THE GARDEN OF GOD.

REV. DR. TALMAGE PREACHES A SEASONABLE SERMON.

He Compares the Church to a Garden Because It Is the Place of Choice Flowers, Select Fruits and of Thorough Irrigation—An Invitation to Enter.

WASHINGTON, April 26.—As the parks in Washington are abloom with hyacinths, and the gardens are being made, the similie dominant in this subject is very suggestive and practical. Dr. Talmage's text was Isaiah lviii, 11, "Thou shalt be like a watered garden."

The Bible is a great poem. We have in it faultless rhythm, and bold imagery, and startling antithesis, and rapturous lyric, and sweet pastoral, and instructive narrative, and devotional psalm—thought expressed in style more solemn than that of Montgomery, more bold than that of Milton, more terrible than that of Dante, more natural than that of Wordsworth, more impassioned than that of Pollock, more tender than that of Cowper, more weird than that of Spenser.

This great poem brings all the gems of the earth into its coronet, and it weaves the flames of judgment into its garlands and pours eternal harmonies in its rhythm. Everything this book touches it makes beautiful, from the plain stones of the summer thrashing floor to the daughters of Nahor filling the trough for the camels, from the fish pools of Heshbon up to the psalmist praising God with the diapason of storm and whirlwind and Job's imagery of Orion, Arcturus and the Pleiades.

A Beautiful Garden.

My text leads us into a scene of summer redolence. The world has had a great many beautiful gardens. Charlemagne added to the glory of his reign by decreeing that they be established all through the realm, deciding even the names of the flowers to be planted there. Henry IV, at Montpellier, established gardens of bewitching beauty and luxuriance, gathering into them Alpine, Pyrenean and French plants. One of the sweetest spots on earth was the garden of Shenstone, the poet. His writings have made but little impression on the world, but his garden, "The Leasowes," will be immortal. To the natural advantage of that place was brought the perfection of art. Arbor and terrace and slope and rustic temple and reservoir and urn and fountain here had their crowning. Oak and yew and hazel put forth their richest foliage. There was no life more diligent, no soul more ingenious, than that of Shenstone, and all that diligence and genius he brought to the adornment of that one treasured spot. He gave £800 for it; he sold it for £17,000. And yet I am to tell you today of a richer garden than any I have mentioned. It is the garden spoken of in my text, the garden of the church, which belongs to Christ. He bought it, he planted it, he owns it, and he shall have it. Walter Scott, in his outlay at Abbotsford, ruined his fortune, and now, in the crimson flowers of those gardens, you can almost think or imagine that you see the blood of that old man's broken heart. The payment of the last £100,000 sacrificed him. But I have to tell you that Christ's life and Christ's death were the outlay of this beautiful garden of the church of which my text speaks. Oh, how many sighs and tears and pangs and agonies! Tell me, ye women who saw him hang! Tell me, ye executioners who lifted him and let him down! Tell me, thou sun that didst hide, ye rocks that fell! Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. If the garden of the church belongs to Christ, certainly he has a right to walk in it. Come, then, O blessed Jesus, today; walk up and down these aisles and pluck what thou wilt of sweetness for thyself.

The church, in my text, is appropriately compared to a garden because it is the place of choice flowers, of select fruits and of thorough irrigation. That would be a strange garden in which there were no flowers. If nowhere else, they would be along the borders or at the gateway. The homeliest taste will dictate something, if it be only the old fashioned hollyhock or dahlia or daffodil, but if there be larger means then you will find the Mexican cactus and blazing azalea and clustering oleander. Well, now, Christ comes to his garden, and he plants there some of the brightest spirits that ever flowered upon the world. Some of them are violets, inconspicuous, but sweet as heaven. You have to search and find them. You do not see them very often perhaps, but you find where they have been by the brightened face of the invalid and the sprig of geranium on the stand and the new window curtains keeping out the glare of the sunlight. They are perhaps more like the ranunculus, creeping sweetly along amid the thorns and briers of life, giving kiss for sting, and many a man who has had in his way some great black rock of trouble has found that they have covered it all over with flowery jasmine, running in and out amid the crevices. These flowers in Christ's garden are not, like the sunflower, gaudy in the light, but wherever darkness hovers over a soul that needs to be comforted there they stand, night blooming cereuses.

