

THE WELL OF BETHLEHEM

DISCOURSE BY REV. DR. TALMAGE AT THE TABERNACLE.

The Gospel the Fountain of Perpetual Youth—Skeptics Measure Eternity with an Hour Glass and the Throne of God with a Yard Stick.

BROOKLYN, Nov. 27.—This morning at the Tabernacle, after explaining appropriate passages of Scripture, the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D.D., gave out the following hymn, that was sung by the congregation with great heartiness:

Duried in sorrow and in sin At hell's dark door we lay; But we arise by grace divine, To see a glorious day.

The subject of the sermon was "Thirst in a Tavern;" and the text: "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!"—II Samuel xxiii, 15.

War, always distressing, is especially ruinous in harvest time. When the crops are all ready for the sickle, to have them trodden down by cavalry horses and heavy supply trains gully the fields, is enough to make any man's heart sick. When the last great war broke out in Europe, and France and Germany were coming into horrid collision, I rode across their golden fields and saw the tents pitched, and the trenches dug in the very midst of the ripe fields, the long scythes of battle sharpening to mow down harvests of men in great winnows of the dead. It was at this season of the harvest that the army of the Philistines came down upon Bethlehem. Hark to the clamor of their voices, the neighing of their chargers, the blare of their trumpets, and the clash of their shields!

Let David and his men fall back! The Lord's host sometimes loses the day. But David knew where to hide. He had been brought up in that country. Boys are inquisitive and they know all about the region where they were born and brought up. If you should go back to the old homestead, you could, with your eyes shut, find your way to the meadow, or the orchard, or the hill back of the house, with which you were familiar thirty or forty years ago. So David knew the cave of Adullam. Perhaps, in his boyhood days, he had played "hide and seek" with his comrades all about the old cave; and though others might not have known it, David did. Travelers say there is only one way of getting into that cave, and that is by a very narrow path; but David was stout, and steady headed, and steady as a rock, and so, with his three brave staff officers, he goes along that path, finds his way into the cave, sits down, looks around at the roof and the dark passages of the mountain, feels very weary with the forced march, and water he must have, or die. I do not know but there may have been drops trickling down the side of the cavern, or that there may have been some water in the goatskin slung to his girdle; but that was not what he wanted. He wanted a deep, full, cold drink, such as a man gets only out of an old well with moss covered bucket. David remembered that very near that cave of Adullam there was such a well as that, a well to which he used to go in boyhood—the well of Bethlehem; and he almost imagines that he can hear the liquid splash of that well, and his parched tongue moves through his hot lips as he says: "Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!"

It was no sooner said than done. The three brave staff officers bound to their feet and start. Brave soldiers will take even a hint from their commander. But between them and the well by the head of the Philistines; and what could three men do with a great army? Yet where there is a will there is a way, and, with their swords slashing this way and that, they make their path to the well. While the Philistines are amazed at the seeming foolhardiness of these three men, and cannot make up their minds exactly what it means, the three men have come to the well. They drop the bucket. They bring up the water. They pour it in the pail, and then start for the cave. "Stop them!" cry the Philistines. "Clip them with your swords! Stab them with your spears! Stop those three men! Too late! They have got around the hill. The hot rocks are splashed with the overflowing water from the vessel as it is carried up the cliffs. The three men go along the dangerous path, and with cheeks flushed with the excitement, and all out of breath in their haste, they sling their swords, red with the skirmish, to the side of the cave, and cry out to David, "There, captain of the host, is what you wanted, a drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate."

A text is of no use to me unless I can find Christ in it, and unless I can bring a gospel out of these words that will arouse and comfort and bless. I shall wish I had never seen them; for your time would be wasted, and against my soul the dark record would be made that this day I stood before a great audience of sinning, suffering and dying men, and told them of no rescue. By the cross of the Son of God, by the throne of the eternal judgment, that shall not be! May the Lord Jesus help me to tell you the truth to-day!

