

BUSINESS TRIALS.

Dr. Talmage Shows How They Refine the Spirit.

Religion in Trade—The Merchant's Office a School of Industry, Patience, Integrity and Upright Living.

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In this discourse Dr. Talmage argues that religion may be taken into the affairs of life, and instead of being a hindrance, as many think, is a reinforcement.

Industry, devoutness and Christian service—all commended in that short text. What, is it possible that they shall be conjoined? Oh, yes. There is no war between religion and business.

The industrial classes are divided into three groups—producers, manufacturers, traders. Producers, such as farmers and miners.

When the prince imperial of France fell on the Zulu battlefield because the strap fastening the stirrup to the saddle broke as he clung to it, his comrades all escaping, but he falling under the lances of the savages, a great many people blamed the empress for allowing her son to go forth into that battlefield.

All that process will either break you down or brighten you up. It is a school of patience. You have known men under the process to become petulant, and choleric, and angry, and pugnacious, and cross, and sour, and queer, and they lost their customers, and their name became a detestation.

So that there must be one continuous line of sympathy with each other's work. But whatever your vocation, if you have a multiplicity of engagements, if into your life there come losses and annoyances and perturbations as well as percentages and dividends, if you are pursued from Monday morning until Saturday night, and from January to January by inexorable obligation and duty, then you are a business man, or you are a business woman, and my subject is appropriate to your case.

We are under the impression that the moil and tug of business life are a prison into which a man is thrust, or that it is an unequal strife, where unarmed a man goes forth to contend. I shall show you this morning that business life was intended of God for grand and glorious education and discipline, and if I shall be helped to say what I want to say I shall rub some of the wrinkles of care out of your brow and unstrap some of the burdens from your back.

I remark again that business life is a school of useful knowledge. Merchants do not read many books and do not study lexicons. They do not dive into profounds of learning, and yet nearly all through their occupations come to understand questions of finance, and politics, and geography, and jurisprudence, and ethics.

Traders in grain come to know something about foreign harvests; traders in fruit come to know something about the prospects of tropical production; manufacturers of American goods come to understand the tariff on imported articles; publishers of books must come to understand the new law of copyright; owners of ships must come to know winds and shoals and navigation, and every bale of cotton and every raisin cask and every tea box and every cluster of bananas is so much literature for a business man.

Now, my brother, why did God put you in that school of energy? Was it merely that you might be a yardstick to measure cloth, or a steelyard to weigh flour? Was it merely that you might be better qualified to chaffer and haggler? No. God placed you in that school of energy that you might be developed for Christian work.

Now, God demands the best lamb out of every flock. He demands the richest sheaf of every harvest. He demands the best men of every generation. A cause in which Newton and Locke and Mansfield toiled you and I can afford to toil in. Oh, for fewer idlers in the cause of Christ and for more Christian workers, men who shall take the same energy that from Monday morning to Saturday night they put forth for the achievement of a livelihood or the gathering of a fortune, and on Sabbath days put it forth to the advantage of Christ's kingdom and the bringing of men to the Lord.

Dr. Duff visited a man who had inherited a great fortune. The man said to him: "I had to be very busy for many years of my life getting my livelihood. After awhile this fortune came to me, and there has been no necessity that I toil since. There came a time when I said to myself 'Shall I now retire from business or shall I go on and serve the Lord in my worldly occupation?'" He said: "I resolved on the latter, and I have been more industrious in commercial circles than I ever was before, and since that hour I have never kept a farthing for myself. I have thought it to be a great shame if I couldn't toil as hard for the Lord as I had toiled for myself, and all the products of my factories and my commercial establishments, to the last farthing, have gone for the building of Christian institutions and supporting the church of God."

