TALMAGE'S SERMON.

POINTS THE WAY TO LIFE OF USEFULNESS.

Destiny May Be Changed by a Fitly Spoken Sentence—Sympathy for the Troubled Like Apples of Gold in Baskets of Silver.

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In this discourse Dr. Talmage shows an open door for any one who desires to be useful and illustrates how a little thing may decide one's destiny. The text is Proverbs xxv., 11 (revised version), "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver."

A filigree basket loaded with fruit is put before us in the text. What is ordinarily translated "pictures" ought to be "baskets." Here is a silver network basket containing ripe and golden apples, pippins or russets. You know how much apples are worth through the openings of a basket of silver network. You have seen such a basket of fruit on many a table. It wheels the appetite as well as excites the vision. Solomon was evidently fond of apples. He cannot be so much spoken of in connection with women. While he was growing ripe in years and in experience and in scope and reach of mind, he did not find that apples were less luscious. Apples in old age are as much apples as they were in youth. Some of them when in maturity are more luscious than in the days of their greenness. Apples by the wayside, apples in the garden of Eden, apples in the orchard, apples in the palace, apples in the cottage, apples by the sea, apples in the mountain, apples in the valley, apples in the wilderness, apples in the city, apples in the country, apples in all ages of the world, apples in all climes, apples in all lands, apples in all tongues, apples in all hearts, apples in all memories, apples in all imaginations, apples in all dreams, apples in all songs, apples in all poetry, apples in all eloquence, apples in all history, apples in all religion, apples in all heaven, apples in all eternity—apples, apples, apples!

You see I am in an enthusiasm on one word. I only mention it to show you how I have been fascinated with the attractiveness of the metaphor in the text. Solomon, in the development of Hebrew literature, stands where Watteau stands in the development of French painting, Titian in Venetian painting, Rubens in Flemish painting, Leland in English poetry, Homer in Grecian poetry, Dante in Italian poetry, Milton in English poetry, Goethe in German poetry, Victor Hugo in modern French poetry. Solomon stands in the midst of the centuries of Hebrew literature as the chief of all poets, and he is the chief of all poets in the use of the word "apple." Now, I am going to show you by two or three illustrations how much apples are worth.

Choosing an Occupation.

I find you when in a state of perplexity in every man's history. It is the time when he is uncertain as to the question of profession or occupation. He supposed he was in the middle life, because they do not want any more treats and he some of the aged, because they fear being crowded off and their places being taken by the younger men. Hear the offers of work and unfair examinations of young men by old doctors of young ministers by old ministers. Hear some of the old merchants talk about the young merchants. Trowels and hammers and scales often are symbols of new trowels and new hammers and new scales. Then it is so difficult to get introduced. How long a time has many a physician had his sign out before he got a call for his services, and the attorney before he got a case? Who wants to take the life of his family two young physician who got his diploma in the spring and who may not have a penny from graduating or to risk the obtaining of a verdict for $20,000 to an attorney who only three years ago read the first page of Blackstone?

The Need of Courage.

Then there comes a time when all the elements of success are against you except pluck and grit. If you are naturally timid give them that and you have everything. In illustrating this one word shows them that courage is that which is antagonistic to anything terrific or terrible. It is him in the arena. Decaying but to fight and to die. Certain Hannibal had to climb and when a land-fast Walter Scott had to work on, and that the greatest poet would ever chant Milton was blind. He is one of the greatest musicians of all ages. Thirlwall, the historian, and Dugald Stewart, in some respects the greatest merchant that America ever saw began in his small office dining on bread and cheese behind the counter in a snatched interregnum between customers, he opening the store and closing it, weeping it out with his own hands and being his own errand boy. Show them that within ten minutes' walk there are stores, shops and factories and homes where as brave deeds have been done as those of Leonidas at Thermopylae as those of Horatius at the bridge, as that of Colin Campbell at Balaklava. Tell them what Napoleon said to his staff officer when that officer declared a certain military attempt to be impossible. "Impossible," said the great commander. "Impossible is the adjective of fools."

Show them also that what is true in worldly directions is more true in spiritual directions. Call the roll of prophets apostles and martyrs and private Christian from the time the world began and ask them to mention one man of whom greatly good or great thing was not depreciated and flailed and made a laughing stock. Racks and prisons and whips and shipwrecks and axes of beheadment did their worst, yet the heroes were more than conquerors. With such things you will illustrate that word "courage," and they will go out from your presence to start anew and right, challenging all earth and hell to the combat.

Words of Comfort.

That word "courage" fitly spoken with compressed lips and stout grip of the hand and an intelligent flash of the eye—well, the finest apples that ever thumped on the ground in an autumnal orchard and were placed in the most beautiful basket of silver network before keen appetites could not be more attractive.

Furthermore a comforting word fitly spoken is a beautiful thing. No one but God could give the inventory of sick beds and bereft homes and broken hearts. We ought not to let a day pass without a visit or a letter or a message or a prayer consolatory. You could call five minutes on your way to the factory, you could leave a half hour earlier at the afternoon and fill a mission of solace. You could brighten Sickroom with one chosen hour you could send your carriage and give an afternoon airing to an invalid on a neighboring street. You could loan a book with some chapters most adapted to some particular misfortune. Go home today and make out a list of things you can do that will show sympathetic thoughtfulness for the hardly bestead. How many dark places you might illumine! How many tears you could stop, or, if already started, you could wipe away. How much like Jesus Christ you might get to be! So sympathetic was he with beggary, so helpful was he for the fallen, and so stirred was he at the sight of dropsy, epilepsy, paralysis and ophthalmia that whether he saw it by the roadside, or at the sea beach, or at the mineral baths of Bethesda, he offered relief. Cultivate genuine sympathy. Christlike sympathy. You cannot successfully dramatize it. False sympathy Alexander Pope sketches in two lines:

> Before her face her handkerchief she spread
> To hide the flood of tears she did not shed.

A Word of Warning.

So also is a word of warning. A ship may sail out of harbor when the sea has no fear in its ripple. But what a foolhardy ship company would be that made no provision for rocks winds and wrathful seas. How many souls will get each a different belief and will be lost in an ocean of infidelity because no one ever told them the way of life! Many a man has been ruined for this world and the next because no one ever told him of the danger. Many a man has been destroyed for eternity because no one ever told him of the danger. Many a man has been destroyed for eternity because no one ever told him of the danger. Many a man has been destroyed for eternity