

# CHRISTIAN HERALD

AND SIGNS OF OUR TIMES

OFFICE: BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK.

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VOLUME 21.—NUMBER 12.

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NEW YORK, MARCH 23, 1898.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.



THE KING'S DAUGHTERS' SEWING CIRCLE MAKING GARMENTS FOR THE DESTITUTE CUBANS. (See Page 250).  
With Portraits of (1) Mrs. Margaret Bottome, President; (2) Mrs. Mary L. Dickinson, Gen. Secretary and Editor "The Silver Cross," and (3) Mrs. Isabella C. Davis, Cor. Secretary.



THE METROPOLITAN PULPIT



People Who Have Lost Their Way.

A Sermon by Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage, D.D., } And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water and gave the lad drink.



DORNING breaks upon Beer-sheba. There is an early stir in the house of old Abraham. There has been trouble among the domestics. Hagar, an assistant in the household, and her son, a brisk lad of sixteen years, have become impudent and insolent, and Sarah, the mistress of the household, puts her foot down very hard and says that they will have to leave the premises. They are packing up now. Abraham, knowing that the journey before his servant and her son will be very long and across desolate places, in the kindness of his heart sets about putting up some bread and a bottle with water in it. It is a very plain lunch that Abraham provides, but I warrant you there would have been enough of it had they not lost their way. "God be with you!" said old Abraham as he gave the lunch to Hagar and a good many charges as to how she should conduct the journey. Ishmael, the boy, I suppose, bounded away in the morning light. Boys always like a change. Poor Ishmael! He has no idea of the disasters that are ahead of him. Hagar gives one long, lingering look on the familiar place where she had spent so many happy days, each scene associated with the pride and joy of her heart, young Ishmael.

The scorching noon comes on. The air is stifling and moves across the desert with insufferable suffocation. Ishmael, the boy, begins to complain and lies down, but Hagar rouses him up, saying nothing about her own weariness or the sweltering heat; for mothers can endure anything. Trudge, trudge, trudge. Crossing the dead level of the desert, how wearily and slowly the miles slip! A tamarind that seemed hours ago to stand only just a little ahead, inviting the travelers to come under its shadow, now is as far off as ever, or seemingly so. Night drops upon the desert, and the travelers are pillowless. Ishmael, very weary, I suppose instantly falls asleep. Hagar, as the shadows of the night begin to lap over each other—Hagar hugs her weary boy to her bosom and thinks of the fact that it is her fault that they are in the desert. A star looks out, and every falling tear it kisses with a sparkle. A wing of wind comes over the hot earth and lifts the locks from the fevered brow of the boy. Hagar sleeps fitfully, and in her dreams travels over the weary day, and half awakes her son by crying out in her sleep, "Ishmael! Ishmael!"

And so they go on day after day and night after night, for they have lost their way. No path in the shifting sands; no sign in the burning sky. The sack empty of the flour; the water gone from the bottle. What shall she do? As she puts her fainting Ishmael under a stunted shrub of the arid plain, she sees the blood-shot eye, and feels the hot hand, and watches the blood bursting from the cracked tongue, and there is a shriek in the desert of Beer-sheba, "We shall die! We shall die!" Now, no mother was ever made stronger of heart to hear her son cry in vain for a drink. Here tofore she had cheered her son by pinning to a speedy end of the journey, and even smiled in on him when she had dropped and smothered. Now there is nothing to do but place him under a shrub and be true to it. She had thought that she would sit there and wait until the spirit of her boy would have flown forever, and then she would create out her own life on her aching heart. But as the boy begins to cry for water, she is a prey of doubt and struggle to do something, and then his mother to say, "Hagar, the mistress of the household, she puts her foot down very hard and says that they will have to leave the premises. They are packing up now. Abraham, knowing that the journey before his servant and her son will be very long and across desolate places, in the kindness of his heart sets about putting up some bread and a bottle with water in it. It is a very plain lunch that Abraham provides, but I warrant you there would have been enough of it had they not lost their way. "God be with you!" said old Abraham as he gave the lunch to Hagar and a good many charges as to how she should conduct the journey. Ishmael, the boy, I suppose, bounded away in the morning light. Boys always like a change. Poor Ishmael! He has no idea of the disasters that are ahead of him. Hagar gives one long, lingering look on the familiar place where she had spent so many happy days, each scene associated with the pride and joy of her heart, young Ishmael.

the angel pointing to a well of water, where she fills the bottle for the lad. Thank God! Thank God!

I learn from this Oriental scene, in the first place, what a sad thing it is when people do not know their place, and get too proud for their business! Hagar was an assistant in that household, but she wanted to rule there. She ridiculed and jeered until her son, Ishmael, got the same tricks. She dashed out her own happiness, and threw Sarah into a great fret; and if she had stayed much longer in that household she would have upset calm Abraham's equilibrium. My friends, one-half of the trouble in the world to-day comes from the fact that people do not know their place, or, finding their place, will not stay in it. When we come into the world there is always a place ready for us. A place for Abraham. A place for Sarah. A place for Hagar. A place for Ishmael. A place for you and a place for me.

