

THE MARCH HOMEWARD.

SERMON PREACHED BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D. D., JAN. 20.

The Servants of the Lord Should Hound Themselves as Did David and His Men and Recover Their Loved Ones from the Power of the Evil One.

BROOKLYN, Jan. 20.—The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., having expounded appropriate passages of Scripture, gave out the hymn: Who are these in bright array. This innumerable throng. Round the altar night and day. Tuning their triumphant song.

The subject of the sermon was "The March Homeward," and the text I Samuel, xxx, 8: "Pursue for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." Dr. Talmage said: There is intense excitement in the village of Ziklag. David and his men are bidding goodby to their families, and are off for the wars. In that little village of Ziklag the defenseless ones will be safe until the warriors, flushed with victory, come home. But will the defenseless ones be safe? The soft arms of children are around the necks of the bronzed warriors until they shake themselves free and start, and handkerchiefs and flags are waved and kisses thrown until the armed men vanish beyond the hills. David and his men start homeward. Every night on their way home, no sooner does the soldier put his head on the knapsack than in his dream he hears the welcome of the wife and the shout of the child. Oh, what long stories they will have to tell their families of how they dodged the lattle axel and then will roll up their sleeves and show their half healed wound. With glad, quick step, they march on, David and his men, for they are marching home. Now they come up to the last hill which overlooks Ziklag, and they expect in a moment to see the dwelling places of their loved ones. They look, and as they look their cheeks turn pale, and their lip quivers, and their hand involuntarily comes down on the hilt of the sword. "Where is Ziklag? Where are our homes?" they cry. Alas! the curling smoke above the ruin tells the tragedy. The Amalekites have come down and consumed the village, and carried the mothers and the wives and the children of David and his men into captivity. The swarthy warriors stand for a few moments transfixed with horror. Then their eyes glance to each other, and they burst into uncontrollable weeping; for when a strong warrior weeps, the grief is appalling. It seems as if the emotion might tear him to pieces. "They weep until they had no more power to weep." But soon their sorrow turns into rage, and David, swinging his sword high in air, cries: "Pursue, for thou shalt overtake them, and without fail recover all." Now the march becomes a "double quick." Two hundred of David's men stop by the brook Besor, faint with fatigue and grief. They cannot go a step farther. They are left there. But the other 400 men under David, with a sort of panther step, march on in sorrow and in rage. They find by the side of the road a half dead Egyptian, and they resuscitate him, and compel him to tell the whole story. He says: "Yonder they went, the captors and the captives," pointing in the direction. Forward, ye 400 brave men of fire! Very soon David and his enraged company come upon the Amalekites' host. Yonder they see their own wives and children and mothers, and under Amalekites' guard. Here are the officers of the Amalekites' army holding a banquet. The cups are full, the music is roused, the dance begins. The Amalekites cheer and cheer and cheer over their victory. But, without note of bugle or warning of trumpet, David and his four hundred men burst upon the scene suddenly, as Robert Bruce hurled his Scotchmen upon the rebels at Bannockburn. David and his men look up, and one glance at their loved ones in captivity and under Amalekites' guard throws them into a very fury of determination, for you know how men will fight when they fight for their wives and children. Ah! there are lightnings in their eyes, and every finger is a spear, and their voice is like the shout of the whirlwind. Amidst the upset tankards and the costly viands crushed under foot, the wounded Amalekites lie their blood mingling with their wives shrieking for mercy. No sooner do David and his men win the victory than they throw their swords down into the dust—what do they want with swords now!—amidst a great shout of joy that makes the parting scene in Ziklag seem very insipid in the comparison. The rough old warrior has to use some persuasion before he can get his child to come to him now after so long an absence; but soon the little finger traces the familiar wrinkle across the scarred face. And then the empty tankards are set up, and they are filled with the best wine from the hills, and David and his men, the husbands, the wives, the brothers, the sisters, drink to the overthrow of the Amalekites and to the rebuilding of Ziklag. So, O Lord, let thine enemies perish!

THE LOST RECOVERED. Now they are coming home, David and his men and their families—a long procession. Men, women and children, loaded with jewels and robes and with all kinds of trophies the Amalekites had gathered up in years of conquest—everything now in the hands of David and his men. When they come by the brook Besor, the place where staid the men sick and incompetent to travel, the jewels and the robes and all kinds of treasures are divided among the sick as well as among the well. Surely, the lame and exhausted ought to have some of the treasures. Here is a robe for the pale faced warrior. Here is a pillow for this dying man. Here is a handful of gold for the wasted trumpeter. I really think that these men who fainted by the brook Besor may have endured as much as those men who went into battle. Some mean fellows objected to the sick ones having any of the spoils. The objectors said: "These men did not fight." David, with a magnanimous heart, replies: "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the staff."

