

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

"WINGS OF SERAPHIM" LAST SUNDAY'S SUBJECT.

From the Text: "With Twain He Covered His Face, With Twain He Covered His Feet, and with Twain He Did Fly"—Isaiah 6:2.



In a hospital of leprosy good King Uzziah had died, and the whole land was shadowed with solemnity, and theological and prophetic Isaiah was thinking about religious things, as one is apt to do in time of great national bereavement, and forgetting the presence of his wife and two sons who made up his family, he has a dream, not like the dreams of ordinary character, which generally come from indigestion, but a vision most instructive, and under the touch of the hand of the Almighty.

The place, the ancient temple: building grand, awful, majestic. Within that temple a throne higher and grander than that occupied by any czar or sultan or emperor. On that throne, the eternal Christ. In lines surrounding that throne, the brightest celestials, not the cherubim, but higher than they, the most exquisite and radiant of the heavenly inhabitants: the seraphim. They are called burners, because they look like fire. Lips of fire, eyes of fire, feet of fire. In addition to the features and the limbs which suggest a human being, there are pinions, which suggest the liveliest, the swiftest, the most buoyant and the most aspiring of all unintelligent creation—a bird. Each seraph had six wings, each two of the wings for a different purpose. Isaiah's dream quivers and flashes with these pinions. Now folded, now spread, now beaten in locomotion. "With twain he covered his feet, with twain he covered his face, and with twain he did fly."

The probability is that these wings were not all used at once. The seraph standing there near the throne overwhelmed at the insignificance of the paths his feet had trodden as compared with the paths trodden by the feet of God, and with the lameness of his locomotion amounting almost to decrepitude as compared with the divine velocity, with feathered veil of angelic modesty hides the feet. "With twain he did cover the feet."

Standing there overpowered by the overmastering splendors of God's glory, and unable longer with the eyes to look upon them, and wishing those eyes shaded from the insufferable glory, the pinions gather over the countenance. "With twain he did cover the face." Then as God tells this seraph to go to the farthest outpost of immensity on message of light and love and joy, and get back before the first anthem, it does not take the seraph a great while to spread himself upon the air with unimagined celerity, one stroke of the wing equal to ten thousand leagues of air. "With twain he did fly."

The most practical and useful lesson for you and me—when we see the seraph spreading his wings over the feet, is the lesson of humility at imperfection. The brightest angels of God are so far beneath God that he charges them with folly. The seraph so far beneath God, and we so far beneath the seraph in service we ought to be plunged in humility, utter and complete. Our feet, how laggard they have been in the divine service. Our feet, how many missteps they have taken. Our feet, in how many paths of worldliness and folly they have walked.

Neither God nor seraph intended to put any dishonor upon that which is one of the masterpieces of Almighty God—the human foot. Physiologist and anatomist are overwhelmed at the wonders of its organization. The Bridgewater Treatise, written by Sir Charles Bell, on the wisdom and goodness of God as illustrated in the human hand, was a result of the \$40,000 bequeathed in the last will and testament of the Earl of Bridgewater for the encouragement of Christian literature. The world could afford to forgive his eccentricities, though he had two dogs seated at his table, and though he put six dogs alone in an equipage drawn by four horses and attended by two footmen. With his large bequest inducing Sir Charles Bell to write so valuable book on the wisdom of God in the structure of the human hand, the world could afford to forgive his oddities. And the world could now afford to have another Earl of Bridgewater, however idiosyncratic, if he would induce some other Sir Charles Bell to write a book on the wisdom and goodness of God in the construction of the human foot. The articulation of its bones, the lubrication of its joints, the gracefulness of its lines, the ingenuity of its cartilages, the delicacy of its veins, the rapidity of its muscular contraction, the sensitiveness of its nerves.

I sound the praises of the human foot. With that we halt or climb or march. It is the foundation of the physical fabric. It is the base of a God-poised column. With it the warrior braces himself for battle. With it the orator plants himself for eulogium. With it the toiler reaches his work. With it the outraged stamps his indignation. It's loss an irreparable disaster. Its health an invaluable equipment. If you want to know its value, ask the man whose foot paralysis hath shriveled, or machinery hath crushed, or surgeon's knife hath amputated. The Bible honors it. Especial care: "Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone;" "he will not suffer thy foot to be moved;" "thy feet shall not stumble." Especial charge: "Keep thy foot when

thou goest to the house of God." Especial peril: "Their feet shall slide in due time." Connected with the world's dissolution: "He shall set one foot on the sea and the other on the earth."

