WORD OF THE LORD

Dr. Talmage Sends Out a Seasonable Sermon.

THOUGHTS OF MAY TIME

How Very Lengthy the Poetry of the Bible is Drawn From the Mountain, the Woods and Fields.

PHILADELPHIA, May 7.—Rev. Dr. Talmage is in this city today participating in the services at the ordination of his son, Rev. Frank Talmage, to the ministry. He has dictated the following sermon on a timely and seasonable topic, "Springtime Thoughts," the text selected being the beautiful words of Solomon's Song iv, 15, "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon."

Some of the finest gardens of olden times were to be found at the foot of Mount Lebanon. Snows descended, and winter whitened the top of the mountain. Then when the warm spring weather came the snows melted and poured down the side of the mountain and gave great luxuriance to the gardens at the foot, and you see now the allusion of my text when it speaks of the fountain of gardens and streams from Lebanon.

Again and again the church is represented as a garden all up and down the word of God, and it is a figure specially suggestive at this season of the year, when the parks and the orchards are about to put forth their blossom and the air is filled with bird voices.

A mother wished to impress her child with the love of God, and so in the springtime, after the ground had been prepared in the garden, she took a handful of flower seeds and scattered these seeds in the shape of letters all across the bed of the garden. Weeks passed by and the rains and the sunshine had done their work, and one day the child came in and said, "Mother, come quickly to the garden—come now." The mother followed the child to the garden, and the little child said: "Look here, mother. See! It is spelled all over the ground in flowers, 'God Is Love.'"

GOD IN EVERYTHING.

Oh, my friends, if we only had faith enough we could see gospel lessons all around and about us—lessons in shells on the beach, lessons in sparkles on the wave, lessons in stars on the sky, lessons in flowers all over the earth.

Well, my friends, you know very well that there have been some beautiful gardens created. There was the garden of Charlemagne, and you remember that this king ordered gardens laid out all through the realm and decided by decree of government what kind of flowers should be planted in those gardens. Henry IV at Montpellier decreed that there should be flowers planted throughout his realm and gardens laid out, and he specially decreed that there should be Alpine pyrens and French plants. Shenstone, the poet, was more celebrated for his gardens than for his poetry. His poetry has faded from the ages for the most part, but his gardens are immortal. To all the beauty of his place he added perfection of art. Palisade and arch and arbor and fountain and rustic temple had their most wonderful specimens, and the oak, and the hazel, and the richest woods of the forest were planted in that garden. He had genius, and he had industry, and all his genius and all his industry he applied to the beautification of that garden. He gave for it $1,500, and he sold it at last for $85,000, or what was equal to that number of dollars. It was an expensive garden, laid out with great elaboration. And yet I have to tell you now of a garden of vaster expense—the garden spoken of in my text—a fountain of gardens with the streams from Lebanon.

Walter Scott had the great ambition of his life to build Abbotsford and lay out extensive gardens round about it. It broke his heart that he could not complete the work as he desired it. At his last payment of £100,000, after laying out these gardens and building that palace of Abbotsford, at that time his heart broke, his health failed, and he died almost an imbecile.

THE GARDEN OF DELIGHTS.

A few years ago, when I walked through those gardens and I thought at what vast expense they had been laid out—at the expense of that man's life—it seemed I could see in the crimson flowers the blood of the old man's broken heart. But I have to tell you now of a garden laid out at vaster expense. Who can calculate that vast expense? Tell me, ye women who watched him hang, tell me, ye executioners who lifted and let him down; tell me, thou sun that didst hide and ye rocks that did fall, what the laying out of this garden cost. This morning, amid the aroma and brightness of the springtime, it is appropriate that I show you how the church of Christ is a garden.

I remark first it is a garden because of the rare plants in it. That would be a strange garden in which there were no flowers. If you cannot find them anywhere else, you will find them along the paths, and you will find them at the gateway.

