

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

Cheer for the Disheartened.

"No man cared for my soul."—PSALM 124: 4.

DAVID, the rubicund lad, had become the battle-worn warrior. Three thousand armed men in pursuit of him, he had hidden in the cave of Engedi, near the coast of the Dead Sea. Utterly fagged out with the pursuit, as you have often been out with the trials of life, he sat down and cried out, "No man cared for my soul."

If you should fall through a hatchway, or slip from a scaffolding, or drop through a skylight, there would be hundreds of people who would come around and pick up your body and carry it to the home or to the hospital. I saw a great crowd of people in the street, and I asked, "What is the matter?" and I found out that a poor laboring man had fallen under a street lamp and all our eyes were fixed with tears at the thought of his distracted wife and his desolated home. We are all sympathetic with physical disaster, but how

LITTLE SYMPATHY FOR SPIRITUAL WOE!

There are men in this house who have come to him who have never yet been once personally accosted about their eternal welfare. A great sermon dropped into an audience of hundreds of thousands will do its work; but if this world is ever to be brought to God, it will be through little sermons preached to private Christians to an audience of one. The sister's letter postmarked at the village; the word uttered in your hearing, half of smiles and half of tears; the religious postscript to a business letter; the card left at the door when you had some kind of trouble; the anxious look of some one across a church aisle while an earnest sermon was being preached, swung you into the kingdom of God.

But there are hundreds of people in this house who will take the word that David used in the past tense and employ it in the present tense, and cry out, "No man cares for my soul." You feel as you go out day by day in the tug and jostle of life that it is

EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF.

You can endure the pressure of commercial affairs and would consider it almost impertinent for any one to ask you whether you are making or losing money. But there have been times when you would have drawn your cheque for thousands of dollars if some one would only help your soul out of its perplexities. There are questions about your higher destiny that ache, and distract, and agonize you at times. Let no one suppose that because you are busy all day with hardware, or dry-goods, or groceries, or grain, that your thoughts are no longer than your yard-stick, and stop at the brass-headed nails of the store counter. When you speak once about religious things you think a thousand times. They call you a worldlying; you are

NOT A WORLDLING.

Of course you are industrious and kept busy, but you have had your eyes opened to the realities of the next world. You are not a fool. You know better than any one most will wind up your earthly engagements, and that you will take residence in a distant sphere where all your business adroitness would be a superfluity. You sometimes think till your head aches about great religious subjects. You go down the street with your eyes fixed on the pavement, oblivious of the passing multitudes, your thoughts gone on an eternal expedition. You wonder if the Bible is true; how much of it is literal and how much is figurative; how if Christ be God; if there is anything like retribution will ever take place; what the occupation of your departed kindred is; what you will be ten thousand years from now. With a cultured placidity of countenance you are on fire with agitations of soul. Oh anxiety

SOLITARY ANXIETY

of your whole lifetime! You have sold goods to or bought them from Christian people for ten years, and they have never whispered one word of spiritual counsel. You have passed up and down the aisles of churches with men who knew that you had no hope of heaven, and talked about the weather, and about everything but that concerning which you most wanted to hear them speak—namely, your everlasting spirit. Times without number you have felt in your heart, if you have not uttered it with your lips, "No man cares for my soul."

There have been times when you were especially pliable on the great subject of religion. It was so, for instance after you had lost your property. You had a great many letters blowing you up for being unfortunate. You showed that there had been a concatenation of circumstances, and that your insolvency was no fault of yours. Your creditors talked to you as though they would have a hundred cents on a dollar or your life. Protest after protest tumbled in on your desk. Men who used to take your hand with both of theirs and shake it violently, now pass you on the street with an almost imperceptible nod. After six or eight hours of scalding business anxiety you go home, and you shut the door and throw yourself on the sofa, and you feel in a state of despair. You wish that some one would come in and break up the gloom. Everything seems to be against you. The bank against you. Your creditors against you. Your friends, suddenly become critical, against you. All the past against you. All the future against you. You make reproachful outcry, "No man cares for my soul."

