TALMAGE SERMON

By Rev.

FRANK DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D.,

Pastor of Jefferson Park Presbyterian Church, Chicago

Los Angeles, Cal., Jan. 17.—How to kindle and keep alive in the heart the divine flame which energizes and spiritualizes the whole life is the preacher's theme in this discourse, which deals with a practical religion for everyday people. The text is I Thessalonians v, xix, "Quench not the Spirit."

The mighty phrase maker Paul is a coiner of many superlatives. He is no stupid platitudinarian. Everyday, commonplace, insipid, tasteless comparisons have for him no attraction. He never harnesses dull eyed and spavined axioms to his verbal chariot. His forge is always redhot; his arms are cranes, his hammers pile drivers, his doors floodgates; his streams are fathomless, onrushing rivers of molten iron; his sparks are stars, and his seconds millenniums.

We would, for our present lesson, use one of Paul's impressive, significant words. His "quench" has a superlative meaning. It is one of those sharp pointed verbal chisels which can open adamantine rock and in cutting power outdiamond the diamond. It is one of those intense lurid words which picture their thoughts in colors of blood. "To quench" means to smother, as a mother would extinguish the flames consuming the dress of her burning child by wrapping about the flimsy garments a heavy, wet blanket, jerked from off the clothesline. "To quench" means to deluge, to submerge, as the Johnstown fires were put out when the Conemaugh dam broke. In that word "quench" Paul startlingly warns all believing Christians against the sin of extinguishing the power of the Holy Spirit, which is now burning within them as a living flame. "Quench not the Spirit" is the command to the Thessalonians. Smother not the divine flames.

A Practical Question.

Now come the practical questions: How do many believing Christians open the floodgates of sin and drown out their spiritual fires? How do many of our new converts chill their holy enthusiasm and dry their cheeks, wet with penitent tears, and harden again their hearts in sin? First and foremost, by neglecting God's place of public worship. By turning their backs upon the Sunday church services. By claiming that they can pray to God just as well at home as in the week night prayer meetings. By asserting that the "communion of the saints," in a building which has been dedicated to God as a "house of prayer," is not essential for true spiritual life. No true convert should ever be guilty of casting a slur upon the public altar of Jesus Christ. It is hard work for a live coal to keep warm and to remain a live coal outside of the grate. It is hard work for a warm hearted, loving Christian to remain a spiritual "live coal" unless he continually lives in close contact with other loving Christians. It is by the commingling of prayers that the best prayer is produced. It is by the commingling of testimonies that the best testimony springs from our lips. It is by "the foolishness" of preaching that sinners are saved. Yes! And also by the foolishness of preaching that they are brought nearer week by week to the personality of Jesus Christ.

If public worship is not essential for spiritual life, why did God decree that Moses should build a tabernacle as soon as the hosts of Pharaoh had found a watery grave in the depths of the Red sea? At that tabernacle the Hebrews were compelled to worship. If not essential, why did Christ during his earthly ministry again and again go up to Jerusalem to attend the feasts and again and again go into the synagogues to worship and to pray? If not essential, why did Christ command his disciples to assemble in one place in Jerusalem and await the coming of the Holy Ghost? If not essential, why did the Puritans and the pilgrim fathers place such emphasis upon the attendance of their church members at the house of God? We can laugh at these stern faced settlers of New England. We can poke fun at their "blue laws" and their plain ways. We can say that Cotton Mather, their natural outgrowth, was the instigator of the Salem witchcraft persecutions. But, laugh at the New England Puritans as we will, we know they produced the highest type of spiritual men then known. We know that for spiritual truth they were ready to die. We know that in order to get that truth in the public meeting house they turned their backs upon the old world and faced the new. It was in public worship that the Puritan gospel thrived. It is in public worship that the new convert should catch the glow of the spiritual fires, which will make his heart warm toward God and his fellow man.

Public Worship Essential.