Again, I remark that business life is a school of patience. In your everyday life how many things to annoy and to disquiet! Bargains will rub. Commercial men will sometimes fail to meet their engagements. Cashbooks and money drawer will sometimes quarrel. Goods ordered for a special emergency will come too late or be damaged in the transportation. People intending no harm will go shopping without any intention of purchase, overturning great stocks of goods and insisting that you break the dozen. More bad debts on the ledger. More counterfeit bills in the drawer. More debts to pay for other people. More menaces on the part of partners in business. Annoyance after annoyance, vexation after vexation, and loss after loss.

What a school of integrity business life is! If you ever have been tempted to let your integrity cringe before present advantage, if you have ever wakened up in some embarrassment and said: "Now, I will step a little aside from the right path and no one will know it, and I will come all right again, it is only once." That only once has ruined tens of thousands of men for this life and blasted their souls for eternity.

A man arose in Fulton street prayer meeting and said: "I wish publicly to acknowledge the goodness of God. I was in business trouble. I had money to pay, and I had no means to pay it, and I was in utter despair, of all human help, and I laid this matter before the Lord, and this morning I went down among some old business friends I had not seen in many years just to make a call, and one said to me: 'Why, I am so glad to see you! Walk in. We have some money on our books due you a good while, but we didn't know where you were, and therefore not having your address, we could not send it. We are very glad you have come.'" And the man standing in Fulton street prayer meeting said: "The amount they paid me was six times what I owed." You say it only happened so? You are unbelieving. God answered that man's prayer.

Oh, you want business grace. Commercial ethics, business honor, laws of trade, are all very good in their place, but there are times when you want something more than this world will give you. You want God. For lack of Him some that you have known have consented to forge, and to maltreat their friends, and to curse their enemies, and their names have been bulletined among scoundrels, and they have been ground to powder, while other men you have known have gone through the very same stress of circumstances triumphantly. There are men here to-day who fought the battle and gained the victory. People come out of that man's store, and they say: "Well, if there ever was a Christian trader, that is one." Integrity kept the books and waited on the customers. Light from the eternal world flashed through the show windows. Love to God and love to man presided in that storehouse. Some day people going through the street notice that the shutters of the window are not down. The bar of that store door has not been removed. People say: "What is the matter?" You go up a little closer, and you see written on the card of that window: "Closed on account of the death of one of the firm." That day all through the circles of business there is talk about how a good man has gone. Boards of trade pass resolutions of sympathy, and churches of Christ pray: "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth." He has made his last bargain, he has suffered his last loss, he has shed with the last fatigue. His children will get the result of his industry, or, if through misfortune there be no dollars left, they will have an estate of prayer and Christian example which will be everlasting. Heavenly rewards for earthly discipline. There "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

pled up and been consumed in the fires of the last great day? Can it be that a man will be wise for time and a fool for eternity?

Never so many temptations to scoundrelism as now. Not a law on the statute book but has some back door through which a miscreant can escape. Ah, how many deceptions in the fabric of the goods! So much plundering in commercial life that if a man talk about living a life of complete commercial integrity there are those who ascribe it to greenness and lack of tact.

How many men do you suppose there are in commercial life who could say truthfully: "In all the sales I have ever made I have never overstated the value of goods; in all the sales I have ever made I have never covered up an imperfection in the fabric; in all the thousands of dollars I have ever made I have not taken one dishonest farthing?" There are men, however, who can say it, hundreds who can say it, thousands who can say it. They are more honest than when they sold their first tierce of rice, or their first firkin of butter, because their honesty and integrity have been tested, tried and come out triumphant. But they remember a time when they could have robbed a partner, or have absconded with the funds of a bank, or made a false assignment, or borrowed illicitly without any efforts at payment, or got a man into a sharp corner and fleeced him. But they never took one step on that pathway of hell fire. They can say their prayers without hearing the chink of dishonest dollars. They can read their Bible without thinking of the time when with a lie on their soul in the custom house they kissed the Book. They can think of death and the judgment that comes after it without any finching—that day when all charlatans and cheats and jockeys and frauds shall be doubly damned. It does not make their knees knock together, and it does not make their teeth chatter to read "as the partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

System in India by which Identification is Made Absolutely Certain.

