

WIFELY AMBITION.

DR. TALMAGE'S SIXTH SERMON TO THE WOMEN OF AMERICA.

Wives of America Use Your Influence for God and Home—Remember the Story of Jezebel and Ahab and Give Not Bad Advice to Your Husbands.

BROOKLYN, Feb. 12.—In the Tabernacle this morning the Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage, D. D., preached the sixth of his series of "Sermons to women of America, with important hints for men." The subject was "Wifely Ambition, Good and Bad," and the text was from I Kings, xxi, 7: "Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth." Dr. Talmage said:

One day King Ahab, looking out of the window of his palace at Jezreel, said to his wife Jezebel: "We ought to have these royal gardens enlarged. If we could only get that fellow, Naboth, who owns that vineyard out there, to trade or sell, we could make it a kitchen garden for our palace."

"Naboth in Naboth," says the king to one of his servants. The plain gardener, wondering why he should be called into the presence of his master's wife, comes in a little downcast in his mood, and with very obsequious manner bows to the king.

"The king says," Naboth, "I want to trade vineyards with you. I want your vineyard for my kitchen garden, and I will give you a great deal better vineyard in place of it, or, if you prefer money for it, I will give you cash."

"Oh, no," says Naboth, "I cannot trade off my little piece, more than I sell it. It is the old homestead. I got it of my father and he of his father, and I cannot let the old place go out of my hands."

In a great state of indignation King Ahab went into the house and flung himself on the bed and turned his face to the wall in a great pain.

His wife Jezebel comes in and she says: "What is the matter with you? Are you sick?"

"Oh," he says, "I feel very blue. I have had my heart on getting that kitchen garden, and Jezebel will neither trade or sell, and it is the dearest to me. I cannot give it more than I can stand."

"Oh, please," says Jezebel, "don't go on that way. Let us put up our dinner and do something. I will get for you two kitchen gardens."

Then Jezebel borrowed her husband's signet or seal, for then, as now, in those lands kings never signed their names, but had a ring with the royal name engraved on it, and that impressed on a royal letter or document was the signature. She stamped her husband's name on a proclamation which resulted in getting Naboth tried for treason against the king, and two perjured witnesses swore their souls away with the life of Naboth, and he was stoned to death and his property came to the crown, and so Jezebel got her husband and herself the kitchen garden.

But while the wild street dogs were roving the dead body of poor Naboth, Elijah, the prophet, tells them of other crimes that will after a while have a free banquet, saying: "Whoso does lick the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."

And, sure enough, three years after, Ahab, wounded in battle, his chariot ripping with the carriage, dogs stood under it lapping his life's blood. And a little afterward his wife, Jezebel, who had been his chief adviser in crime, stands at her palace window and sees Jehu, the enemy, approaching to take possession of the palace. And, to make herself look as attractive as possible and queenly to the very last, she decorated her person, and according to Oriental custom, closed her eyes and ran a brush dipped in blue powder along the long eyelashes, and then from the window she glared her indignation upon Jehu.

As he rode to the gate in his chariot he shouted to his slaves in her room: "Throw her down!" But to doubt the slaves lacked a moment from such work of assassination, you know Queen Jezebel could be no more to them and the conqueror Jehu would be everything as he shouted again: "Throw her down!" they seized her and here her struggling and causing to see the window casement, and hurled her forth till she came tumbling to the earth, stiller it just in time to let Jehu's horses trample her and the chariot wheels roll over her. While Jehu is indeed the robbers feeding himself after the excitement he orders his servants to go out and bury the dead queen. But the wild street dogs had for the third time appeared on the scene, and they had removed all her body except those parts which in all ages dogs are by a strange instinct or brutal superstition kept from touching after death—the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet.

All this appalling scene of ancient history was the result of a wife's bad advice to a husband, of a wife's struggle to advance her husband's interests by unlawful means. Ahab and Jezebel got the kitchen garden of Naboth, but the dogs got them. The trouble all began when this Naboth's wife crossed her husband out of his path by the words of the text: "Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth."