But in Christ's garden there are plants that may be better compared to the Mexican cactus—thorns without, loveliness within, men with sharp points of character. They wound almost every one that touches them. They are hard to handle. Men pronounce them nothing but thorns, but Christ loves them notwithstanding all their sharpnesses. Many a man has had a very hard ground to cultivate, and it has only been through severe trial he has raised even the smallest crop of grace. A very harsh minister was talking to a very placid elder, and the placid elder said to the harsh minister, "Doctor, I do wish you would control your temper." "Ah," said the minister to the elder, "I control more temper in five minutes than you do in five years."

Thorns In the Garden.

It is harder for some men to do right than for other men to do right. The grace that would elevate you to the seventh heaven might not keep your brother from knocking a man down. I had a friend who came to me and said, "I dare not join the church." I said, "Why?" "Oh," he said, "I have such a violent temper! Yesterday morning I was crossing very early at the Jersey City ferry, and I saw a milkman pour a large quantity of water into the milk can, and I said to him, 'I think that will do,' and he insulted me, and I knocked him down. Do you think I ought to join the church?" Nevertheless that very same man, who was so harsh in his behavior, loved Christ and could not speak of sacred things without tears of emotion and affection. Thorns without, sweetness within—the best specimen of the Mexican cactus I ever saw.

There are others planted in Christ's garden who are always radiant, always impressive, more like the roses of deep hue that we occasionally find, called "Giants of Battle;" the Martin Luthers, St. Pauls, Chrysostoms, Wyclifs, Latimers and Samuel Rutherfords. What in other men is a spark in them is a conflagration. When they sweat, they sweat great drops of blood. When they pray, their prayer takes fire. When they preach, it is a Pentecost. When they fight, it is a Thermopylæ. When they die, it is a martyrdom. You find a great many roses in the gardens, but only a few "Giants of Battle." Men say, "Why don't you have more of them in the church?" I say, "Why don't you have in the world more Humboldts and Wellingtons!" God gives to some ten talents; to another, one.

In this garden of the church which Christ has planted I also find the snowdrops, beautiful but cold looking, seemingly another phase of winter. I mean those Christians who are precise in their tastes, unimpassioned, pure as snowdrops and as cold. They never shed any tears, they never get excited, they never say anything rashly, they never do anything precipitately. Their pulses never flutter, their nerves never twitch, their indignation never boils over. They live longer than most people, but their life is in a minor key. They never run up th C above the staff. In their music of life they have no staccato passages. Christ planted them in the church, and they must be of some service, or they would not be there. Snowdrops, always snowdrops.

But I have not told you of the most beautiful flower of all this garden spoken of in the text. If you see a century plant, your emotions are started. You say, "Why, this flower has been 100 years gathering up for one bloom, and it will be 100 years more before other petals will come out." But I have to tell you of a plant that was gathering up from all eternity, and that 1,900 years ago put forth its bloom never to wither. It is the passion plant of the cross! Prophets foretold it, Bethlehem shepherds looked upon it in the bud, the rocks shook at its bursting, and the dead got up in their winding sheets to see its full bloom. It is a crimson flower—blood at the roots, blood on the branches, blood on all the leaves. Its perfume is to fill all the nations. Its breath is heaven. Come, O winds, from the north, and winds from the south, and winds from the east, and winds from the west, and bear to all the earth the sweet smelling savor of Christ, my Lord!

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

Fruit In the Garden.

Again the church may be appropriately compared to a garden because it is a place of fruits. That would be a strange garden which had in it no berries, no plums or peaches or apricots. The coarser fruits are planted in the orchard or they are set out on the sunny hillside, but the choicest fruits are kept in the garden. So, in the world outside the church, Christ has planted a great many beautiful things—patience, charity, generosity, integrity—but he intends the choicest fruits to be in the garden, and, if they are not there, then shame on the church.

