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O, the happy Christmas time,  
Gay with carol and with chime!

Now the curious children peep,  
As from little beds they creep.

While they slept, a starry tree  
Blossomed most mysteriously.

And their dear old Santa's head  
Smiles from holly, green and red.

## THE METROPOLITAN PULPIT



## MASTER OF THE SITUATION

A Sermon by Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.,  
on the Text: Zechariah 2: 4, . . . } Run, speak to this young man

THERE was no snow on the beard of the prophet of my text, and no crows' feet had left their mark near his eyes. Zechariah was a young man, and in a day-dream he saw and heard two angels talking about the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. One of these angels desires that young Zechariah should be well informed about the rebuilding of that city, its circumference and the height of its walls, and he says to the other angel, "Run, speak to this young man." "Do not walk, but run, for the message is urgent and imminent. So every young man needs to have immediate advice about the dimensions, the height, and the circumference of that which, under God, he is to build, namely, his own character and destiny. No slow or laggard pace will do. A little farther on, and counsel will be of no advantage. Swift-footed must be the practical and important suggestions, or they might as well never be made at all. Run at the pace of five miles the hour, and speak to that young man. Run, before this year of 1898 is ended. Run, before this century is closed. Run, before his character is inexorably decided for two worlds, this world and the next. How many of us have found out by long and bitter experience things that we ought to have been told before we were twenty-five years of age. Now I propose to tell you some things which, if you will seriously and prayerfully observe, will make you master of the situation in which you are now placed, and master of every situation in which you ever will be placed. And in order that my subject may be climactic, I begin on the outside edge of that advice, which will be more and more important as the subject unfolds.

Now if you would be master of the situation, do not expend money before you get it. How many young men irrevocably mortgage their future because of resources that are quite sure to be theirs. Have the money either in your hand, or in a safety deposit, or in a bank, or in a United States bond before you make purchases, or go into expensive enterprises, or hitch a spanking team to a glittering turn out, or contract for the building of a mansion on the Potomac or the Hudson. Do not depend on an inheritance from your father or uncle. The old man may live on a good deal longer than you expect, and the day of your enforced payment may come before the day of his decease. You cannot depend upon rheumatism or heart failure or senility to do its work. Longevity is so wonderfully improved that you cannot depend upon people dying when you think they ought to. They live to be septuagenarians, or octogenarians, or nonagenarians, or even centenarians, and meanwhile their heirs go into bankruptcy, or tempted to forgery, or misappropriation of trust funds, or watering of railroad or mining stock, go into the penitentiary. Neither had you better spread yourself out because of the fifteen or twenty per cent. you expect from an investment. Most of the fifteen or twenty per cent. investments are apt to pay nothing save the privilege of being assessed to meet the obligations of the company in the affairs of which you get involved. Better get three and a half per cent. from a government bond than be promised fifteen per cent. from a dividend which will never be declared, or paid only once or twice, so as to tempt you deeper in before the grand smash up, and you receive, instead of a payment of dividends, a letter from the president and secretary of the company saying they are very sorry.

If you have to wait a year, or five years, or ten years, or most of your life time, then you had better wait rather than spend money you expect to get. Then after you get it, do not spend it all. Never spend a dollar until you have fifty cents that you do not spend. In the Government service in this city, how many splen-

did women who are the daughters of men who spent all they got and then sneaked out of life to leave their daughters penniless, to be looked after by some kind senator or other friend who might solicit for them a position on small salary, but enough to keep them from starvation and the poorhouse! Such men do not die; they abscond. I cannot understand how such spendthrift and reckless and improvident men dare, at their decease, appear at the door of heaven seeking admission, when they have left their families in the tophet of want and mendicancy. Such men do not deserve a throne and a harp and a mansion, but an everlasting poor-house. From no disappointed or disgruntled state of mind do I give this counsel, for life has been to me a glad surprise, as it has been to most people a disappointment. I expected nothing of advantage or opportunity, and so everything has been to me a matter of pleased amazement; but I have seen so many men ruined for time and eternity by going into expenditure, with nothing to depend upon except anticipation, that if I had power to put all warnings into one clap of thunder, I would with that startling vehemence say to all young men what John Randolph said in yonder Senate Chamber, as he stretched his long finger out toward some Senatorial opponent, and with shrill voice cried out, "Gentlemen, pay as you go!"

