

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

Wifely Ambition, Good and Bad.

"Arise and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth."—1 Kings 21:1.

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."

"Fetch in Naboth," says the king to one of his servants.

The plain gardener, wondering why he should be called into the presence of his majesty, comes in, a little downcast in his modesty, 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 a kitchen garden, and I will give 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 place, nor can 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 petulance, King Ahab went into the house and flung himself on the bed, and turned his face to the wall, in a great pout.

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

"Oh," she says, "I feel very blue. I have set my heart on getting that kitchen, and Naboth will neither trade nor sell, and to be defeated by a common gardener is more than I can stand."

"Oh, pshaw!" says Jezebel, "don't go on in that way. Get up and eat your dinner, and stop moping. I will get for you that kitchen garden."

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 for her husband and herself the kitchen garden.

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

And sure enough, three years after, Ahab, wounded in battle, his chariot dripping with the carnage, 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 a black powder along the long eye-lashes, and then from the window she glared her indignation upon Jehu.

As he rode to the gates in his chariot he shouted to the slaves in her room: "Throw her down!" But, no doubt the slaves halted a moment from such.

WORK OF ASSASSINATION.

Yet, knowing 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 bore her struggling and cursing to the window casement, and hurled her forth till she came tumbling to the earth, striking it just in time to let Jehu's horses trample her and the chariot wheels roll over her.

While Jehu is inside at the table refreshing 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 mistaken wife aroused her husband out of his melancholy by the words of the text: "Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard."

The influence suggested by this subject is an influence you never before heard discouraged 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 over-powered with wine and beer that they can hardly sit up, while there are many so-called respectable restaurants where they can get and take their champagne and hot toddy all alone. Many temperance voters these women would make. Besides that, the wives of the rum-sellers would have to vote in the interest of their husbands' 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 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 their 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 unforgiving 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 hurl 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 might 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, in society and history are instances of

WIFELY AMBITION 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 reinforcement 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, the chain holding the miniature likeness of her who had been his greatest inspiration, whether among the snows at Valley Forge or the honors of the Presidential chair.

Pliny's pen was driven through all its poetic and historical dominions by his wife, Calpurnia, who sang his stanzas to the sound of 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 Lovestien by means of a bookcase that went in and out, carrying his books to and fro, he was 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 Roquerelle, 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 Ceresus 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 epithets that husbands

put upon their wives' tombstones are often an attempt to make up for 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 quit 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."

O 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 bellowing of one bull on Wall Street, may scatter it.

Is it 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 nor thickness. Many a wife has not been satisfied till her husband went into politics, but would afterward 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 wife and prosperous business, but his wife did not think it genteel. There were

ODORS ABOUT THE BUSINESS,

and sometimes they would adhere to his garments when he returned at night. She insisted on him 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 made a certain number of hundreds of thousands of dollars he would return to the church and its services. Where is that family to-day? 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 to-day, has become a homeless, penniless libertine. His wife's ambition for a more genteel business destroyed him, disgraced her, and blighted their child.

But suppose, now, there be in our homes, as thank God there are in hundreds of homes here represented, on

THE WIFE'S 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 can not be with you in person as you go to your daily business, but I will be with you in my daily prayers. Let us see what we can achieve by having God in our hearts, and God in our lives, and God in our home. 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 reinforced and inspired and spurred on by a woman's voice.

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 a line of 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. O wives of America, swing your sceptres 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.

EXTINCT FAMILIES.

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 descendants. 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 Cowper, or Pope, or Addison, or Johnson, or Lord Chatham, or Grattan, or Isaac Newton, or Goldsmith, or Swift, or Locke, or Gibbon, or Walpole, or Canning, or Dryden, or Moore, 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 subdue 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 drive him there. You cannot make 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 of your neighbor. Her wifely

AMBITION 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 stay, 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 pronouncement. Her husband and sons and daughters, who all, like her, live for this world, will have the same destiny for the body and the soul. You, having had a

SANCTIFIED AND ENNOBLED

wifely ambition, will pass up into palaces, 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 any crown you choose from off 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 the one night Catherine the Empress entertained Prince Henry. It was severe 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 sleighs laden with the first people of Russia, the whole length of the distance illumined by lamps and dazzling temples 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 centre 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 snowy chill of their earthly existence into the warm and illumined places 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 of Kenilworth and St. Cloud and the Alhambra were a beggar's crust. And the platter of one royal satisfaction touched at the centre shall disappear only to make room for a beggar's crust; and the golden plate of one royal satisfaction, touched at the centre, shall disappear only to make room for the coming up of some richer and grander regalment.

For the First Time in the Prison Pen.

"Did you ever think of a man's or woman's feelings when brought up to answer the first charge ever made against them in a police court?" said a tipstaff as he stood watching the van taking its daily load of sin and suffering from the place of their trials to be shut in away from opportunity, if not temptation. "I tell you the chief punishment lies in standing in shame in the presence of your fellows, knowing that live as long as you may, there is a possibility of your being recognized in any future position you may occupy in the world as having been in a felon's dock, however justly or unjustly. The after-confinement, if convicted while it may be irksome, has no such element of general shame as the facing of the herd who frequent the court-rooms. The old and hardened bird who depends on crime for a living has nothing to lose in this way; but, to the aforesaid innocent one whose misstep has been the result of suddenly yielding to impulse or necessity, I tell you, it must be terrible. I believe that a continuance in wrong-doing is often believed to be the only course, thought to be open to the person once accused."

