

NEW SPRINGS OF JOY.

SERMON PREACHED BY DR. TALMAGE ON SUNDAY, MAY 19.

As Caleb the Father Gave Achsah a Desirable Land to Live In, So God Has Given Man This World, a Goodly Home in Which to Dwell.

BROOKLYN, May 19.—The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., preached to-day on "New Springs of Joy." The text was, "Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs."—Joshua xv, 19.

The city of Debir was the Boston of antiquity—a great place for brain and books. Caleb wanted it, and he offered his daughter Achsah as a prize to any one who would capture that city. It was a strange thing for Caleb to do; and yet the man that could take the city would have, at any rate, two elements of manhood—bravery and patriotism. With Caleb's daughter as a prize to fight for, Gen. Othniel rode into the battle. The gates of Debir were thundered into the dust, and the city of books lay at the feet of the conquerors. The work done, Othniel comes back to claim his bride. Having conquered the city, it is no great job for him to conquer the girl's heart; for however faint hearted a woman herself may be, she always loves courage in a man. I never saw an exception to that. The wedding festivity having gone by, Othniel and Achsah are about to go to their new home. However loudly the cymbals may clash and the laughter ring, parents are always sad when a fondly cherished daughter goes off to stay; and Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, knows that now is the time to ask almost anything she wants of her father. It seems that Caleb, the good old man, had given as a wedding present to his daughter a piece of land that was mountainous and sloping southward toward the deserts of Arabia, swept with some very hot winds. It was called "a south land." But Achsah wants an addition of property; she wants a piece of land that is well watered and fertile. Now it is no wonder that Caleb standing amidst the bridal party, his eyes so full of tears because she was going away that he could hardly see her at all, gives her more than she asks. She said to him: "Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs."

GOD HAS GIVEN US THE WORLD. What a suggestive passage! The fact is, that as Caleb, the father, gave Achsah, the daughter, a south land, so God gives to us his world. I am very thankful he has given it to us. But I am like Achsah in the fact that I want a larger portion. Trees, and flowers, and grass, and blue skies are very well in their places; but he who has nothing but this world for a portion has no portion at all. It is a mountainous land, sloping off toward the desert of sorrow, swept by fiery siroccos; it is "a south land," a poor portion for any man that tries to put his trust in it. What has been your experience? What has been the experience of every man, of every woman that has tried this world for a portion? Queen Elizabeth, amidst the surroundings of pomp, is unhappy because the painter sketches too minutely the wrinkles on her face, and she indignantly cries out: "You must strike off my likeness without any shadows!" Hogarth, at the very height of his artistic triumph, is stung almost to death with chagrin because the painter he had dedicated to the king does not seem to be acceptable; for George II. cries out: "Who is this Hogarth? Take his trumpet out of my presence!" Brinsley Sheridan thrilled the earth with his eloquence, but had for his last words, "I am absolutely undone." Walter Scott, fumbling around the inkstand, trying to write, says to his daughter: "Oh, take me back to my room; there is no rest for Sir Walter but in the grave." Stephen Girard, the wealthiest man in his day, or, at any rate, only second in wealth, says: "I live the life of a galley slave; when I arise in the morning my one effort is to work so hard that I can sleep when it gets to be night." Charles Lamb, applauded of all the world, in the very midst of his literary triumph says: "Do you remember, Bridget, when we used to laugh from the shilling gallery at the play? There are now no good plays to laugh at from the boxes." But why go so far as that? I used to go no further than your street to find an illustration of what I am saying.

WORKING ARE NOT REALLY HAPPY. Pick me out ten successful worldlings—without any religion, and you know what I mean by successful worldlings—pick me out ten successful worldlings, and you cannot find more than one that looks happy. Care drags him across the bridge; care drags him back. Take your stand at two o'clock at the corner of Nassau and Wall streets, or at the corner of Canal street and Broadway, and see the agonized physiognomies. Your bankers, your insurance men, your porters, your wholesalers, and your retailers, as a class, are they happy? No. Care dogs their steps; and, making no appeal to God for help or comfort, they are tossed everywhere. How has it been with you, my hearer? Are you more contented in the house of fourteen rooms than you were in the two rooms you had in a house when you started? Have you not had more care and worry since you won that fifty thousand dollars that you did before? Some of the poorest men I have ever known have been those of great fortune. A man of small means may be put in great business straits, but the glances of all embarrasments is that of the man who has large estates. The men who commit suicide because of monetary losses are those who cannot bear the burden any more, because they have only a hundred thousand dollars left.

