

TABERNACLE SERMONS.

Discourse of Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage

On the College Student.

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank; so moreover three times a day at the time agreed, they might stand before the king.—Daniel 1, 5.

Since I left you 12 days ago I have travelled over 3,000 miles, and had opportunity of addressing great multitudes of young men in the larger cities of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, and have never been so impressed with the magnificent opportunities opening before young men, or with the temptations to which they are subjected, or with their great need of full hearted sympathy. And what I observed during the past 10 days may give somewhat of a coloring to the subject that I present this morning. My text opened the door of a college in Babylon, and introduces you to a young student 17 years of age, Daniel by name. Be not surprised if in the college you find many hilarities. Put a hundred young men together and they are sure to have a good time. There is no harm in that. God does not write out the trees and the grass and the blossoms in dull prose. The old robin does not sit moping in the nest because of the chirpings and the lively adventures of the fledglings that have just begun to fly. Do not come into an orchard looking for winter apples on a May morning. But Daniel of the text is far from being gay. What oppressive thoughts must have come over him as he remembered that he was a captive in a strange land. The music that came into his study-window was not the song of Zion, but the sound of flute, sackbut, and dulcimer in the worship of a heathen god. Moreover, he had no hope of ever getting back home again and meeting those who had missed him long, and missed him bitterly, wondering if he were still alive, and finding many a luxury tasteless because they did not know but Daniel might be lacking bread. When you and I were in school or college, and the vacation approached, we were full of bright anticipation, and we could not study the last day, and we could not sleep the last night. The lexicon and the philosophical apparatus were transparent, so we could see right through them into the meadows and the orchards. Not so with poor Daniel. He did not know that he should ever escape from captivity, or, escaping, he did not know but when he got home the loved ones would be dead, and he would go wandering and weeping among the sepulchres of his fathers. Beside that, the king tried to make him forget his homeland forgot his country; for that purpose, actually changed his name. The king wanted him to be a prodigy in personal appearance, and so he ordered meat and wine sent from his own table to Daniel; but Daniel refuses all this, and puts himself upon the humblest diet, the poorest of all herbs, called pulse and plain water. His attendants cry out against this, and tell him he will perish under such a diet. "No," he says, "you try us for 10 days, and if at the end of that time we are not full-cheeked and robust as any it will be surprising." Ten days pass along, and the students come up for examination, and all declare that none are so ruddy and robust as Daniel and his fellow-captives. The years of industrious pupilage pass by, and the day of graduation has come, and Daniel gets his diploma, signed by the king and reading as follows:

"In all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king required of them he found them 10 times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm."

And so Daniel took the first honor, and here the story ends; for Daniel the student hereafter will be Daniel the prime minister.

The first thought suggested to me by this subject is that young men may be carried into captivity by their enemies. There is a captivity more galling than the one into which Daniel was transported; it is the captivity of evil habit. Men do not go into that willingly. Slyly and imperceptibly are the chains forged upon them, and one day they wake up to find themselves away down in Babylon.

Cyrus consented that some of his captives should go, and 50,000 of them accepted the opportunity; but tell me what evil habit ever consented to let a man go. Ten plagues made Pharaoh consent to the departure of God's people; but tell me what Pharaoh of evil habit ever cheerfully consented to let any of its victims go. Men talk of evil habits as though they were light and trivial; but they are scorpion whips that tear the flesh; they make a road of spikes more bloody than the path of a Brahmin; they are the poisonous robe of Nessus; they are the sepulchre in which millions are buried alive. The young are in more peril because they are unsuspecting. The lions are asleep in their soul, and their power is not known. The time when a ship's company makes mutiny is where the watchman is off his guard. When a spider meets a fly it does not say: "Go down with me to the place where I murder insects." No. It says: "Come and take a walk with me on this bridge of gossamer." Oh! there is a difference between the sparkle of the serpent's eyes and the crush of its slimy folds. There is a difference between the bear's paw toying with a kid and the cracking bones in the terrific hug. Pike's Peak looks beautiful in the distance, but ask the starved travelers by the road-side what they think of Pike's Peak. Oh? are there those around who suspicious companions are gathering? Do their jests and their entertainments make the hours go blithely by when you are with them? Have you taken a sip from their cup of sin, or gone with them in one path of unrighteousness? Turn back. From Babylon they come, and to Babylon they would carry you. If so many plague-stricken men would like to enter your companionship, before anyone is allowed to pass into the intimacy of your heart put on them severest quarantine.

