TALMAGE'S SERMON.

LESSONS TAUGHT BY BIRTH DATES AND HOLIDAYS.

All Other Anniversaries Are Inferior in Importance to Christmas—The Year 1893 Is Certain to Be a Memorable One—Nature's Lesson of Growth and Decay.

At the Tabernacle.

The text selected by Rev. Dr. Talmage was Colossians ii, 16, "In repect of a holy day."

What the Bible here and elsewhere calls a holy day we, by change of one letter and change of pronunciation, call holiday. But in spite of spelling and accentuation we cannot change the fact that holidays have great significance. As long as the world stands Christmas day and New Year's day and Easter day will be charged and surcharged with solemn suggestiveness and holy mirth. Whether you take the old style of my text and call them holy days, or the modern style and call them holidays, I am somehow set all my nerves a-tingle and my deeper emotions into profoundest agitation. I am glad that this season we have the holidays completely bounded. For years, Christmas day starting in the midst of one week, and New Year's day starting in the midst of another week, we have been perplexed to know when the holidays began and when they ended, and perhaps we may have begun them too soon or continued them too long.

But this year they are bounded by two beaches of gold—Sabbath, Dec. 25, 1892, and Sabbath, Jan. 1, 1893. The one Sabbath this year commemorates the birth of the greatest being that ever walked the earth; the other celebrates the birth of that which is to be one of the greatest years of all time; the one day supernatural because of an unhinged star and angelic doxology, and the other day unnatural, but part of a procession that started with the world's existence and will go on until the world is burned up; both the first and the last days of these holidays coming in with Sabbatical splendor and solemnity, and girdling all the days between with thoughts that have all time and all eternity in their emphasis. How shall we spend them. At haphazard and without special direction, and they leaving, as they go away from us, physical fatigue and mental exhaustion, the effect of late hours and recklessness of diet adding another chapter to the moral and spiritual and eternal disasters which have resulted from misspent holidays? Oh, no! A stout and resounding no! for all the eight days.

I propose that we divide this holiday season, the two Sabbaths of the holiday and the six days between, into three chapters—the first part a chapter of illustrious birthday; the second part a chapter of annual decadence; the third part a chapter of chronological introduction.

First, then, a chapter of illustrious birthday. Not a day of any year but has been marked by the nativity of some good or great soul. Among discoverers the birthday of Humboldt was Sept. 14 and of David Livingston March 19. Among astronomers the birthday of Isaac Newton was Dec. 25 and of Herschel Nov. 17. Among orators the birthday of Cicero was Jan. 3 and of Chrysostom Jan. 14. Among prison reformers the birthday of John Howard was Sept. 2 and of Elizabeth Fry May 1. Among painters the birthday of Raphael was March 28 and of Michael Angelo March 6. Among statesmen the birthday of Washington was Feb 22, of Hamilton May 8 and of Jefferson April 2. Among consecrated souls the birthday of Mrs. Hemans was Sept. 25, of Lucretia Mott Jan. 3 and of Isabella Graham July 29. But what are all these birthdays compared with Dec. 25, for on or about that day was born one who eclipsed all the great names of all the centuries—Jesus of Bethlehem, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus of Golgotha, Jesus of Olivet, Jesus of the heavenly throne.

The greatest pictures have been made about scenes in His lifetime. The greatest sacrifices on field of battle or in hospital or on long march or in martyrdom have been inspired by His self-abnegation. The finest words of eloquence ever spoken have been uttered in the proclamation of His Gospel. The grandest oratorios that have ever rolled through cathedras were descriptive of His life and death. There have been other orators, but none like Him who "spake as never man spake." There have been other reformers, but none like Him who will not have completed His mission until the last prison is ventilated, and the last blind eye opened, and the last deaf ear unstopped, and the last lame foot bounding like a roe, and the last case of dementia shall come to its right mind. There have been other discoverers, but none like Him able to find how man may be just with God. There have been other deliverers, but none like Him, the rescuer of nations. There have been other painters, but none like Him who put the image of God on a lost soul. No wonder we celebrate His birth, Protestant church, Catholic church, Greek church, St. Isaac's of Petersburg, St. Peter's at Rome, the Madeleine at Paris, St. Paul's in London joining all our American cathedrals and churches and ice-cabin meeting houses and hovels in keeping this pre-eminent birth festival.

