

LECTURES AND ADDRESSES

BY

REV. THOMAS GUARD, D.D.

WITH

MEMORIAL SERMON

BY

REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D.

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MEMORIAL SERMON.

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REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE.



“How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!”—1 SAM. i, 25.

AN outburst of grief and eulogium from David because of the death of his dearly-beloved friend Jonathan at the battle of Gilboa, but as appropriate an exclamation for all those who heard that, two weeks ago, at six minutes of one o'clock, on Sabbath morning, the Rev. Thomas Guard, pastor of the Mount Vernon Methodist Episcopal Church of Baltimore breathed his last. Mighty in eloquence. Mighty in sympathy. Mighty in influence. Mighty for God. Mighty for the Church. Mighty for the world's betterment. “How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!”

The providence comes to me with the more solemnity because he sent me a salutation of love, warmer and more generous than I ever received from any Christian minister—a salutation which reached me a week after his death, coming with the proposition that we exchange pulpits, he to preach here and I to go there. O, how glad I would have been to have had him confront this assemblage, and on this platform unfurl the crimson banner of the cross.

Who was this Thomas Guard? I remark, in the first place, he was a grand specimen of what the religion of Jesus Christ can do for a man. Whether in Ireland, or in South Africa, or in America, on the Atlantic coast, or on the Pacific coast, or in the cities between, he was ever busy trying to make the people good and happy. I challenge you, amid all the ranks of those who have despised Christianity, during all the ages, to show me a soul so unselfish, so self-sacrificing, and I will give you from now until we meet at the bar of God in the day of eternal judgment to fetch up your first specimen. It is only the grace of God that can make a character like that.

Who was he? He was a contribution from Methodism to Christianity. He was in that apostleship of which John Wesley was the chief, and Alfred Cookman the modern, exponent. I warrant you that when this man of God, two weeks ago, went up to the gate of heaven, there was at that shining gate a group of the chieftains of that heroic sect to greet him. How it makes one feel for the helmet and the sword to give reverential salute as I call the names of Asbury, and Emory, and Coke, and Watson, and Fletcher, and Whitefield, and Bishops Janes and Scott.

But no fence of sectarianism could wall in Thomas Guard, any more than you could fence in the fragrance of a grove of magnolias in full bloom. He was with us in the attempt to annihilate bitter sectarianism, a work so nearly done that, while in all our denominations there are narrow-souled bigots running around with rail and post and shovel, trying to rebuild the unbrotherly separation, the distinctions will soon all vanish in the overwhelming answer to Christ's prayer, "Father, that they all may be one." Who was he?

He was the contribution of foreign nationality to America. Born in Galway, Ireland, in 1831. Died in Maryland, United States, 1882. Take away from the history of the American forum, the American laboratory, and the American pulpit all foreign talent, and you have obliterated more than half of it. Scotland grows great metaphysicians, England grows great philosophers, Germany grows great dreamers, Italy grows great painters, Sweden and Norway grow great singers, and Ireland grows great orators.

Thomas Guard came from the land of Edmund Burke and Robert Emmet and Daniel O'Connell, and he showed it. The fire of eloquence was in his eye, in his hand, in his foot, and quivered in his whole body. With every tone, with every attitude, with every gesture, he defied all the rules of rhetoric as laid down in the books. He made his own laws. Unlike all others, he was like himself. Electric, thunderbolted. Irish eloquence sanctified. When America has received for the last half century such a large donation of great souls from Ireland she can well afford to return her sympathy. Bread when there is famine, and *world-resounding protest when there is political oppression.*

Who was he? He was a preacher of the Gospel, natural and untrammelled by the way other people did their work. His church was thronged. A building holding 1,500 or 2,000 people, and thronged. He did not use what is called the pulpit tone. He spoke out of a sympathetic heart to the hearts of the people. In all denominations there is discussion about the decadence of church going. I will tell you *why people do not go to church.* They cannot stand the humdrum of ministers resolved to preach like all their predecessors

and like every body else. The fact is that some of the theological seminaries in this day take all the fire out of a man, and send him into the pulpit cowed down. They tell him how many heads he must have to his discourse, and how long the introduction must be, and what kind of an application must be fastened on at the end, and how he must plant his foot, and how he must throw out his hand, and there are thousands of Presbyterian and Methodist and Baptist and Congregational churches to-day dying by inches through intolerable humdrum. Thomas Guard threw body, mind, and soul against these frigid conventionalities of the Church, and they cracked and gave way under his holy impetuosity.