The influence suggested by this subject is an influence you never before heard discoursed on, and may never hear again, but a most potent and semi-omnipotent influence, and decides the course of individuals, families, nations, centuries and eternities. I speak of wifely ambition, good and bad. How important that every wife have her ambition, an elevated, righteous and divinely approved ambition.

And here let me say what I am most anxious for is that woman, not waiting for the rights denied her or postponed, promptly and decisively employ the rights she already has in possession. Some say she will be in fair way to get all her rights when she gets the right to the ballot box. I wish that the experiment might be tried and settled. I would like to see all women vote and then watch the result. I do not know that it would change anything for the better. Most wives and daughters and sisters would vote as their husbands and fathers and brothers voted. Nearly all the families that I know are solidly Republican or

Democratic or Prohibition. Those families all voting would make more votes but no difference in the result. Besides that, as now at the polls men are bought up by the thousands, women would be bought up by the thousands. The more voters the more opportunity for political corruption. We have several million more voters now than are for public good.

We are told that female suffrage would correct two evils—the rum business and the insufficiency of woman's wages. About the rum business I have to say that multitudes of women drink, and it is no unusual thing to see them in the restaurants so overpowered with wine and beer that they can hardly sit up, while there are many so-called respectable restaurants where they can go and take their champagne and hot toddy all alone. Mighty temperance voters these women would make! Besides that, the wives of the rum sellers would have to vote in the interest of their husband's business, or have a time the inverse of felicitous.

Besides that, millions of respectable and refined women in America would probably not vote at all, because they do not want to go to the polls, and, on the other hand, womanly roughs would all go to the polls, and that might make woman's vote on the wrong side. There is not in my mind much prospect of the expulsion of drunkenness by female suffrage.

As to woman's wages to be corrected by woman's vote, I have not much faith in that. Women are harder on women than men are. Masculine employers are mean enough in treatment of women, but if you want to hear beating down of prices and wages in perfection, listen how some women treat washerwomen and dressmakers and female servants. Mrs. Shylock is more merciful than Mr. Shylock. Women, I fear, will never get righteous wages through woman's vote; and as to unfortunate womanhood, women are far more cruel and unfeeling than men are. After a woman has made shipwreck of her character men generally drop her, but women do not so much drop her as hurt her with the force of a catapult clear out and off and down and under.

I have not much faith that woman will ever get merciful consideration and justice through woman suffrage, yet I like experiments, and some of my friends in whose judgment I have confidence are so certain that alleviation would come by such process that I would, if I had the power, put in every woman's hand the vote. I cannot see what right you have to make a woman pay taxes on her property to help support city, state and national government, and yet deny her the opportunity of helping decide who shall be mayor, governor or president. But let every wife, not waiting for the vote she may never get, or getting it, find it outbalanced by some other vote not fit to be cast, arise now in the night of the eternal God and wield the power of a sanctified wifely ambition for a good approximating the infinite.

No one can so inspire a man to noble purposes as a noble woman, and no one so thoroughly degrade a man as a wife of unworthy tendencies. While in my text we have illustration of wifely ambition employed in the wrong direction, society and history are full of instances of wifely ambition gloriously triumphant in right directions. All that was worth admiration in the character of Henry VI was a reflection of the heroics of his wife Margaret. William, Prince of Orange, was restored to the right path by the grand qualities of his wife Mary. Justinian, the Roman emperor, confesses that his wise laws were the suggestion of his wife Theodora. Andrew Jackson, the warrior and president, had his mightiest re-enforcement in his plain wife, whose inartistic attire was the amusement of the elegant circles in which she was invited. Washington, who broke the chain that held America in foreign vassalage, wore for forty years a chain around his own neck, that chain holding the miniature likeness of her who had been his greatest inspiration, whether among the snows at Valley Forge or amid the honors of the presidential chair. Eliza's pen was driven through all its poetic and historical dimensions by his wife Calphurnia, who sang his stanzas to the sound of the flute, and sat among audiences enraptured at her husband's genius, herself the most enraptured. Pericles said he got all his eloquence and statesmanship from his wife. When the wife of Grotius rescued him from long imprisonment at Lovstein by means of a bookcase that went in and out, carrying his books to and fro, he one day transported, hidden amid the folios, and the women of besieged Weinsberg, getting permission from the victorious army to take with them so much of their valuables as they could carry, under cover of the promise shouldered and took with them as the most important valuables their husbands—both achievements in a literal way illustrated what thousands of times has been done in a figurative way, that wifely ambition has been the salvation of men.