My subject also impresses me with the fact that early impressions are almost ineffectual. Daniel had a religious bringing up. From the good meaning of his name I know he had pious parentage. But as soon as he comes into the possession of the king his name is changed, all his surroundings are changed, and now, you say, will begin the demoralization of his character. Before, his name was Daniel, which means "God my judge," now his name is to Belshazzar, which means "the treasurer of the god Bell." Now, you expect to see him overthrown amid all these changed circumstances. Oh! no; Daniel started right, and he keeps on right. When I find what Daniel is in Jerusalem, I am not surprised to find what he is in Babylon. I wish I could write on all parents' hearts this morning the fact that early impressions are well nigh sinefable. When I see Joseph a pious lad, in the house of his father, Jacob, I am not surprised to see him act so nobly down in Egypt. When I find Samuel a pious lad in the house of his mother Hannah, I am not surprised that he gives a terrible smiting to

idolatry as soon as he comes to manhood. David planned the Temple at Jerusalem, and gathered the materials for its building; but Solomon, the son, came and put up the structure, and that goes on in all ages. The father plans the character of the child and its destiny for time and eternity; then the son completes the structure. You might as well put down a foundation ten feet by five and expect to rear on it a great cathedral, as to put down a contracted character in a child's soul, and yet rear upon it something extensively grand and extensively useful. Let me say to those Christian parents who are doing their best in the education of their children, take good heart, your sons this morning may be far away from you and in a distant city, but God, to whom you dedicated them, will look after them. The God of Daniel will look after them far away in Babylon. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." He may wander away for awhile, and fall into sin, and break your heart; but before he is done with this life, you having commanded him to God, he will come back again; for I put the emphasis in the right place on the word "old," when I repeat that passage and say, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." May you all have the glorious satisfaction of seeing your children walk in the paths of righteousness and peace. One with them on earth, may you be one with them in heaven.

I learn also from this subject the beauty of Christian sobriety. The meat and the wine that were to come to Daniel's table were to come from the king's table. Well, Daniel had no right to take that food. The king was a heathen, and like all the heathen, was accustomed to ask a blessing before he partook of food, and in that blessing they always dedicated the food to the gods. So that if Daniel had taken this food he would have broken the law which forbade the taking of food dedicated to idols. He chose pulse. It was a miracle that he did not dwindle away. There is nothing in pulse, such a poor herb, to make a man ruddy and healthful. Some people talk as though that were a kind of diet which would make a man strong and competent to do the duties of this life. That is not the lesson at all. But for a positive miracle Daniel would have dwindle away, and when God for his self-denial puts a benediction upon all Christian sobriety. I would not have you class your preacher among those who would put unnecessary restraints upon unlawful appetites. There are those in this day who dispute the grant which God gave to man for animal food, and then make a religion of their hunger as the Pharisees expected heaven for their fasting. Daniel did not always live on pulse. He was not a Grahamite, he was not a vegetarian. He went through that self-denial because the food offered him was idolatrous food. When I see God filling the earth with all varieties of food I have not much confidence in the teaching of those who would put us on severe regimen. There are parents who, with a wrong theory in this respect, deny their children all harmless luxuries, and, without sufficient inquiry, send them off to boarding schools where their intellects are cultured to the disadvantage of their starved bodies; so that from many of a boarding-school a class of 20 will graduate 19 of them ghosts! Now, when I see three angels eating the calf which Abraham slew, and when I find Christ eating broiled fish even after His resurrection, I come to the conclusion that the theories of the vegetarian are well founded. But oh! how many temptations to dissipation. With so many things to tempt the appetite, how many temptations to gluttony. With so many sparkling beverages, how much temptation to drunkenness. Could I bring before you this morning the mothers and the wives and the sisters who have wept at the graves of the inebriate, your soul would be overpowered with the spectacle. Could I show you the many forms robed of their beauty, the eye flashings quenched in the wine cup, the ruddy cheek from which rum has wormed the rose, your souls would recoil with horror, and you would rise up and cry, "Begone, thou dream of hell!" Charles Lamb made all the world laugh at his humor, and then afterward made all the world weep at his fate, who outwitted everybody, and was at last outwitted of his own appetites.

Are you fond of pictures? Here is one drawn by Solomon:

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it moveth itself in the cup. At the last it biteh like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

"Do you know what you are doing?" said a mother who had broken into a restaurant, the door locked against her, her son inside. She came up to the counter and saw the man of the restaurant mingling the intoxicating cup for her own son. She said to the man behind the counter: "Do you know what you are doing?" "No," said he, "I don't." Says she, "You are fattening gravey-rids." I was told at Des Moines last week of a train of cars going, through a very stormy night, over one of the Western prairies, and the young man who was present told us the story. In the night there was a little child in the sleeping-car, fretful, and worrying and crying hour after hour. A man on the opposite side of the car lost his patience, and said, "Either make that child shut up, or pitch it out of the window!" Then another man on the opposite side of the sleeping-car—a man with a broken heart—pushed back the curtain and looked out, and said: "Young man, that child's mother is dead in the baggage-car!" Then the man who committed the affront rose up, offered his services for the night, and took care of the child until the morning, and all the passengers in the car was broken down with emotion. Oh, if the cry of one child could arouse so many sympathies, what ought to be the effect of the ten-thousand-voiced shrieks of orphans and widowhood from the inebriates' grave! God save this country from the perils of strong drink.

