

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "Apologies for Not Entering the Christian Life."

TEXT: "And they all with one consent began to make excuse."—Luke xv, 18.

After the invitations to a live are sent out the regrets come in. One man apologizes for nonattendance on one ground, another on another ground. The most of the regrets are founded on personal engagements. So in my text a great banquet was spread, the invitations were circulated, and now the regrets come in. The one gives an agricultural reason, the other a stock dealer's reason, the other a domestic reason—all poor reasons. The agricultural reason being that the man had bought a farm and wanted to see it. Could he not see it the next day? The stock dealer's reason being that he had bought five yoke of oxen, and he wanted to go and prove them. He had no business to buy them until he knew what they were. Besides that a man who can own five yoke of oxen can command his own time. Besides that he might have yoked two of them together and driven them on the way to the banquet, for locomotion was not so rapid then as now. The man who gave the domestic reason said he had got married. He ought to have taken his wife with him. The fact was he did not want to go. "And they all with one consent began to make excuse." So now God spreads a great banquet; it is the gospel feast, and the table reaches to the hemispheres, and the invitations go out to all multitudes come and sit down and drink out of the chalice of God's love, while other multitudes decline coming—the one giving this apology and the other that. "And they all with one consent began to make excuse." I propose this morning, so it was with two mechanics in New York. They were very antagonistic. They had done all they could to injure each other. They were in the same line of business. One of the mechanics was converted to God. Having been converted, he asked the Lord to teach him how to bear himself toward that business antagonist, and he was impressed with the fact that it was his duty to be as good to his antagonist as he was to his opponent who had not been converted. I suppose that is about the hardest thing the man could do, but being thoroughly converted to God he resolved to do that very thing, and being asked for a certain kind of goods which he had not he said, "You go to such and such a store and you will get it. After awhile merchant No. 2 found these customers coming in, and he found also that merchant No. 1 had been brought to God, and he sought the same religion. Now they are good neighbors, and good neighbors, the grace of God entirely changing their disposition.

"Oh," says one, "I have a rough, jagged, impetuous nature, and religion can't do anything for me." Do you know that Martin Luther and Robert Newton and Richard Baxter were impetuous, all of them, and yet they were good neighbors, and yet the grace of God turned them into the mightiest usefulness? Oh, how many who have been pugnacious and who have been converted to God, and have found out that the grace of God is profitable for all, and as well as for the life which is to come. Peter, with nature tempestuous as the sea that he once tried to walk, at one look of Christ acrossed and went bitterly. Rich harvests of grace may grow on the jagged steep, and flocks of Christian grace may find pasture in fields of trample and rock. Though your disposition may be all a-breeze with fretfulness, though you have a temper a-gleam with quick lightnings, though your avarice be like that of the horse-leech, crying, "Give! give!" though damnable iniquities have wrapped you in all consuming fire, God can drive that devil out of your soul, and over the chaos and the darkness He can say, "Let there be light."

Converting grace has lifted the drunkard from the ditch and snatched the knife from the hand of the assassin and the false key from the burglar, and in the petrifactions of the city met the daughter of sin under the dim lamplight and scattered her sorrow and her guilt with the words, "Thy sins are forgiven—no sin no more." For scarlet sin a scarlet atonement.

Other persons apologize for not entering the Christian life because of the inconsistency of those who profess religion. There are thousands of poor farmers. They do not know the nature of soil nor the proper rotation of crops. Their corn is shorter in the stalk and smaller in the ear. They have ten bushels to the acre, and their neighbors, who are better farmers, have twenty. But who declines being a farmer because there are so many poor farmers? There are thousands of incompetent merchants. They buy at the wrong time. They are cheated in the sale of their goods. Every bale of goods is to them disaster. They fail after a while and go out of business. But who declines to be a merchant because there are so many incompetent merchants? They are the worst evidence against any case in which they are retained. But who declines to be a lawyer because there are so many incompetent lawyers? Yet there are less of thousands of people who decline being religious because there are so many unworthy Christians. Now, I say it is illogical. Poor lawyers are nothing against jurisprudence, poor physicians are nothing against medicine, poor farmers are nothing against agriculture, and mean, contemptible professors of religion are nothing against our glorious Christianity.