Eloquence is not attitude, it is not gesture, it is not voice; it is being possessed with some important thought and making others feel as you do. I wish that the young men of our theological seminaries could have heard Thomas Guard preach. The trouble is that in many theological seminaries young men are taught how to preach by professors who themselves never could preach. You can no more get people to come to church, doing things now as they did a century ago, than you can get them to discard the limited express train to Washington and go with the stage-coach. The old Gospel, the same Gospel from century to century, but having its adaptation to each age. What a farce is being enacted in many of the cities! A church holding a thousand people with two hundred and fifty folks in it, scattered around in great lonesomeness, and going there from year to year because it has been decreed from all eternity that they should go, and they somehow cannot help it.

Who was he? He was a man of large sympathies. The earth could not fill him; he took in heaven as well. All time, all eternity, all heights, all depths, all lengths, all breadths. Thorough manliness. No whining out of the Gospel. No whimpering about the world as going to destruction when it is going to redemption. No patience with men inside or outside the ministry built on a small scale, five feet by three, trying to pull others down, hoping out of the *débris* to build themselves up. Hating cant with as much emphasis as Thomas Carlyle hated it, but for an opposite reason; not as the tiger hates the calf, but as music hates discord and as sunshine hates darkness. He was full of the gospel of good cheer, the gospel of geniality, the gospel of practical help, the gospel of spring morning, the gospel of carnation, rose, and pond lily. I think that to him the blooming orchard was a burning censer swinging before the throne. I think that to him the sky was a gallery and the clouds were pictures done in water-colors. Great soul, gentle soul, sympathetic soul, suffering soul, triumphant soul, transcendent soul.

I do not know through which one of the twelve gates in Heaven he entered when he ascended two weeks ago; but if there be one gate with larger pearl than another, and with hinges of more ponderous gold than another, and with arch more triumphal than another, and with waiting chariot of swifter wheel and snowier coursers than another, I think that was the gate at which Thomas Guard entered.

While I consider this providence which affects all the Christian Church, I am struck first with the mysteries and then with the alleviations. *Mystery the first*: Why should so good a man be called so terrifically to suffer?

There came all those years of domestic anxiety because of *his wife's invalidism*, moving from Ireland to South Africa, for the same cause moving from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast, for the same cause moving from San Francisco to Oakland. The honeymoon lasted from the time when, at twenty-seven years of his age, he took her hand at Dublin, on down until when, four or five years ago, he put her away for the resurrection. Ah, that husbandly affection is of but poor fiber which lasts only while the eye sparkles and the cheek has in it the flush of the sunrise. He held that hand as tenderly and as lovingly after it was wasted and sick as when it was round and well and strong. The ardor of affection increasing all the way from Dublin to Oakland.

Then came those four or five years when, at any moment, he was liable to paroxysm of physical suffering; postponing the surgeon's knife until he could postpone it no longer; with nervous horror approaching the crisis until he had no strength to meet it; passing out of life with physical agonies which anodyne and hypodermic appliances only partially assuaged. Suffering, suffering. Tell me why. I cannot tell you. *I adjourn the mystery* to the day when Ridley shall have explained to him the fiery stake, and Hugh M'Kail shall have explained to him the scaffold, and Margaret the martyr Scotch girl shall have explained to her the wave with which she was drowned, and James A. Garfield shall have explained to him the bullet, and that suffering woman up the dark alley shall have explained to her the cancer, and the rainbow of God's bright and beautiful explanation shall be hung on all the departed showers of earthly grief.

Mystery the second: Why should he be taken at fifty-one years of age, and at the very height of his power and influence? Why not wait until he was worn out with old age? Why, after the batteries had been loaded for a new campaign and were about to be unlimbered, must a gunner drop? Why should he be taken before this Austerlitz, this Sedan, this Waterloo between Infidelity and Christianity is undisputedly settled in behalf of Him who is the rider on the white horse? Why should this fearless and mounted captain of the Lord's host be slain while the feet of many weak Christians are by terror being shaken out of the stirrups? Why should this man die when to rally the courage of the Christian Church we want more plumed warriors at the front? It is the last part of my text that sounds like the roll of a funeral drum. "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!"