On Bowling Green, New York, there is a house where Talleyrand used to go. He was a favorite man. All the world knew him, and he had

wealth almost unlimited; yet at the close of his life he says: "Behold, eighty-three years have passed without any practical result, save fatigue of body and fatigue of mind, great discouragement for the future and great disgust for the past." Oh, my friends, this is "a south land," and it slopes off toward deserts of sorrows; and the prayer which Achsah made to her father Caleb, we make this day to our Father God: "Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave them the upper springs, and the nether springs." Blessed be God! We have more advantages given us than we can really appreciate. We have spiritual blessings offered us in this world which I shall call the nether springs, and glories in the world to come which I shall call the upper springs.

THE PURE JOY OF RELIGION. Where shall I find words enough threaded with light to set forth the pleasure of religion? David, unable to describe it in words, played it on a harp. Mrs. Hemans, not finding enough power in prose, sings that praise in a canto. Christopher Wren, unable to describe it in language, sprung it into the arches of St. Paul's. John Bunyan, unable to present it in ordinary phraseology, takes all the fascination of allegory. Handel, with ordinary music unable to reach the height of the theme, rouses it up in an oratorio. Oh, there is no life on earth so happy as a really Christian life. I do not mean a sham Christian life, but a real Christian life. Where there is a thorn, there is a whole garland of roses. Where there is one groan, there are three doxologies. Where there is one day of cloud, there is a whole season of sunshine. Take the humblest Christian man that you know—angels of God canopy him with their white wings; the lightnings of heaven are his armed allies; the Lord is his Shepherd, picking out for him green pastures by still waters; if he walk forth, heaven is his body guard; if he lie down to sleep, ladders of light, angel blossoming, are let into his dreams; if he be thirsty, the potentates of heaven are his cup bearers; if he sit down to food, his plain table blooms into the King's banquet. Men say: "Look at that old fellow with the worn out coat; the angels of God cry: 'Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates, and let him come in!' Fastidious people cry: 'Get off my front steps; the doorkeepers of heaven cry: 'Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom!' When he comes to die, though he may be carried out in a pine box to the potter's field, to that potter's field the chariots of Christ will come down, and the cavalcade will crowd all the boulevards of heaven.

IT MAKES A MAN "ALL RIGHT." I bless Christ for the present satisfaction of religion. It makes a man all right with reference to the past; it makes a man all right with reference to the future. Oh, these nether springs of comfort! They are perennial. The foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are his." "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, who hath mercy upon them." Oh, cluster of diamonds set in burnished gold! Oh, nether springs of comfort bursting through all the valleys of trial and tribulation! When you see, you of the world, what satisfaction there is on earth in religion, do you not thirst after it as the daughter of Caleb thirsted after the water springs? It is no stagnant pond, scummed over with malaria, but springs of water leaping from the Rock of Ages! Take up one cup of that spring water, and across the top of the chalice will float the delicate shadows of the heavenly wall, the yellow of jasper, the green of emerald, the blue of sardonyx, the fire of jacinth.

HAPPY IN LIFE AND GLAD IN DEATH. I wish I could make you understand the joy religion is to some of us. It makes a man happy while he lives, and glad when he dies. With two feet upon a chair and bursting with drooping, I heard an old man in the poor house cry out: "Bless the Lord, oh, my soul!" I looked around and said: "What has this man got to thank God for?" It makes the lame man leap like the hart, and the dumb sing. They say that the old Puritan religion is a juiceless and joyless religion; but I remember reading of Dr. Goodwin, the celebrated Puritan, who in his last moments said: "Is this dying? Why, my bow abides in strength! I am swallowed up in God." "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Oh, you who have been trying to satisfy yourselves with the "south land" of this world, do you not feel that you would, this morning, like to have access to the nether springs of spiritual comfort? Would you not like to have Jesus Christ bend over your cradle and bless your table and heal your wounds, and strew flowers of consolation all up and down the graves of your dead?

This religion that can give sweetest pleasures while we live; This religion that can supply sweetest comfort when we die.

But I have something better to tell you, suggested by this text. It seems that old father Caleb on the wedding day of his daughter wanted to make her just as happy as possible. Though Othniel was taking her away, and his heart was almost broken because she was going, yet he gives her a "south land," not only that, but the nether springs; not only that, but the upper springs. O God, my Father, I thank thee that thou hast given me a "south land" in this world, and the nether springs of spiritual comfort in this world; but, more than all, I thank thee for the upper springs in heaven.