You know that carrier pigeons have sometimes letters tied under the wing, and they fly hundreds of miles—100 miles in an hour—carrying a message. So I have thought I would like to have it now. Oh, heavenly Dove! bring under thy wing today, to my soul and to the souls of this people, some message of light, and love, and peace!

It is not an unusual thing to see people gather around a well in summer time. The husbandman puts down his cradle at the well curb; the builder puts down his trowel; the traveler puts down his pack. Then one draws the water for all the rest, himself taking the very last. The cup is passed around, and the first of thirst are put out; the traveler starts on his journey, and the workman takes up his burden.

My friends, we come today around the Gospel well. We put down our pack of burdens and our implements of toil. One man must draw the water for those who have gathered around the well. I will try and draw the water today; and if, after I have poured out from this living fountain for your soul, I just taste of it myself, you will not begrudge me a

"drink from the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate."

"I, God be for us, who can be against us?" "If God spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" "For I am persuaded that neither height, nor depth, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come," shall take from us into final captivity the Gospel of my blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, the Gospel well, like the one spoken of in my text, is a well at the gate. The traveler stops the camel today, and gets down and dips out of the valley of the east some very beautiful, clear, bright water, and that is out of the very well that David longed for. Do you know that that well was at the gate so that nobody could go into Bethlehem without going right past it? And so it is with this Gospel well—it is at the gate. It is, in the first place, at the gate of purification. We cannot wash away our sins unless with that water. I take the responsibility of saying that there is no man, woman or child in this house today that has escaped sinful defilement. Do you say it is outrageous and ungentle for me to make such a charge? Do you say, "I have never stolen—I have never blasphemed—I have never committed unchastity—I have never been guilty of murder?" I reply, you have committed a sin worse than blasphemy, worse than unchastity, worse than theft, worse than murder. We have all committed it. We have by our sin re-crucified the Lord, and that is decide. And if there be any who dare to plead "not guilty" to the indictment, then the hosts of heaven will be impeached as a jury to render a unanimous verdict against you, guilty one, guilty all. With what a slashing stroke that one passage cuts us away from all our pretensions: "There is none that doeth good—no, not one." "Oh," says some one, "all we want, all the race wants, is development." Now I want to tell you that the race develops without the Gospel into a Sodom, a Five Points, a great Salt Lake City. It always develops downward, and never upward, except as the grace of God lays hold of it. What, then, is to become of our soul without Christ? Banishment. Disaster. But I bless my Lord Jesus Christ that there is a well at the gate of purification. For great sin, great pardon. For eighty years of transgression, an eternity of forgiveness. For crime deep as hell, an atonement high as heaven; that where sin abounded, so grace may much more abound; that as sin reigned unto death, even so may grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Angel of the Conenant, dip thy wing in this living fountain today, and wave it over this solemn assemblage, that our souls may be washed in "the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate."

Further, I remark that this well of the Gospel is at the gate of comfort. Do you remember the words of the text? He was in the cave of Adullam. That is where some of you are now. Has the world always gone smoothly with you? Has it never pursued you with slander? Is your health always good? Have your fortunes never perished? Are your children all alive and well? Is there one dead lamb in the fold? Are you ignorant of the way to the cemetery? Have you ever heard the bell toll when it seemed as if every stroke of the iron clapper beat your heart? Are the skies bright when you look up at them as they used to be when other eyes, now closed, used to look into them? Is there some trunk or drawer in your house that you go to only on anniversary days, when there comes beating against your soul the surf of a great ocean of agony? Is the cave of Adullam. The cave of Adullam! Is there some David here whose fatherly heart wayward Absalom has broken? Is there some Abraham here who is lonely because Sarah is dead in the family plot of Machpelah? After a lonely life, you look up at the sky, how hard it was for them to part. Why not have two seats in the Lord's chariot, so that both the old folks might have gone up at once? My aged mother, in her last moment, said to my father, "Father, wouldn't it be nice if we could both go together?" No, no, no. We must part. And there are wounded hearts here today. The world cannot comfort you. What can it bring you? Nothing. Nothing. The salve they try to put on your wounds will not stick. They cannot, with their bungling surgery, mend the broken bones.