If there be no especial taste and no especial means, you will find there the hollyhock, and the daffodil, and the dahlia. If there be no especial taste and no especial means, you will find the Mexican cactus, and the bluebell, and the arbutus, and the clusters of oleanders.

THE SMALLEST IS THE BEST.

There are a dozen well-known liver pills, but only one so effective that it can be guaranteed to give satisfaction, or the money be refunded. Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets are smaller, but better than the large, old-fashioned pill, the medicinal agents are refined and concentrated.

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Flowers there must be in every garden, and I have to tell you that in the garden of the church are the rarest plants. Sometimes you will find the violet, inconspicuous, but sweet as heaven—Christian souls with no pretense, but of vast usefulness, comparatively unknown on earth, but to be glorious in celestial spheres. Violets and violets all the time. You cannot tell where these Christians have been save by the brightening face of the invalid, or the stamping tenderness on the stand near the sick pillow, or the new curtain that keeps out the glare of the sun from the poor man's cot. Such characters are perhaps better typified by the honeysuckle which goes creeping between the thorns and the briers of this life, giving a kiss for a sting, and many a man has thought that life before him was a black rock of trouble and found it covered all over with delightsome jasmine of Christian sympathy.

CONTROL OF THE TEMPER.

In this garden of the Lord I find the Mexican cactus, loveliness within, thorns without, men with great sharpness of behavior and manner, but within them the peace of God, the love of God, the grace of God. They are hard men to handle, ugly men to touch, very apt to strike back when you strike them, yet within them all loveliness and attraction, while outside so completely unfortunate. Mexican cactus all the time.

Said a placid elder to a Christian minister, "Doctor, you would do better to control your temper." "Ah!" said the minister to the placid elder, "I control more temper in five minutes than you do in five years." These people, gifted men, who have great exasperation of manner and seem to be very different from what they should be, really have in their souls that which commends them to the Lord. Mexican cactus all the time. So a man said to me years ago: "Do you think I ought to become a member of the church? I have such a violent temper.

"Yesterday I was crossing Jersey City ferry. It was very early in the morning, and I saw a milkman putting a large quantity of water into his can, and I said, 'That is enough, sir,' and he got off the cart and insulted me, and I knocked him down. Well," said he, "do you think I could ever become a Christian?" That man had in his soul the grace of the Lord Jesus, but outside he was full of thorns, and full of brambles, and full of exasperations, but he could not hear the story of a Saviour's mercy told without having the tears roll down his cheek. There was loveliness within, but roughness outside. Mexican cactus all the time.

But I remember in boyhood that we had in our father's garden what we called the Giant of Battle, a peculiar rose, very red and very fiery. Suggestive flower, it was called the Giant of Battle. And so in the garden of the Lord we find that kind of flower—the Pauls and Martin Luthers, the Wyclifs, the John Knoxes—giants of battle. What in other men is a spark, in them is a conflagration. When they pray, their prayers take fire; when they suffer, they sweat great drops of blood; when they preach, it is a pentecost; when they fight, it is a Thermopylae; when they die, it is martyrdom—giants of battle. You say, "Why have we not more of them in the church of Christ at this time?" I answer your question by asking another, "Why have we not more Cromwells and Humboldts in the world?" God wants only a few giants of battle. They do their work, and they do it well.

NEED OF ZEALOUS MEN.

But I find also in the church of God a plant that I shall call the snowdrop, very beautiful, but cold. It is very pure—pure as the snowdrop, beautiful as the snowdrop and as cold as the snowdrop. No special sympathy. That kind of man never loses his patience; he never weeps, he never flashes with anger, he never utters a rash word. Always cold, always precise, always passive—beautiful snowdrop, but I don't like him. I would rather have one Giant of Battle than 5,000 snowdrops.

Give me a man who may make some mistakes in his ardor for the Lord's service rather than that kind of nature which spends its whole life doing but one thing, and that is keeping equilibrium. There are snowdrops in all the churches—men without any sympathy. Very good; they are in the garden of the Lord; therefore I know they ought to be there, but always snowdrops.