Give me the history of your foot, and I will give you the history of your lifetime. Tell me up what steps it hath gone, down what declivities, and in what roads and in what directions, and I will know more about you than I want to know. None of us could endure the scrutiny. Our feet not always in paths of God. Sometimes in paths of worldliness. Our feet, a divine and glorious machinery for usefulness and work, so often making missteps, so often going in the wrong direction. God knowing every step, the patriarch saying, "Thou settest a print on the heels of my feet." Crimes of the hand, crimes of the tongue, crimes of the eye, crimes of the ear not worse than crimes of the foot. Oh, we want the wings of humility to cover the feet. Ought we not to go into self-abnegation before the all-searching, all-scrutinizing, all-trying eye of God? The seraphs do. How much more we? "With twain he covered the feet."

All this talk about the dignity of human nature is braggadocio and sin. Our nature started at the hand of God regal, but it has been pauperized. There is a well in Belgium which once had very pure water, and it was stoutly masoned with stone and brick; but that well afterward became the center of the battle of Waterloo. At the opening of the battle the soldiers with their sabers compelled the gardener, William Von Kylsom, to draw water out of the well for them, and it was very pure water. But the battle raged, and three hundred dead and half dead were flung into the well for quick and easy burial; so that the well of refreshment became the well of death, and long after, people looked down into the well and they saw the bleached skulls but no water. So the human soul was a well of good, but the armies of sin have fought around it, and fought across it and been slain, and it has become a well of skeletons. Dead hopes, dead resolutions, dead opportunities, dead ambitions. An abandoned well unless Christ shall reopen and purify and fill it as the well of Belgium never was. Unclean, unclean.

Another seraphic posture in the text: "With twain he covered the face." That means reverence Godward. Never so much irreverence abroad in the world as to day. You see it in the defaced statuary, in the cutting out of figures from fine paintings, in the chipping of monuments for a memento, in the fact that military guard must stand at the grave of Lincoln and Garfield, and that old shade trees must be cut down for firewood, though fifty George P. Morrissey beg the woodmen to spare the tree, and that calls a corpse a cadaver, and that speaks of death as going over to the majority, and substitutes for the reverent terms father and mother, "the old man" and "the old woman," and finds nothing impressive in the ruins of Baalbec or the columns of Karnak, and sees no difference in the Sabbath from other days except it allows more dissipation, and reads the Bible in what is called higher criticism, making it not the Word of God but a good book with some fine things in it. Irreverence never so much abroad. How many take the name of God in vain, how many trivial things said about the Almighty. Not willing to have God in the world, they roll up an idea of sentimental and humanitarianism and impudence and imbecility, and call it God. No wings of reverence over the face, no taking off of shoes on holy ground. You can tell from the way they talk they could have made a better world than this, and that the God of the Bible shocks every sense of propriety. They talk of the love of God in a way that shows you they believe it does not make any difference how bad a man is here, he will come in at the shining gate. They talk of the love of God in a way which shows you they think it is a general jail delivery for all the abandoned and the scoundrels of the universe. No punishment hereafter for any wrong done here.

The Bible gives two descriptions of God, and they are just opposite, and they are both true. In one place the Bible says God is a consuming fire. The explanation is plain as plain can be. God through Christ is love. God out of Christ is fire. To win the one and to escape the other we have only to throw ourselves body, mind and soul into Christ's keeping. "No," says Irreverence, "I want no atonement, I want no pardon, I want no intervention; I will go up and face God, and I will challenge him, and I will defy him, and I will ask him what he wants to do with me." So the finite confronts the infinite, so a tack hammer tries to break a thunderbolt, so the breath of human nostrils defies the everlasting God, while the hierarchs of heaven bow the head and bend the knee as the King's chariot goes by, and the archangel turns away because he cannot endure the splendor, and the chorus of all the empires of heaven comes in with full diapason, "Holy, holy, holy!"

Reverence for sham, reverence for the old merely because it is old, reverence for stupidity, however learned, reverence for incapacity however finely inaugurated, I have none. But we want more reverence for God, more reverence for the sacraments, more reverence for the Bible, more reverence for the pure, more reverence for the good. Reverence a characteristic of all great natures. You hear it in the roll of the master oratories. You see it in the Raphaels and Titians and Ghirlandajos. You study it in the architecture of the Aholabs and Christopher Wrens. It is not flippant about God. Do not joke about death. Do not make fun of the Bible. Do not ride the Eternal. The brightest and

mightiest seraph cannot look unabashed upon him. Involuntarily the wings come up. "With twain he covered his face." *