Religion is not a mere sentimentality. It is a practical, life giving, healthful fruit—not posies, but apples. "Oh," says somebody, "I don't see what your garden of the church has yielded." In reply I ask, Where did your asylums come from, and your hospitals, and your institutions of mercy? Christ planted every one of them; he planted them in his garden. When Christ gave sight to Bartimeus, he laid the cornerstone to every blind asylum that has ever been built. When Christ soothed the demoniac of Galilee, he laid the cornerstone of every lunatic asylum that has ever been established. When Christ said to the sick man, "Take up thy bed and walk," he laid the cornerstone of every hospital the world has ever seen. When Christ said, "I was in prison and ye visited me," he laid the cornerstone of every prison reform association that has ever been organized. The church of Christ is a glorious garden, and it is full of fruit.

I know there is some poor fruit in it. I know there are some weeds that ought to be thrown over the fence. I know there are some crab apple trees that ought to be cut down. I know there are some wild grapes that ought to be uprooted. But are you going to destroy the whole garden because of a little gnarled fruit? You will find worm eaten leaves in Fontainebleau, and insects that sting in the fairy groves of the Champs Elysees. You do not tear down and destroy the whole garden because there are a few specimens of gnarled fruit. I admit there are men and women in the church who ought not to be there, but let us be just as frank and admit the fact that there are hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands of glorious Christian men and women—holy, blessed, useful, consecrated and triumphant. There is no grander, nobler collection in all the earth than the collection of Christians.

There are Christian men in this house whose religion is not a matter of psalm singing and church going. Tomorrow morning that religion will keep them just as consistent and consecrated in their worldly occupation as it ever kept them at the communion table. There are women here today of a higher type of character than Mary of Bethany. They not only sit at the feet of Christ, but they go out into the kitchen to help Martha in her work that she may sit there too. There is a woman, who has a drunkard husband, who has exhibited more faith and patience and courage than Ridley in the fire. He was consumed in 20 minutes. Hers has been a 20 years' martyrdom. Yonder is a man who has been 15 years on his back, unable to feed himself, yet calm and peaceful as though he lay on one of the green banks of heaven watching the oarsmen dip their paddle in the crystal river. Why, it seems to me this moment as if St. Paul threw to us a pomologist's catalogue of the fruits growing in this great garden of Christ—love, joy, peace, patience, charity, brotherly kindness, gentleness, mercy—glorious fruit, enough to fill all the baskets of earth and heaven.

The Watered Garden.

Again, the church in my text is appropriately called a garden because it is thoroughly irrigated. No garden could prosper long without plenty of water. I have seen a garden in the midst of a desert, yet blooming and luxuriant. All around us were dearth and barrenness, but there were pipes, aqueducts, reaching from this garden up to the mountains, and through those aqueducts the water came streaming down and tossing up into beautiful fountains, until every root and leaf and flower was saturated. That is like the church. The church is a garden in the midst of a great desert of sin and suffering, but it is well irrigated, for "our eyes are unto the hills from whence cometh our help." From the mountains of God's strength there flow down rivers of gladness. "There is a river the stream whereof shall make glad the city of our God." Preaching the gospel is one of the aqueducts. The Bible is another. Baptism and the Lord's supper are aqueducts. Water to slake the thirst, water to wash the unclean, water tossed high up in the light of the Sun of Righteousness, showing us the rainbow around the throne. Oh, was there ever a garden so thoroughly irrigated! You know that the beauty of Versailles and Chatsworth depends very much upon the great supply of water. I came to the latter place, Chatsworth, one day when strangers are not to be admitted, but by an inducement which always seemed as potent with an Englishman as an American I got in, and then the gardener went far up above the stairs of stone and turned on the water. I saw it gleaming on the dry pavement, coming down from step to step until it came so near I could hear the musical rush, and all over the high, broad stairs it came, foaming, flashing, roaring down, until sunlight and water in gleesome wrestle tumbled at my feet. So it is with the church of God. Everything comes from above—pardon from above, joy from above, adoption from above, sanctification from above.