It is as though Blucher had been slain while coming up at nightfall with reinforcements. It is as though Garnet Wolseley had fallen half-way between Alexandria and Tel-el-Kebir. How demoralizing, to have the riderless horse of a chieftain careering and snorting across the battle plain. Why was it, when Thomas Guard had gathered up so much knowledge, so much experience, he should be taken away just as his best work was about to be done? Tell me. I cannot tell you. I adjourn the mystery to that day when we shall find out why Henry Kirk White expired at twenty-one years of age, just as he was giving intimation to the Christian church that he had in him the song power of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, writing with his boyish hand:

When marshaled on the nightly plain,
 The glittering hosts bestud the sky;
 One star alone of all the train
 Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.
 Hark, hark to God, the chorus breaks,
 From every host, from every gem,
 But one alone the Saviour speaks,
 It is the Star of Bethlehem.

I postpone this mystery of Thomas Guard's death to the day when we shall find out why John Summerfield, the flaming evangel, expired at twenty-seven years of age, just as his grandest work seemed opening before him; and why John M'Clintock died before he had completed his cyclopedia of biblical, theological, and ecclesiastical literature; and until the day when we shall know why, last year, at fifty-seven years of age, William Morley Punshon closed his lips forever, while on his shoulder rested the interests of the English Missionary Society, and there were yet so many words of fire waiting for him to speak. Yea, until that day when we shall find why Beethoven was struck with complete deafness so that he could not hear the loudest organ crash rendering his own music; and that day when we shall find out why so many authors never finished their manuscripts, and why so many artists dropped their pencils just as they were making the outline of a great masterpiece, and why so many poets stopped midway the rhythm, and why so many bright days halted at noon.

O, yes, it was with Thomas Guard twelve o'clock meridian. The clock of his life struck one at Galway, struck nine at South Africa, struck ten at San Francisco, struck eleven at Oakland, struck twelve at

Baltimore. High noon, and the sun eclipsed. But that last word, thank God, passes us out from the shadows of mystery into the glorious alleviation of this providence.

Eclipsed, not extinguished; something rolled between us and him, doing no damage to him. When Jupiter hides one of his satellites it is occultation. No one has any idea that the satellite is destroyed. When the earth casts its shadow on the moon, it is lunar eclipse, but no one has any idea that the queen of night is dethroned. When Mercury partially hides the face of the sun, we call it a transit, but we have no idea that any damage is done. When the moon hides the sun, it is solar eclipse; but no one has any idea that the king of day is dead. I pronounce this departure of Thomas Guard to be *occultation, transit, eclipse*.

When the sun was eclipsed in 1842 and in 1868 and 1869, all the astronomers gathered in the observatories and all the telescopes were drawn heavenward; and now, as this effulgent nature is eclipsed, we do well to come up in the watchtowers of the Church and into the observatory of Mount Zion, and stand like the men of Galilee gazing into heaven. If you have any idea that Thomas Guard lies lacerated in Green Mount Cemetery I have no share in your wretched agnosticism. Alas for that sepulcher which has a knob on the outside the door to let us in, but no latch on the inside the door to let us out!

This man of God has only moved on and moved up.

He passed out of a room where the air was heavy with opiates into an atmosphere exhilarant, and from a body painstruck into conditions rubicund with health immortal. He has become one of the athletes of

heaven—deathless as God is deathless, never to know pain or sickness or suffering or sorrow except as a vivid reminiscence. His mission is widened out. He has come to higher appointment, not to this church or to that church, or this denomination or that denomination, or this city or that city, or this world or that world. He has the universe to range in. What velocities! What circuits! What momentum! What orbits in which the stars shall be as silvery as before the occultation, and the sun shall be as radiant as before the eclipse.

You could not understand fully Thomas Guard here, you cannot understand Thomas Guard there. More difference than between an eagle in an iron cage and an eagle pitching from Chimborazo toward the sun. His work on earth is not done, it is not half done, it is not a fourth done, it is not a thousandth part done. He resumes it now under better auspices. How do I know? "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?" The lines of telegraphy and of rail track connect no two earthly cities so well as earth is connected with heaven.