Sometimes you have been riding along on a summer night by a swamp, and you have seen lights that kindled over decayed vegetation—lights which are called jack-o'-lantern or will-o'-the-wisp. My friends, are mercy poisonous mistmists. My friends, do you say to heaven you will want a better light than the will-o'-the-wisp which dances on the rotten character of dead Christians. Exhalations from poisonous trees in our neighbor's garden will make a very poor balm for our wounds. Sickness will come, and we will be pushed out toward the Red Sea which divides this world from the next, and not the inconsistency of Christians but the rod of faith will wave in the waters as a commander wheels his host. The judgment will come with its thunderous solemnities, attended by bursting mountains and the deep laugh of earthquakes, and men will fly before the feet of God like sparks from the anvil, and 10,000 burning wheels shall blaze like banners in the track of God omnipotent. Oh, then we will stop and say, "There was a man, a Christian, there was a cowardly Christian; there was an impure Christian." In that day as now, "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest, thou shalt alone shall bear it." Why, my brother, the inconsistency of Christians is far from being an argument to keep you away from God; it is an argument to drive you to Him. The best place for a skillful doctor is a neighborhood where there are all poor doctors; the best place for an enterprising merchant to open his store is in a place where the bargain makers do not understand their business, and the best place for you who want to become the illustrious and complete Christians—the best place for you is to come right down among us who are so incompetent and so inconsistent sometimes.

Other persons apologize for not becoming Christians because they lack time, as though religion muddled the brain of the accountant, or tripped the pen of the author, or thickened the tongue of the orator, or weak-

ened the arm of the mechanic, or scattered the briefs of the lawyer, or interrupted the sales of the merchant. They bolt their store doors against it and fight it back with frowls and with yard sticks and cry, "Away with your religion from our store, our office, our factory!" They do not understand that religion in this workaday world will help you to do anything you ought to do. It can lay a keel, it can haul a cargo, it can work a pulley, it can pave a street, it can fit a wristband, it can write a constitution, it can marshal a host. It is as appropriate to the astronomer as his telescope, to the chemist as his laboratory, to the mason as his plummet, to the carpenter as his plane, to the child as his marbles, to the grandfather as his staff.

No time to be religious here? You have no time not to be religious. You might as well have no clerks in your store, no books in your library, no compass on your ship, no rifle in the battle, no hat for your head, no coat for your back, no shoes for your feet. Better travel toward eternity bare headed and bare footed, and honestly through life without religion, than go through life with religion. Did religion make Raleigh any less of a statesman, or Havelock any less of a soldier, or Grinnell any less of a merchant, or West any less of a painter? Religion is the best security in every bargain, it is the sweetest note in every song, it is the brightest gem in every coronet. No time to be religious? Why, you will have to take time to be sick, to be troubled, to die. Our world is only the wharf from which we are to embark for heaven. No time to secure the friendship of Christ. No time to buy a lamp and trim it for that walk through the darkness which otherwise will be illumined only by the whiteness of the tombstones. No time to educate the eye for heavenly splendor, or the hand for choral harp, or the ear for everlasting songs, or the soul for honor, glory and immortality. One would think we had time for nothing else.

Other persons apologize for not entering the Christian life because it is time enough to take a careful view of the human condition. That is very like the man who says, "I will come in perhaps at 11 or 12 o'clock. I will not be there at the opening of the banquet, but I will be there at the close." Not yet! Not yet!

Now, I do not give any doleful view of this life. There is nothing in my nature, and there is nothing in God, that tends toward a doleful view of human life. I have not much sympathy with Addison's description of the "Visions of Mirza," where he represents human life as being a bridge of a hundred arches and both ends of the bridge covered with clouds, and the race coming on, the most of them falling down through the first span, and all of them falling down through the last span. It is a very dismal picture. I have not much sympathy with the Spanish proverb which says, "The sky is good, and the earth is good—that which is bad is between the earth and the sky." But while we Christian people are bound to take a careful view of the human condition, that life is a great uncertainty, and that man who says, "I can't become a Christian because there is time enough yet," is running a risk infinite. You do not perhaps realize the fact that this world is made up of grades of sin gets deeper and deeper, and that you are gathering up a rush and velocity which after awhile may not answer to the friction of the wheels. It is not among those who give their whole life to the world and then give their corpse to God. It does not seem fair while our pulses are in full play of health that we serve ourselves and neglect the soul, and then when God is at the present of a coffin. It does not seem right that we run our ship from coast to coast, carrying cargoes for ourselves, and when the ship is crushed on the rocks give into the shivered timber, with it is a great thing for a man on his dying pillow to repent—better than never at all—but how much better, how much more generous, it were to repent when he had repented fifty years before! My friends, you will never get over these procrastinations.

Here is a delusion. People think, "I can go on in sin and worldliness, but after awhile I will repent, and then it will be as though I had come at the very start." That is a delusion. No one ever gets fully over procrastination. If you give your soul to God, some other time than this, you will enter heaven with only half the carriage, for enjoyment and knowledge you might have had. There will be heights of blessedness you might have attained, you will never reach the throne of glory on which you might have been seated, but which you will never climb. We will never get over procrastination, neither in time nor in eternity. We have started on a march from which there is no retreat. The shadows of eternity gather about us. How insignificant is time compared with the vast eternity! This morning comes down over the Allegheny mountains, by the wonderful piece which you have all heard described in the Horeshee—a depression in the side of the mountain where the train almost turns back again upon itself, and you see how appropriate is the description of the Horeshee, and thinking on this very theme and perceiving this very sermon it seemed to me as if the great courier of eternity speeding along had just struck the mountain with one hoof and gone into illimitable space. How very time, so insignificant is earth, compared with the vast eternity!