THE GLORIES OF HEAVEN. It is very fortunate we cannot see heaven until we get into it. Oh, Christian man, if you could see what a place it is, we would never get you back again to the office or store or shop, and the duties you ought to perform would go neglected. I am glad I shall not see that world until I enter it. Suppose we were allowed to go on an excursion into that good land with the idea of returning. When we got

there, and heard the song, and looked at their raptured faces, and mingled in the surly society, we would cry out: "Let us stay! We are coming here anyhow. Why take the trouble of going back again to that old world? We are here now; let us stay." And it would take angelic violence to put us out of that world, if once we got there. But as people who cannot afford to pay for an entertainment sometimes come around it and look through the door ajar, or through the openings in the fence, so we come and look through the crevices in that good land which God has provided for us. We can just catch a glimpse of it. We come near enough to hear the rumbering of the eternal orchestra, though not near enough to know who blows the cornet or who fingers the harp. My soul spreads out both wings and claps them in triumph at the thought of those upper springs. One of them breaks from beneath the throne; another breaks forth from beneath the altar of the temple; another at the door of "the house of many mansions." Upper springs of gladness! Upper springs of light! Upper springs of love! It is no fancy of mine. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to the living fountains of water." Oh, Saviour divine, roll in upon our souls one of those anticipated raptures! Pour around the roots of the parched tongue one drop of that liquid life! Toss before our vision those fountains of God, rainbowed with eternal victory. Hear it. They are never sick there; not so much as a headache, or twinge rheumatic, or thrust neuralgic. The inhabitant never says: "I am sick." They are never tired there. Flight to farthest world is only the play of a holiday. They never sin there. It is as easy for them to be holy as it is for us to sin. They never die there. You might go through all the outskirts of the great city and find not one place where the ground was broken for a grave. The eyesight of the redeemed is never blurred with tears. There is health in every cheek. There is spring in every foot. There is majesty on every brow. There is joy in every heart. There is hosanna on every lip. How they must pity us as they look over and down and see us, and say: "Poor things away down in that world." And when some Christian is hurled into a fatal accident, they cry: "Good! he is coming!" And when we stand around the couch of some loved one (whose strength is going away) and we shake our heads forbodingly, they cry: "I am glad he is going; he has been down there long enough. There, he is dead! Come home! Come home!" Oh, if we could only get our ideas about that future world untwisted our thought of transfer from here to there would be as pleasant to us as it was to a little child that was dying. She said: "Papa, when will I go home?" And he said: "Today, Florence." "Today! So soon? I am so glad!"

THE DAY OF DELIVERANCE IS COMING. I wish I could stimulate you with these thoughts, oh Christian man, to the highest possible exhilaration. The day of your deliverance is coming, is coming. It is rolling on with the shining wheels of the day, and the jet wheels of the night. Every thump of the heart is only a hammer stroke striking off another chain of clay. Better scour the deck and coil the rope, the harbor is only six miles away. Jesus will come down in the "Narrows" nearer than when you believed. Unforgotten man, unpardoned man, will you not today make a choice between these two portions, between the "south land" of this world, which slopes to the desert, and this glorious land which thy Father offers thee, running with eternal water courses? Why let your tongue be consumed with thirst when there are the nether springs and the upper springs, comfort here, and glory hereafter? Let me tell you, my dear brother, that the silliest and wickedest thing a man ever does is to reject Jesus Christ. The loss of the soul is a mistake that cannot be corrected. It is a downfall that knows no alleviation; it is a ruin that is remediless; it is a sickness that has no medication; it is a grave into which a man goes but never comes out. Therefore, putting my hand on your shoulder as one brother puts his hand on the shoulder of a brother, I say this day, be manly, and surrender your heart to Christ. You have been long enough serving the world; now begin to serve the Lord who bought you. You have tried long enough to carry these burdens; let Jesus Christ put his shoulder under your burden. Do I hear any one in the audience say: "I mean to attend to that after awhile; it is not just the time?" It is the time, for the simple reason that you are sure of no other; and God sends you here this morning, and he sent me here to confront you with this message; and you must hear now that Christ died to save your soul, and that if you want to be saved you may be saved. "Whosoever will, let him come." You will never find any more convenient season than this. Some of you have been waiting ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty and sixty years. On some of you the snow has fallen. I see it on your brow, and yet you have not attended to those duties which belong to the very springtime of life. It is September with you now, it is October with you, it is December with you. I am no alarmist. I simply know this: if a man does not repent in this world he never repents at all, and that now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation. Oh, put off this matter no longer. Do not turn your back on Jesus Christ who comes to save you, lest you should lose your soul. On Monday morning a friend of mine started from New York to celebrate her birthday with her daughter in Virginia. On Saturday of the same week, just after sunrise, I stood at the gate of Greenwood waiting for her silent form to come in. It is a long journey to take in one week—from New York to Philadelphia, from Philadelphia to Baltimore, from Baltimore to Washington, from Washington to Virginia, from Virginia into the great eternity. "What thy hand findeth to do, do it."

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