Hearts are flowers: they remain open to the soft-falling dew, but shut up in the violent downpour of rain.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 1898.

Christ's Last Journey to Jerusalem.

LESSON TEXT.

Matt. 20: 17-29. Memory verses, 17-19.

LESSON PLAN.

TOPIC OF THE QUARTER: Jesus the King of Zion.

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER: He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.—Rev. 17: 14.

LESSON TOPIC: The King's Lessons on True Fidelity.

Lesson (1. Fidelity Illustrated, vs. 17-19. Outline: 2. Fidelity Overlooked, vs. 20-22. 3. Fidelity Explained, vs. 23-29.)

GOLDEN TEXT: The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.—Matt. 20: 28.

DAILY HOME READINGS:

M.—Matt. 20: 17-29. Lessons on true fidelity.

T.—Mark 10: 32-46. Mark's parallel narrative.

W.—Luke 18: 31-35. Luke's partial parallel.

T.—Matt. 25: 14-23. Fidelity rewarded.

F.—Matt. 26: 36-46. The Lord's fidelity.

S.—2 Tim. 4: 1-8. Faithful unto death.

S.—Luke 16: 1-12. Good stewardship.

LESSON ANALYSIS.

I. FIDELITY ILLUSTRATED.

I. Onward to Betrayal:

The Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests (18).

The Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men (Matt. 17: 22). After two days... the Son of man is delivered up (Matt. 26: 2).

One of you shall betray me (Mark 14: 18).

Jesus knew... who it was that should betray him (John 6: 64).

II. Onward to Suffering:

To mock, and to scourge, and to crucify (19).

Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted (Isa. 53: 4).

He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things (Matt. 16: 21).

The Son of man must suffer... and be rejected (Mark 8: 31).

Believed it not the Christ to suffer these things? (Luke 24: 26).

III. Onward to Death:

They shall condemn him to death (18).

He must go... and be killed (Matt. 16: 21).

The Son of man must... be killed (Mark 8: 31).

They shall kill him (Mark 9: 31).

They shall condemn him to death (Mark 10: 33).

1. "He took the twelve disciples apart." (1) The great master; (2) The obedient disciples; (3) The separate interview.—(1) Whom he took; (2) Whither he took; (3) Why he took.

2. "They shall condemn him to death." (1) The judges; (2) The condemned; (3) The condemnation.—(1) The grounds of the Lord's condemnation; (2) The fruits of the Lord's condemnation.

3. "The third day he shall be raised up." (1) Delivered up to death; (2) Held by the grave; (3) Raised up to life.

II. FIDELITY OVERLOOKED.

I. Position Sought:

One on the right hand, and one on the left hand (21).

Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones (Matt. 19: 28).

Ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes (Luke 22: 30).

Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? (1 Cor. 6: 2).

To him will I give authority over the nations (Rev. 2: 26).

II. Ability Questioned:

Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able? (22).

Ye are not able to do even that which is least (Luke 12: 29).

Ye cannot bear them now (John 16: 12).

A yoke... neither our fathers nor we were able to bear (Acts 15: 10).

Ye were not able to bear it (1 Cor. 3: 2).

III. Decision Made:

It is for them for whom it hath been prepared (23).

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you (Matt. 25: 34).

Things God prepared for them that love him (1 Cor. 2: 9).

He hath prepared for them a city (Heb. 11: 16).

The holy city... made ready as a bride adorned (Rev. 21: 2).

1. "What wouldest thou?" (1) Expression of help solicited; (2) Assurance of help proffered.

2. "Ye know not what ye ask." (1) Desire; (2) Ignorance; (3) Rebuke.

3. "It is for them for whom it hath been prepared." (1) The fact of prepared blessings; (2) The nature of prepared blessings; (3) The basis of prepared blessings.

III. FIDELITY EXPLAINED.

I. Contrasted with Worldly Authority:

Not so shall it be among you (26).

With force and with rigor have ye ruled over them (Ezek. 34: 4).

The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them (Matt. 20: 25).

Not that we have lordship over you (John 13: 14).

Neither as lordling it over the charge allotted to you (1 Pet. 5: 3).

II. Characterized by Genuine Humility:

Whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant (27).

He that is greatest among you shall be your servant (Matt. 23: 11).

If any man would be first, he shall be last of all (Mark 9: 35).

Whosoever would become great... shall be your minister (Mark 10: 43).

I am in the midst of you as he that serveth (Luke 22: 27).

III. Illustrated by Christ's Example:

Even as the Son of man came... to give his life (38).

To give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10: 45).

Becoming obedient even unto death (Phil. 2: 8).

Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2: 6).

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us (Tit. 2: 14).

1. "They were moved with indignation." (1) The aroused spirit; (2) The arousing cause.