Public worship is absolutely essential for the spiritual life of the average man. Some years ago a country boy was riding in the cars toward Philadelphia. In the seat sitting next to him was an old man. After a long conversation, in which the young man told his seat mate that he was going to Philadelphia to find work, the aged man asked him for his letters. "Oh, yes," said the young fellow, "here is one from my old employer. Here is one from my schoolteacher. Here is one from my physician." "Is that all? Have you not one from your minister?" asked his seat mate. "Yes, I have that also." "Well, my young friend," said the old man, "I would advise you to present that letter to some church at once. I am an old sea captain, and I have found out by bitter experience that it is safer when in harbor to tie my ship up to a wharf than to anchor it out in midstream, to be floated around in the tides. By bitter experience I have also found out that no young Christian is safe unless he is bound up in Christian fellowship with other Christians in Sunday services and in the week night prayer meetings." The old sea captain's experience has been mine. I never saw in my life a church member go astray unless you could first trace his spiritual degeneracy in growing absence from the prayer meeting and Sunday services.

How may the new convert in another way smother the divine flames burning within him? By throwing away the golden key which unlocks the closet door of secret prayer? By neglecting to have a trysting place, where, as a lover, he can meet with God and talk over his plans and hopes? By thinking that there is any wakeful hour, day or night, when he can afford not to feel that—

> Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
> The Christian's native air;
> His watchword at the gate of death,
> He enters heaven with prayer?

A Fatal Maneuver.

William T. Sherman in his famous journey from Atlanta to the sea broke loose from his military base of supplies and fed his army on the surrounding country through which he marched. But a course that may be safe for a military strategist is certainly and inevitably disastrous for a soldier of Jesus Christ. A Christian convert should never get out of prayer touch with the heavenly city. It is a fatal maneuver. It will ultimately mean the Christian falling a victim to spiritual ambuscade, entrapment and overthrow. You have no more reason to expect the flames of a candle to burn in a chemical retort emptied of all oxygen than you have a right to expect your spiritual fires to burn in your bedroom which is not charged and surcharged with the holy atmosphere of secret prayer.

It is necessary for true spiritual life to pray in public. Oh, yes! But it is just as necessary to pray in private. "The Lord thy God is a jealous God." That means in one sense that there are times when God wants us to be alone with him, alone as Christ was alone with the Heavenly Father when Jesus again and again went off alone to pray. He wants us to be alone with him in holy fellowship, as some of us have often been alone with our mothers. Blessed and tender were those hours of sweet communion with our mothers, who have now gone beyond. After the rest of the family were all in bed we used to sit up toward midnight, telling her what we wanted to do and asking her if she thought it was best for us to do it. So God, the Heavenly Father, wants us at times to come to him when we are alone. He wants us to tell him all our plans. George Whitefield would never accept any invitation to do anything of any import unless he had first talked it over with his "best friend." In the darkness of the bedroom and in the solitary walks through the streets and in the quiet of the office or in the kitchen, God wants us to frankly and freely and lovingly talk with him.

Benefits of Prayer.

Christian convert, never feel that the hours are wasted which you spend on your knees talking with Christ in secret prayer. You cannot find one man on earth who has ever attained to a life of eminent Christian usefulness unless he climbed there by grasping firmly and gladly, rung by rung, the golden ladder of secret prayer. What said Charles H. Spurgeon in reference to the power of secret prayer? When some one asked him the cause of his marvelous usefulness for Christ, Spurgeon pointed to the floor of his tabernacle, saying: "In the room beneath you will find 300 praying Christians. Every time I preach here they gather together and uphold my hands by continuous prayer and supplication. There you will find the secret of all the blessings." As Charles H. Spurgeon's "Gideon's band", by secret prayer swept their pastor on to spiritual victories so by the power of secret prayer we can lift ourselves up toward God and Christian usefulness. As Philip Doddridge, of blessed memory, once said, "The better I pray the better I study," I say, "The better you pray the better you will work." The better you pray the better as a mother you can look after your children. The better you pray the better you will live and the better you will preach and the wider will be your influence for Christ.