Elaborate and prolonged efforts have been made to show that the star that pointed to the manger in which Christ was born was not what it appeared to be, but a conjunction of Jupiter and saturn. Our wise men of the West say that the wise men of the East were mistaken. Astronomers, you know, can calculate backward as well as forward, and as they can tell what will occur a hundred years from now among the heavenly bodies, so they can accurately calculate backward and tell what occurred eighteen or nineteen centuries ago. And it is true that seven years before Christ, in Chaldea, about three hours before day dawn, there was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. Standing in Jerusalem and looking over toward Bethlehem, those two stars would have seemed to hang over that village, and it is suggested by a learned professor that the Magi may have had reason to say that the two stars may have looked like one. In order to take everything supernatural out of the story we have to blind the eyes of the magi and introduce a second star to help out the idea of the one star. But I prefer the simple story of the Bible, that a light of some kind—stellar or meteoric—pointed from the sky to the straw cradle. When it is so easy for God to make a world that he puts eighteen millions of them within one sweep of the telescope, He could certainly afford one [illegible] some kind to point at the place where the sovereign of the universe lay incarnated and infantile.

You see, the birth at Bethlehem must have been more novel and startling to the heavens than the crucifixion on Calvary. It was expected that Christ would be maltreated. The world always had maltreated its good and great friends. Joseph hurled into the pit, Shadrach put into the fire, Jeremiah lowered into a dungeon, David hounded from the throne, Elijah compelled to starve or take his food from the beak of a filthy raven, and Socrates condemned to death, so that the Calvarian massacre was in the same old line of maltreatment. But the novelty of all the ages was the conjunction of divinity and humanity. Invisible deity, muscled and nerved and fleshed in masculine physique. A child and yet a God! Why, if the meteor had not pointed out that night, some angel would have rushed down and pointed with his glittering scepter. Isaiah and David and Ezekiel, who foretold the coming, would have descended from their thrones and stood on the roof of the barn or in some way designated the honored locality. As the finger of light that Dec. 25 pointed to the straw cradle, now all the fingers of God pointed from this moment, fingers of childhood and old age, fingers of sermon and song and decoration and festivity, point to the great straw cradle. Am I not right in saying that the first of the three chapters of the holidays should be devoted to the illustrious birthday? By song and prayer and solemn reflection and charities to-day, and by gifts and trees that bear fruit in an hour after they are planted, and family gathering and hilarities sounding from cellar to garret to-morrow, keep Christmas.

As far as possible gather the children and the grandchildren, but put no estoppel on racket, whether of laughter or swift feet or toys in shape of rail trains or trumpets or infant effigy. Let the old folks for one day at least say nothing about rheumatism, or prospect of early demise, or the degeneracy of modern times, or the pains in the inferiority. If you cannot stand the noise, retire from it for a little while into some other room and stop your ears. Christmas for children without plenty of noise is no Christmas at all. If children and grandchildren cannot have full swing during the holidays, when will they have it? They will be still soon enough, and their feet will slacken their pace, and the burdens of life will bear them down. Houses get awfully still when the children are gone. While they stay let them fill the room with such resounding mirth that you can hear the echoes twenty years after they are dead. By religious celebration to-day and by domestic celebration to-morrow keep Christmas. As for our beloved church, we to-morrow night mean to set the children of our Sabbath school wild with delight. And in The Christian Herald, with which I am connected, we are celebrating the holidays by sending out from 2,000 to 4,000 Bibles a day, and they will continue to go out by express, by messengers and by mails until we have distributed at least 100,000 copies of the good old Book on which Christmas is built, and which give the only healthful interpretation of these swift flying years.

The second chapter of the holidays must speak of annual decadence. This is the last Sabbath of the year. The steps of the year are getting short for it is old now. When it waved the spring-time blossoms the year was young, and when it swung the scythe and cradle through the summer harvest fields the year was strong, but it is getting out of breath, and after six more throes of the pulse will be dead. We can hear this annual decadence. Set all the clocks back, set all the watches back, set all the chronometers back, but you cannot set time back. For the old family clock you might suppose that time would have especial respect, and that if you took hold of those old hands on the face of that centenarian of a timepiece and pushed them back you might expect that time would stop or retreat for at least a few minutes. "No, no!" says the old family clock. "I must go on. I saw your father and mother on their wedding day. I struck the hour of your nativity. I counted the festal hours of the day in which you brought home a bride. I sounded the knell at your father's death. I tolled at your mother's departure. Yea, I must sound your own going out of life. I must go on. I must go on. Tick, tock! Tick, tock!"

