

THE REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Text: "There are three-score queens."—Solomon's Song, vi., 8.

So Solomon, by one stroke, set forth the imperial character of a true Christian woman. She is not a slave, not a hireling, not a subordinate, but a queen; and in my text Solomon sees sixty of these helping to make up the royal pageant of Jesus. In a former sermon I showed you that crown and courtly attendants and imperial wardrobe were not necessary to make a queen; but that graces of the heart and will give coronation to any woman.

Backed to the throne of grace, and in the dominion which she has already won, I began an enumeration of some of her rights, and this morning I resume the subject.

In the first place, woman has the special and the superior right—not accorded to any man—of being clothed with grace. It is the woman's position washigher in the world than man's, and that although she had often been denied the right of suffrage, she always did vote and always would vote by her influence; and that her chief right ought to be that she should have grace rightly to be in the dominion which she has already won.

What land, what street, what house has not felt the smiting of these three-ten of thousands of sick beds? What shall we do with them? Shall man, with his rough hand and clumsy foot, go stumbling around the sick room, trying to soothe the distracted nerves and alleviate the pains of the tossing patient?

The young man at some length scoff at the idea of being under maternal influence, but at the first blast of the typhoid fever on his cheek he says: "Where is mother?"

Walter Scott wrote partly in satire and partly in compliment when he said: "O woman, in our hours of ease, Uncertain, art thou hard to please; When pain and anguish wring the brow, A ministering angel thou."

I think the most pathetic passage in all the Bible is the description of a man who went out to the harvest field of Shunammite and got sunstruck—throwing his hands on his temples and crying out: "Oh, my head! my head!"

And then the record is: "He sat on his knees till noon, and there did not move." It is a thing to be ill away from home in a hotel, once in a while man coming in to look at you, holding their hand over their mouth for fear they will catch the contagion.

How roughly they turn you in bed. How loudly they talk. How long they stay in the room of home. I knew one such who went away from one of the brightest of women for several weeks' business absence at the West.

A telegram came at midnight that he was on his death bed, far away from home. By express train dispatchers were sent westward; but they went too late. He feared not to die, but he was in agony to live until his family got there.

He tried to write the doctor to make him live a little while longer. "But the pulses flutter, the eyes closed, and the heart stopped. The express trains met in the midnight; wife and daughters going westward—lifeless remains of husband and father coming eastward. O, it was a fearful day, a fearful day, a fearful spectacle! When we are sick, we want to be back at home. When the time comes for us to die, we want to die at home. The room may be very humble, and the faces that look into ours may be very plain, but we want to be there! Loving hands to bathe the temples. Loving voices to speak good cheer. Loving lips to read the comforting promises of Jesus.

In our last dreadful war men cast the cannon-men fashioned the musketry; men cried to the hosts: "Forward march!" and their battalions on the sharp edges of the enemy, crying: "Charge! charge!" but woman scraped the lint; woman administered the cordials; woman watched by the dying couch; woman was the last message to the home circle; woman was the solitary burial attended by herself and four men with a spade.

We greeted the general home with brass bands, and triumphal arches, and wild huzzas; but the story is too good to be written anywhere, save in the annals of heaven, of Mrs. Brady, who was among the sick in the swamps of the Chichahominy; of Annie Ross, in the cooper shop hospital; of Margaret Breckinridge, who came to the front who had been for weeks with their wounds unhealed; of the soldiers who went to the ground, and when she turned them over those that had an arm left waved it and filled the air with their "hurrah!" of Mrs. Hodge, who came from Chicago with blankets and with pillows, and the faces that look into ours may be very plain, but we want to be there! Loving hands to bathe the temples. Loving voices to speak good cheer. Loving lips to read the comforting promises of Jesus.

Men will sleep and women will watch. Again, woman has the superior right to take care of the poor. There are hundreds and thousands of them all over the land. There is a kind of work that men cannot do for the poor. Here comes a group of little barefoot children to the door of the Dorcas Society.

Which of these directors of banks would know how many yards it would take to make that little girl a dress? Which of these masculine hands could fit a hat to that little girl's head? Which of these men would know how to tie a bow on a girl's shoes? Man sometimes gives his charity in a rough way, and it falls like the fruit of a tree in the east, which fruit comes down so heavily that it breaks the soil of the man who is trying to gather it. But woman glides so softly into the house of destitution, and finds out all the sorrows of the place, and puts so quietly the donation on the table, that all the family come out on the front steps as she enters, expecting that from under her shawl she will carry out two wings and go right up toward heaven, from whence she seems to have come down.