Hark! I hear the latch of the garden gate, and I look to see who is coming. I hear the voice of Christ, "I am come into my garden." I say: "Come in, O Jesus! We have been waiting for thee. Walk all through the paths. Look at the flowers; look at the fruit; pluck that which thou wilt for thyself." Jesus comes into the garden and up to that old man and touches him and says: "Almost home, father; not many more aches for thee. I will never leave thee; take courage a little longer, and I will steady thy tottering steps, and I will soothe thy troubles and give thee rest. Courage, old man." Then Christ goes up another garden path, and he comes to a soul in trouble and says: "Peace! All is well. I have seen thy tears. I have heard thy prayer. The sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he will preserve thy soul. Courage, O troubled spirit!"

Then I see Jesus going up another garden path, and I see great excitement among the leaves, and I hasten up that garden path to see what Jesus is doing there, and, lo! he is breaking off flowers, sharp and clean, from the stem, and I say, "Stop, Jesus; don't kill those beautiful flowers." He turns to me and says, "I have come into my garden to gather lilies, and I mean to take these up to a higher terrace, for the garden around my palace, and there I will plant them, and in better soil and in better air they shall put forth brighter leaves and sweeter redolence, and no frost shall touch them forever." And I looked up into his face and said: "Well, it is his garden, and he has a right to do what he will with it. Thy will be done"—the hardest prayer ever man made.

It has seemed as if Jesus Christ took the best. From many of your households the best one is gone. You know that she was too good for this world; she was the gentlest in her ways, the deepest in her affections, and when at last the sickness came you had no faith in medicines. You knew that the hour of parting had come, and when, through the rich grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, you surrendered that treasure you said: "Lord Jesus, take it. It is the best we have; take it. Thou art worthy!" The others in the household may have been of grosser mold. She was of the finest.

The heaven of your little ones will not be fairly begun until you get there. All the kindnesses shown them by immortals will not make them forget you. There they are, the radiant throngs that went out from your homes. I throw a kiss to the sweet darlings. They are all well now in the palace. The crippled child has a sound foot now. A little lame child says "Ma, will I be lame in heaven?" "No, my darling; you won't be lame in heaven." A little sick child says, "Ma, will I be sick in heaven?" "No, my dear; you won't be sick in heaven." A little blind child says, "Ma, will I be blind in heaven?" "No, my dear; you won't be blind in heaven. They are all well there."

I notice that the fine gardens sometimes have high fences around them and you cannot get in. It is so with a king's garden. The only glimpse you ever get of such a garden is when the king rides out in his splendid carriage. It is not so with this garden, this King's garden. I throw wide open the gate and tell you all to come in. No monopoly in religion. Whosoever will, may. Choose now between a desert and a garden. Many of you have tried the garden of this world's delight. You have found it has been a chagrin. So it was with Theodore Hook. He made all the world laugh. He makes us laugh now when we read his poems, but he could not make his own heart laugh. While in the midst of his festivities he confronted a looking glass, and he saw himself and said: "There, that is true! I look just as I am—done up in body, mind and purse." So it was of Shenstone, of whose garden I told you at the beginning of my sermon. He sat down amid those bowers and said: "I have lost my road to happiness. I am angry and envious and frantic and despise everything around me, just as it becomes a madman to do."

Heartsease.

O ye weary souls, come into Christ's garden today and pluck a little heartsease. Christ is the only rest and the only pardon for a perturbed spirit. Do you not think your chance has almost come? You men and women who have been waiting year after year for some good opportunity in which to accept Christ, but have postponed it 5, 10, 20, 30 years, do you not feel as if now your hour of deliverance and pardon and salvation had come? O man, what grudge hast thou against thy poor soul that thou wilt not let it be saved? I feel as if salvation must come today in some of your hearts.