But there is a great city clock high up in the tower. There are so many wrongs in all our cities to be righted, so many evils to be dispated, so many prisons to be sanitaried—stop the city clock until all these things are done. Let common council and the people of the place by decree that the city hall clock shall stop. We do not want the sins of 1892 to be handed over to 1893. We do not want the young year to inherit the misfortunes of the old year. By ladders lifted to the tower and by strong hands take hold and halt the city clock. "No, no!" says the city clock. "I cannot wait until you correct all evils or soothe all sorrow or drive out all sin. I have been counting the steps of your progress as a city. I have seen your opportunities. I have deplored your neglects, but time wasted is wasted forever. I must go on. I must go on. Tick, tock! Tick, tock!" But in the tower of the capitols at Washington and London and Berlin and Vienna and all the great national capitals there are clocks.

Suppose that by Presidental proclamation and resolution of Senate and House of Representatives our national clock in the Capitol turret be ordered to stop. "Stop, O clock, until sectional animosities are cooled off, until our Sabbaths are better kept, and drunkenness turns to sobriety, and bribery, fraud and dissipation quit the land! Stop, O clock, in the tower of the great United States Capitol!" "No, no!" says the clock. "I have been going on so long I cannot afford to stop. I sounded the birthday of American Independence. I rang out the return of peace in 1865. I have seen Presidents inaugurated. I struck the hour of Lincoln's assassination. I have beat time for emancipation proclamation, and Chicago fire, and Charleston earthquake, and epidemics of fever and cholera. Nations never stop. They march on toward salvation or demolition. And why should I stop? I chime for the national holidays. I toll for the mighty dead. I must go on! I must go on! Tick, tock! Tick, tock!" There may be a difference of a few seconds or a few minutes in the timepieces, but it will be a serious occasion when the next Saturday night about the same hour the family clocks, and the city clocks, and the national clocks strike one! two! three! four! five! six! seven! eight! nine! ten! eleven! twelve!?

Sorry am I to have 1892 depart this life. It has been a good year. What bright days! What starry nights! What harvests! What religious convocations! What triumphs of art and science and invention and enterprise and religion! But, alas, how sacred it has been with sorrows! What pillows hot with fever that could not be cooled! What graves opening wide enough to take down beauty and strength and usefulness! What octogenarians putting down the staff of earthly pilgrimage and taking the crown of heavenly reward! What children, as in Bible time, crying: "My head, my head! And they carried him to his mother, and he sat on her knees until noon and then died." This year went the chief poet of England and the chief poet of America. Our John G. Whittier—great in literature and simple as a child—for did I not spend an afternoon with him in a barn in the Adirondacks, and in the evening we played blind-man's bluff, he tying over my eyes the handkerchief while the hotel parlors rang with the merrymaking? And Tennyson, this year gone — he who for this particular season of the year wrote:

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light.
The year is dying in the night.
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

What mingling of emotions in this closing year! What orange blossoms for the marriage altar, and what myrtle for the tomb of the dead! Hosannas and lamentations in collision. Anthem and dead march mounting from the same ivory keys. Before this year quite leaves the earth let it hear our repentance for opportunities that can never return. Kind words spoken too late or not spoken at all. Means of getting good or doing good so completely gone by that the archangel's voice could not recall them. Can it be that this year is closing and our sins are unforgiven, and we have no certainty that when our last Dec. 31 has sped away we shall enter a blissful eternity? The most overwhelmingly solemn week of all the year is the last week of December.

Compare the first half of this century with the last half. The surges of this ocean of time are rolling higher and higher. The forces of right and wrong are rapidly multiplying, and their struggles must be intensified. It is a chronological fact that we are all the time coming nearer to the world's edenization first and then to its incineration, to its redemption and its demolition. And so I expect that 1893 will be a greater year than 1892. Its wedding bells will be merrier. Its obseques will be sadder. Its scientific discoveries more brilliant. Its prosperities more significant. Its orbit being more grand. Its termination more stupendous. Look out for 1893! Let printers have in their cases of type plenty of exclamation points to set up a sudden paragraph. Let the conservatories have profusion of flowers that can be twisted into garlands. Let churches have plenty of room for increased assemblages. Let men and women have more intelligence, more decisions, and the exigencies, and the demands, and the raptures, and the woes of this coming 1893. In what mood shall we open the door of the new year? With faith, strong faith, buoyant faith, triumphant faith, God will see you through. His grace will be sufficient if you trust him. You can go to him at any time and find sympathy.