Zoppar the Naamathite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Eliphaz the Temanite, come in and talk, and talk, and talk, but miserable comforters are they all. They cannot give you light into the cave of Adullam. They cannot bring a single draught of water from "the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate." But glory be to Jesus Christ, there is comfort at the gate! There is life in the well at the gate. If you give me time, I will draw up a promise for every man, woman and child in this house. Aye, I will do it in two minutes. I will lay hold of the rope of the old well. What is your trouble? "Oh," you say, "I am so sick, so weary of life—ailments after ailments." I will draw up a promise: "The inhabitants shall never say, 'I am sick.'" What is your trouble? "Oh, it is loss of friends—bereavement," you say. I will draw you up a promise, fresh and cool, out of the well: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." What is your trouble? You say it is the intimacies of old age. I will draw you up a promise: "Down to old age I am with thee, to hoary hairs will I carry thee." What is your trouble? "Oh," you say, "I have a widowed soul, and my children cry for bread." I bring up this promise: "Leave thy fatherless children. I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me." I break through the armed ranks of your sorrows today, and bring to your parched lips "a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate."

Again, the Gospel well is at the gate of heaven. I have not heard yet one single intelligent account of the future world from anybody who does not believe in the Bible. They throw such a fog about the subject that I do not want to go to the skeptic's heaven, to the transcendentalist's heaven, to the worldly philosopher's heaven. I would not exchange the poorest room in your house for the finest heaven that Huxley or Stuart Mill or Darwin ever dreamed of.

Their heaven has no Christ in it, and a heaven without Christ, though you could sweep the whole universe into it, would be a hell! Oh, they tell us there are no songs there, there are no coronations in heaven—that is all imagination. They tell us we will do there about what we do here, only on a larger scale—geometrize with clearer intellect, and with alpenstock go clambering up over the icebergs in an eternal vacation. Rather than that, I turn to my Bible, and I find John's picture of that good land, that heaven which was your lullaby in infancy, that heaven which our children in the Sabbath school will sing about this afternoon—that heaven which has a "well at the gate."

After you have been on a long journey, and you come in all bedusted and tired to your home, the first thing you want is refreshing alibution; and I am glad to know that after we get through the pilgrimage of this world—the hard, dusty pilgrimage—we will find a well at the gate. In that one wash away will go our sins and sorrows. I do not care whether cherubs or seraph or my own departed friends in that blessed land place to my lips the cup; the touch of that cup will be life, will be heaven! I was reading of how the ancients sought for the fountain of perpetual youth. They thought if they could only find and drink out of that well the old would become young again, the sick would be cured, and everybody would have eternal juvenescence. Of course, they could not find it. Eureka! I have found it!—"the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate."

I think we had better make a bargain with those who leave us, going out of this world from time to time, as to where we will meet them. Travelers parting appoint a place of meeting. They say, "We will meet at Rome, or we will meet at Stockholm, or Vienna, or Jerusalem, or Bethlehem." Now, when we come to stand by the death pillow of those who are leaving us for the far land, do not let us weep as though we would never see them again, but let us, there standing, appoint a place where we will meet. Where shall it be? Shall it be on the banks of the river? No. The banks are too long. Shall it be in the temple? No, no. There is such a host there—ten thousand times ten thousand. Where shall we meet our loved ones? Let us make an appointment to meet at the well by the gate. Oh, heaven! Sweet heaven! Dear heaven! Heaven, where our good friends are! Heaven, where Jesus is! Heaven! Heaven!

But while I stand here there comes a revulsion of feeling when I look into your eyes and know there are souls here dying of thirst, notwithstanding the well at the gate. Between them and the well of heaven there is a great army of sin; and though Christ is ready to clear a way to that well for them, they will not have his love or intercession.