This subject is practically suggestive to me. Thank God, in these times a man can go off on a journey, and be gone weeks and months, and come back and see his house untouched, and have his family on the step to greet him, if by telegram he has foretold the moment of his coming. But there are Amalekites' disasters, and there are Amalekites' diseases, that sometimes come down upon one's home, making as devastating work as the day when Ziklag took fire. There are families in my congregation whose homes have been broken up. No tattering rags hang in the door, no insect-eaten furniture, no flames leaped amidst the curtains, but so far as all the joy and merriment that once belonged to that house are concerned, the home has departed. Armed diseases come down upon the quietness of the scene—scarlet fevers, or pleurisy, or consumptions, or undefined disorders came and seized upon some members of that family, and carried them away. Ziklag is ashes! And you go about, sometimes weeping and sometimes enraged, wanting to get back your loved ones as much as David and his men

wanted to reconstruct their despoiled households. Ziklag is ashes. Some of you went off from home. You counted the days of your absence. Every day seemed as long as a week. Oh, how glad you were when the time came for you to go aboard the steamboat or rail car and start for home! You arrived. You went up the street where your dwelling was, and in the night you put your hand on the door bell, and behold it was wrapped with the signal of bereavement, and you found that Amalekites' Death, which has devastated a thousand other households, had blasted yours. You go about weeping amidst the desolation of your once happy home, thinking of the bright eyes closed, and the noble hearts stopped, and the gentle hands folded, and you weep until you have no more power to weep. Ziklag is ashes!

OUR ZIKLAG IN ASHES. A gentleman went to a friend of mine in the city of Washington, and asked that through him he might get a consoling letter to some foreign port. My friend said to him: "What do you want to go away from your beautiful home for, into a foreign port?" "Oh," he replied, "my home is gone! My six children are dead! I must get away, sir. I can't stand it in this country any longer." Ziklag is ashes! Why these long shadows of bereavement across this audience? Why is it that in almost every assemblage black is the predominant color of the apparel? Is it because you do not like saffron or brown or violet? Oh, no! You say: "The world is not so bright to us as it once was," and there is a story of silent voices, and of still feet, and of loved ones gone, and when you look over the hills, expecting only beauty and loveliness, you find only devastation and woe. Ziklag is ashes!

In Ulster county, New York, the village church was decorated until the fragrance of the flowers was almost bewildering. The maidens of the village had emptied the place of flowers upon one marriage altar. One of their own number was affianced to a minister of Christ, who had come to take her to his home. With hands joined, amidst a congratulatory audience, the vows were taken. In three days from that time one of those who stood at the altar exchanged earth for heaven. The wedding march broke down into the funeral dirge. There were not enough flowers now for the coffin lid, because they had all been taken for the bridal hour. The dead minister of Christ is brought to another village. He had gone out from there less than a week before in his strength; now he comes home lifeless. The whole church bewailed him. The solemn procession moved around to look upon the still face that once had beamed with messages of salvation. Little children were lifted up to look at him. And some of those whom he had comforted in days of sorrow, when they passed that silent form, made the place dreadful with their weeping. Another village emptied of its flowers—some of them put in the shape of a cross to symbolize his love, others put in the shape of a crown to symbolize his triumph. A hundred lights blown out in one strong gust from the open door of a sepulcher. Ziklag is ashes!

I preach this sermon today because I want to rally you, as David rallied his men, for the recovery of the loved and the lost. I want not only to win heaven, but I want all this congregation to go along with me. I feel that somehow I have a responsibility in your arriving at that great city. I have on other Sabbaths used other inducements. I mean today, for the sake of variety, hoping to reach your heart, to try another kind of inducement. Do you really want to join the companionship of your loved ones who have gone? Are you anxious to join them as David and his men were to join their families? Then I am here, in the name of God, to say that you may and to tell you how.

I remark, in the first place, if you want to join your loved ones in glory, you must travel the same way they went. No sooner had the half dead Egyptian been resuscitated than he pointed the way the captors and the captives had gone, and David and his men followed after. So our Christian friends have gone into another country, and if we want to reach their companionship we must take the same road. They repented, we must repent. They prayed, we must pray. They trusted in Christ, we must trust in Christ. They lived a religious life, we must live a religious life. They were in some things like ourselves. I know, now that they are gone, there is a halo around their names, but they had their faults. They said and did things they ought never to have said or done. They were sometimes rebellious, sometimes cast down. They were far from being perfect. So I suppose that when we have gone some things in us that are not only tolerable may be almost splendid. But, as they were like us in deficiencies, we ought to be like them in taking a supernatural Christ to make up for the deficits. Had it not been for Jesus, they would have all perished; but Christ confronted them and said: "I am the way," and they took it.