De Tocqueville, whose writings will be potential and quoted while the world lasts, ascribes his successes to his wife, and says: "Of all the blessings which God has given to me the greatest of all in my eyes is to have lighted on Maria Motley." Martin Luther says of his wife: "I would not exchange my poverty with her for all the riches of Croesus without her." Isabella of Spain, by her superior faith in Columbus, put into the hand of Ferdinand, her husband, America. John Adams, president of the United States, said of his wife: "She never by word or look discouraged me from running all hazards for the salvation of my country's liberties. Thomas Carlyle spent the last twenty years of his life in trying by his pen to atone for the fact that during his wife's life he never appreciated her influence on his career and destiny. Alas! that, having taken her from a beautiful home and a brilliant career, he should have buried her in the home of a recluse and scolded her in such language as only a dyspeptic genius could manage, until one day while in her invalidism, riding in Hyde park, her pet dog got run over, and under the excitement the coachman found her dead. Then the literary giant woke from his conjugal injustice and wrote the lamentations of Craigen-Puttock and Cheyne row. The elegant and fulsome epitaphs that husbands put upon their wives' tombstones are often an attempt to make up for the lack of appreciative words that should have been uttered in the ears of the living. A whole

Greenwood of monumental inscriptions will not do a wife so much good after she has quiet the world, as one plain sentence like that which Tom Hood wrote to his living wife, when he said: "I never was anything till I knew you."

Oh, woman, what is your wifely ambition, noble or ignoble? Is it high social position? That will then probably direct your husband, and he will climb and scramble and slip and fall and rise and tumble, and on what level or in what depth or on what height he will after a while be found I cannot even guess. The contest for social position is the most unsatisfactory contest in all the world, because it is so uncertain about your getting it, and so insecure a possession after you have obtained it, and so unsatisfactory even if you keep it. The whisk of a lady's fan may blow it out. The growl of one bear or the howling of one bill on Wall street may scatter it.

Is the wife's ambition the political preferment of her husband? Then that will probably direct him. What a God forsaken realm is American politics those best know who have dabbled in them. After they have assessed a man who is a candidate for office, which he does not get, or assessed him for some office attained, and he has been whirled round and round and round and round among the drinking, smoking, swearing crowd who often get control of public affairs, all that is left of his self respect or moral stamina would find plenty of room on a geometrical point, which is said to have neither length, breadth or thickness. Many a wife has not been satisfied till her husband went into politics, but would afterwards have given all she possessed to get him out.

I knew a highly moral man, useful in the church and possessor of a bright home. He had a useful and prosperous business, but his wife did not think it gentle enough. There were odors about the business and sometimes they would adhere to his garments when he returned at night. She insisted on his doing something more elegant, although he was qualified for no business except that in which he was engaged. To please her he changed his business, and in order to get on faster abandoned church attendance, saying after he had made a certain number of hundreds of thousands of dollars he would return to the church and its services. Where is that family today? Obliterated. Although succeeding in business for which he was qualified, he undertook a style of merchandise for which he had no qualification, and soon went into bankruptcy. His new style of business put him into evil association. He lost his morals as well as his money. He broke up not only his own home, but broke up another man's home; and, from being a kind, pure, generous, moral man as any of you who sit here today, has become a homeless, penniless libertine. His wife's ambition for a more genteel business destroyed him and disgraced her, and lighted their only child.