Some years ago a vessel struck on the rocks. They had only one lifeboat. In that lifeboat the passengers and crew were getting ashore. The vessel had foundered and was sinking deeper and deeper, and that one boat could not take the passengers very swiftly. A little girl stood on the deck waiting for her turn to get into the boat. The boat came and went, came and went, but her turn did not seem to come. After awhile she could wait no longer, and she leaped on the taffrail and then sprang into the sea, crying to the boatman: "Save me next! Save me next!" Oh, how many have gone ashore into God's mercy, and yet you are clinging to the wreck of sin! Others have accepted the pardon of Christ, but you are in peril. Why not this moment make a rush for your immortal rescue, crying until Jesus shall hear you and heaven and earth ring with the cry: "Save me next! Save me next!" Now is the day of salvation! Now! Now!

This Sabbath is the last for some of you. It is about to sail away forever. Her bell tolls. The planks thunder back in the gangway. She shoves off. She floats out toward the great ocean of eternity. Wave farewell to your last chance for heaven. "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate!" Invited to revel in a garden, you die in a desert! May God Almighty, before it is too late, break that infatuation.

A VISIT TO "CLYDESIDE,"

The Farm on Which Major Grout Lives—Its Practical Operation.

In an interesting letter to the Farmer's Advocate Mr. G. W. Scarff writes as follows concerning a visit to the farm owned and operated by Maj. Josiah Grout:

I visited Maj. Grout at his home in Derby, to see for myself his farm establishment and describes it to the readers of the Advocate.

I thought to do this because he is a candidate for an office the farmers have often desired one of their number to occupy, and I seemed to me they should be informed about him as a farmer.

The farm buildings and stock one sees at Clyde side suggests those things belonging to good farming. There is probably not another similar establishment in Vermont, large or small conducted more economically than the Grout farm, with everything in such apple-pie order and of such a general farm-like character. It is an example of farming and farm life worthy of imitation, with which the proprietor may feel satisfied and of which the State may be proud. You see there no fancifully decorated features, but from house to barn, barn to shed and shed to the tool room, everywhere order and neatness. The whole plant is appointed for convenience and finished for comfort. As much as I ever saw, it is a farm with a place for everything and everything in its place.

CLYDESIDE,

as the home farm is called, consists of 650 acres near the street of Derby Centre Village, and is divided into tillage 160, pasture 400, and woodland 150 acres. The arable portion has been cultivated nearly a century and produces better now than ever, for when the major began here 14 years ago these acres sustained about 30 head of stock and they now furnish most of the different kinds of farm fodders for over 175 head, the result of intensive farming. The pasturage also has been greatly improved.

THE STOCK

consists of over 100 Jerseys, 20 horses, 50 sheep and about 30 swine. An average of 60 cows are continuously in milk, the annual butter yield of which runs about 250 pounds per cow.

The sheep are high grade Shropshire, and a fine looking flock. The pigs are fat and grunty for they are turned over to the butcher at seven months and 300 pounds. The horses, aside from the work team, are fine drivers but the owner is waiting for a buyer.

THE DAIRY,

70 in number, is a healthy, handsome looking lot of cows and as they stand in stabled rows of 25 each, dehorned and gentle, are a pleasant sight. They were tested for tuberculosis last October and found free from all traces of the dreaded disease, rendering them all the more desirable.

THE SUGAR ORCHARD

has 4200 trees, the sap of which is piped from convenient elevations to the sugar houses. The boiling is done at two places but the sugaring-off at one place only.

The main sugar house is a model of its kind 50x50 feet, wood shed at one end, evaporating room next, sap storage tanks next and a sugaring-off room at the other end completes the building. Each apartment is so appointed as to be commodious and convenient. The annual output of this sugar camp is about 15,000 pounds. This sugar place is probably the most extensive and best equipped of any in the State.

THE BRYANT PLACE,

is a small farm of about 40 acres which has undergone a great change since the Major bought it and many spears of grass and other crops grow on it now where one hardly ventured in sight a few years ago.

THE EATON PLACE,

Is another farm of about 100 acres which is rapidly changing from a barren waste to a fertile field. On this place is found the reservoir and springs that supply the village below with water.