THE CAPTIVE'S PATH UNPLEASANT. I have also to say to you that the path that the captives trod was a troubled path, and that David and his men had to go over the same difficult way. While these captives were being taken off they said: "Oh, we are so tired; we are so sick; we are so hungry!" But the men who had charge of them said: "Stop this crying. Go on!" David and his men also found it a hard way. They had to travel it. Our friends have gone into glory, and it is through much tribulation that we are to enter into the kingdom. How our loved ones used to have to struggle! how their old hearts ached! how sometimes they had a tussle for bread! In our childhood we wondered why there were so many wrinkles on their faces. We did not know that what were called "crow's feet" on their faces were the marks of the black raven of trouble. Did you never hear the old people, seated by the evening stand, talk over their early trials, their hardships, the accidents, the trials, the disappointments, the empty flour barrel when there were so many hungry ones to feed, the sickness almost unto death, where the next dose of morphine decided between ghastly bereavement and an unbroken home circle? Oh, yes! it was trouble that whitened their hair. It was trouble that shook the cup in their hands. It was trouble that washed the luster from their eyes with the rain of tears until they needed spectacles. It was trouble that made the cane a necessity for their journey. Do you never remember seeing your old mother sitting, on some rainy day, looking out of the window, her elbow on the window sill, her hand to her brow—looking out, not seeing the falling shower at all (you well knew she was looking into the distant past, until the apron came up to her eyes, because the memory was too much for her)?

Oh the big, unbidden tear. Stealing down the furrowed cheek, Told in eloquence sincere, Tides of woe they could not speak. But this scene of weeping o'er, Past this scene of toil and pain, They shall feel distress no more. Never, never weep again.

"Who are these under the altar?" the question was asked, and the response came: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb." Our friends went by a path of tears into glory. Be not surprised if we have to travel the same pathway.

I remark, again, if we want to win the so-

ciety of our friends in heaven, we will not only have to travel a path of faith and a path of tribulation; but we will also have to positively battle for their companionship. David and his men never wanted sharp swords and invulnerable shields and thick breastplates so much as they wanted them on the day when they came down upon the Amalekites. If they had lost that battle, they never would have got their families back. I suppose that one glance at their loved ones in captivity hurried them into the battle with tenfold courage and energy. They said: "We must win it. Everything depends upon it. Let each one take a man on point of spear or sword. We must win it." And I have to tell you that between us and coming into the companionship of our loved ones who are departed there is an Austerlitz, there is a Gettysburg, there is a Waterloo. War with the world, war with the flesh, war with the devil. We have either to conquer our troubles, or our troubles will conquer us. David will either slay the Amalekites, or the Amalekites will slay David. And yet is not the fort to be taken worth all the pain, all the peril, all the besiegement! Look! who are they on the bright hills of heaven yonder! There they are, those who sat at your own table, the chair now vacant. There they are, those whom you rocked in infancy in the cradle, or hushed to sleep in your arms. There they are, those in whose life your life was bound up. There they are, their brow more radiant than ever before you saw it, their lips waiting for the kiss of heavenly greeting, their cheeks rosate with the health of eternal summer, their hands beckoning you up the steep, their feet bounding with the mirth of heaven. The pallor of their last sickness gone out of their face—never more to be sick, never more to cough, never more to limp, never more to be old, never more to weep. They are watching from those heights to see if, through Christ, you can take that fort, and whether you will rush in upon them—victors. They know that upon this battle depends whether you will ever join their society. Up! Strike harder! Charge more bravely! Remember that every inch you gain puts you so much further on toward that heavenly reunion.

"VICTORY OR DEATH?" If this morning while I speak you could hear the cannonade of a foreign navy, coming through the "Narrows," which was to despoil our city, and if they really should succeed in carrying our families away from us, how long would we take before we resolved to go after them? Every weapon, whether fresh from the forge or old and rusty in the garret, would be brought out; and we would try on, and, coming in front of the foe, we would look at them, and then look at our families, and the cry would be: "Victory or death!" and when the ammunition was gone, we would take the captors on the point of the bayonet or under the breach of the gun. If you would make such a struggle for the getting back of your earthly friends, will you not make as much struggle for the gaining of the eternal companionship of your heavenly friends? Oh, yes! we must join them. We must sit in their holy society. We must sing with them the song: "We must celebrate with them the triumph. Let it never be told on earth or in heaven that David and his men pushed out with braver hearts for the getting back of their earthly friends for a few years on earth than we to get our departed."