But I am glad to know that you may come yet. The well is here—the well of heaven. Come; I do not care how feeble you are. Let me take hold of your arm, and steady you up to the well curb. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come." I would rather win one soul to Christ this morning than wear the crown of the world's dominion. Do not let any man go away and say I did not invite him. Oh, if you could only just look at my Lord once; if you could just see him full in the face; if you could only do as that woman did whom I read about at the beginning of the services—just come up behind him and touch his feet—methinks you would live. In northern New Jersey one winter, three little children wandered off from home in a snow storm. Night came on. Father and mother said, "Where are the children?" They could not be found. They started out in haste, and the news ran to the neighbors, and before morning it was said that there were hundreds of men hunting the mountains for those three children, but found them not. After a while a man imagined there was a place that he had been looking at and he went and saw the three children. He examined their bodies. He found that the elder boy had taken off his coat and wrapped it around the younger one, the baby, and then taken off his vest and put it around the other one; and there they all died, he probably the first, for he had no coat or vest. Oh, it was a touching scene when that was brought to light! I was on the ground a little while after, and it brought the whole scene to my mind; and I thought to myself of a more melting scene than that. It is that Jesus, our elder brother, took off the robe of royalty, and laid aside the last garment of earthly comfort, that he might wrap our poor souls from the blast. Oh, the height, and the depth, and the length and the breadth of the love of Christ!

Almost as bad as a Fire. In the Leipzig Stadt theatre there is an enormous cistern that overhangs the stage, from which an alarming quantity of water can be flooded down on the boards at the shortest warning. The knowledge of this provision has hitherto been a great source of comfort to the actors. They were not, however, prepared for an impromptu that occurred several weeks ago. Without a moment's warning, and in the presence of stalls, pit and curtain, nearly the whole company was soundly drenched. They had to make a very hasty retreat from the stage, to drop the curtain and to get their clothes dried before they could again "go on." The audience seemed immensely amused, and no "demoralizing panic" has to be recorded.—Chicago Herald.

Death of an Investigator. The chemists of the world have been called upon to mourn the recent death of one of their most celebrated investigators. I refer to Gustav Robert Kirchhoff. He was the discoverer of spectrum analysis, by means of which astronomers have been enabled to determine the composition of the sun and other heavenly bodies. It is today the most delicate means of chemical analysis. Some idea of its precision can be formed when I tell you that it will detect about a 200,000,000th part of a grain of sodium salt, or a 6,000,000th part of a grain of lithium salt. It has enabled chemists to discover several new elements and to prove that some substances formerly supposed to be elements are compounds. The name of Kirchhoff will long be remembered.—Chemist in Globe-Democrat.

CHEAP BOOTS & SHOES

The same quality of goods 10 percent cheaper than any house west of the Mississippi. Will never be undersold. Call and be convinced.

ALSO REPAIRING PETER MERGES.

THE FURNITURE EMPORIUM

PARLOR SET! BEDROOM SET!



FURNITURE

Parlors, Bedrooms, Dining-rooms.

Kitchens, Hallways and Offices.

HENRY BOECK'S

Where a magnificent stock of Goods and Fair Prices abound.

UNDER TAKING AND EMBALMING A SPECIALTY HENRY BOECK,

CORNER MAIN AND SIXTH PLATTSMOUTH, NEBRASKA

F. G. FRICKE & CO.,

Will keep constantly on hand a full and complete stock of pure

Drugs and Medicines, Paints, Oils

Wall Paper and a Full Line of DRUGGIST'S SUNDRIES

PURE LIQUORS.

E. G. Dovey & Son. E. G. Dovey & Son.

Fall and Winter Goods.

We take pleasure in saying that we have the fullest and Handsomest line of

Fall and Winter Goods

Ever brought to this Market

and shall be pleased to show you a

Superb Line

Wool Dress Goods, and Trimmings,

Hoisery and Underwear, Blankets and Comforters.

A splendid assortment of Ladies' Misses' and Childrens

CLOAKS, WRAPS AND JERSEYS.

We have also added to our line of carpets some new patterns,

Floor Oil Cloths, Mats and Rugs.

In men's heavy and fine boots and shoes, also in Ladies', Misses and Childrens Footgear, we have a complete line to which we INVITE your inspection. All departments Full and Complete.

E. G. Dovey & Son.