This morning rolls down the sky, and all the world of light are ready to rejoice at your disappearance. You are in the presence of the King ragged with sin when you may have this robe of righteousness. Dash not your foot to pieces against the sharp stones of the carnal day. Throw not your crown of life off the battlements. All the scribes of God are this moment ready with volumes of living light to record the news of your soul emancipated.

The Mysterious Loss. Mr. J. E. Emerson, a California "forty-niner," relates a curious story in the Scientific American. Gold, while its melting point is over 2,016 degrees, will evaporate at a much lower heat. In 1853-4 the Government Inspector visited the (then) new mint at San Francisco, to "take stock," and found a deficiency of \$160,000. Tremendous excitement ensued, the sensation being almost equal to that caused by the acts of the famous "Vigilance Committee." Wholesale arrests were threatened, until some cool head suggested that evaporation was the thief—that the missing gold had flown up the chimney. Sure enough, examination of the slate roof showed it covered with feathery gold, where the cold air had caused it to be deposited when it came out of the chimney. The slates were torn off; also those from several near-by buildings; these were ground to powder, and much of the gold recovered. So also was the furnace and chimney brick, and, after all was saved that could be profitably by the methods in use in San Francisco, the dust was sent to the mint in Philadelphia. Here it was worked over more closely, and then the dust was sold to French chemists, who shipped it to Paris and worked it over again there.

More than one-half of the \$160,000, as well as the good name of the San Francisco official, was saved by these various processes. Improved methods now prevent any recurrence of such mysterious losses.

At Minorca the fisherman simply dives to a depth of seventy feet with a weight in one hand to carry him down. With the other hand he picks up as many pearl oysters as he can carry and brings them up to the boat.

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Transfusion of Blood Not New. Transfusion of blood as practiced in surgery is by no means a recent development in science. Medical records show it to have been known to the Egyptians, Syrians and Persians. The Pittsburgh Dispatch regards it as even possible that the ancients were more successful than the physicians of recent periods. In the Seventeenth Century so many attempts were made in France, accompanied by so many failures and fatalities, that the Parliament of Paris declared against its legality. The experiments continued, however, calf's blood being substituted for the human. The results were not encouraging, the physicians not being aware that the blood of animals injected into the veins of another belonging to a different species acted as a poison. For 200 years the experiments were discontinued, and then one day, some years ago, the story of the death of a young medical student named Ronsin le Goff, while trying to save the life of a friend with his own blood, created a great sensation. A street in Paris, named after le Goff, commemorates his brave act. By this time the medical men had learned that to be successful the blood must neither be allowed to coagulate, nor air suffered to enter the veins with it. Doctor Roussel, of Geneva, invented an apparatus which overcame both the above difficulties. Since that time the experiments have been continued with remarkable success. Many lives have been undoubtedly saved by it. An old employee of the Theatre Francaise in Paris, named Duputich, has given up his blood several times to those in need of it, for which he has been awarded a magnificent gold medal by the French Government.

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Not a Failure. Johnny Gibbs is a youthful philosopher. He believes that life would be simplified if people would be content to do one thing at a time. The other day Johnny was hard at work with paper and pencil. His mother looked over his shoulder. "Why, Johnny," she exclaimed, "your spelling is perfectly dreadful! Look at that—'siting in a chair.' I'm ashamed of you!" "But, mamma," said the little boy, reassuringly, "this isn't a spelling lesson. It's a composition."

Pasteur, the great French specialist, is a short, thick-set man, with round shoulders. He walks lame, as the result of paralysis, and his eyesight is poor. Verdi married young, winning a charming Italian girl, who made his home ideally perfect.

The thought that he can be well off with little, never enters the working's head. One of the best of housekeepers is the woman who hates dirt. Some shepherds pay the most attention to the fattest sheep. If your Back Aches, or you are all worn out, good for nothing, it is general debility. Brown's Iron Bitters will cure you, make you strong, cleanse your liver, and give you a good appetite—tonic the nerves. Love is the unknowable. A wonderful stomach corrector—Beecham's Pills. Beecham's—no others. 25 cents a box. If you can be silent keep silent. For a cure of thin Blood, Weakness, Malnutrition, Indigestion and Biliousness, take Brown's Iron Bitters—it gives strength, makes old persons feel young—and young persons strong; pleasant to take. The downright fool doesn't know it.

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