There was another occasion when all the doors of your heart swung

OPEN FOR SACRED INFLUENCES.

A bright light went out in your household. Within three or four days there were compressed sickness, death obsequies. You were so lonely that a hundred people coming into the house did not break up the solitariness. You were almost killed with the domestic calamity. A few formal, perfunctory words of consolation were uttered on the stairs before you went to the grave; but you wanted some one to come and

talk over the whole matter, and recite the alleviations, and decipher the lessons of the dark bereavement. No one came. Many a time you could not sleep until two or three o'clock in the morning, and then your sleep was a troubled dream, in which was re-enacted all the scene of sickness, and parting, and dissolution. Oh, what days and nights they were! No man seemed to care for your soul.

There was another occasion when your heart was very susceptible. There was

A GREAT AWAKENING.

There were hundreds of people who pressed into the kingdom of God—some of them acquaintances, some business associates, yes, perhaps some members of your own family were baptized by sprinkling or immersion. Christian people thought of you and they called you to your store, but you were out on business. They stopped at your house; you had gone around to spend the evening. They sent a kindly message to you; somehow, by accident, you did not get it. The life-boat of the Gospel swept through the surf, and everybody seemed to get in but you. Everything seemed to escape you. One touch of personal sympathy would have pushed you into the kingdom of God. When on communion-day your friends went in and your sons and daughters went into the church, you buried your face in your handkerchief and sobbed. "Why am I left out? Everybody seems to get saved but me. No man cares for my soul."

Hearken to a revelation I have to make. It is

A STARTLING STATEMENT.

It will so surprise you that I must prove it as I go on. Instead of this total indifference all about you in regard to your soul, I have to tell you that heaven, earth, and hell are after your immortal spirit. Earth to cheat it. Hell to destroy it. Heaven to redeem it. Although you may be a stranger to the Christians in this house, their faces would glow and their hearts would bound if they saw you make one step toward heaven. So intricate and far-reaching is this web of sympathy, that I could by one word rouse a great many prayers in your behalf. No one cares for your soul! Why, one signal of distress on your part would thrill this audience with joy excitement.

If a boat in any harbor should get in distress, from the men of war, and from the sloops, and from the steamers, the flying paddles would pull to the rescue. And if now you would lift one signal of distress, all these voyagers of eternity would bear down toward you and bring you relief. But no. You are

LIKE A SHIP ON FIRE

at sea. They keep the hatches down, and the captain is frenzied, and he gives orders that no one shall be passing ships. He says, "I shall either land this vessel in Hamburg or on the bottom of the ocean, and I don't care which." You are a ship of the White Star Line passing, Yonder one of the Cunard Line. Yonder one of the Inman Line. But they know not there is any calamity happening on that vessel. Oh, if the captain would only put his trumpet to his lip and cry out, "Lower your boats! Bear down this way! We are burning up! Fire! Fire!" No, no. No signal is given. If that vessel perishes, having haled no one, whose fault will it be? Will it be the fault of the ship that hid its calamity, or will it be the fault of the vessels that, passing on the high seas, would have been glad to furnish relief if it had been only asked? In other words, my brother, if you miss heaven it will be your own fault.

No one cares for your soul! Why, in all the ages there have been men whose entire business was soul-saving. In this work Munson went down under the knives of the cannibals whom he had come to save, and Robert McCheyne preached himself to death by thirty years of age, and John Bunyan was thrown into a dungeon in Bedfordshire, and Jehudi Ashmun endured all the maharias of the African jungle; and there are hundreds and thousands of Christian men and women now who are praying, toiling, preaching, living, dying to save souls.

No one care for your soul! Have you heard

HOW CHRIST FEELS ABOUT IT?