Our first duty is to find our sphere; our second is, to keep it. We may be born in a sphere far off from the one for which God finally intends us. Sixtus V. was born on the low ground, and was a swineherd; God called him up to wave a sceptre. Ferguson spent his early days in looking after sheep; God called him up to look after stars, and be a shepherd watching the flocks of light on the hillsides of heaven. Hogarth began by engraving pewter pots; God raised him to stand in the enchanted realm of a painter. The shoemaker's bench held Bloomfield for a little while; but God raised him to sit in the chair of a philosopher and Christian scholar. The soap-boiler of London could not keep his son in that business, for God had decided that Hawley was to be one of the greatest astronomers of England.

On the other hand we may be born in a sphere a little higher than that for which God intends us. We may be born in a castle, and play in a costly conservatory, and feed high-bred pointers, and angle for gold-fish in artificial ponds, and be familiar with princes; yet God may better have fitted us for a carpenter's shop, or dentist's forceps, or a weaver's shuttle, or a blacksmith's forge. The great thing is to find just the sphere for which God intended us, and then to occupy that sphere, and occupy it forever. Here is a man God fashioned to make a plough. There is a man God fashioned to make a constitution. The man who makes the plow is just as honorable as the man who makes the constitution. There is a woman who was made to fashion a robe, and yonder is one intended to be a queen and wear it. It seems to me that in the one case as in the other, God appoints the sphere, and the needle is just as respectable in his sight as the sceptre. I do not know but that the world would long ago have been saved if some of the men out of the ministry were in it, and some of those who are in it were out of it. I really think that one-half the world may be divided into two quarters—those who have not found their sphere, and those who having found it, are not willing to stay there. How many are struggling for a position a little higher than that which God intended them. The bondswoman wants to be mistress. Hagar keeps crowding Sarah. The small wheel of a watch which beautifully went treading its golden pathway wants to be the balance-wheel, and the sparrow with chaparrin drops into the brook because it cannot, like the eagle, cut a circle under the sun.

Again, I find in this Oriental scene a lesson of sympathy with woman when she goes forth trudging in the desert. What a great change it was for this Hagar! There was the tent and all the surroundings of Abraham's house, beautiful and luxuriant, no doubt. Now she is going out into the hot sands of the desert. Oh, what a change it was! And in our day we often see the wheel of fortune turn. Here is some one who lived in the very bright home of her father. She had

everything possible to administer to her happiness—plenty at the table, music in the drawing-room, welcome at the door. She is led forth into life by some one who cannot appreciate her. A dissipated soul comes and takes her out in the desert. Cruelties blot out all the lights of that home circle. Harsh words wear out her spirits. The high hope that shone out over the marriage altar while the ring was being set, and the vows given, and the benediction pronounced, have all faded with the orange blossoms, and there she is to-day broken-hearted, thinking of past joys and present desolation and coming anguish. Hagar in the wilderness!

Here is a beautiful home. You cannot think of anything that can be added to it. For years there has not been the suggestion of a single trouble. Bright and happy children fill the house with laughter and song. Books to read. Pictures to look at. Lounges to rest on. Cup of domestic joy full and running over. Dark night drops. Pillow hot. Pulses flutter. Eyes close. And the foot whose well-known steps on the door-sill brought the whole household out at eventide crying: "Father's coming!" will never sound on the door-sill again. A long, deep grief ploughed through all that brightness of domestic life. Paradise lost. Widowhood. Hagar in the wilderness!

How often is it we see the weak arm of woman conscripted for this battle with the rough world. Who is she, going down the street in the early light of the morning, pale with exhausting work, not half slept out with the slumbers of last night, tragedies of suffering written all over her face, her lustreless eyes looking far ahead, as though for the coming of some other trouble? Her parents called her Mary, or Bertha, or Agnes, on the day when they held her up to the font and the Christian minister sprinkled on the infant's face the washings of a holy baptism. Her name is changed now. I hear it in the shuffle of the worn-out shoes. I see it in the figure of the faded calico. I find it in the lineaments of the woe-begone countenance. Not Mary, nor Bertha, nor Agnes, but Hagar in the wilderness. May God have mercy upon woman in her toils, her struggles, her hardships, her desolation, and may the great heart of divine sympathy inclose her forever!

Again, I find in this Oriental scene the fact that every mother leads forth tremendous destinies.