Oh, Christian young woman! if you could make yourself happy and win the blessings of Christ, and then go down the destitute. A loaf of bread or a bundle of socks may make a homely load to carry, but the angels of God will come out to watch, and the Lord Almighty will give his messenger a charge, saying: "Look after that woman. Carry her with your wings and shelter her from all harm." and while you are seated in the house of destitution and suffering, the little ones around the room will whisper: "Who is she? Ain't she beautiful?" and if you are sitting on the roof, and rolling over the rotten stairs, the angel chant that shook Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." Can you tell me why a Christian woman going down among the haunts of iniquity on a Christian errand never meets with any indignity? I stood in the chapel of Helen Chalmers, the daughter of the celebrated Dr. Chalmers, the most abandoned part of the city of Edinburgh, and I said to her as I looked out upon the fearful surroundings of that place: "Do you come here nights to look a service?" "O, yes," she said, "I can be possible that you never meet with an insult while performing

this Christian errand?" "No, never," she said, "never." That young woman who has her father by her side walking down the street, an armed police at each corner, is not so well defended as that Christian woman who goes forth on gospel work into the haunts of the city, carrying the Bible and bread, and with the red right arm of his wrath omnipotent, would tear to pieces any one who should offer indignity. He would smite him with lightning, and down him with floods, and smite him with earthquakes, and damn him with eternal indignation. Some one said: "I dislike very much to see that Christian woman teaching those bad boys in the mission school. I am afraid for her." "I am afraid," said another man, "I am afraid, too." "I am afraid," said the first, "I am afraid they will use violence before they leave the place." "Ah," said the other man, "I am not afraid of that. What I am afraid of is that if any of those boys should use a bad word in that presence the other boys would tear him to pieces and kill him on the spot." That woman is best sheltered who is sheltered by the Lord God Almighty, and you need never fear going anywhere where God tells you to go.

It seems as if the Lord had ordained woman for an especial work in the solicitation of the poor. Backed to the throne of grace, there is no flour, and by stores in which there is no fire, and by wardrobes in which there are no clothes, a woman is irresistible; passing on her errand, God says to her: "You go into that banqueting hall, and get the man who is sheltered by the Lord God Almighty, and you need never fear going anywhere where God tells you to go."

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A man was dying; and he said to his wife, "Rebecca, you wouldn't let me have family prayers; and you laughed about all that, and you got me away into worldliness; and now I am going to die, and my fate is sealed, and you are the cause of my ruin!" O woman, what knowest thou, but thou canst destroy thy husband? Are there not some here who have kindly influences at home? Are there not some here who have wandered far away from God, who can remember the Christian influences in the early home? Do not despise those influences, my brother. If you die without Christ, what will you do with your mother's prayers, with your wife's importunities, with your sister's entreaties? What will you do with the letters they used to write to you, with the memory of those days when they attended you so kindly in times of sickness? Oh, there is but one strand holding you from floating off on that dark sea. I would just like this morning to take hold of that strand and pull you to the beach! For the sake of your wife's God, for the sake of your mother's God, for the sake of your daughter's God, for the sake of your sister's God, come this day and be saved.

I wish to say that one of the specific rights of woman is, through the grace of Christ, finally to reach Heaven! Mary, Christ's mother, in Heaven; Elizabeth Fry in Heaven; Charlotte Elizabeth in Heaven; the noblest of women, the Countess of Huntingdon—who sold her splendid jewels to build chapels—in Heaven; while a great many others who have never been heard of on earth or known but little, have gone into the rest and peace of heaven. What a rest! What a change! To take hold of that strand with no fire and one window, the glass broken out, and the aching side, and worn out eyes, to the "house of many mansions!" No more stitching until 12 at night, no more thrusting of the thumb by the employer through the fingers, no more of that sort of quite right. Plenty of bread at last. Heaven for aching heads. Heaven for broken hearts. Heaven for anguish bitten frames. No more sitting up until midnight for the coming of the staggering steps. No more sharp, keen, bitter curses. Some of you will have no rest in this world. It will be toiled and struggle and suffering all the way up. You will have to stand at your door fighting back the waves of your own hand, red with ceaseless. But God has a crown for you. I want to realize this morning that he is now making it, and whenever you weep a tear he sets another gem in that crown; whenever you have a pang of body or soul, or push another gem into that tiara there will be no room for an other splendor, and God will say to his angel: "The crown is done; let her up that she may wear it." And as the Lord of righteousness puts the crown upon the head of the victor, so he will crown the faithful. "Who is she?" and Christ will say: "I will tell you who she is. She is the one that came up out of great tribulation, and had her robe washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. And then God will appoint her to be a ruler over the principalities of heaven to sit at the feast, and the tables will blush with the best clusters from the vineyards of God, and crimson with the twelve manner of fruits from the Tree of Life; and from the fountains of the rock will flash the golden tankards; and the old harpers of heaven will sit there, making music with their harps; and Christ will point you out, amid the celebrities of heaven, saying: 'She suffered with me on earth, now we are going to be glorified together. And the banqueter, no longer able to hold their peace, will break forth with congratulation: "Hail! hail!" And there will be handwritings on the wall—not such as struck the Persian nobles in the burning of the temple, but such as will be written in blazing capitals of light, and love, and victory: "God hath wiped away all tears from all faces!"

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