Do not say you have no chance, but remember Isaac Newton, the greatest astronomer of his day, once peddling cabbages in the street; and Martin Luther, singing on the public square for any pennies that he might pick up; and John Bunyan, mending kettles; and the late Judge Bradley, of the United States Supreme Court, who was the son of a charcoal-burner; and Turner, the painter, who was the son of a barber; and Lord Clive, who saved India to England, shipped by his father to Madras as a useless boy whom he wanted to get rid of; and Pridcaux, the world renowned scholar and theologian, scouring pots and pans to work his way through college; and the mother of the late William E. Dodge, the philanthropist and magnificient man, keeping a thread and needle store; and Peter Cooper, who worked on small wages in a glue factory, living to give five hundred thousand dollars for the founding of an institute that has already educated thousands of the poor sons and daughters of America; and Bowditch, the scientist, beginning his useful learning and affluent career by reading the books that had been driven ashore from a shipwreck at Salem. There is, young man, a great financial or literary or moral or religious success awaiting you if you only know how to go up and take it. Then take it, or get ready to take it. The mightier the opposition the grander the triumph when you have conquered. There is a flower in Siberia that blooms only in January, the severest month of that cold climate. It is a star-shaped flower and covered with glistening specks that look like diamonds. A Russian took some of the seeds of that flower to St. Petersburg and planted them, and they grew, and on the coldest day of January they pushed back the snow and ice and burst into full bloom. They called it the "snow flower," and it makes me think of those whom the world tries to freeze out and snow under, but who, in the strength of God, push through and up and out, and bloom in the hardest weather of the world's cold treatment, starred and radiant with a beauty given only to those who find life a struggle and turn it into a victory.

Again: If you would master the situation, when angry do not utter a word or write a letter, but before you speak a word or write a word, sing a verse of some hymn, in a tune arranged in minor key and having no staccato passages. If very angry, sing two verses. If in a

positive rage, sing three verses. First of all, the unhealthiest thing on earth is to get mad. It jangles the nerves, enlarges the spleen, and sets the heart into a wild thumping. Many a man and many a woman has in time of such mental and physical agitation dropped dead. Not only that, but it makes enemies out of friends, and makes enemies more virulent, and anger is partial or consummate suicide. Great attorneys, understanding this, have often won their cause by wilfully throwing the opposing counsel into a rage. There is one man you must manage, or one woman you must control, in order to please God and make life a success, and that is yourself. There are drawbridges to every castle by which you may keep out of your nature foreign foes, but no man has a defense against himself unless it be a divine defense. Out of the millions of the human race there is only one person who can do you permanent and everlasting harm, and that is the being that walks under your own hat and in your own shoes. The hardest realm that you will ever have to govern is the realm between your scalp and heel. The most dangerous cargo a ship can carry is dynamite, and the most perilous thing in one's nature is an explosive temper. If your nature is hopelessly irascible and tempestuous, then dramatize placidity. If the ship is on fire and you cannot extinguish the flames, at any rate keep down the hatches. When at some injustice inflicted upon you, or some insult offered, or some wrong done, the best thing for you to say is to say nothing, and the best thing for you to write is to write nothing. If the meanness done you is unbearable, or you must express yourself or die, then I commend a plan that I have once or twice successfully adopted. Take a sheet of paper. Date it at your home or office. Then put the wrong-doer's name at the head of the letter-page, without any prefix of "Colonel," or suffix of "D.D.," and begin with no term of courtesy, but a bold and abrupt "Sir." Then follow it with a statement of the wrong he has done you, and of the indignation you have felt. Put into it the strongest terms of execration you can employ without being profane. Sign your name to the red-hot epistle. Fold it. Envelope it. Direct it plainly to the man who has done you wrong. Carry the letter a week, or two weeks, if need be, and then destroy it. In God's name, destroy it! I like what Abraham Lincoln said to one of his Cabinet officers. That Cabinet officer had been belied and misrepresented until, in a fury, he wrote a letter of arraignment to his enemy, and in tersest possible phraseology told him what he thought of him. The Cabinet officer read it to Mr. Lincoln and asked him how he liked it. Mr. Lincoln replied, "It is splendid for sarcasm and scorn. I never heard anything more complete in that direction. But do you think you can afford to send it?" That calm and wise and Christian interrogation of the President stopped the letter, and it was never sent. Young man, before you get far on in life, unless you are to be an exception among men, you will be wronged, you will be misinterpreted, you will be outraged. All your sense of justice will be in conflagration. Let me know how you meet that first great offense and I will tell you whether your life is to be a triumph or a failure. You see, equipose at such a time means so many things: It means self-control. It means a capacity to foresee results. It means a confidence in your own integrity. It means a faith in the Lord God that he will see you through.