You say: "That isn't an unusual scene, a mother leading her child by the hand." Who is it that she is leading? Ishmael, you say. Who is Ishmael? A great nation is to be founded—a nation so strong that it is to stand for thousands of years against all the armies of the world. Egypt and Assyria thunder against it, but in vain. Gaulus brings up his army, and his army is smitten. Alexander decides upon a campaign, brings up his hosts, and dies. For a long while that nation monopolizes the learning of the world. It is the nation of the Arabs. Who founded it? Ishmael, the lad that Hagar led into the wilderness. She had no idea she was leading forth such destinies. Neither does any mother. You pass along the street and see and pass boys and girls who will yet make the earth quake with their influence.

My mind leaps forward thirty years from now, and I find myself looking through the wickets of a prison. I see a face scarred with every crime. His chin on his open palm, his elbow on his knee, a picture of despair. As I open the wicket, he starts and I hear his chain clank. The jail-keeper tells me that he has been in there now three times—first for theft, then for arson, now for murder. He steps upon the trap door, the rope is fastened to his neck, the plank falls, his body swings into the air, his soul swings off into eternity. Who is he, and where is he? This afternoon playing kite on the city commons. Mother, you are now hoisting a throne or forging a chain; you are kindling a star or digging a dungeon.

A Christian mother a good many years ago sat teaching lessons of religion to her child, and he drank in those lessons. She never knew that Lamphier would come forth and establish the Fulton street prayer meeting, and by one meeting revolutionize the devotions of the whole earth and thrill the eternities with his Christian influence. Lamphier said it was his mother who brought him to Jesus Christ.

She never had an idea that she was leading forth such destinies. But oh, when she see a mother reckless of her influence rattling on toward destruction, Garland for the sacrifice with unseemly mirth a godlessness, dancing on down to perdition taking her children in the same direction preparing them for a life of frivolity death of shame and dishonor, and eternity of disaster, I cannot help I say: "There they go—there they go—Hagar and Ishmael!"

I tell you there are wilder deserts than Beer-sheba in many of the fashionable circles of this day. Dissipated parents leading dissipated children. Avaricious parents leading avaricious children. Prayerless parents leading prayerless children. They go through every street up every dark alley, into every cell along every highway. Hagar and Ishmael! and while I pronounce their name it seems like the moaning of the desert wind: "Hagar and Ishmael!"

I learn one more lesson from this Oriental scene, and that is, that every wilderness has a well in it. Hagar and Ishmael gave up to die. Hagar's heart sank with her as she heard her child cry: "Water! Water! Water!" "A she says, "my darling, there is no water. This is a desert." And then God's angel said from the cloud: "What aileth thee, Hagar?" And she looked up and him pointing to a well of water, where he filled the bottle for the lad. Blessed God, that there is in every wilderness a well, if you only know how to find fountains for all these thirsty souls. On that last day, on that great day of our feast, Jesus stood and cried: "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." All these other fountains I find are mere mirages of the desert. Here I tell you of the elixir of everlasting life bursting from the "Rock of Ages" and that drinking that water you shall never get old, and you will never be thirsty, and you will never die. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the water." Ah! here is a man who says: "I have been looking for that fountain a great while but can't find it." And here is some one else who says: "I believe all you say, but I have been trudging along in the wilderness and can't find the fountain." Do you know the reason? I will tell you. You never looked in the right direction.

Look up, where Hagar looked. She never would have found the fountain all, but when she heard the voice of the angel she looked up, and she saw the finger pointing to the supply. And O soul to-day with one earnest, intense prayer you would only look up to Christ, he would point you down to the supply in the wilderness. "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved; for I am God and there is none else!" Look! Look! Look! Hagar looked!

Have you seen the Nyctanthes? It is a beautiful flower, but it gives very little fragrance until after sunset. The sun pours its richness on the air. And the grace of the Gospel that I commend to you now, while it may be very sweet during the day of prosperity, it pours forth its richest aroma after sundown. A time will be sundown with you and me ere awhile. When you come to go out of this world, will it be a desert march, or will you be drinking at a fountain?

A converted Hindoo was dying, and his heathen comrades came around him and tried to comfort him by reading some of the pages of their theology; but he would not hear it, as much as to say: "I don't want to hear it." Then they called in a heathen priest, and he said: "If you will only recite the Numtra, it will deliver you from hell." He waved his hand, as much as to say: "I don't want to hear that." Then they said: "Call on Juggernaut." He shook his head, as much as to say: "I can't do that." Then they thought perhaps he was too weary to speak, and they said: "Now, if you can't say 'Juggernaut,' think of him." He shook his head, as much as to say: "No, no, no!" Then they bent down to his pillow, and they said: "In what will you trust?" His eyes lighted up with the very glories of the celestial sphere, as he cried out, rallying his dying energies: "Jesus." Oh, one hour to the fountain! I will tell you the whole story in two or three sentences. Pardon for all sin. Comfort for all trouble. Light for all darkness. And every wilderness has a well in it.