My little child got hurt one morning during her mother's absence. We looked after the case as well as we could. Toward night her mother returned, and for the first time the child cried and cried vociferously. Some one said to her: "What do you cry for? You did not cry all day." Her reply was, "There was no one to cry to." And so you sometimes suppress your trouble because there is no full resource of earthly sympathy. But I rejoice to tell you that the God you always have someone to cry to. He will condole and help in every crisis. Come, now, let me unstrap that knapsack of care from your shoulders. Come prosperity or adversity, come wedding or burial, come health or sickness, come life or death, come time or eternity, all's well, all's well! Keep your heart right and all else will be right. Men and women have sometimes given utterance to whimsical directions in regard to what shall be done with their hearts after death. Robert Bruce ordered his heart to be sent to the Holy Land for burial. The Earl of Leicester ordered his heart sent to Brackley hospital. Isabella, daughter of the Earl of Pembroke, died at Berkhampstead, but ordered her heart taken to Pewkesbury cathedral. Lord Windsor, dying on a foreign land, ordered his heart inclosed in lead and sent to England for burial in the chapel of Bradenham. Now what shall we decree for our heart? That it be the Lord's, and then it makes no difference what else becomes of it. Living and dying, may it all be His.

Thus in three chapters I have counseled that the holidays be grouped. May nothing interfere with their felicities. May they be so spent that they will be food for pleasant reminiscence further on. You know that after while the old homestead will be broken up. For years and years the children came home to spend the holidays, and the house is rummaged from garret to cellar, and the scenes of childhood are rehearsed, and we laugh till the tears come as we talk over some boyish or girlish freak or cry over some old trouble ended; but the hearts swing back again to mirth, for it does not take half a second for a tear of the eye to strike the smile of the lip. For a few years the grandchildren make the holidays merry. One of the many uses of grandchildren is to keep the old folks young. Then after a few years the annual gathering at the old homestead is half broken up, for father or mother is gone.

About two years after (for there are generally about two years between the time of their going) the other half of the holiday season is broken up. The old house goes into possession of strangers, and the sons and daughters by that time have homes of their own. They plant their own Christmas trees, and hang up their own children's stockings, and twine their own holly and mistle toe, and have their own good times. They will perhaps go out on some one of those holidays either in slough or carriage twenty or thirty years from now and see the places where we slumber the last sleep, and may we have been so considerate and sympathetic in our demeanor toward them now that they will then say one to another as they pass the silent mounds of the village graveyard or city cemetery, "There rest as kind a father and as kind a mother as ever wished their children a merry Christmas or a happy New Year."

SOMEBODY asked Curran what business had brought a very tall Irish friend of his to London. "I cannot possibly say," replied the great lawyer, "though he is one of my longest acquaintances. Perhaps it is to peep down the chimneys of the Londoners, and find out what they have for dinner."

ICE THRONED AS KING.

COLD WEATHER HAS FINALLY COME IN EARNEST.

Mercury Seeks the Bottom of the Bulb and Shivering Humanity Seeks the Fire—Storm Seems to Have Been General—Much Suffering Reported.

Below the Zero Mark.

Fur muffs, skates and knit socks are right in it, so to speak. The cold weather has made business exceedingly good with them. They joined hands and danced a merry hornpipe about the thermometer and laughed a loud he-he over the mercury's struggle to rise from the low state into which it had fallen. A brisk wind put a double edge upon the cold and brought out humanity's "goose-flesh."

The Chicago weather man says he fears the winter will be a very cold one. It has started out at a terrible pace, but it is nobody's fault but your own if you lived the summer like a grasshopper and are not ready for it. The muskrat predicted a tight season and built his house twice the regular thickness, and any corn broker will tell you there were twice as many shucks on the ear this year than usual. Early roses withered the lingering roses and sent the swallow south a month before his due. Nuts fell before the boys knew they were ripe and the forests grew fantastic before their season. All these things you might have profited by and had your bins full and hams in the cellar and bushels of beets and turnips and fruits, and you have been prepared to go into winter quarters and hibernate for six months.