Again: If you would be master of the situation, put the best interpretation on the character and behavior of others. Do not be looking for hypocrites in churches, or thieving among domestic servants, or swindlers among business men, or malfeasance in office. There is much in life to make men suspicious of others, and when that characteristic of suspicion becomes dominant, a man has secured his own unhappiness, and he has become an offence in all circles, religious, commercial and political. The man who moves for a committee of investigation is generally a moral derelict. The man who goes with his nostrils inflated, trying to discover something malodorous, is not a man, but a slenth-bound! The world is full of nice people, generous people, people who are doing their best—good husbands, good wives, good fathers, good mothers, good

officers of the law, good judges, good governors, good State and National legislators, good rulers. Does some man growl out, "That has not been my experience, and I think just the opposite?" Well, my brother, I am sorry for your afflictive circumstances, and that you had an unfortunate ancestry, and that you have kept such bad company, and had such discouraging environment. I notice that after a man has been making a violent tirade against his fellow-men, he is on his way down, and if he live long enough he will be asking you for a quarter of a dollar to get a drink or a night's lodging. Behave yourself well, oh, young man, and you will find life a pleasant thing to live, and the world full of friends, and God's benediction about you.

Again: If you would be master of the situation, expect nothing from good luck, or haphazard, or gaming adventures. In this time, when it is estimated that gambling exchanges money to the amount of about eighty million dollars a day, this remark may be useful. There come times in many a man's life when he hopes to get something for which he does not give an equivalent, and there are fifty kinds of gambling. Stand aloof from all of them. Understand that the gambling spirit is a disease, and the more successful you are, the more certain you are to go right on to your own ruin. Having made his thousands, why does not the gambler stop, and make a safe investment of what he has gained, and spend the rest of his life in quiet, or less hazardous style of occupation? The reason is, he cannot stop. Nothing but death ever cures a confirmed gambler. Doctor Keeley's gold cure rescues the drunkard, and there are anti-tobacco preparations that will arrest the victim of nicotine, and religion can save any one except a gambler. The fact is, he is irresponsible. Having got the habit in him, he is no more responsible for keeping on, than a man falling from the roof of a four-story house can stop at the window of the second story. Here and there you may find an instance where a gambler has been reported, or reports himself, as being converted, but in that case the man was not fully under the heel of the passion. The real gambler is a through passenger to death and perdition. The only use in referring to him is in the way of prevention. He began by taking chances on a bookcase or a sewing machine at a church fair, and ended by getting a few pennies for his last valuable in a pawn-broker's shop. The only man who gambles successfully is the man who loses so fearfully at the start that he is disgusted and quits. Let him win at the start, and win again, and it means farewell to home and heaven. Most merciless of all habits! Horace Walpole says that a man dropped down at the door of a club-house in London and was carried in, and the gamblers began to bet whether he was dead or not, and when it was proposed to bleed him for his recovery, the gamblers objected that it would affect the fairness of the bet. What noble men they must have been!