When asked how he brought about such changes in his farms, he replied "by cultivating and fertilizing." Most of the fertilizer referred to he would make on the farm by feeding all crops and as nearly as possible returning to the soil, in converted form all that is taken from it. His idea is that the most practical crop in Vermont is grass, and cut early it is the best food for the dairy cow considering its cost; that nothing has been so valuable an aid to his farm work as the study he has made of how best to make grass grow on pasture and meadow and how to use it in keeping stock. A good second is corn as it begins to scar, fed dry or insiloed ears and stover together. An equally good feed is oats cut as soon as headed, and cured as hay.

He thinks the farmers should raise those crops, a combination of which constitutes a complete ration for the dairy cow, as such fodders are also good rations for other kinds of stock. In doing this, much mill feed can be avoided and thousands of dollars saved annually.

THE BUILDINGS.

are the home dwelling, an ancient two-story house, one of the first built in Derby, modernized and made a pleasant living place. A tenement dwelling in the same yard, occupied by hired help; a horse barn 30x50, another 20x40; a barn 30x50, another 40x130, another 40x60; a tool house 20x90; a scale and wagon house 30x60; a carriage and wood house 20x60 and a dairy, wagon and ice house 22x90.

The dairy house is equipped with steam power and supplied with creamery appliances as complete as any creamery for making butter. This establishment has made and put upon the market in a year 15,000 pounds of butter from the Clydeside dairy.

The tillage lands lies in beautiful level fields to the east of the buildings and from many an acre of it in many a season has been taken at two harvestings five tons of early cut hay. When an acre is suspected of yielding less than two and one-half tons, it is treated to the plow.

PERSONAL.

From six to ten or more men, according to the season, are employed at Clydeside and when at home, Maj. Grout associates himself with these men, directing and assisting in the different kinds of work. He rises at five in the morning and is occupied the day long about something connected with his farm property.

Now I have told you briefly about Josiah Grout as a farmer and must leave the reader at his leisure to supply many interesting features of his farm and the doing thereon. He has devoted his best efforts for fourteen years to building up his Clydeside farm home. He is one of the best informed and most practical farmers in the State, and really takes more pride in his farm and its belongings than in anything he has done or can do of a more public character. It is not the object of this writing to portray him as a lawyer, a legislator, an upright public servant, a gifted speaker or a brave, faithful soldier, but simply as a plain, practical farmer as he is at home in every day affairs where all his neighbors appreciate his conscientious ways, his simple habits and honest methods.

HEAVENLY MESSENGERS.

(From the Richmond Dispatch.)

How many weary hearts,
Tired of this life's alarms,
Find their sweetest comfort
In the clasp of childish arms?

Messengers straight from heaven
Are little children sent,
To teach us to love the Giver
Who treasures to us hath lent.

God help the sorrowing mothers
And fathers all over our land,
Whose children have joined the chorus,
Sung by the heavenly band.

Oh! the little cribs are empty,
Once so full of happy life,
While we are left in this weary world
To toil in its hurry and strife

But, when our work is over,
And death has sought its calm,
In heaven, once more around our necks,
Shall we feel the childish arms.

And then, how sweet the thought!
How glad we are to know
Once more we'll hear our darling say,
"Mamma, I love you so."

"MEANEST THING A WIFE CAN DO."

(From the Newport Express.)

Judge Thompson of Irasburgh during the short time he has been upon the bench, has presided at five murder trials in Vermont. Three of these have been for poisoning husbands by wives, to get rid of them. In every case there has been a man prowling round ready to marry the widow. There is a case of this kind now waiting trial in Washington county, with the wife and paramour in jail. These cases occur in both high and low life, but more often among the people from the back towns who are ignorant and have no knowledge of the modern scientific means of detecting poison taken in the system. The meanest thing a wife can do in this life is to fall in love with another man, and then with his aid, take the life of the man she has sworn to be true to. If these ignorant people knew how easy it is to detect poison in the human system and secure a conviction, they would be more cautious, and wives would be less likely to try this method of getting rid of their husbands. Here is a chance to do some missionary work in Vermont, by properly educating this class of people, who live as a rule in the back towns.