In detective novels finger prints left by criminals, preferably in blood, play an important part, but truth seems stranger than fiction in the fact that the finger-print system of identifying criminals in India has been made so perfect that it would enable any intelligent person in a few minutes to distinguish the individual, if necessary, from all other persons now living in the world, or, if data were available, from all other persons who have lived since the creation of man.

Every finger mark shows lines of the "loop" or the "whorl" type and by a simple table of the combinations of these types in the ten digits, 1,024 main classes are made. These are again subdivided according to minor details, and the subdivisions can be further divided ad infinitum if necessary, but with the table before him any person of ordinary intelligence can place his finger on the corresponding card to a record in his hand within five minutes, no matter how many thousand cards there may be. It is calculated that the chances are about 64,000,000 to 1 against any two persons having single fingers identical, and the chances against all ten fingers being identical go beyond mathematics altogether.—London Globe.

Babies at a Premium. Mail advices from Madagascar state that the French authorities are collecting a tax of 15 francs on every unmarried male native over 25 years of age, and of 7 1/2 francs on every native woman over 21 years of age who has not a child, legitimate or illegitimate. Many natives borrow children when the tax collector arrives and return them to their parents as soon as the tax collector has gone on.—Danzel.

The Sequel. "Did you ever laugh until you cried, Tommy?" "Yes, only this morning." "What at?" "Well, pa stepped on a tack and I laughed; then pa caught me laughing and I cried."—Chicago Evening News.

A Definition. Tommy—Paw what is a pessimist? Mr. Figg—He is the man who of two evils prefers both.—Indianapolis Journal.

DEBUT OF THE DOLLAR SIGN.

The Author of the Famous Character at Last Discovered in an Old-Time Vermont.

Some weeks ago Dr. Marquis Baker, of this city, published in one of the magazines an account of a theory which he has to account for the origin of the familiar dollar sign. This has long been in dispute. All sorts of explanations have been given, the most common of which is that the initials of the United States are crossed. But there have been seven or eight other theories to account for the dollar sign which is about as good.

Dr. Baker, in his researches in the library of the bureau of education, came across an old book entitled, "A Compendium of Federal Arithmetic," designed for the use of schools, and especially calculated for the meridian of the United States, which was published at Lansingburg, N. Y., in 1797. Its author was Rev. Chauncey Lee, of Rutland, Vt. In this book the author sets forth a system of what he calls "characteristics," by which one vertical stroke was to designate the mill, two vertical strokes the cent, these two crossed by one s-shaped stroke the dime, and for the dollar the sign consisting of the two verticals with the two curved strokes, now so familiar, was proposed.

At that time the people of the country were just emerging from the use of pounds, shillings, and pence, where each was separated by a space from the next denomination. It accordingly seemed necessary to Mr. Lee to have an arbitrary mark for each of the denominations of our monetary system. But he soon found that one character, with the decimal point, was all that was necessary, and in the latter part of his own book all of his elaborate system of symbols, except the one intended to mark the dollar, was found to have been dropped.

Dr. Baker certainly finds the dollar sign in this old arithmetic, and he does not find it in use at any earlier date. By the time Adams' arithmetic was published in 1805, the symbol had become established. He therefore regards Mr. Lee as the inventor and believes the sign to have been absolutely arbitrary in its origin. Since the publication of his paper in one of the magazines, Dr. Barker has received many letters on the subject, but none in which his conclusions are challenged. He intends, for further verification, to make a study of the department records to see when the dollar sign first appeared in the treasury accounts. He also hopes to make a more thorough search of the old text-books to see if by chance any use of this sign prior to that of Rev. Chauncey Lee can be discovered. It is certainly interesting to know the origin of a thing in such constant use as the dollar sign. Dr. Baker's discoveries seem likely to take all the sentiment out of this matter, but this is the common result of modern historical research.—Washington Cor. Boston Transcript.

TRACING BY FINGER PRINTS.

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