

DANGER IN DELAY.

Dr. Talmage on the Folly of Postponing the Acceptance of the Gospel.

Sympathy for the Sceptics—The Time to Be Religious.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—In the following discourse, prepared by Dr. Talmage before his illness, the folly and danger of postponing the acceptance of the gospel invitation are exposed on the text, Luke xiv, 18, "And they all with one consent began to make excuse."

After the invitations to a levee are sent out the regrets come in. One man apologizes for non-attendance on one ground, another on another ground. The most of the regrets are based on previous 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 raiser's reason, the other a domestic reason. All poor reasons. The fact was, they 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 across the hemispheres, and the invitations go out, and multitudes come and sit down and drink of the banquet of God's love, while other multitudes decline coming, the one giving this apology, and the other giving that apology, "and they all with one consent begin to make excuse." I propose, so far as God may help me, to examine the apologies which men make for not entering the Christian life.

Apology the first: "I am not sure there is anything valuable in the Christian religion." It is pleaded that there are so many impostures in this day; so many things that seem to be real are sham. A gilded outside may have a hollow inside. There is so much quackery in physics, in ethics, in politics, that men come to the habit of incredulity, and after awhile they allow that incredulity to collide with our holy religion. But, my friends, I think religion has made a pretty good record in the world. How many wounds it has saved! How many pillars of fire it has lifted in the midnight wilderness! How many sinners it has rescued from the jaws of the devil! How it has stilled the choppy sea! What rosy light it hath sent streaming through the rift of the storm-cloud! What showers of cool water it hath rained for thirsty Hagar and Ishmael! What manna whiter than coriander seed it hath dropped all around the camp of hardy and valiant warriors! What promises it hath sent out like holy watchers to keep the lamps burning around deathbeds, through the darkness that lowers into the sepulcher! What flashes of resurrection morn!

Besides that, this religion has made so many heroes. It brought Summerfield, the Methodist, across the Atlantic ocean with his silver trumpet to blow the acceptable year of the Lord unto the ears of our American cities would take the kingdom of heaven by violence. It sent Jehudi Ashmun into Africa alone, in a continent of naked barbarians, to lift the standard of civilization and Christianity. It made John Milton among poets, Raphael among painters, Christopher Wren among architects, Thordwaldsen among sculptors, Handel among musicians, Dugout among military commanders, and to give new wings to the imagination, and better balance to the judgment, and more determination to the will, and greater usefulness to the life, and grander nobility to the soul, there is nothing in all the earth like our Christian religion. Nothing in religion? Why, then, all those Christians were deceived when in their dying moment they thought they saw the castles of the blessed, and your child, that with unutterable agony you put away into the grave, you will never see him again or hear his sweet voice nor feel the throbs of his young heart. There is nothing in religion? Sickness will come upon you. Roll and turn on your pillow; no relief. The medicine may be bitter, the night may be dark, the pain may be sharp; no relief. Christ never comes to the sick-room. Let the pain stab; let the fever burn; curse it and die. There is nothing in religion? After awhile death will come. You will hear the paving of the pale horse on the threshold. The spirit will be breaking away from the body, and it will take flight—whither, whither? There is no God, no ministering angels to conduct, no Christ, no heaven, no home. Nothing in religion? Oh, you are not willing to adopt such a dismal theory!

