

MORE COMMON SENSE.

It is Daily Needed in the Matter of Religion.

Business Skill and Forcefulness Would Work Wonders—How the World Can be Brought to Christ and Iniquity Abolished.

In his latest sermon Dr. Talmage makes an earnest appeal for more practical wisdom in matters pertaining to the soul.

This is another way of saying that Christians are not so skillful in the manipulation of spiritual affairs as worldly men are.

Some years ago, on a train going toward the southwest, as the porter of the sleeping car was making up the berths at the evening-tide, I saw a man kneel down to pray.

In the first place, my friends, we want more common sense in the building and conduct of churches.

On my friends' we want more common sense in the rearing of churches.

Again I remark: We want more common sense in the obtaining of religious hope.

A millic in California, many years ago, picked up a sparkle of gold from the bed of a stream which turned his mill.

Word comes to us that the mountain of God's love is full of gold; that men have been digging there, and have brought up gold, and amethyst, and carbuncle, and jasper, and sardonyx, and chrysopeasus, and all the precious stones out of which the walls of Heaven were builded.

Is it a bogus company that is formed? Is it under-looked territory? Oh, no; the story is true.

Why, my brother, do you not do that way in business matters? Why do you not to-morrow go to your store and sit down and fold your arms, and say: "If these goods are to be sold, they will be sold; and if they are not to be sold, they will not be sold; there is nothing for me to do about it."

This doctrine of God's sovereignty, how it is misquoted and spoken of as though it were an iron chain which bound us hand and foot for time and for eternity, when, so far from that, in every fiber of your body, in every faculty of your mind, in every passion of your soul, you are a free man—a free man—and it will no more to-morrow be a matter of choice whether you shall go to business through Pennsylvania avenue or some other street; it will be no more a matter of choice with you to-morrow whether you shall go to Philadelphia or New York, or stay at home, than it is this hour a matter of free choice whether you will accept Christ or reject Him.

In all the army of banners there is not one conscript. Men are not to be dragged into Heaven. Among all the tens of thousands of the Lord's soldiery there is not one man but will tell you: "I chose Christ; I wanted Him; I desired to be in His service; I am not a conscript—I am a volunteer."

Again, I remark: We want more common sense in the building up and enlarging of our Christian character.

There are men who have for 40 years been running the Christian race, and they have not run a quarter of a mile! No business man would be willing to have his investments unaccumulative.

How little common sense in the reading of the scriptures! We get any other book, and we open it, and we say, "Now what does this book mean to teach me?"

Now, God says this Bible is to be a lamp to our feet and a lantern to our path, to guide us through the midnight of this world to the gates of the Celestial City.

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But I remark again: we want more

common sense in doing good. Oh, how many people there are who want to do good, and they are dead failures! Why is it? They do not exercise the same tact, the same ingenuity, the same strategem, the same common sense in the work of Christ that they do in worldly things.

When I was a lad I was one day in a village store, and there was a large group of young men there full of rolicking and fun, and a Christian man came in, a very good Christian man, and without any introduction of the subject, and while they were in great hilarity, said to one of them: "George, what is the first step of wisdom?"

Oh, we might gather even the stars of the sky and twist them like forget-me-nots in the garland of Jesus. We must bring everything to Him—the wealth of language, the tenderness of sentiment, the delicacy of morning dew, the saffron of floating cloud, the tangled surf of the tossing sea, the bursting thunder guns of the storm's bombardment.

Now, all this being so, what is the common-sense thing for you and me to do? What do I think will depend upon three facts—three great facts:

The first fact, that sin has ruined us. It has blasted body, mind and soul. We want no Bible to prove that we are sinners.

Suppose some business man in whose skill you had perfect confidence should tell you that to-morrow, Monday morning, between 11 and 12 o'clock, you could by a certain financial transaction make \$5,000, but that on Tuesday perhaps you might make it, but there would not be any positiveness about it, and on Wednesday there would not be so much, and Thursday less, Friday less, and so on less and less—when would you attend to the matter? Why, your common sense would dictate, "Immediately I will attend to the matter, between 11 and 12 o'clock to-morrow, Monday morning, for then I can surely accomplish it, but on Tuesday I may not, and on Wednesday there is less prospect and less and less. I will attend to it to-morrow." Now, let us bring our common sense in this matter of religion. Here are the hopes of the gospel. We may get them now. To-morrow we may get them, and we may not. Next day we may and we may not. The prospect less and less and less and less. The only sure time now—now, I would not talk to you in this way if I did not know that Christ was able to save all the people. I would not go into a hospital and tear off the bandages from the wounds if I had no balm to apply. I would not have the face to tell a man he is a sinner unless I had at the same time the authority for saying he may be saved.

"Mamma," said a little child to her mother, when she was being put to bed at night, "mamma, what makes your hand so scarred and twisted, and unlike other people's hands?" "Well," said the mother, "my child, when you were younger than you are now, years ago, one night after I had put you to bed, I heard a cry, a shriek upstairs. I came up and found the bed was on fire, and you were on fire, and I took hold of you and I tore off the burning garments, and while I was tearing them off, and trying to get you away, I burned my hand, and it has been scarred and twisted ever since, and hardly looks any more like a hand; but I got that, my child, in trying to save you."

O man! O woman! I wish to-day I could show you the burned hand of Christ—burned in plucking you out of the fire, burned in snatching you away from the flame. Ay, also the burned foot, and the burned brow, and the burned heart—burned for you. "By His stripes ye are healed."

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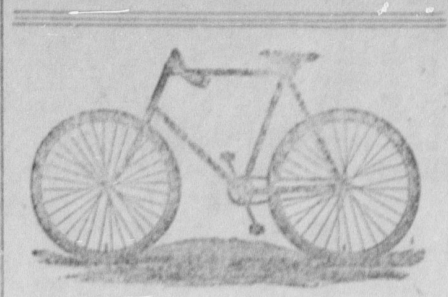
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