As you take a pinch of salt or powder between your thumb and two fingers, so Isaiah indicates God takes up the earth. He measures the dust of the earth, the original there indicating that God takes all the dust of all the continents between the thumb and two fingers. You wrap around your hand a blue ribbon five times, ten times. You say it is five hand-breadths, or it is ten hand-breadths. So indicates the prophet God winds the blue ribbon of the sky around his hand. "He meteth out the heavens with a span." You know that balances are made of a beam suspended in the middle with two basins at the extremity of equal heft. In that way what a vast heft has been weighed. But what are all the balances of earthly manipulation compared with the balances that Isaiah saw suspended when he saw God put into the scales the Alps and the Appenines and Mount Washington and the Sierra Nevadas. You see the earth had to be ballasted. It would not do to have too much weight in Europe, or too much weight in Asia, or too much weight in Africa, or in America; so when God made the mountains he weighed them. The Bible distinctly says so. God knows the weight of the great ranges that cross the continents, the tons, the pounds avoirdupois, the ounces, the grains, the milligrammes—just how much they weighed then, and just how much they weigh now. "He weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance."

See that eagle in the mountain nest. It looks so sick, so ragged-feathered, so worn-out and so half asleep. Is that eagle dying? No. The ornithologist will tell you it is the moulting season with that bird. Not dying, but moulting. You see that Christian sick and weary and worn-out and seeming about to expire on what is called his death-bed. The world says he is dying. I say it is the moulting season for his soul—the body dropping away, the celestial pinions coming on. Not dying, but moulting. Moulting out of darkness and sin and struggle into glory and into God. Why do you not shout? Why do you sit shivering at the thought of death and trying to hold back and wishing you could stay here forever, and speak of departure as though the subject were filled with skeletons and the varnish of coffins, and as though you preferred lame foot to swift wing?

People of God, let us stop playing the fool and prepare for rapturous flight. When your soul stands on the verge of this life, and there are vast precipices beneath, and sapphired domes above, which way will you fly? Will you swoop or will you soar? Will you fly downward or will you fly upward? Everything on the wing this day bidding us aspire. Holy Spirit on the wing. Angel of the New Covenant on the wing. Time on the wing, flying away from us. Eternity on the wing, flying toward us. Wings, wings, wings!

Live so near to Christ that when you are dead, people standing by your lifeless body will not soliloquize, saying: "What a disappointment life was to him; how averse he was to departure; what a pity it was he had to die; what an awful calamity." Rather standing there may they see a sign more vivid on your still face than the vestiges of pain, something that will indicate that it was a happy exit—the clearance from oppressive quarantine, the cast-off chrysalid, the moulting of the faded and the useless, and the ascent from malarial valleys to bright, shining mountain-tops, and be led to say, as they stand there contemplating your humility and your reverence in life, and your happiness in death: "With twain he covered the feet, with twain he did fly." Wings! Wings! Wings!

Brave Children.

The Denver Republican quotes an interesting story of childlike heroism, related by Mr. Spearman, attorney for the department of justice at Washington.

He has been taking testimony concerning some Indian depredation claims. In taking such testimony, he says, I frequently hear interesting stories concerning early frontier life. I remember one case in particular, one of the most remarkable exhibitions of courage in an eight-year-old boy that I have ever heard of. It occurred near the town of Beaver, in Utah. A ranch was attacked by Indians, and a man who was visiting the ranchman was killed, and for a while it seemed as if the whole party, wife and children, would fall a prey to the savages. The house was surrounded by the Indians, and the people within defended themselves as best they could; but the ranchman, watching his opportunity, lowered his little boy and his daughter, who was but twelve years of age, from the back window and told them to try and make their way to the canon and follow it down to Beaver, where they could obtain help. The children succeeded in reaching the canon unbroken, and with presence of mind and bravery which I think remarkable for a child of that age, the boy told his sister to follow one side of the canon and he would follow the other, so that in case the Indians should find one of them the other might not be observed. The children got safely to Beaver, where a party was organized which hastened to the rescue of the besieged. At the beginning of the siege the Indians had heard the children in the house, and missing their voices, the alert savages discovered that they had gone and endeavored to overtake them; but being unsuccessful, and knowing that help would soon arrive, they withdrew before the rescuers could reach the ranch.

A day's work has been steadily decreasing for the last hundred years.

INDIANA LEGISLATURE

REPORTED BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

February 22.

There was a decided flutter in the house when, in response to numerous calls from Mr. Nicholson, the majority of the temperance committee made a report on his quartet bill, striking out all save the enacting clause and substituting a bill prepared by the Indiana State Liquor League, the effect of which is to repeal all the vital parts of the so-called Nicholson law, and among other things authorizing saloons in larger cities to keep open until midnight. Mr. Nicholson and his friends were indignant, and Mr. Nicholson, as a member of the temperance committee, denounced the report, saying that he had never had an opportunity to attend a meeting of the committee. He submitted a minority report, reaffirming his so-called quartet bill. After much skirmishing the whole subject was made the special order for to-morrow morning. The house passed the building and loan bill providing for an inspection of associations by the state auditor, and the senate, in deference to the demands of the laboring interests of this city, rushed through a bill calling for 3-cent fares on the street railways of this city. The child labor bill, prohibiting the employment of children in factories and the appointment of a state factory inspector, also passed. The legislative apportionment bill was also passed by a strict party vote.

