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→*SERMONS*←

FORGOTTEN VOWS.*

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Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?—JOHN xviii., 26.

THE character of Peter is well worthy of study. He was a man of large mental calibre, strong principle and firm faith. Naturally he was a leader among the disciples. No one of the twelve was more ready with counsel, or more wise, or quick to act on his convictions, even against strong opposition.

His failing was in the direction of his strength. He was a man of impulse, prone to ask or reply or promise whatever was in his heart with no thought of difficulty or danger. When, in the midst of the sea, the disciples were affrighted, supposing they saw a spirit, Peter heard the words: "It is I, be not afraid," and on the impulse of the moment cried out: "Lord, suffer me to come to Thee on the water." His second impulse was of fear, and he cried: "Lord, save or I perish." Again on the night before the betrayal, when Jesus girding Himself with a towel took water to wash the disciples' feet, Peter, all impulse, exclaimed: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." A second impulse as Christ's meaning dawned on him, expressed itself in the prayer: "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." The same impulsive disposition led him to say: "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." "Though all men should be offended yet will I not

*A Sermon after Communion.

what do we find? Very few home tables spread with God's good gifts, on which His blessing is invoked; very few family altars, where the Heavenly Father is worshipped; very few hours in the year, when the children are gathered together and taught the three most important Rs: reverence, righteousness and religion; comparatively few homes in which the old-fashioned word, "train" ("Train up a child") is not displaced by modern substitutes, such as coax, hire, bribe, frighten, wheedle, or else young America is left to do his own training and often train his parents also.

Parents cannot do the work which the Creator has placed upon them by proxy. They cannot commit the souls of those for whom they are responsible, to the Sunday-school teacher or to any other outside instruction. How shall they give an account at last for those moments spent in the petty employments and amusements of daily life, while the soul-culture of their little ones was neglected? Do they imagine that the divine life will grow in the young heart, without their nurture and watch care? Do they expect that their dear ones will develop Christian characters without their agency? Will they obey God, if they are not first taught to obey human authority?

But again: This secular spirit and tendency have thoroughly permeated our *school system*. Religious and periodical instruction have quite generally given place to public schools, which are conducted on the theory that the state has nothing to do with moral and religious instruction. While an excellent secular education is given in these schools, which will stand comparison with that given by any government on earth to its young, it is still but a *partial education* and the most important part is left out of it. The word education means a drawing out, a development, and it refers to the whole man, not merely to the intellectual powers. An education which does not reach the will, the heart, and the conscience is sadly defective and may be worse than useless. In my view, that *education*, therefore, which neglects the moral and spiritual nature of childhood, whether of a

private or public character, is a miserable substitute, and a shameful misnomer, and that teacher, who himself lacks moral and religious character is not a fit instructor of the young, and the state that is satisfied with such partial instruction is doing itself and its citizens serious injury.

Revolutionary Religion.

BY T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D. (PRESBYTERIAN).

The religion of the Bible will make a revolution in the family. Those things that are wrong in the family circle will be overthrown by it, while justice and harmony will take the place. The husband will be the head of the household only when he is fit to be. I know a man who spends all the money he makes in drink, as well as all the money that his wife makes; do you tell me that he is the head of that household? If the wife have more nobility, more consistency, more of all that is right, she shall have the supremacy. You say that the Bible says that the wife is to be subject to the husband. I know it. But that is a husband, not a masculine caricature. There is no human or divine law that makes a woman subordinate to a man unworthy of her. When Christianity comes into a domestic circle it gives the dominancy to that one who is the most worthy of it. As religion comes in at the front door, mirth and laughter will not go out of the back door. It will not hobble the children's feet. John will laugh just as loud, and George will jump higher than he ever did before. It will steal from the little ones neither ball, nor bat, nor hoop, nor kite. It will establish a family altar. Angels will hover over it. Ladders of light will reach down to it. The glory of Heaven will stream upon it. The books of remembrance will record it and tides of everlasting blessedness will flow from it. Not such a family altar as you may have seen, where the prayer is long; and a long chapter is read with tedious explanation and the exercise keeps on until the children's knees are sore and their backs ache and their patience is lost and for the seventh time they have counted all the rounds in the chair; but I mean a

family altar such as you may have seen in your father's house. You may have wandered far off in the paths of sin and darkness, but you have never forgotten that family altar where father and mother knelt importuning God for your soul. That is a memory that a man never gets over. There will be a hearty, joyful family altar in every domestic circle. You will not have to go far to find Hannah rearing her Samuel for the temple, or a grandmother

Lois instructing her young Timothy in the knowledge of Christ, or Mary and Martha and Lazarus gathered in fraternal and sisterly affection, or a table at which Jesus sits, as that of Zaccheus, or a home in which Jesus dwells, as in the house of Simon the tanner. The religion of Jesus Christ coming into the domestic circle will overthrow all jealousies, all janglings, and peace and order and holiness will take possession of the home.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CAUSE

LIGHT ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

BY ALFRED H. MOMENT, D.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), BROOKLYN, N. Y.

May 1,

Israel in Egypt.—EXODUS i., 6-14.

1887.

I. The time Israel was in Egypt. This is positively declared in Ex. xii., 40 (Rev. Ver.), to be 430 years. Paul's statement (Gal. iii., 17) is in harmony with Ex. xii., 40. When Abraham came to Canaan, the covenant was made with him. This covenant secured from God certain promises which were re-affirmed to Isaac and Jacob. This may be called the "Dispensation of the Promise." In Gen. chapter xii. to xlvi., 4, we have the Scripture covering the period. In the next verse—xlvi., 5—we find Jacob and his family passing into Egypt. Then it was that the "dispensation of promise" terminated. At once commenced a period which was spent out of the *land of promise* and in the *land of bondage* and ultimately requiring a law to be promulgated. Paul's 430 years are reckoned from the end of the Dispensation of Promise (Gen. xlvi., 5), and not from the beginning (Gen. xii.). Hence the harmony in Ex. xii., 40, and Gal. iii., 17. In Gen. xv., 13, and Acts vii., 6, the time is stated to be 400 years. The reason for this is that in each case the privilege is taken of using a round number.

II. Israel fruitful in Egypt. Vs. 6, 7. From 70 souls, the posterity of Jacob increased so as to fill the land. (1) We have here the fulfilment of the divine promise (Gen. xii., 2; xv., 5; xvii., 6; xlvi., 3). In a spiritual sense, this promise of fruitfulness is still going on (Gal. iii., 9). Nothing that God says can prove

false. (2) To the end, their numerical increase, we see a great providence in Israel going into Egypt. That country has ever surpassed all others in fertility, "as well among the human race as among animals." The divine purpose is often mysterious but it is always perfect. How glorious for the individual and the nation to be directed by the Most High! There may be great perils but there is always ultimate success. The man who humbly responds to the promise of Gen. xlvi., 3, 4, is sure to realize the truth of Ex. i., 7. Confidence in God's Word brings to us God's increase in peace, hope, influence, numerical strength and all desirable things. O for the Church to realize this spiritual fact!

III. Israel exciting hatred in Egypt. Vs. 8-10. (1) They must have been a long time in the land before this feeling was kindled. It was not till after they had "multiplied, waxed exceedingly mighty and the land was filled with them." It might not be out of the way to think that the oppression lasted 100 years, thus leaving 330 as years of freedom for God's people in Egypt. We know that the bondage commenced some time before the birth of Moses and he was 80 years old when the exodus took place. After all, Israel had in Egypt more joy than sorrow. And so it ever is with God's children. (2) "A new king which knew not Joseph" (v. 8). We now read of him, desiring to be like him in his