mean to take him away from me, do you? Please, Lord, don't take him away. Why, there are neighbors who have three and four sons. This is my only son, this is my Isaac. Lord, you won't take him away from me, will you? But I saw he was getting worse and worse all the time, and I turned round and prayed until after awhile I felt submissive, and I could say, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to me naturally that he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, whom I thought was going to be slain, was soon well again, and I said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, knowing