Again: If you would be master of the situation, never adjourn until to-morrow what you can do to-day. The difference between happy and inspiring work and wearying and exhausting and dispiriting work is the difference between work behind you and work before you. But always wait until you feel like it, wait until circumstances are more propitious, wait till next week, or wait till next year, and the probability is the work will be only half done, or never done at all. Postponement is the curse of a vast population. After awhile all the things that ought to have been done previously will rush in upon you, and it being too much for your brain and nerves, you will be a fit subject for paralysis or nervous prostration. How many battles have been lost because the general did not strike quick enough, and the enemy had full time to gather reinforcement? You intend some time to write that important letter. You intend some time to make that business call. You intend some time to finish that book. You intend some time to preach that sermon. Where is some time? What is some time? Does it walk, or does it float about you? Will it happen to come? No! Some time is never. There are no stragglers in the days and months and years. If one day should refuse to keep step, and become a straggler, it would wreck the universe. Promptness!

Up to time! To-day! Now! You will get only what you win. There are accidents, like the printer's mistake, which caused Louis Napoleon to be called "Napoleon III." A Parisian editor, at the time that Louis Napoleon, by base strategy, turned the republic into a monarchy, wrote in derision the word "Napoleon," followed by three exclamation points. These exclamation points the printer mistook for the letter "I" three times written, and hence he was called "Napoleon III." But promotions by accident are not to be depended on. Depend on getting nothing except that which, under God, by your own industry and good sense you achieve. That was a good maxim of olden time. "Get thy spindle and distaff ready, and God will send thee flax." Especially do our young men need to get ready, as within the past few months the world has unfolded before them opportunities such as we never dreamed would come so soon. Putting aside the political question as to what ought to be done with Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines, the whole world, for the first time, is open, and the question now is, what our young men will do with the world. China, the richest of all lands for metals and, with five hundred million of people, is made our neighbor, and the commerce of the United States is to be quadrupled in the life of the present generation, and what advantages commerce, advantages mechanism, and art, and literature, and the professions. The American plow, the American hammer, the American pen, the American printing-press, the American bargain-counter, are soon to have their opportunity in every island of the sea and every continent. Young men! You need to be wiser, braver, better men than we have ever been to meet the crisis.

Again: If you would be master of the situation, and I name it last, because it is the most important, for you know that which is last mentioned is apt to be best remembered, I charge you get into your heart and life, your conversation and your manners, your body, mind and soul, the near six thousand-year-old religion of the Bible. Why so? Because the large majority of people quit this life before twenty-five years of age, and the possibility is that if you do not take possession of this religion, and religion does not take possession of you while you are young, you will never come into alliance. Mrs. McKinley, the mother of our President, said to me at the White House, "I am living on borrowed time, for I am over eighty years of age." My reply to her was the reply I make to you, "All those who are over fifteen years of age are living on borrowed time, since the majority of people go out of the world before fifteen years of age."

Heraclitus, according to Plato, said that no man bathes twice in the same river. But suppose you live to be octogenarians, do you not see that postponement is an awful waste of nerve and muscle and brain. What is the use of your pulling a heavy load all your life, when you can have two of the white horses that St. John saw in heaven harnessed to your load? Suppose you have a great mill-wheel to turn. You can put that mill-wheel where it will be turned by a millrace of water one foot deep, poured by a small brook, or you can put it along the deep and swift St. Lawrence, which will roll through the millrace tons of water every second of time. Are you going to run your life by the shallow drippings of earthly influence or by the rolling rivers of Omnipotent power? Are you going to undertake the work of life with nothing but your own brain or arm, or with your own brain and arm backed up by all the terrestrial and all the celestial forces of the Almighty? I make as great an offer as was ever made by man. I offer you God! He tells me to make that point-blank proposition. If you want them you can have them on your side for the earnest asking.—Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence! Can you imagine a greater contrast than a young man undertaking life alone,—life, with all its confrontments of temptation and obstacle,—and a young man undertaking life with every wing of angel and every thunderbolt of heaven pledged for his defense and advancement: the difference between