Prayer in public necessary for spiritual development? Oh, yes! Prayer behind the locked door, prayer in secret, prayer where only God's ear can hear and God's eye can see, just as important for the spiritual life and hope. During the Revolutionary war a highland soldier was caught creeping into camp during the darkness of the night. He was charged with being a spy and taken before the commanding general. Being asked why he had left the camp, the soldier replied, "I merely left in order to go out into the darkness of the woods and be alone with God and have secret prayer." "Then down on your knees!" thundered the officer. "Within twenty hours you shall be shot as a spy. You never needed to pray as much as you need to pray now." The soldier dropped on his knees and offered such a simple, earnest prayer of faith and love that the tears sprang from the commander's eyes. He turned to the guard and said: "Let that soldier go. He is telling the truth. He must have often been on his knees in prayer drill or else he could not have prayed so well in public review." The great Heavenly Commander judges the sincerity of our public professions by the earnestness and consecration of our private devotions.

Our public Christian usefulness to a great extent is dependent upon the intensity of our prayers uttered in secret. Christian brother, never allow your prayer closet to become dust covered and musty. Never let a time come when you will break the telegraphic communication with the heavenly headquarters for prayer. In God's great whispering gallery may your lips learn to utter the divine pleadings so softly that they shall sometimes only be heard by his ear and answered directly only by his loving voice.

The closed lids of God's Bible are often used to extinguish the divine flame burning within the Christian's heart. They can become the barred and bolted doors of superstition, barred and bolted by gross ignorance, endungeoning the most monstrous of heresies in the darkest of cells. They may become redhot irons putting out the calm, deep blue eyes of faith and love. By an ancient eastern law no blind prince is allowed to sit upon the throne of Persia. By a divine law no Christian can reach that stage of enlightenment fitting him to occupy one of God's spiritual thrones without earnest and prayerful study of the Bible. "Tolle, lege! Tolle, lege!" ("Take and read! Take and read!") was the divine command given in vision to young Augustine in reference to the Holy Scriptures. "Take and read! Take and read!" is the divine command given to the young Christian of the present day.

My friends, how are you going to find out what is the law of God and the will of God unless you read his holy word? In Isaiah he distinctly says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." Are you and I trying to find out by studying the Scriptures what are God's thoughts and to harmonize our lives with his life? Are we trying to find out what is the deeper, richer meaning of the Saviour's name? Are we seeking to understand what is the mission of the Holy Spirit and how God with the weak things of this world is going to confound the mighty? Or are we going around day after day singing a senseless, silly, siren song: "Jesus will save! Jesus will save! Oh, I am so happy, Jesus will save!" when some of us merely look upon the name of Jesus as an amulet, because we do not know or care who Jesus is or take the trouble to read the words which he has spoken for us? Are we going to look upon the closed lids of the Bible in a superstitious way, as did the peasants of Europe during the dark ages, as though they were something they had no right to touch? Up to twenty years of age the great Martin Luther was totally ignorant of God's word. Though studying to be a priest, he had never been allowed to personally touch a Bible and was not aware that the gospels and the epistles comprised more than the few chapters read by the priests in public worship. Shall we continue to be as ignorant of God's word as that? Or are you going to look upon the Holy Scriptures as a divine letter written by the Heavenly Father to his children, which letter ought to be carefully studied and its commands to be strictly followed out?

Development of Character.

Supposing that your mother died of consumption when you were a child of four years. Supposing that when the hectic roses of that fatal disease were blooming in the garden of her pale, sunken cheek she one day had you, her sleeping baby, placed by her side. Then while you slept she wrote you a long letter. In this letter she gave her maternal advice and parting benediction. Then she folded that letter and gave it to your father, saying: "Husband, give this to my baby boy on the day he graduates from the public school. Before he decides upon life's work I want to give him my advice and tell him what I want him to do." Supposing twelve years had now passed and you, at sixteen, were now given that letter. What would you do? First you would kiss it. You would say: "Mother wrote it with her dying hand! Mother wrote it with love!" Then you would reverently open the yellow leaves and carefully read that letter, line by line. If you were a true son, if possible you would follow out the desires of that maternal letter word by word. New convert in the gospel life and Christian of older standing, the Holy Scriptures are God's letter to us. If we are the Heavenly Father's true children we will take the letter and study it. We will translate the desires of that letter into our own lives. We will make God's thoughts our thoughts and his ways our ways.