You say that all this implies that our departed Christian friends are alive. Why, had you any idea they were dead? They have only moved. If you should go on the 2d of May to a house where one of your friends lived and found him gone, you would not think that he was dead. You would inquire next door where he had moved to. Our departed Christian friends have only taken another house. The secret is that they are richer now than they once were, and can afford a better residence. They once drank out of earthenware; they now drink from the King's chalice. "Joseph is yet alive," and Jacob will go up and see him. Living! Are they? Why, if a man can live in this damp, dark dungeon of earthly captivity, can he not live in a house where the bracing atmosphere of the mountains of heaven? Oh, yes, they are living!

Do you think that Paul is so near dead now as he was when he was living in the Roman dungeon? Do you think that Frederick Robertson, of Brighton, is as near dead now as he was when, year after year, he slept seated on the floor, his head on the bottom of a chair, because he could find none in no other position? Do you think that Robert Hall is as near dead now as when, on his couch, he tossed in physical tortures? No. Death gave them the black drop, and they died. That is all death does to a Christian—curses him. I know that what I have said implies that they are living. There is no question about that. The only question this morning is whether you will ever join them.

But I must not forget those two hundred men who fainted by the brook Besor. Their feet were sore, their head ached; their entire nature was exhausted. Besides that, they were broken hearted because their homes were gone. Ziklag is ashes! And yet David, when he came to them, divides the spoils among them. He says that he shall have some of the jewels, some of the robes, some of the treasures. I look over this audience this morning, and I find at least two hundred who have fainted by the brook Besor—the brook of tears. You feel as if you could not take another step farther, as though you could never look up again. But I am going to imitate David, and divide among you some glorious trophies. Here is a robe: "All things work together for good to them who love God." Wrap yourself in that glorious promise. Here is for your neck a string of pearls, made out of crystallized tears: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Here is a coronet: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." O ye fainting ones by the brook Besor, dip your blistered feet in the running stream of God's mercy. Bathe your brow at the wells of salvation. Soothe your wounds with the balsam that exudes from trees of life. God will not utterly cast you off. O broken hearted man, O broken hearted woman, fainting by the brook Besor.

YOU WANT DIVINE NURSING. A shepherd finds that his musical pipe is broken. He says: "I can't get any more music out of this instrument, so I will just break it, and I will throw this reed away. Then I will get another reed, and I will play music on that." But God says he will not cast you off because all the music has gone out of your soul. "The broken reed he will not break." As far as I can tell the diagnosis of your disease, you want divine nursing, and it is promised you: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." God will see you all the way through, O troubled soul, and when you come down to the Jordan of death you will find it to be as thin as a brook as Besor; for Dr. Robinson says that in April, Brier dies up and there is no brook at all. And in your last moment you will be as placid as the Kentucky minister who went up to God, saying in the dying hour: "Write to my sister Kate, and tell her not to be worried and frightened about the story of the horrors around the death bed. Tell her there is not a word of truth in it, for I am there now, and Jesus is with me,

and I had it a very happy way; not because I am a good man, for I am not; I am nothing but a poor, miserable sinner, but I have an Almighty Saviour, and both of his arms are around me." May God Almighty, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, bring us into the companionship of our loved ones who have already entered the heavenly land, and entered the presence of Christ, whom, not having seen, we love, and so David shall recover all, and as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the staff.

BRIEF MENTION.

Alexander the Great died at Babylon, B. C. 323, at the age of 33.

Titan, considered by many the prince of colonists, was born at Venice in 1477 and died in 1576.

Kansas boasts of having the largest two military reservations in the country—Forts Leavenworth and Riley.

George Routledge, the London publisher, printed and sold 600,000 copies of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

A Ulysses, Neb., man has built the "largest corn crib on earth." It is 400 feet long, 12 feet wide and 12 feet high, and holds 35,000 bushels.

A very pleasant and "gentle" way of making a little pin money has been found in the new feminine fad for wood carving.

Public opinion is the strongest factor in putting down any evil, and it is made up of private opinion, openly expressed and heartily followed.

Anna Katherine Green makes it a rule to rest a year between the publication of one book and the beginning of the composition of another.