Such weather makes a fellow wish he had lived in the carboniferous age or been a silurian in the good old days about 700,000 B. C., when this part of the earth was being baked and tropical monkeys sat idly on the logs in the lagoons and chatted neighborly with the dodoes; when palms and figs and banyan trees flourished by the river bank and the snake built his nest therein, and was contented to occupy the sphere for which he was created; when it was summer the year around, and the grasping plumber was yet unmade; when nine-tenths of the land was water and there was no tax on it.

Regular Peary Weather.

In Chicago the lake is frozen from the shore to the breakwater and piled deep as far out as the crib. But twice last winter did the phenomenon happen, and that was along in January, when the mercury goes down into its bulb and lingers until early spring and groundhod day.

At present the ice there is sufficiently thick to furnish skating, and in a day or so it will be almost possible to glide from the Auditorium to the World's Fair grounds and make a record for a splendid story to tell next August. The ponds in the parks are frozen to the bottoms, and two hours is enough to make a hard coating when flooded.

The man on the roof who is paid to find out such information says: "It is frigid from Medicine Hat to Mobile, and the only warm spot in the whole country has been crowded south from day to day, until it has entirely disappeared off the earth."

Worst Storm in Years.

The cold weather seems to be general, and in many places is the worst experienced in years. In Kansas wires are down and trains are either moving very cautiously by time card or else are stuck in the snow. All of the trains are late from one to ten hours, and on many roads the time of arrival of trains is reported "indefinite." The railroads report the heaviest storms to the north in Iowa and Northern Kansas. Freight trains are tied up at almost every point, and it is impossible to make any sort of time against the wind and snow with heavily loaded trains. Rumors of of wrecks on several of the roads were circulated, but owing to the failure of the wires it is impossible to either confirm or deny the reports.

In exposed places at Davenport, Iowa, the mercury dropped to 12 below zero. People are crossing the Mississippi on foot and by morning the ice bridge will hold teams, and at Preston, Iowa, the thermometer showed 24 below zero.

The Ohio river at Bellaire, Ohio, is frozen over for the first time since 1885.

Amsterdam, N. Y., reports the weather in the Mohawk Valley to be the coldest of the season. It was 14 below at Gloversville and there is but little snow.

A storm of sleet and snow of unusual severity came down on that section of the sunny South in the vicinity of Camden, Ark. The mercury, as a consequence, dropped 40 degrees in two hours. The weather is decidedly the coldest of the year.

The holidays wound up at Wilmington, N. C. with a young blizzard. A heavy sleet-storm prevailed, and snow covers the ground to a depth of two inches, beating Wilmington's snow record for several years.

Newsy Paragraphs.

A SEVERE snow storm occurred at Nashville and vicinity.

SIX persons were bitten by a mad dog at Alexandria, Minn.

SECRETARY TRACY will locate in New York and practice law.

A MOUNTAIN lion is terrorizing people in the suburbs of Spokane, Wash.

FOURTEEN Oklahoma invaders were arrested and jailed at Wichita, Kan.

MINNESOTA will pass a law for uniformity in the incorporation of villages.

A FUND is being raised in Bombay to send Islam missionaries to the United States.

A FREIGHT train broke in three sections on a grade at De Soto, Mo., killing Brakeman Daniel Green.

A MOB at Williamsburg, Col., attempted to lynch John Voorhis, a school teacher, who punished pupils by pulling their teeth.

THE Executive Committee of the National Association of Democratic Clubs met at Washington and decided to continue the club work.

MARSHALL MCCHESNEY, of Manchester, Ohio, attempted to arrest a desperado named T. J. Bouvard. The latter fired four shots at the officer, and was then shot dead.

MRS. MATTHEW M. GARDNER, a society belle of Nashville, Tenn., is suing for divorce, alleging cruel treatment and desertion. Her husband is worth $500,000.

THERE is little reason to doubt that the President will soon issue an order extending the civil service law and rules so as to include all letter carriers and clerks in free delivery postoffices.

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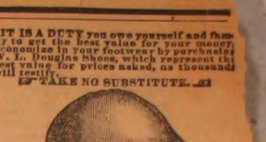

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