But suppose now there be in our homes, as thank God there are in hundreds of homes here represented, on the wifely throne one who says not only by her words, but more powerfully by her actions: "My husband, our destinies are united; let us see where industry, honesty, common sense and faith in God will put us. I am with you in all your enterprises. I cannot be with you in person as you go to your daily business, but I will be with you in my prayers. Let us see what we can achieve by having God in our hearts, and God in our lives, and God in our homes. Be on the side of everything good. Go ahead and do your best, and though everything should turn out different from what we have calculated, you may always count on two who are going to help you, and God is one and I am the other." That man may have feeble health, and may meet with many obstacles and business trials, but he is coming gloriously through, for he is re-enforced, and inspired, and spurred on by a woman's voice, as much as was Barak by Deborah, when Sisera with nine hundred iron chariots came to crush him and his army, and Deborah shouted in the ear of Barak: "Up! for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hands." And the enemy fell back, and Sisera's chariot, not getting along fast enough in the retreat, the general jumped out and took it afoot, and ran till he came to a place where a woman first gave him a drink of milk and then sent a spike through his skull, nailing him to the floor.

Some of us could tell of what influence upon us has been a wifely ambition consecrated to righteousness. As my wife is out of town and will not shake her head because I say it in public, I will state that in my own professional life I have often been called of God, as I thought, to run into the very teeth of public opinion, and all outsiders with whom I advised told me I had better not, it would ruin me and ruin my church, and at the same time I was receiving nice little letters threatening me with dirk and pistol and poison if I persisted in attacking certain evils of the day, until the commissioner of police considered it his duty to take his place in our Sabbath services, with forty officers scattered through the house for the preservation of order; but in my home there has always been one voice to say: "Go ahead and diverge not an inch from the straight line. Who cares if only God is on our side?" And though sometimes it seemed as if I was going out against 900 iron chariots, I went ahead, cheered by the domestic voice: "Up! for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hands."

A man is no better than his wife will let him be. Oh, wives of America, swing your scepters of wifely influence for God and good homes! Do not urge your husbands to annex Naboth's vineyard to your palace of success, whether right or wrong, lest the dogs that come out to destroy Naboth come out also to devour you. Righteousness will pay best in life, will pay best in death, will pay best in the judgment, will pay best through all eternity.

In our effort to have the mother of every household appreciate her influence over her children, we are apt to forget the wife's influence over the husband. In many households the influence upon the husband is the only home influence. In a great multitude of the best and most important and most talented families of the earth, there have been no descend-

ants. There is not a child or a grandchild or any remote descendant of Washington or Charles Sumner or Shakespeare or Edmund Burke or Pitt or Lord Nelson or Cawper or Pope or Addison or Johnson or Lord Chatham or Grant or Isaac Newton or Goldsmith or Swift or Locke or Gibbon or Walpole or Canning or Dryden or More or Chaucer or Lord Byron or Walter Scott or Oliver Cromwell or Garrick or Hogarth or Joshua Reynolds or Spencer or Lord Bacon or Macaulay. Multitudes of the finest families of the earth are extinct. As though they had done enough for the world by their genius or wit or patriotism or invention or consecration, God withdrew them. In multitudes of cases all woman's opportunity for usefulness is with her contemporaries. How important that it be an improved opportunity!

While the French warriors, on their way to Rheims, had about concluded to give up attacking the castle at Troyes, because it was so heavily garrisoned, Joan of Arc entered the room and told them they would be inside the castle in three days. "We would willingly wait six days," said one of the leaders. "Six!" she cried out, "you shall be in it to-morrow," and under her leadership on the morrow they entered. On a smaller scale every man has garrisons to subside and obstacles to level, and every wife may be an inspired Joan of Arc to her husband.

What a noble, wifely ambition, the determination, God helping, to accompany her companion across the stormy sea of this life and together gain the wharf of the Celestial City! Coax him along with you! You cannot coax him there, but you can coax him there. That is God's plan. He coaxes us all the way—coaxes us out of our sins, coaxes us to accept pardon, coaxes us to heaven. If we reach that blessed place it will be through a prolonged and divine coaxing. By the same process take your companion, and then you will get there as well, and all your household. Do just the opposite to your neighbor. Her wifely ambition is all for this world, and a disappointed and vexed and unhappy creature she will be all the way. Her residence may be better than yours for the few years of earthly life, but she will move out of it as to her body into a house about five and a half feet long and about three feet wide and two feet high, and concerning her soul's destiny you can make your own prognostication. Her husband and five sons and daughters, who all, like her, live for this world, will have about the same destiny for the body and the soul. You, having had a sanctified and divinely enabled wifely ambition, will pass up into palace, and what becomes of your body is of no importance, for it is only a scaffolding, pulled down now that your temple is done. You will stand in the everlasting rest and see your husband come in, and see your children come in, if they have not preceded you. Glorified Christian wife! pick up your own you choose from out the king's footstool and wear it; it was promised you long ago, and with it cover up all the scars of your earthly conflict.