A Michigan woman practiced with a revolver until she could hit a susepder button at eight paces. Then there came a burglar into the house early one morning, and she sent a bullet ping through her husband's left ear.

Little Billy had a new brother, and soon afterward one of his neighbors said to him: "So you have another baby at your house? He's right smart little fellow, I suppose." "Humph!" said Billy, turning up his nose. "How many smart boys do you expect us to have in our family?"

It is now proposed to have another international exhibition in the great crystal palace at Sydenham, near London, in 1891, in the buildings in which the exhibition of 1851 was held in Hyde park, but which were afterward removed to Sydenham.

Twenty-seven years ago an acorn lodged somehow in the mortar or between the stones of an Ohio court house spire, took root, and sent out an oak shoot. To-day a miniature oak grows on the spire, eighty feet from the ground. It draws life from the cement, the "skin of the rock," and the air, but principally from the air, as there is very little moisture in the spire.

He who amasses wealth, not as an equitable return for value given, but by underhand dealing or oppression of the poor, or gambling on a high or low seas, has been engaged in no honorable competition. He who climbs into power, not by proving himself the fittest man to wield it, but by pushing others down and crowding them out, desecrates the name of emulation.

The first railway out of Chicago was the Galena and Chicago Union (now the Galena division of the Chicago and Northwestern), the first ten miles of which, to Harlem, were completed and open to travel Dec. 30, 1848. The company some years subsequently extended its lines to Freeport, there connecting with the Illinois Central to Galena and Dubuque, and also to Fulton on the Mississippi. The Michigan Central and Michigan Southern were completed and opened to travel in 1852.

A Strange Story. A writer in The London Morning Post tells a strange tale of "ancient Holyrood," which he says should be once contradicted or confirmed. Some visitors who went through the Queen of Scots' apartments there were shown by the guide, who seemed to have spoken a little beyond his commission, a certain passage and a large jutting stone like a step, and the following curious statement was then let fall: "Some time ago, when some repairs were being made in the Queen of Scots' room, a stone mason struck the jutting out stone above mentioned, which rang hollow. He had the curiosity to turn it up, and discovered the remains of a baby wrapped in cloth of gold, and marked 'J.' Now, it is well known that Mary Stuart gave birth to James I of England and the VI of Scotland in the adjoining room, and that immediately after the birth the child was removed and brought up elsewhere, the queen showing a small interest in her offspring."

Now, supposing the real child, the real James, is the infant wrapped in cloth of gold, lying under that stone, who was the other child who afterwards reigned as James I of England and VI of Scotland? Did this question ever occur to the authorities? This will be best answered by asking how they are said to have treated the discovery. They telegraphed at once to the high personage in London whose business it is to control Holyrood palace. What did he do? He sent back word "to make no fuss about it," but to replace the baby in cloth of gold marked "J." under the stone, and presumably there he still lies. But the questions remain to be answered. If that is Mary Stuart's baby, and the rightful heir, who was that other baby? And why, when the supposed original turned up in cloth of gold, was there no fuss to be made? If this is all a mare's nest, it is high time that people who go over Holyrood should know it, let alone those whom it may concern even more nearly.

Once Too Often. A beggar, a small boy, and a pitcher figured in an interesting little comedy up town. The pitcher was standing outside of the third story window of a house which stood directly opposite a saloon. On the Bowery this pitcher would be called a "growler," although it was a beautiful design and somewhat expensive.

Whenever the person who occupied the room wanted some beer the pitcher was put out, and a small boy who keeps a bootblackening stand on the opposite corner would see it, and quickly go for it and get it filled. The beggar had been that way before, and had learned the relation between the small boy and the pitcher, so he watched for its appearance one day and forestalled the small boy. He went up to the room from which the pitcher was exhibited, told the owner that he had for it instead of the small boy, and secured both the pitcher and the dime that was in it.

The dime went into his pocket, and the pitcher was probably resolved to take a quarter at the nearest second hand store.—New York Times.

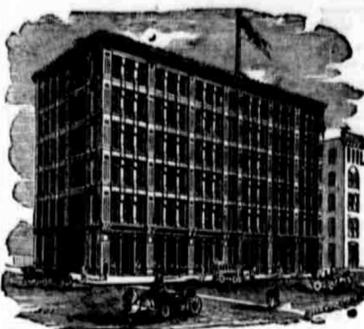
Professor Felix Adler, of New York, thinks that general improvement in government, industry and society is constantly going on, and that all necessary reforms will yet be won, as the result of experiment and effort on the part of the laboring masses and their friends.

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