"But," some new convert says, "if the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures is essential to a truly developed spiritual character then I am not a true Christian. I practically know nothing about the word of God except that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' That is all I know. Cannot I now accept Christ as my Saviour?" Oh, yes, my brother, you can. You are now a Christian, if you want to be. If you accept and truly believe that one verse just quoted, you are as much a Christian as a little fledgeling just hatched out of an egg is a bird. If you accept truly with your whole heart that profound truth and should die tonight, he who promised salvation to every soul who believes and trusts him would take your soul into his safe keeping. But if you live you should grow and develop. You are saved that you may serve him as an example and as a soul winner, and this you can never do unless you learn to know him and his teaching through the study of his word. Remember you are now a Christian only as the bird just hatched out of the egg is a bird. You are a spiritual fledgeling; you must eat spiritual food. That spiritual food is to be found in the Word of God, as the breath for your spiritual lungs is to be found in the atmosphere of prayer.

Paul's Advice.

Paul said to young Timothy, "Preach the word!" I say to you, "Study the word." Study it in the church and in the home. Study it on your knees and at your desk and in your bed. Study it as absorbingly and as intensely as John Locke studied it, who gave up his last fourteen years to an earnest search after divine truth as revealed in the Scriptures. Study God's word as earnestly and as faithfully as Samuel Johnson commended his young friend to study it when upon his deathbed he turned and said: "Young man, attend to the voice of one who has possessed a certain degree of fame in the world and who is about to appear before his Maker: Read the Bible every day of your life." Yes, new convert, read the Bible and continue to read it, because God commands you to read it. Read it, because your deeper spiritual life depends upon your reading it and in having it read to you. Study it, and continue to study it, because when you read the Bible God is talking to you, as when you pray you are talking to God.

But there is still another way for the Christian to quench the spiritual flame which is now burning within him. That way is to neglect the family altar, which should be raised in every home. That way is for the husband and father to hurriedly arise in the morning and quickly dress, and then off to business without gathering his children about him for family worship and without having any blessing asked at the breakfast table. That way is for every father to think that all that he has to do is to say his own prayers and do his own Christian work, and then his children will say their own prayers and fulfill their own Christian tasks.

The Fireside Standard.

Every man's home to a certain extent is his own castle. He can lift what standards he pleases over his own fireside. He can emphatically say, as did God's servant of old, "Let others do as they will, but as for me and my house we shall serve the Lord." Or he can open his own home to shelter and entertain evil temptations of all sorts. But let no man think if he surrenders his house to evil practices and yields himself and his home to the seductions of the world that he can at the same time live a spiritual life, nor can he expect that those around him, who are bound to him by ties of blood and love, will lead spiritual lives. He must, if he would live right, not only consecrate his own life every morning to God, but in the presence of his children he must offer a petition to God for them to consecrate their lives to Christ also.

So completely do I believe the true spiritual life to be dependent in many ways upon the family altar that I would have the fathers and mothers, as soon as possible, teach their little children to publicly pray at family worship and to publicly ask the blessing at the daily meals. I remember, many years ago when traveling in Scotland, noticing how general was the custom for the youngest child of the household who could utter the words being called upon to ask the blessing at the family meal. I thought then, as I think now, that it was an excellent practice, tending to accustom the child from its earliest years to acknowledge the goodness of God and to address him in prayer. As soon as my children were born I made up my mind I would teach them when very young to ask the blessing in public and to publicly pray at the family altar. I would teach them when very young, so that they should never be ashamed to lift their voices in petition to God, no matter where they might be. And in their young lips praying at family worship I have found my own spiritual life as a river widening and deepening in strength every year.

In Touch With Christ.