I know it was only five or six miles from Bethlehem to Calvary—the birthplace and the deathplace of Christ—but who can tell how many miles it was from the throne to the manger? How many miles down, how many miles up, was the focus of all splendor and pomp. All the thrones facing His throne. His name the chorus in every song and the inscription on every banner. His landing-place a cattle-pen, malodorous with unwashed brutes, and dogs growling in and out of the stable. Born of a weary mother who had journeyed eighty miles in severe unhealth that she might find the right place for the Lord's nativity—born, not as other princes, under the flash of a chandelier, but under a lantern swung by a rope to the roof of the barn. In that place Christ started to save you. Your name, your face, your time, your eternity, in Christ's mind. Sometimes travelling on mule's back to escape King Herod's massacre, sometimes attempting nervous sleep on the chilly hill-side, sometimes earning His breakfast by the carpentry of a plough. In Quarantania the stones of the field, by their shape and color, looking like the loaves of bread, tantalizing His hunger. Yet all the time keeping on after you. With drenched coat treading the surf of Gennesareth. Howled after by a bloodthirsty mob. Denounced as a drunkard. Mourning over a doomed city, while others shouted at the sight of the shimmering towers. All the time coming on and

COMING ON TO SAVE YOU.

Indicted as being a traitor against government, perjured witnesses swearing their souls away to insure His butchery. Flogged, spit on, slapped in the face, and then hoisted on rough lumber, in the sight of earth, and heaven, and hell, to purchase your eternal emancipation. From the first infant step to the last step of manhood on her

sharp spike of Calvary a journey for you. Oh, how

HE CARED FOR YOUR SOUL?

By dolorous arithmetic add up the stable, the wintry tempest, the midnight dampness, the abstinence of forty days from food, the brutal Sanhedrin, the heights of Gogotha, across which all the hatreds of earth and all the furies of hell charged with their bayonets, and then dare to say again that no one cares for your soul.

A young man might as well go off from home and give his father and mother no intimation as to where he has gone, and, crossing the seas, sitting down in some foreign country, cold, sick, and hungry and lonely, saying, "My father and mother don't care anything about me. Do not care anything about him! Why, that father's hair has turned gray since his son went off. He has written to all the colleges in the foreign ports asking about you because you will not care for the father he loves. He has broken his heart. She has never smiled since he went away. All day long, and almost all night, she keeps asking, "Where is he! Where can he be?" He is the first thought in her prayer and the last thought in her prayer—the first thought in the morning and the last at night. She says, "O God, bring back my boy. I must see him again before I die." Oh, do not see his father and mother about you because you think God heavenly Father, and you think He does not care for you because you will not even read the letters by which He invites you to come back, while all heaven is waiting, and waiting and waiting for you to return.

A young man said to his father, "I am going off; I will write to you

AT THE END OF SEVEN YEARS

and tell you where I am." Many years have passed along since that son went away, and for years the father has been going to the depot in the village on the arrival of every train, and when he hears the whistle in the distance he is thrilled with excitement, and he waits until all the passengers have come out, and then he waits until the train has gone clear out of sight again, and then he goes home hastening back to the next train, and he will be at every train until that son comes back, unless the son waits until the father be dead. But oh, the greater patience of God! He has been waiting for you not seven years, not nine years, but for some of you twenty years, thirty years, forty years, fifty years—waiting, calling—waiting, calling, until nothing but omnipotent patience could have endured it. Oh, my brother, do not take the sentiment of my text as your sentiment! We do care for your soul.

One Sabbath night years ago in my church in Brooklyn a young man appeared at the end of the platform, and he said to me, "I have just come off the sea." I said, "when did you arrive?" He said, "I was in a great 'blow' off Cape Hatteras this last week, and I thought that I

MIGHT AS WELL GO TO HEAVEN

as to hell. I thought the ship would sink; but sir, I never very seriously thought about my soul until to-night." I said to him, "Do you feel that Christ is able and willing to save you?" "Oh, yes," he replied, "I do." "Well," I said, "now are you willing to come and be saved by Him?" "I am," he said. "Well, will you now, in the prayer we are about to offer, give yourself to God for time and eternity?" "I will," he said. Then we knelt in prayer, and after we had got through praying he told me that the great transformation had taken place. I could not doubt it. He is on the sea now. I do not know what other port he may gain, but I think he will gain the harbor of heaven.