a young man alone, and a young man befriended by the Maker and Upholder of the Universe? The battle of life is so severe that no young man can afford to decline any help, and the mightiest help is God. One night in the year 1741 Count Lessock went to escort the Princess Elizabeth of Russia to a throne which was then unoccupied. She halted, she hesitated, she wondered whether she had better go to the palace and mount the throne of all the Russias. Then Count Lessock drew on a paper two sketches, the one of herself and the Count in disgrace and on the scaffold, and the other of herself on a throne amid huzzahing subjects. When she saw plainly that she must make a choice, she chose the throne. I put before the young men of Washington and the young men of America, the choice between overthrow and enthronement. You may have what you will. Will you be the slave of passion, and sin, and death, or a conqueror empalaced? The Spanish proverb was right when it said, "The road of By and By leads to the town of Never."

More young men would take this advantage which I speak of if they did not have the notion that religion puts one into depressing process. They have heard, for instance, the absurd preaching, "You ought to live every day as though it were your last." Such a lachrymose man I would not want anywhere around me. On the contrary, you ought to live as though you were going to live a great while in this world, and to live forever in the next world. There is no smell of varnish of coffin-lids in our genuine religion.

At thirty-eight. At twenty-seven Calvin published his immortal *Institutes*. Alexander the Great died at thirty-seven, and lesser men get armed for the chief good or evil of their lives before they reach their mid-life.

Young man, start right, and the only way to start right is to put yourself into companionship with the best friend a young man ever had,—Christ the Lord. He will give you equipoise amid the rocking of life's uncertainties. He will support you in day of loss. He will direct you when you come to the forks of the road and know not which road to take. He will guide you in your home life, if you are wise enough to have a home of your own. If you live on to old age, he will make the evening twilight as bright as, and perhaps brighter than, was the morning twilight, and when your work on earth is done the gates of a better world will open on expansions and enthronements and felicities which St John describes, sometimes as orchards, sometimes as shaded streets, and sometimes as a crystalline river, and inhabitants always tearless, and songful, and resplendent, so that the mightiest calamity of the universe is the portion of that one who fails to enter it.

Young man, seek only elevating and improving companionship. Do not let the last scion of a noble family, a fellow with a big name but bad habits, for he drinks and swears and is dissolute, take your arm to walk down the street, or spend an evening with you, either at your room or his room. Remember that sin is the most expensive thing in God's uni-

moment there are thousands of young men, unwittingly and not knowing what they do, taking into their bugle-cup of earthly joy that which is deadly because it drips from the jaws of that old serpent, the devil, and the dove of God's Spirit in kindly warning dashes down the cup; but again it is filled and again dashed down, and again filled and again dashed down. Why not turn away and slake your thirst at the clear, bright, perennial fountain that breaks from the Rock of Ages, a fountain so wide and so deep that all the inhabitants of earth, and all the armies of heaven, may stoop down and fill their chalices?

A Great Painter's Life-Work

Tissot's Wonderful Representation of the Life and Times of Jesus

FOR many months past the art world of two continents has been discussing with mingled feelings of surprise and delight the remarkable productions of J. James Tissot, a French artist. Tissot's peculiar genius seems to have been indeed consecrated, and he has accomplished in a comparatively brief period, what no other artist has ever attempted in a life-time, in reproducing on canvas the life and manners of the Holy Land in the time of Christ.

In a recent article in *The Review of Reviews*, Clifton Harby Levy says of Tissot and his paintings:

He went to Palestine, there to study the places associated by Scripture and tradition with the name of Jesus. He stayed there two or three months, making sketches which he thought would suffice for paintings dealing with Jesus and his disciples. He was on the point of returning to Paris, when he looked over his drawings and saw how few and unsatisfactory they were. He determined to make a hundred, but when those were completed their paucity again impressed him. He would make a hundred more; but even then he was unsatisfied. It was only after he had finished three hundred and sixty-five paintings in oil and water color, and had, while ten years had elapsed, made a hundred and fifty pen-and-ink sketches, that he felt content with having done his best to tell the story of Jesus as, it had never been told before.