You have seen in some places perhaps a century plant. I do not suppose there is a person in this house who has ever seen more than one century plant in full bloom, and when you see the century plant your emotions are stirred. You look at it and say, "This flower has been gathering up its beauty for a whole century, and it will not bloom again for another hundred years." Well, I have to tell you that in this garden of the church, spoken of in my text, there is a century plant.

It has gathered up its bloom from all the ages of eternity, and 19 centuries ago it put forth its glory. It is not only a century plant, but a passion flower—the passion flower of Christ, a crimson flower, blood at the root and blood on the leaves, the passion flower of Jesus, the century plant of eternity. Come, O winds from the north, and winds from the south, and winds from the east, and winds from the west, and scatter the perfume of this flower through all nations.

His worth, if all the nations knew,
Sure the whole earth would love him too.

Thou, the Christ of all the ages, hast garments smelling of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces.

A GARDEN IN THE DESERT.

I go further and say the church of Christ is appropriately compared to a garden because of its thorough irrigation. There can be no luxuriant garden without plenty of water. I saw a garden in the midst of the desert amid the Rocky mountains. I said, "How is it possible you have so many flowers, so much rich fruit, in a desert for miles around?" I suppose some of you have seen those gardens. Well, they told me they had aqueducts and pipes reaching up to the hills, and the snows melted on the Sierra Nevada and the Rocky mountains and then poured down in water to those aqueducts, and it kept the fields in great luxuriance. And I thought to myself—how like the garden of Christ! All around it the barrenness of sin and the barrenness of the world, but our eyes are unto the hills, from whence cometh our help. There is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God, the fountain of gardens and streams from Lebanon. Water to slake the thirst, water to refresh the fainting, water to wash the unclean, water to toss up in fountains under the sun of righteousness until you can see the rainbow around the throne.

Surrounded in a garden of Gethsemane how best, and I saw the luxuriance of those gardens was helped by the abundant supply of water. I came to it on a day when strangers were not admitted, but by a strange coincidence, at the moment I got in, the king's chariot passed, and the gardener went up on the hill and turned on the water, and it came flashing down the broad stairs of stone until sunlight and wave in gleesome wrestle tumbled at my feet. And so it is with this garden of Christ. Everything comes from above—pardon from above, peace from above, comfort from above, sanctification from above. Streams from Lebanon. Oh, the consolation in this thought! Would God that the gardeners turned on the fountain of salvation until the place where we sit and stand might become Elim with 12 wells of water and threescore and ten palm trees. But I hear his sound at the garden gate. I hear the lifting of the latch of the gate. Who comes there? It is the Gardener, who passes in through the garden gate. He comes through this path of the garden, and he comes to the aged man, and he says: "Old man, I come to help thee; I come to strengthen thee. Down to hoary hairs I will shelter thee; I will give thee strength at the time of old age. I will not leave; I will never forsake thee. Peace, broken hearted old man; I will be thy consolation forever."

THE DIVINE GARDENER.

And then Christ, the Gardener, comes up another path of the garden, and he sees a soul in great trouble, and he says, "Hush, troubled spirit; the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night; the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; the Lord shall preserve thy soul." And then the Gardener comes up another path of the garden, and he comes where there are some beautiful buds, and I say, "Stop, O Gardener; do not break them off." But he breaks them off, the beautiful buds, and I see a great flutter among the leaves, and I wonder what he is doing, and he says: "I do not come to destroy these flowers. I am only going to plant them in a higher terrace and in the garden around my palace. I have come into my garden to gather lilies. I must take back a whole cluster of rosebuds. Peace, troubled soul; all shall be well. Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Oh, glorious Gardener of the church! Christ comes to it now, and he has a right to come. We look into the face of the Gardener as he breaks off the bud, and we say: "Thou art worthy to have them. Thy will be done." The hardest prayer a bereaved father or mother ever uttered—"Thy will be done."