February 23.

The Legislature devoted all day to important business questions. The Senate passed a bill extending the life of the Lake-Laporte Superior Court and a bill fixing the fees of constables. It then took up the McCord building and loan bill, a duplicate of the measure that passed the House, and spent the rest of the day in amending it. It knocked out the section authorizing the auditor of state to make examinations upon demand of ten stockholders, and made a few other amendments, but this was the only vital feature of the bill attacked.

The House spent very nearly the whole day considering a mass of insurance legislation upon second reading. One of these, a blanket bill regulating foreign insurance companies, was amended in some particulars and sent to third reading. A hard fight arose over an amendment offered, declaring the "board plan" unlawful, and it was only withdrawn after assurance was given that the Sutton bill, drawn for this purpose and applying to all kinds of insurance companies, would be pushed. A blanket bill for the organization of home mutual companies, one of the Commercial Club series, was killed, partly from the belief that it would interfere with farmers' mutual companies and partly from the fact that it contained many inconsistencies and duplications. For the same reason another bill providing for the organization of home joint stock companies was also killed.

The House was about to tomahawk another blanket bill for the organization of life and accident companies on the assessment plan, when its friends succeeded in having it recommitted to the insurance committee. Another bill providing a standard form of policy, such as is in use in Massachusetts and New York, was permitted to escape after some amendments that bear rather heavily upon the insurance companies. The most important of these is one providing that both appraisers shall be residents of the counties where the loss occurs. After finishing with the insurance bills on second reading the House passed a bill exempting farms within the limits of towns or cities from corporation taxes and the Remington dog-tax bill, which permits any person to kill a dog that is known to have been chased or worried a sheep or any other live stock or fowl.

February 24.

The house killed the local-option bill and there is no likelihood of such radical legislation on the temperance question. Mr. Nicholson, the recognized leader of the temperance forces in the state, opposed the bill, declaring that the people were not yet ready for such a step. By a narrow margin the house passed a bill providing for a revision of the statutes, but the bill is hardly likely to pass the senate. The first of the insurance measures to reach final enactment got there today, when the house passed a senate bill repealing the law, and fixing a 10 per cent penalty upon home companies for failure to adjust and pay losses within sixty days. An unexpected bit of excitement came up late in the afternoon, when Senator Shively's bill appropriating \$5,000 for a statue of Morton in the capitol at Washington came up on third reading. It was made the occasion for a flood of patriotic oratory on both sides of the house, the Republicans favoring the bill, and the Democrats taking the tack that no monument could add to Morton's glory. The applause and confusion became so great at one time that the speaker ordered the galleries cleared. The bill was finally passed, by almost a party vote.

February 25.

The Mexican veterans paid their annual visit to the legislature today. The house was about to begin the consideration of the general appropriation bill when the proceedings were interrupted by the roll of drums, and about sixty of the aged soldiers marched in and were received with great applause. The members arose to their feet to do the veterans honor. Major Mulky, president of the association, was introduced by Representative Spooner, who was in the chair, and he spoke briefly. General Lew Wallace was asked to address the house and he was received with great applause. In the course of his remarks General Wallace said:

"We have here representatives of every

battlefield, of every victory, for there

were no defeats in that war. Every

great victory in that war is here rep-

resented and well represented. That

was the war which won us our first

name as a military people and in another

respect it is one of the greatest wars

we have participated in. It gave us

more and richer territories than did any other war. Among the acquisitions

were the most of the Pacific

states and especially that land of flow-

ers and orange groves, California. It

has pleased some historians to pro-

claim this an unnecessary war, but I

should like to defend it. We have been

called invaders of a neighboring coun-

try. I have given much study to the

history of the war and it is my dis-

passionate conclusion that it was a war

of necessity, an inevitable war. We

fought for our flag and country against

invaders." After thanking the assem-

blies, General Wallace gave way to Gen-

eral McGinnis, who spoke briefly and

was followed by Governor Mount, who

congratulated the veterans upon their

numbers and referred to the debt of

gratitude the people owe them. The

aged veterans then marched over to the

senate chamber, where much the same

ceremonies were gone through. No

business of importance was concluded.

February 26.

The house, immediately after roll call

to-day, suspended the rules and passed

the bill authorizing the attorney gen-

eral to bring suit against the Vandalia

railroad company for the collection of

the state's claim, under a former char-