Mr. Tissot made a careful study of the Gospels. He had read them so often that he knew them by heart, but he felt that without the background of the country and its customs, they were often incomprehensible. He tried to free himself from all prejudices and dogmas. He wished to know "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and present it by the power of paint and pencil to the Christian world. With this end in view he remained in Palestine for ten long years, following the steps of Jesus as closely as he could that he might catch the spirit and atmosphere of Him he was trying to trace. He could not give a contemporaneous life of Jesus, but he could, at least, try to come as near to it as possible. So he studied every ruin. He talked with the rabbis in Jerusalem; he conversed with Turk and Syrian, learning all of the traditions so carefully treasured up in the Orient.

He trod, as far as could be ascertained, the very places where Jesus walked, and on the hallowed soil he posed his living models—men and women who, with costume and custom unchanged by the centuries might fitly represent the figures of the past. In the consecrated enthusiasm of his art, he has reproduced, with a realistic fidelity that has astonished the critical world, the scenes and incidents of the Gospel history, with figures full of character, and amid such surroundings as no other painter ever drew. His figures are those of the real people of Palestine of the first century.

These remarkable paintings, which are now on exhibition at the American Art Gallery in New York City, are being widely discussed. It is understood to be Mr. Tissot's intention to present them to some public institution where they will be fitly preserved to posterity. We have been privileged to reproduce one of the canvases on this page—that which illustrates the incident related in Mark 9: 35, 36, 37: "And he took a child and set him in the midst of them," etc. Beneath the drawing Mr. Tissot has written: "There is a legend extant which says that the child which Jesus took upon his lap was no other than Ignace, later Bishop of Antioch, and a martyr."



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JESUS AND THE LITTLE CHILD

BY PER. AMER. ART ASS'N.

Get in right relation with God through Jesus Christ, and you need not bother yourself the rest of your life for two minutes about your death or about your funeral. Here is a manly religion, one that will extirpate from your nature all that ought to be extirpated, and irradiate it with every virtue, and make it glow with every anticipation.

Neither would I have you adopt that other absurd preaching, that the things of this world are of little importance as compared with the next world. On the contrary, you cannot sufficiently appreciate the importance of this world, for it decides your next world. You might as well despise a school house because it is not a university. In the school house we prepare for the university. If this world is of such little importance, I do not think the first-born and the last-born of heaven would have spent thirty-three years down here to redeem it.

Do not postpone to the fifties or even the forties of your life that which you can be and do in the twenties or thirties. If you do not amount to much before forty years of age, you will never amount to much. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of American Independence at thirty-three years of age. William Pitt was Prime Minister of England at twenty-four. Raphael's great paintings were all finished before he was thirty-seven years of age. Cortez was thirty-one when he overcame Mexico. Grotius was Attorney-General at twenty-four. Gustavus Adolphus ex-

posed at thirty-eight. At twenty-seven Calvin published his immortal *Institutes*. Alexander the Great died at thirty-seven, and lesser men get armed for the chief good or evil of their lives before they reach their mid-life. Young man, start right, and the only way to start right is to put yourself into companionship with the best friend a young man ever had,—Christ the Lord. He will give you equipoise amid the rocking of life's uncertainties. He will support you in day of loss. He will direct you when you come to the forks of the road and know not which road to take. He will guide you in your home life, if you are wise enough to have a home of your own. If you live on to old age, he will make the evening twilight as bright as, and perhaps brighter than, was the morning twilight, and when your work on earth is done the gates of a better world will open on expansions and enthronements and felicities which St John describes, sometimes as orchards, sometimes as shaded streets, and sometimes as a crystalline river, and inhabitants always tearless, and songful, and resplendent, so that the mightiest calamity of the universe is the portion of that one who fails to enter it. Young man, seek only elevating and improving companionship. Do not let the last scion of a noble family, a fellow with a big name but bad habits, for he drinks and swears and is dissolute, take your arm to walk down the street, or spend an evening with you, either at your room or his room. Remember that sin is the most expensive thing in God's uni-