Did Thomas Guard, after he was established in this land, go to South Africa to get his family and bring them to this better country? and shall he not now come back some time to that earthly home, and at the right time take his loved ones to the still better country? But he shall not come alone. The twain shall come, they who were side by side for so many years, bending over the same cradle, weeping over the same grave, now coming side by side, wing and wing, to hover over those children when they sleep, and to es-

cort them heavenward when they die. Father and mother coming to help. Father and mother coming down to comfort. Father and mother coming down to defend.

The air this autumnal day is not so darkened with the flocks of birds flying southward seeking a summer clime, not so full as the air is full of ministering spirits.

Angels are hovering around. Flocks of immortals sweeping this way and that. Earth no more an orphaned world, but a suburb of heaven. Blessed is that earthly home where Christian parents preside, but more mightily defended is that home which a glorified ancestry canopy with their benediction. Elisha saw the mountains full of horses and chariots of supernatural aid, and *so they are yet*. Which way are they driving? The horses head this way. How the chariots rumble down the sky steeps. Sent forth to minister. Is yonder a soul in great excruciation of pain, and shall Thomas Guard refuse the ministry when he knows about suffering? Is yonder a soul awfully bereft? Surely Thomas Guard cannot refuse his ministry, for he knows what it is to be bereft. Shall we have revivals of religion in our churches, and Thomas Guard not join in the alleluia? Shall there come a great Armageddon in which all the good are one side, and all the bad on the other side; earth and hell and heaven drawn out in battle array, and the gallant spirit just ascended not mingle in the fight? not draw his sword? not lift his battle shout?

Passing on to fatigueless service. Perhaps he will preach the Gospel to some other world that needs a Saviour. Perhaps he will carry quick dispatch from the throne of God to some empire of which the

strongest telescope has yet made no revelation. Perhaps he will take a special part in the chorals before the throne. Perhaps he will help compose some new doxology for the blessed. Perhaps he will tell, while all the galleries of light listen, of that grace which strengthened him through all the earthly struggle, the closing words of his recital drowned out by the outburst of minstrelsy that can halt no longer, the surges dashing to the top of the throne, while the archangel rising beats time with his scepter.

When a good man was dying, he said he saw written on the sky three letters, and they were all alike. The letter "V." Some one said to this man dying what he thought the letter "V" was for. He said, "I think it stands for victory." So over all this scene there is written congratulation for the departed, comfort for the bereft, and encouragement for us all. Three "V's." Victory! Victory! Victory! Three "H's." Heaven! Heaven! Heaven!

On a catafalque of flowers Thomas Guard lay under architectural grandeurs hung with symbols of sadness, the air throbbing with the "Dead March in Saul," and beautiful, cultured, and queenly Baltimore breaking her richest box of alabaster and pouring its contents on those weary feet as they halted in the journey, and the American Church, North, South, East, West, sobbing out its sympathies over that great loving heart silenced forever. But this day I open on all sides doors of consolation, doors of hope, doors of resurrection, doors of reunion for his bereft sons and daughters, Reginald, and William, and Percy, and Porter, and James, and Charlotte, and Jessie, and for the Mount Vernon Church that for two terms stood with him on the mount of transfiguration, and for the denomination which still

vibrates with his magnetic utterances, and for the Church universal which now sits watching this wonderful sunset.

Until we meet again, farewell, my dear brother. Thou wast very pleasant to me. Thy salutation came so late I could not return it. So to-day I throw thee this kiss of warmest brotherly affection. Honored in life, triumphant in death, blessed in eternity. I could not be present to put even one flower on thy casket, but to-day I sprinkle over thy new-made grave this handful of heather from the Scotch highlands, in the hymn which the people in that land of Andrew Melville and John Knox are apt to sing on their way to the grave of some one greatly beloved :

Neighbor, accept our parting song,
The road is short, the rest is long ;
The Lord brought here, the Lord takes hence,
This is no house of permanence.

On bread of mirth and bread of tears
The pilgrim fed these checkered years :
Now, landlord world, shut to the door,
Thy guest is gone for evermore.

Gone to the land of sweet repose,
His comrades bless him as he goes :
Of toil and moil the day was full,
A good sleep now, the night is cool.

Yea, village bells. ring softly, ring,
And in the blessed Sabbath bring ;
Which from this weary work-day tryst
Awaits God's folk through Jesus Christ.