My subject also impresses me with the beauty of youthful character remaining incorrupt away from home. If Daniel had plunged into every wickedness of the city of Babylon, the old folks at home would never have heard of it. If he had gone through all the rounds of iniquity, it would have cast no shadow on his early home. There were no telegraphs, there were no railroads. But Daniel knew that God's eye was on him. That was enough. There are young men not so good away from home as at home. Frederick tending his father's sheep among the hills, or thrashing rye in the barn, is different, perhaps, from Frederick on the Stock Exchange. Instead of the retiring disposition, there is bold effrontry; instead of an obliging spirit, there is, perhaps, oppressive selfishness; instead of open-handed charity, there is tight-lipped stinginess; instead of reasonable hours, there is midnight revel. I stand before many young men this morning who may have left their father's house, and others who, though still under the parental roof, are looking forward to the time when they will go forth to conflict alone in this world with its temptations and its sorrows, and when they will build up their own character. Oh! that the God of Daniel might be with them in Babylon! I think the most thrilling passage of a young man's life is

when he leaves home to make his fortune. The novelty and the romance of the thing may keep him from any keen sorrow, but the old people who have seen the destruction of so many who started with high hope, can not help but be anxious. As long as he was in his father's house his waywardness was kindly chided, and, although sometimes he thought the restraint rather bitter and rather severe, in his calmer moments he acknowledged it was salutary and righteous. Through the influence of metropolitan friends the father has obtained a situation for his son in the city. The courtesies of the young man come the night before his departure to bid farewell to the adventurer. The morning of his going away he walks around the place to take a last look at things, perhaps comes upon some object that starts a tear, some old familiar place, but no one sees the tear. The trunk is put upon the wagon, the young man is off for the city. He is set down amid excitements and amid associates who are not over careful about their words and thoughts and actions. Morning comes. No family altar. Sabbath comes. No rural quiet. The sanctuary comes, but all the faces are strange, and no one cares whether he comes to church or does not come. On his way home from the store he sees a placard announcing a rare and a vicious amusement. He has no greeting at the door of the boarding-house. He has no appetite for the food. No one cares whether he eats or does not eat—rather he would not eat; it is cheaper! After the tea he goes into the parlor, takes up a book, finds it dull—no sister to look over it with him; goes up stairs to his room in third story, finds it cold and uninventing and in despair he rushes out, caring for nothing but to get something to make him stop thinking. He is caught in the first whirl of sin. He has started out on the dark sea where the gleam of joy is the flashing of the gate of the lost. Oh! how many graves are in the country churchyard which, if they could speak, would tell of young men who went off with high hopes and came back blotted and crushed to disgrace the sepulchre of their fathers. And yet this excess must go on. As from distant hills the rivers are poured down through tunnels to slake the thirst of our great cities, so from distant country places the streams of incorporeal population must pour down to purify our great cities. To-morrow morning on all the thoroughfares, in every steamboat, and in every rail-car will be young men going forth to seek their fortune in our great towns. O Lord, God of Daniel, help them to be as faithful in Babylon as they were at Jerusalem. Forget not in the great seaports the moral and religious principles inculcated by parental solicitude, and if to-day, oh, my young friend, seated in the house of God, you feel the advantage of early Christian culture, forget not those to whom you are most indebted, and pray God that, as old age comes upon them and the shadow of death, the hope of Heaven may beam through the darkness. God forbid that any of us, through our misconduct, should bring disgrace upon a father's name, or prove recreant to the love of a mother. The poet made no exaggeration when he exclaimed: "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!"

Oh! that God would help you as parents and as young people to take to heart the lessons of this important subject, and if we shall learn that there is danger of being carried into captivity, and that early impressions are almost ineffaceable, and that there is something beautiful in Christian sobriety, and that there is great attractiveness, and that there are other serious complications of that character, they stand without a rival.

ACUE AND FEVER.

No better cathartic can be used preparatory to, or after taking quinine.

As a simple purgative they are unequalled.

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The genuine are never sugar-coated.

Each box has a red-wax seal on the lid with the impression, MCCLANE'S LIVER PILLS.

Each wrapped bears the signatures of C. MCCLANE and FLEMING BROS.

RECEIVE upon having the genuine Dr. C. MCCLANE'S LIVER PILLS, prepared by

FLEMING BROS., Pittsburgh, Pa.,

the market being full of imitations of the name *McLane*, spelled differently but same pronunciation.

THE GREAT REMEDY FOR CURING LIVER PILLS

are not recommended as a remedy "for all the ills that flesh is heir to," but the affections of the Liver, and in all Bilious Complaints, Dyspepsia, and Sick Headache, or diseases of that character, they stand without a rival.

THE CURE FOR COLD, COLD, COLD.

These impure, unwholesome, and unclean

substances, which are the cause of all the

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