And yet the world is full of sceptics. And let me say there is no class of people for whom I have a warmer sympathy than for sceptics. We do not know how to treat them. We deride them, we caricature them. We, instead of taking them by the soft hand of Christian love, clutch them with the iron pinchers of ecclesiasticism. Oh, if you knew how those men had fallen away from Christianity and become sceptics you would not be so rough on them! Some were brought up in homes where religion was overdone. The most wretched day in the week was Sunday. Religion was driven into them with a trip hammer. They had a surfeit of prayer meetings. They were stuffed and choked with catechisms. They were told by their parents that they were the worst children that ever lived because they liked to ride down hill better than to read "Pilgrim's Progress." They never heard their parents talk of religion but with the corners of the mouth drawn down and the eyes rolled up. Others went into skepticism through maltreatment on the part of some who professed religion. There is a man who says: "My partner in business was conspicuous in prayer meeting, and he was officious in all religious circles, but he cheated me out of \$3000, and I don't want any of that religion." Then there are others who get into skepticism by a natural persistence in asking questions why or how? How can God be one being in three persons? They cannot understand it. Neither can I. How can God be a complete sovereign and yet man a free agent? They cannot understand it. Neither can I. They cannot understand why a holy God lets sin come into the world. Neither can I. They say: "Here is a great mystery; here is a disciple of fashion, frivolous and godless all her days; she lives on to be an octogenarian. Here is a Christian mother, training her children for God and for heaven, self-sacrificing, Christlike, indispensable seemingly to that household; she gets a cancer and dies." The skeptic says, "I can't explain that." Neither can I.

I can see how men reason themselves into skepticism. With burning feet I have trodden that blistering way. I know what it is to have a hundred nights poured into one hour. There are the arid desert of doubt who would give their thousands of dollars if they could get back to the old religion of their fathers. Such men are not to be caricatured, but helped, and not through their heads, but through their hearts. When these men really do come into the kingdom of God, they will be worth far more to the cause of Christ than those who never examined the evidences of Christianity. Thomas Chalmers once a skeptic, Robert Hall once a skeptic, Christmas Evans once a skeptic; but when they did lay hold of the gospel charter how they made it speed ahead! If, therefore, I address men and women who have drifted away into skepticism, I throw out no scoff; I rather implore you by the memory of those good old times when you knelt at your mother's knee and said your evening prayer, and those other days of sickness when she watched all night and gave you the medicines at just the right time and turned the pillow when it was hot and with hand long ago turned to dust soothed your pains and with that voice you will never hear again unless you join her in the better country, told you

never mind, and by that dying couch where she talked so slowly, catching her breath between the words—by all those memories I ask you to come and take the same religion. It was good enough for her; it is good enough for you. Aye, I better plea: By the wounds and the death throes of the Son of God, who approaches you in infinite love with torn brow and lacerated hands and whipped back, crying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!"

Other persons apologize for not entering the Christian life because of the incorrigibility of their temperament. Now, we admit it is harder for some people to become Christians than for others, but the grace of God never came to a mountain that it could not climb or to an abyss that it could not fathom or to a bondage that it could not break. The wildest horse that ever trod Arabian sands has been broken to his and trace.

The maddest torrent tumbling from mountain shelving has been harnessed to the mill wheel and the factory band, setting a thousand shuttles all a-buzz and a-catch. And the wildest, the haughtiest, the most ungovernable man ever created by the grace of God may be subdued and sent out on ministry of kindness, as God sends an August thunderstorm to water the wild flowers down in the grass. Peter, with nature tempestuous as the sea that he once tried to walk, at one look from Christ went out and wept bitterly. Rich harvests of grace may be grown on the summit of the jagged steep, and flocks of Christian graces may find pasturage in fields of bramble and rock.

Though your disposition may be all a-bristle with fretfulness, though you have a temper a-gleam with quick lightnings, though your avarice be like that of the horse leech, crying, "Give! though damnable impurities 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!"

The best place for a skillful doctor is in 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 Christian, the best place for you is to come right down among us who are so incompetent and so inconsistent sometimes. Show us how. Give us an example.

Excursions from poisonous trees in our neighbor's garden will make a very poor banquet for our souls.

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 back the best place for you who want to become the illustrious and complete Christian, the best place for you is to come right down among us who are so incompetent and so inconsistent sometimes. Show us how. Give us an example.

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An Obliging Caller.

When Monsieur Clemenceau was in the French Chamber of Deputies he became, for some reason, the idol of the working man; but his popularity, according to the course of nature, brought his penalties. He was besieged by all sorts of people, who came merely to ask questions, and sometimes they were questions of the most trivial sort.