Thus, no matter which way we may look at the Pauline word "quench," the whole trend of the matter is this: As Christians we cannot live a true spiritual life unless every moment of every day we are in touch with Christ. We cannot preach to others unless by searching God's word we hear Christ preaching to us. We cannot pray for others in public review unless we have had much knee drill in secret prayer. We cannot give ourselves wholly to God's service unless at the same time at the family altar we give our loved ones also to him. Are we ready to come into touch with all these spiritual sources of power? By coming in touch with Christ's life shall we have the Spirit's flame leap and glow and resistlessly move on and scatter and consume our sins and our brother's sins, even as the prairie fire makes serpent, buffalo and deer flee for their lives.

In welcoming the church members to Christ's altar I have but one more question to ask and to answer. In what, O struggling friend, does the chief definition of being a Christian consist? Ought you to say, "I want to be a Christian to escape the evil effects of sin?" "I want to be a Christian to be happy?" "I want to be a Christian in order that I may reach heaven?" Oh, no. You should want to be a Christian, not for your own beatification, but in order that God may be glorified. In order to glorify God we should work for him. In order to glorify God we should give to him of our temporal substance. In order to glorify God we should pray to him. We should read the Bible that we can further find out how Christ may continue to be glorified. May our lives be filled with holy zeal for the glorification of the blessed Saviour on earth and in heaven. I congratulate you in this the supreme moment of your life, when you start in the service of Jesus Christ. Christian brother, give me thy hand.

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NO FISH NET INDICTMENTS.

Grand Jury Finishes Work and Reports Bills Under Seal.

But It Is Understood No Additional Indictments Were Found as a Result of the Probe—No Indictment Against E. J. Moore.

The grand jury rose Friday afternoon after a two weeks' session and made a final report to Justice Rich in Supreme court. No indictments were returned in fish net cases, which the jurors have been probing two or three days. The investigation went deep, it is said, and in some cases, it is understood, it was voted to indict and afterwards this action was rescinded and the slate was swept clean of this class of cases so far as this grand jury is concerned. In some cases the first vote was against indicting. It is said that 20 cases of this sort were probed and the final vote was quite close but there were not enough favorable to find true bills. From what could be heard outside the grand jury room door there was something going on Friday morning. The discussion was very animated and the sounds emanating from the room were as if all the jurors were trying to talk at once while the foreman's gavel was frequently heard.

Four or five indictments, in addition to the seven open indictments previously reported, were handed up, whether four or five is not known. All of them were sealed and only one of them is in an excise case. Among the cases probed in which no indictment was found were the Edward J. Moore excise case, the arson case against Charles P. Ketcham, of Weedsport, the case of Albert Cooklin for his alleged behavior toward young girls, and the cases of Rosalina Leone and Mary Lazzaro, charged with assault on Frank Lazzaro. Lazzaro, it is understood, is not about here. These cases were investigated by the last grand jury and at that time Lazzaro was absent.

The grand jury also "probed" Prof. Edward W. Miller, D. D., of the seminary, president of the Anti-Saloon league, for the latter he wrote to the foreman, Lewis E. Lyon, of a former grand jury in regard to the existence of "spotter" witnesses. The inquiry was made on the charge of attempting to interfere with a grand jury and no indictment was found. It will be remembered that the letter was brought to light following the trial of the William J. White excise case.

District Attorney Dayton made this statement to the grand jury: "In my judgment there is evidence on which other indictments could have been found and it is a matter for every man to settle with his own conscience why other indictment were not found. Failure of the grand jury to indict in cases the jurors declared to be clear would reflect poorly on their motives."

The jury filed into court promptly at 2 o'clock Friday afternoon. At the call of the roll the clerk omitted the name of J. M. Rude, of Port Byron. Mr. Rude asked that his name be called. It seemed he was marked absent on the first day but the fact is he was properly sworn in and has been in attendance at all the sessions. After the sealed indictments had been handed up the jurors were excused.

The court announced that any defendants who wished to consult with counsel could do so and their cases would be put over to January 25. Carrie S. Holt, indicted for larceny after a former conviction for a felony, was the only defendant in court, although others were in the ante room. She entered a plea of not guilty, L. K. R. Laird was assigned to consult with her and her plea was ordered not to be recorded until January 25, to which time all arraignments were deferred.