"Star of peace, beam o'er the billow,  
Bless the soul that sighs for Thee;  
Bless the sailor's lonely pillow,  
Far, far at sea."

It was sudden conversion with him that night. Oh, that it might be sudden conversion with you to-day! God can be in one moment as well as He can in a century. There are sudden deaths, sudden calamities; why not sudden deliverances?

God's Spirit is infinite in speed. He comes here with omnipotent power, and He is ready here and now, instantaneously and forever, to save your soul. I believe that a multitude of you will to-day come to God. I feel you are coming, and you will bring along your families and your friends with you. They have heard in heaven already of the step you are about to take. The news has been cried along the golden streets, and has rung out from the towers. "A soul saved! A soul saved!" But there is some one here to-day who will reject this Gospel. He will stay out of the kingdom of God himself. He will keep his family and his friends out. It is a dreadful thing for a man just to plant himself in the way of life, then keep back his children, keep back his companion in life, keep back his business partners—refuse to get into heaven himself, and refuse to let others go in.

TRAGIC DEATH OF A REJECTOR.

A young man, at the close of a religious service, was asked to decide the matter of his soul's salvation. He said, "I will not do it to-night." Well, the Christian man kept talking with him, and he said, "I insist that to-night you either take God or reject Him." "Well," said the young man, "if you put it that way, I will reject Him." There now the matter's settled! On his way home on horseback, he knew not that a tree had fallen across the road, and he was going at full speed, and he struck the obstacle and dropped lifeless. That night his Christian mother heard the riderless horse plunging about the barn, and suspecting that something terrible was the matter, she went out and came to the place where her son lay, and she cried out, "Oh, Henry! dead and not a Christian. Oh, my son! my son! dead and not a Christian. O Henry! God keep us from such a catastrophe."

Telegraph Statistics.

The United States has as many miles of telegraph as all the countries of Europe combined, and the people of this country send more than double the number of messages by telegraph as Great Britain, whose people send the largest number of any in Europe.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 1887.

Joseph Exalted.  
LESSON TEXT.  
(Gen. 41: 28-48.)

LESSON PLAN.

TOPIC OF THE QUARTER: Bondage and Deliverance.

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER: There is no other God that can deliver after this sort.—Dan. 3: 29.

LESSON TOPIC: Delivered and Exalted.

Lesson Outline: (1) Exalted from Bondage, vs. 28-41. (2) Invested with Authority, vs. 41-44. (3) Ruling with Wisdom, vs. 45-48.

GOLDEN TEXT: Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.—Psa. 37: 5.

DAILY HOME READINGS:

M.—Gen. 41: 38-48. Delivered and exalted.

T.—Gen. 40: 1-23. Joseph in prison.

W.—Gen. 41: 1-37. Joseph before Pharaoh.

Th.—Gen. 41: 49-57. Joseph in authority.

F.—Ezth. 8: 1-17. The Jews delivered and exalted.

S.—Dan. 6: 1-28. Daniel delivered and exalted.

S.—Acts 2: 22-36. Jesus delivered and exalted.

LESSON ANALYSIS.

I. EXALTED FROM BONDAGE.

I. A True Basis of Merit:

A man in whom the spirit of God is (38).

Joshua, . . . a man in whom is the spirit (Num. 27: 18).

The spirit of the holy gods in thee (Dan. 4: 18).

A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6: 5).

He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost (Act 11: 24).

II. A Natural Fruit of Godliness:

There is none so discreet and wise as thou (39).

Thou art able, for the spirit . . . is in thee (Dan. 4: 18).

The Holy Spirit . . . shall teach you all things (John 14: 26).

Men . . . full of the Spirit and of wisdom (Acts 6: 3).

Ye have an anointing . . . and ye know all things (1 John 2: 20).

III. A Grand Field of Usefulness:

According unto thy word shall all my people be ruled (40).