He was originally a doctor, and used to give advice for nothing at certain hours of the day. One morning a working man entered his room, and Clemenceau said, without looking up from his writing:

"Take off your coat and shirt. I'll attend to you directly."

Three minutes later he found the man had stripped to the waist.

"There is nothing the matter with you," said the Doctor, when he had made an examination.

"I know there isn't!" returned the man.

"Then what did you come for?"

"To consult you on a political question."

"But what did you strip for?"

"I thought you wanted an illustration of the emaciated body of the man who lives by the sweat of his brow."

The political question remained unanswered. Monsieur Clemenceau was too expensively to do more than tell the man to dress and go home.—Youth's Companion.

Inquisitive American in London.

A curious American arrived in London the other morning. Asked in a few of the questions he asked in the evening: "Why do butchers wear blue aprons which will not show dirt, while assistants in boot shops wear immaculate white aprons?" "Why is footwear 'boots,' while the boy who polishes them is a 'shoe' black? Why is there no direct bus from London Bridge Station to 'Waterloo'? Why is the poste restante in the largest city of the world not open all night? Why do many women wear straw hats in the winter? Why can't you get breakfast in a restaurant within a reasonable time after 'sun-up'? When is 'sun-up,' anyhow?"

A Scent of Rattlesnake Skins.

A peculiarly interesting and highly valued curiosity in the possession of an American gentleman named Peter Gruber, of Rochester, N. Y., is a complete suit of clothes made from the skins of rattlesnakes sewn together. No fewer than 125 rattlesnakes were requisitioned to supply the necessary skins for this purpose. Four different specimens of rattlers were comprised in the suit—black, brown, yellow and gray—and the judicious arrangement of these variegated skins presents a peculiar and bizarre effect. The buttons are rattlesnakes' heads stuffed, and supplied with brilliant bead eyes. Even Mr. Gruber's hat and stock are covered with skins, rendering the attire most extraordinary. The owner would not part with it for any sum of money, for it is the only one of its kind in existence.

Glass Made by Lightning.

Tubes of glass made by lightning are often found in sand. The electricity passes into the ground and melts the silicious material, forming little pipes, the inside diameter of which represents the "bore" of the "thunderbolt." Such tubes measuring as much as 27 feet in length have been discovered. No doubt exists as to the method of their manufacture, inasmuch as people have sought for them and dug them up still hot from places freshly struck by lightning. Attempts have been made to reproduce them artificially by passing a powerful current of electricity through finely powdered glass. In this way pipes nearly an inch long and as big as a darning needle have been obtained. From the comparative size one gets a notion of the enormous energy of lightning.

CHANGE OF LIFE.

Some Sensible Advice to Women by Mrs. E. Sailer.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—When I passed through what is known as 'change of life,' I had two years' suffering,—sudden heat, and as quick chills would pass over me; my appetite was variable and I never could tell for

"I do not perhaps realize the fact that this descending grade of sin gets steeper and steeper, and that you are gathering up a rush and velocity which after awhile may not answer to the brakes."

Be not among those who give their whole life to the world and then give their corpse to God. It does not seem far that while our pulses are in full play of health we serve ourselves and serve the world and then make God at last the present of our coffin. It does not seem right that we run our ship from coast to coast carrying cargoes for ourselves and then, when the ship is crushed in the rocks, give to God the shivered timbers. 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 would have been if he had repented fifty years before! My friends, you will never get over these pre-arrangements.

We have started on a march from which there is no retreat. The shadows of eternity gather on our pathway. How insignificant is time compared with the vast eternity! As I was thinking of this one day while coming down over the Alleghany Mountains at noon, by that wonderful pass which you all have heard described as the Horseshoe—a depression in the side of the mountain where the train almost turns back again upon itself, and you see how appropriate is the name of the Horseshoe—and thinking on this very theme and preparing 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 on into illimitable space. So short is time, so insignificant is earth, compared with the vast eternity! This moment voices roll down the sky and all the worlds of light are ready to rejoice at your disenfranchisement. Rush not into the presence of the King ragged with sin when you may have this robe of righteousness. Dash not your feet pieces against the throne of a crucified Christ. Throw not your crown of life off the battlements. All the scribes of God are at this hour ready with volumes of living light to record the news of your soul emancipated.