After Rosalina Leone and Mary Lazzaro had been discharged court adjourned until Saturday morning for hearing motions, if any.

IN SUPREME COURT.

Verdict for Plaintiff in the Spencer Case—A Divorce Action.

The January term of Supreme court adjourned Friday until next Monday. There are four or five cases ready for trial at that time. This week Justice Rich will preside at a term at Geneseo in Livingston county. The calendar for the Livingston county term is a large one and the week there will be one full of business.

The action brought by Otto J. Spencer against the Berkshire Springs company, in which $533.71 was demanded, went to the jury at 5:30 Thursday afternoon and at 8 o'clock a verdict was reached which was sealed and which was reported at the opening of court next morning. The verdict was for the plaintiff in the amount of $308. Henry D. Parsell was attorney for the plaintiff.

Friday Justice Rich heard an argument in a divorce action brought by Joseph Leeson, jr., of Venice, against Ida May Leeson. On November 14 last an order was entered directing the plaintiff to pay $40 counsel fees and $3 a week alimony during the pendency of the action, with the understanding, plaintiff asserts, that the case would be tried at the January term. Now defendant wants the case to go over the term and argument that morning was on an order compelling the defendant to show cause why the order of last November shall not be modified, relieving the plaintiff from payment of the $3 a week alimony. George H. Leonard appeared for the plaintiff and Frank E. Cady for the defendant. After hearing the argument Justice Rich took the papers and reserved decision.

A motion was also made to have case No. 59, Thomas Walsh against David M. Dunning, put over the term. After the arguments the court took the papers.

That afternoon judgment by default, the defendant not appearing, was rendered in case No. 39, John R. Marcellus, as executor of Sarah C. Cole, against Andrew Cole, after one witness had been sworn. The judgment is for $393.39, one-third of a board bill defendant agreed to pay for his aged mother's support.

THE DEATH OF CALDWELL.

No Additional Details Received by Relatives in This City.

No further particulars have been received in this city regarding the death in California of Charles L. Caldwell, which was chronicled in the Associated Press dispatches. His charred body was found in a field near Los Angeles, Cal., with his automobile. His father, George S. Caldwell, and two sisters, Mrs. Willard F. Case and Mrs. Nelson B. Eldred, are awaiting answers to telegrams sent Thursday requesting details of the tragic death.

The deceased was 32 years of age. In his younger days he was a prominent Auburn athlete and was one of the speediest cyclists in this vicinity at the time when the high wheels were in vogue. Several years ago he married a Southern woman of wealth and has made his home since in Los Angeles. He is survived by a widow and one daughter.

THEY STOLE TURKEY.

James Connors, Frank Judd and Patrick Barry were taken into custody by Roundsman Graney Friday on a warrant charging them with petit larceny. It is alleged that the three men were implicated in the theft of a 20 pound turkey left hanging for display purposes in front of Herring's market last Friday night. The men acknowledge taking the bird, disposing of it and dividing the money received from the sale. They refused to state how much they received for the turkey or the party to whom they sold it.

All three pleaded guilty on arraignment before Recorder Stupp that afternoon. Barry was given a fine of $25 or 25 days in jail. Connors and Judd were committed to the county jail for 90 days each.

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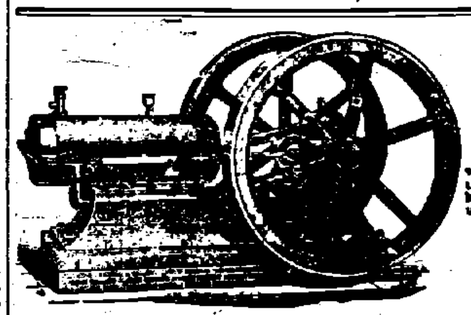

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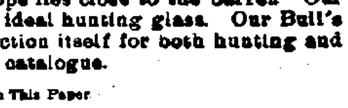

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