Sixteen miles from Petersburg, Russia, was one of the royal palaces, and there one night Catherine, the empress, entertained Prince Henry. It was several winter and deep snow, and the empress and the prince rode in a magnificence of sleigh and robe and canopy never surpassed, followed by two thousand glebe's laden with the first people of Russia, the whole length of the distance flanked by lamps and dazzling temple built for that one night, and imitations of mosques and Egyptian pyramids; and people of all nations, in all styles of costume, standing on platforms along the way and watching the blaze of the pyrotechnics. At the palace the luxuries of kingdoms were gathered and spread, and at the table the guests had but to touch the center of a plate, and by magical machinery it dropped and another plate came up loaded with still richer viands. But all that scene of the long ago shall be eclipsed by the greater splendors that will be gathered at the banquet made by the Heavenly King for those consecrated women who come in out of the winter and snows of their earthly existence into the warm and illumined palace of heaven. With the king himself and all the potentates, yourself robed and crowned, you will sit at a table compared with which all the feasts at Kenilworth, and St. Cloud, and the Alhambra, were a beggar's crust. And the platter of one royal satisfaction touched at the center shall disappear only to make room for a beggar's crust, and the golden plate of one royal satisfaction, touched at the center, shall disappear only to make room for the coming up of some richer and grander regalement.

Privileges of Parsee Ladies. The Parsees are the only Asiatics in India, except native Christians, who allow their ladies to move freely in society. Elsewhere well bred women are shut up in zenanas and harems; and no foreigner ever sees them. But he sees and admires Parsee ladies, who are noted for their good looks and graceful manners, and dress with admirable taste. They are now coming forward to display their cleverness as well as their beauty. Miss Sorabji has taken her degree in the Bombay university, her name appearing in the first class. One or two Parsee ladies have taken degrees at the Calcutta university; and the Maharata lady Kundika Rana Bai has won distinction as a Sanscrit scholar.—Home Journal.

Utilizing Cigar Stubs. There is a society at Berlin, Germany, whose members collect the points and stumps of cigars, which they sell to tobacco factories. With the proceeds they buy Christmas gifts for poor children. This year the society was able to give to ten orphan boys 33 each, and to prepare for forty-five orphan girls a regular Christmas tree, with a plate full of apples, nuts and cakes, a good pair of boots, a woolen dress, a chemise, a pair of woolen stockings and a warm shawl for each.—Chicago News.

Indiscriminate Charity. Free soup has been a source of trouble in New York, and is no longer provided for the poor. It was found to bring tramps to the city and to aid the undeserving poor, as in all indiscriminate charity giving.—Chicago Herald.

The Plattsmouth Herald Is enjoying a Boom in both its DAILY AND WEEKLY EDITIONS.

The Year 1888

Will be one during which the subjects of national interest and importance will be strongly agitated and the election of a President will take place. The people of Cass County who would like to learn of Political, Commercial and Social Transactions

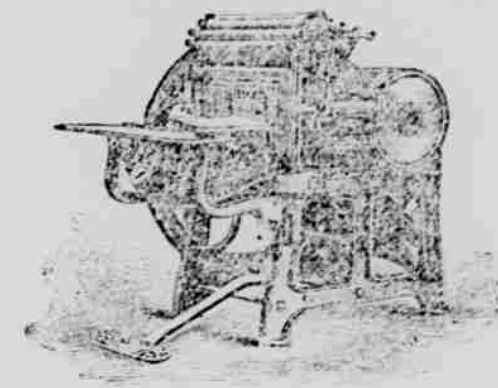
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