One . . . that ruleth in the fear of God, . . . shall be as the light (2 Sam. 23: 3).

He made him lord of his house, and ruler (Psa. 105: 21).

I will see thee over many things (Matt. 25: 21).

He made him governor over Egypt and all his house (Acts 7: 10).

"Can we find such a one as this?"

(1) High qualifications needed: (2) High qualifications found.

"God hath sheathed thee all this."

(1) A Divine teacher; (2) A susceptible pupil; (3) A blessed result.

"Only in the throne will I be greater than thou." (1) Extensive jurisdiction allotted; (2) Supreme jurisdiction reserved.—(1) Joseph's sway; (2) Pharaoh's reservation.

II. INVESTED WITH AUTHORITY.

I. The Royal Ring:

Pharaoh took off his signet ring, . . . and put it upon Joseph's hand (42).

The king took off his ring, . . . and gave it to him (Haman Esther 3: 10).

It was sealed with the king's ring (Esther 3: 12).

The king took off his ring, . . . and gave it unto Mordecai (Esther 8: 2).

Put a ring on his hand (Luke 15: 22).

II. The Royal Robe:

And arrayed him in vestures of fine linen (42).

David was clothed with a robe of fine linen (1 Chron. 15: 27).

Mordecai went forth . . . in royal apparel of blue and white (Esther 8: 15).

I girded thee about with fine linen (Ezek. 16: 10).

Clothed in fine linen, white and pure (Rev. 19: 14).

III. The Royal Rule.

Without thee shall no man lift up his hand (44).

Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do (Gen. 41: 55).

He it was that sold to all the people (Gen. 42: 6).

He is ruler over all the land of Egypt (Gen. 45: 26).

To bind his princes at his pleasure (Psa. 105: 32).

1. "Ring . . . vestures, . . . chain, . . . chariot." (1) Symbols of royalty; (2) Symbols of honor; (3) Symbols of authority.

2. "He set him over all the land of Egypt." (1) To rule it; (2) To save it.—(1) To gather in its plenty; (2) To support in its poverty.

3. "I am Pharaoh." (1) Sovereignty recognized; (2) Sovereignty asserted; (3) Sovereignty delegated.

III. RULING WITH WISDOM.

I. Planning the Work:

Joseph went out over the land of Egypt (45).

Appoint overseers over the land (Gen. 41: 34).

Joseph . . . went throughout all the land of Egypt (Gen. 41: 46).

Then went I up in the night, . . . and viewed the wall (Neh. 2: 15).

Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields (John 4: 35).

II. Gathering the Food:

He gathered up all the food of the seven years (48).

Let them gather all the food of these good years (Gen. 41: 35).

And gathereth her food in the harvest (Prov. 6: 8).

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son (Prov. 10: 5).

He that reapeth . . . gathereth fruit unto life eternal (John 4: 36).

III. Providing for Emergency:

The food . . . round about every city, laid he up (48).

Joseph laid up corn as the sand of the sea (Gen. 41: 49).

In all the land of Egypt there was bread (Gen. 41: 54).

Prepare to meet thy God (Amos 4: 12).

Be ye also ready . . . the Son of man cometh (Matt. 24: 44).

1. "Joseph went out over the land of Egypt." (1) The man; (2) The land;

(3) The outgoing—Went out (1) To survey the field; (2) To organize his work; (3) To initiate his gatherings.

2. "The earth brought forth by handfuls." (1) To fulfill Joseph's interpretation; (2) To fill Joseph's granaries; (3) To feed Joseph's dependants; (4) To honor Joseph's God.

3. "Laid up the food in the cities." (1) Food abundant; (2) Food gathered; (3) Food garnered; (4) Food convenient.

LESSON BIBLE READING.

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE.

1. Its Sphere:

Over all his works (Psa. 103: 19; 145: 9).

Preserves all his works (Neh. 9: 6; Matt. 10: 29).

Provides food for all (Psa. 104: 27; 28; 136: 25).