THE WALL OF DEFENSE.

But you have noticed that around every king's garden there is a high wall. You may have stood at the wall of a king's court and thought, "How I would like to see that garden!" and while you were watching the gardener opened the gate, and the royal equipage swept through it, and you caught a glimpse of the garden, but only a glimpse, for then the gates closed.

I bless God that this garden of Christ has gates on all sides; that they are opened by day, opened by night, and whosoever will may come in. Oh, how many there are who die in the desert when they might revel in the garden! How many there are who are seeking in the garden of this world that satisfaction which they can never find!

It was so with Theodore Hook, who made all nations laugh while he was living. And yet Theodore Hook on a certain day, when in the midst of his revelry he caught a glimpse of his own face and his own apparel in the mirror, said: "That is true. I look just as I am—lost, body, mind, soul and estate, lost!" And so it was with Shenstone about his garden, of which I spoke in the beginning of my sermon. He sat down amid all its beauty and wrung his hands and said, "I have lost my way to happiness; I am frantic; I hate everything; I hate myself as a mad man ought to." Alas, so many in the gardens of this world are looking for that flower they never can find except in the garden of Christ!

Substantial comfort will not grow
In nature's barren soil.
All we can boast till Christ we know
Is vanity and toil.

UNSATISFYING PLEASURES.

How many have tried all the fountains of this world's pleasure, but never tasted of the stream from Lebanon! How many have reveled in other gardens to their soul's ruin, but never plucked one flower from the garden of our God! I swing open all the gates of the garden and invite you in, whatever your history, whatever your sins, whatever your temptations, whatever your trouble. The invitation comes no more to one than to all, "Whosoever will, let him come."

The flowers of earthly gardens soon fade; but, blessed be God, there are garlands that never wither, and through the grace of Christ Jesus we may enter into the joys which are provided for us at God's right hand. Oh, come into the garden. And remember, as the closing thought, that God not only brings us into a garden here, but it is a garden all the way with those who trust and love and serve him, a garden all through the struggles of this life, a garden all up the slope of heaven.

There everlasting spring abides
And never withering flowers.
Death, like a narrow stream, divides
That heavenly land from ours.

Mothers and Daughters.

Over twelve years I was afflicted with a very serious female difficulty and for the last sixteen months was under treatment of three of the very best physicians that money could employ. Under their skillful treatment I gradually grew worse until they decided they could render me no permanent help. One of my friends persuaded me to try a bottle of Dullam's Great German Uterine Tonic, and after taking three bottles can say I am in better health than I have been for twenty years and am not 60 years old, but feel as young as at thirty. June 2, 1890. MRS. E. S. CARPENTER, Lapeer, Mich.

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The most painful cases of rheumatism may be relieved by a few applications of Chamberlain's Pain Balm, its continued use will cure any case, no matter of how long standing. It is equally beneficial for lame back, pain in the side, pain in the chest, lameness, and in all painful affections requiring an external remedy. A piece of flannel saturated with Pain Balm and bound on over the seat of pain is superior to any plaster. For sale by F. J. Wurzburg, druggist, No. 58 Monroe street.

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AN ENGLISH COMMENTARY.

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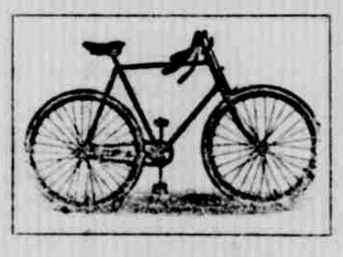

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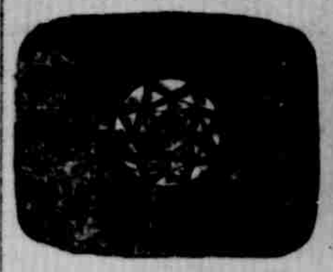

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