TO ENJOY LONG LIFE.

A Prescription Prepared by Rev. Dr. Talmage.

Religion Will Offset the Dissipations and Destroyers of Life—The Gospel a Chariot for the Living.

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In this discourse Dr. Talmage gives prescriptions for the prolongation of life and preaches the gospel of physical health. The text is Psalms 91, 16, "With long life will I satisfy him."

Through the mistake of its friends religion has been chiefly associated with sick beds and graveyards. The whole subject to many people is odorous with chlorine and carbolic acid. There are people who cannot pronounce the word "religion" without hearing in it the clipping chisel of the tombstone cutter. It is high time that this thing were changed and that religion, instead of being represented as a hearse to carry out the dead, should be represented as a chariot in which the living are to triumph.

Religion, so far from subtracting from one's vitality, is a glorious addition. It is sanative, curative, hygienic. It is good for the eyes, good for the ears, good for the spleen, good for the digestion, good for the nerves, good for the muscles. When David in another part of the psalm prays that religion may be dominant, he does not speak of it as a mild sickness or an emaciation or an attack of moral and spiritual cramp. He speaks of it as "the saving health of all nations," while God in the text promises longevity to the pious, saying: "With long life will I satisfy him." The fact is that men and women die too soon. It is high time that religion joined the hand of medical science in attempting to improve human longevity. Adam lived 930 years; Methuselah lived 969 years. As late in the history of the world as Vespasian there were at one time in his empire 45 people 135 years old. So far down as the sixteenth century Peter Zartan died at 185 years of age. I do not say that religion will ever take the race back to antediluvian longevity, but I do say the length of life will be increased.

It is said in Isaiah: "The child shall die a hundred years old." Now, if, according to Scripture, the child is to be a hundred years old, may not the men and women reach to 300 and 400? The fact is that we are mere dwarfs and skeletons compared with some of the generations that are to come. Take the African race. They have been under bondage for centuries. Give them a chance, and they develop a Frederick Douglass or a Toussaint L'Ouverture. And, if the white race shall be brought from under the serfdom of sin, what shall be the body, what shall be the soul? Religion has only just touched our world. Give it full power for a few centuries, and who can tell what will be the strength of man and the beauty of women and the longevity of all?

My design is to show that practical religion is the friend of long life. I prove it first from the fact that it makes the care of our health a positive Christian duty. Whether we shall keep early or late hours, whether we shall take food digestible or indigestible, whether there shall be thorough or incomplete mastication, are questions very often deferred to the realm of whimsicality. But the Christian man lifts this whole problem of health into the accountable and the Divine. He says: "God has given me this body, and He has called it the temple of the Holy Ghost, and to deface its altars or mar its walls or crumble its pillars is a God defying sacrilege." He sees God's caligraphy in every page, anatomical and physiological. He says: "God has given me a wonderful body for noble purposes"—that arm with 32 curious bones—wielded by 46 curious muscles and all under the brain's telegraphy, 350 pounds of blood rushing through the heart every hour, the heart in 24 hours beating 100,000 times, during the 24 hours the lungs taking in 57 hogsheads of air, and all this mechanism not more mighty than delicate and easily disturbed and demolished. The Christian man says to himself: "If I hurt my nerves, if I hurt my brain, if I hurt any of my physical faculties, I insult God and call for dire retribution." Why did God tell the Levites not to offer to Him in sacrifice animals imperfect and diseased? He meant to tell us in all the ages that we are to offer to God our very best physical condition, and a man who through irregular or gluttonous eating ruins his health is not offering to God such a sacrifice. Why did Paul write for his cloak at Troas? Why should such a great man as Paul be anxious about a thing so insignificant as an overcoat? It was because he knew that with pneumonia and rheumatism he would not be worth half as much to God and the church as with respiration easy and foot free.

An intelligent Christian man would consider it an absurdity to kneel down at night and pray and ask God's protection while at the same time he kept the window of his bedroom tight shut against fresh air. He would just as soon think of going out on the bridge between New York and Brooklyn, leaping off and then praying to God to keep him from getting hurt. Just as long as you refer this whole subject of physical health to the realm of whimsicality or to the pastry cook or to the butcher or to the baker or to the apothecary or to the clothier you are not acting like a Christian. Take care of all your physical forces—nervous, muscular, bone, brain, cellular tissue—for all you must be brought to judgment. Smoking your nervous system into fidgets, burning out the coating of your stomach with wine longwooded and strychnined, walking with thin shoes to make your feet look delicate, pinched at the waist until you are nigh cut in two and neither part worth anything, groaning about sick headache and palpitation of the heart, which you think came from God, when they came from your own folly!

What right has any man or woman to deface the temple of the Holy Ghost? What is the ear? It is the whispering gallery of the soul. What is the eye? It is the observatory God constructed, its telescope sweeping the heavens. What is the hand? An instrument so wonderful that, when the earl of Bridgewater bequeathed in his will $40,000 for treatises to be written on the wisdom, power and goodness of God, Sir Charles Bell, the great English anatomist and surgeon, found his greatest illustration in the construction of the human hand, devoting his whole book to that subject. So wonderful are these bodies that God names his own attributes after different parts of them. His omniscience—it is God's eye; His omnipresence—it is God's ear; His omnipotence — it is God's arm; the upholstery of the midnight heavens—it is the work of God's fingers; His life-giving power—it is the breath of the Almighty; his dominion—"the government shall be upon his shoulder."