Specially preserves his saints (Psa. 37: 28; Matt. 10: 30, 31).

Controls all men (Prov. 16: 9; Acts 5: 38; 59).

Overrules evil (Gen. 45: 5-7; 50: 20; Psa. 76: 10).

2. Its Aim:

The glory of God (Psa. 46: 10; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28).

The good of saints (Rom. 8: 28; 1 Cor. 3: 21-53).

3. Its Operations:

With Abraham (Gen. 22: 6-13).

With Joseph (Gen. 37: 23-28; 45: 4-8).

With Elijah (1 Kings 17: 2-6).

With Mordecai (Esther 6: 1-3, 10, 11).

With Peter (Acts 12: 5-11).

With Paul (Acts 23: 10-24).

LESSON SURROUNDINGS.

The last lesson left Joseph in Egypt, a slave to Potiphar, who was a captain of the king's body-guard, which was also the king's band of executioners.

At this point in the Bible narrative turns aside to relate a story of the misdoings in the house of Judah, the son of Jacob in whose line the promised Messiah was to come. In such truthful exhibits as this, of the sinfulness of the chosen people of God, it is that the inspiration which guided the Bible record is evidenced. There is no attempt to show these men perfect. They are pictured just as they were. And it is noteworthy, in this connection, that the dishonored daughter of Judah is the first of the four women named in the genealogy of Jesus, with which the New Testament opens, the other three being Rahab the Canaanitish harlot, Ruth, a woman of the Moabitish stock, and the false wife of Uriah the Hittite.

It was not of a pure and untainted stock that Jesus Christ came into this world, when he humbled himself to be formed in fashion as a man. Nor are sinners shut out from the provisions of grace. Returning to Joseph, the Bible narrative represents his varied and eventful career in Egypt. No story in the Bible is fuller of interest than this story of Joseph. When the International lessons were first entered upon, three full months were given to this story. But now only a few salient points in the lessons selected.

The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man." His Egyptian master trusted him. But Joseph's very winsomeness brought him temptations. Then Joseph was with the Lord, in his gratitude at having the Lord with him. When tempted, he stayed himself on God. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" was the thought which was his safeguard. He was then hated for his very virtue. He was misrepresented, and was cast into prison unjustly. Among the discourses of early Egyptian literature there is a strange parallel of this story of Joseph in his temptation and fidelity and consequent suffering; although the Potiphar story is presented here by Potiphar brothers, instead of master and slave.

In the military prison, or fortress, where Joseph was confined, the Lord gave him favor with those who were over him. He was Divinely enabled to interpret the dreams of two of his fellow-prisoners, whose future was thus disclosed to them. One of these prisoners, who was the king's chief butler, or cup-bearer, promised to remember Joseph gratefully and helpfully, when again in his old position of royal favor, as Joseph assured him he should be; but he forgot that promise right speedily, and Joseph remained a prisoner.

Two years after this, Pharaoh dreamed a strange dream, which troubled him sorely. He sought to learn its meaning; but his magicians, and "sacred scribes," could not help him. Then it was that the chief butler remembered Joseph's power as an interpreter, and reported it to the king. Joseph was quickly sent for, and asked to interpret the royal dream. Joseph referred all his power of dream-interpretation to God. The dream was told to him. He interpreted it as foretelling seven years of plenty in Egypt, to be followed by seven years of famine. He also counseled Pharaoh to set some man in charge of the work of garnering the surplus grain of the years of plenty as a reserve store against the years of famine. "The thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh;" and it is at this point that the lesson begins.

It is thought by many scholars that Joseph's life in Egypt was during the period of the Hyksos kings, or the Shepherd kings, a foreign race of rulers—from the East—who dominated Egypt during a number of centuries. This gives an added reason for the royal confidence reposed in Joseph, as a man more likely to be in sympathy with the dynasty than on the throne than a native Egyptian would have been.

The time of this lesson is, according to our ordinary Bible chronology, about 1715 B. C. The place is Zoan, or Tanis