MRS. E. SAILER.
President German Relief Association,
Los Angeles, Cal.

a day at a time how I would feel the next day. Five bottles of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound changed all that, my days became days of health, and I have enjoyed every day since—now six years.

"We have used considerable of your Vegetable Compound in our charitable work, as we find that to restore a poor mother to health so she can support herself and those dependent upon her, if such there be, is truer charity than to give other aid. You have my hearty endorsement, for you have proven yourself a true friend to suffering women."—Mrs. E. Sailer, 756 1/2 Hill St., Los Angeles, Cal.—\$5000 forfeit if above testimonial is not genuine.

No other person can give such helpful advice to women who are sick as can Mrs. Pinkham, for no other has had such great experience—her address is Lynn, Mass., and her advice free—if you are sick write her—you are foolish if you don't.

From Tomahawk to Shoe-brush.

Sitting Bull's eldest son is a bootblack. His name is Montezuma, and he is a graduate of the Carlisle Indian School. After his schooling he went to Philadelphia full of ambition, and musing over the profession he would adopt. At first it seemed to him that he might be a banker, and then, when no one seemed inclined to help him along that path, a master merchant. But he was beginning to learn that there is royal road to riches, and he thereupon decided that he would black shoes.

For a few cents he bought the regulation kit, and it was not long before he could send for Winonah, from the Roseburg Agency, the girl who had promised to marry him. Instead of the soap box which Montezuma once carried for an outfit, he now has a handsome stand, and this descendant of a line of chiefs is building up a more flourishing business every day. Best of all, he lays his success to Carlisle, for, as he says, he learned there how to do things well, the small as well as the great.—Youth's Companion.

Dire Threat.

Fay—He behaved awfully mean when I refused him.
May—You don't say!
Fay—Yes; he declared he'd never propose to me again.

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HEALTH AND ALL ITS BLESSINGS

Health will come with all its blessings to those who know the way, and it is mainly a question of right-living, with all the term implies, but the efforts which strengthen the system, the games which refresh and the foods which nourish are important, each in a way, while it is also advantageous to have knowledge of the best methods of promoting freedom from unsanitary conditions. To assist nature, when nature needs assistance, it is all important that the medicinal agents used should be of the best quality and of known value, and the one remedy which acts most beneficially and pleasantly, as a laxative, is—Syrup of Figs—manufactured by the California Fig Syrup Co.

With a proper understanding of the fact that many physical ills are of a transient character and yield promptly to the gentle action of Syrup of Figs, gladness and comfort come to the heart, and if one would remove the torpor and strain and congestion attendant upon a constipated condition of the system, take Syrup of Figs and enjoy freedom from the aches and pains, the colds and headaches and the depression due to inactivity of the bowels. In case of any organic trouble it is well to consult a competent physician, but when a laxative is required remember that the most permanently gratifying results will follow personal cooperation with the beneficial effects of Syrup of Figs. It is for sale by all reliable druggists. Price fifty cents per bottle.

The excellence of Syrup of Figs comes from the beneficial effects of the plants used in the combination and also from the method of manufacture which ensures that perfect purity and uniformity of product essential in a perfect family laxative. All the members of the family from the youngest to the most advanced in years may use it whenever a laxative is needed and share alike in its beneficial effects. We do not claim that Syrup of Figs is the only remedy of known value, but it possesses this great advantage over all other laxatives that it acts gently and pleasantly without disturbing natural functions, in any way, as it is free from every objectionable quality or substance. To get its beneficial effects it is always necessary to buy the genuine and the full name of the Co.—California Fig Syrup Co.—is printed on the front of every package.

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You can't buy a Cigar of better quality for 10 cents each.

"FLORODORA" Bands are of same value as tags from "Star," "Drummond," "Natural Leaf," "Good Luck," "Old Peach and Honey," "Razor" and "E. Rice Greenville" Tobacco.