"But," you say, "professors of religion have fallen, professors of religion have got drunk, professors of religion have misappropriated trust funds, professors of religion have absconded." Yes, but they threw away their religion before they did their morality. If a man on a White Star line steamer, bound for Liverpool, in mid-Atlantic jumps overboard and is drowned, is that anything against the White Star line's capacity to take the man across the ocean? And if a man jumps over the gunwale of his religion and goes down never to rise, is that any reason for your believing that religion has no capacity to take the man clear through? In the one case, if he had kept to the steamer, his body would have been saved; in the other case, if he had kept to his religion, his morals would have been saved.

There are aged people who would have been dead 25 years ago but for the defenses and the equipoise of religion. You have no more natural resistance than hundreds of people who lie in the cemeteries to-day slain by their own vices. The doctors made their case as kind and pleasant as they could, and it was called congestion of the brain or something else, but the snakes and the bluebottles that seemed to crawl over the pillow in the sight of the delirious patient showed what was the matter with him. You, the aged Christian man, walked along by that unhappy one until you came to the golden pillar of a Christian life. You went to the right, he went to the left. That is all the difference between you. If this religion is a protest against all forms of dissipation, then it is an illustrious friend of longevity. "With long life will I satisfy Him."

Suppose you had a supernatural neighbor who came in and said: "Sir, I want you to call on me in every exigency. I am your fast friend. I could fall back on $20,000,000. I can foresee a panic ten years. I hold the controlling stock in 30 of the best monetary institutions of New York. Whenever you are in trouble call on me, and I will help you. You can have my money, and you can have my influence. Here is my hand in pledge for it." How much would you worry about business? Why, you would say: "I'll do the best I can, and then I'll depend on my friend's generosity for the rest."

Now, more than that is promised to every Christian business man. God says to him: "I own New York and London and St. Petersburg and Peking, and Australia and California are mine. I can foresee a panic a hundred years. I have all the resources of the universe, and I am your fast friend. When you get in business trouble or any other trouble, call on me, and I will help. Here is my hand in pledge of omnipotent deliverance." How much should that man worry? Not much. What lion will dare to put his paw on that Daniel? Is there not rest in this? Is there not an eternal vacation in this? "Oh," you say, "here is a man who asked God for a blessing in a certain enterprise, and he lost $5,000 in it. Explain that."

I will. Yonder is a factory, and one wheel is going north, and the other wheel is going south, and one wheel plays laterally, and the other plays vertically. I go to the manufacturer and I say: "O manufacturer, your machinery is a contradiction! Why do you not make all the wheels go one way?" "Well," he says, "I made them go in opposite directions on purpose, and they produce the right result. You go downstairs and examine the carpets we are turning out in this establishment, and you will see." I go down on the other floor, and I see the carpets, and I am obliged to confess that, though the wheels in that factory go in opposite directions, they turn out a beautiful result, and while I am standing there looking at the exquisite fabric an old Scripture passage comes into my mind: "All things work together for good to them who love God." Is there not a tonic in that? Is there not longevity in that?

Suppose a man is all the time worried about his reputation? One man says he lies, another says he is stupid, another says he is dishonest and half a dozen printing establishments attack him, and he is in a great state of excitement and worry and fume and cannot sleep, but religion comes to him and says: "Man, God is on your side. He will take care of your reputation. If God be for you, who can be against you?" How much should that man worry about his reputation? Not much. If that broker who some years ago in Wall street, after he had lost money, sat down and wrote a farewell letter to his wife before he blew his brains out—if, instead of taking out of his pocket a pistol, he had taken out a well-read New Testament, there would have been one less suicide.

O nervous and feverish people of the world, try this almighty sedative! You will live 25 years longer under its soothing power. It is not chloral that you want or morphine that you want. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "With long life will I satisfy him."

Again, practical religion is a friend of longevity in the fact that it removes all corroding care about a future existence. Every man wants to know what is to become of him. If you get on board a rail train, you want to know at what depot it is going to stop. If you get on board a ship, you want to know into what harbor it is going to run. And if you should tell me you have no interest in what is to be your future destiny I would, in as polite a way as I know how, tell you I did not believe you. Before I had this matter settled with reference to my future existence the question almost worried me into ruined health. The anxieties men have upon this subject, put together, would make a martyrdom. This is a state of awful unhealthiness. There are people who fret themselves to death for fear of dying. I want to take the strain off your nerves and the depression off your soul, and I make two or three experiments. Experiment first: When you go out of this world it does not make any difference whether you have been good or bad, whether you believed truth or error, you will go straight to glory. "Impossible," you say. "My common sense as well as my religion teaches that the bad and the good cannot live together forever. You give me no comfort in that experiment." Experiment the second: When you leave this world you will go into an intermediate state, where you can get converted and prepared for Heaven. "Impossible," you say. "As the tree falleth, so must it lie, and I cannot postpone to an intermediate state reformation which ought to have been effected in this state." Experiment the third: There is no future world. When a man dies, that is the last of him. Do not worry about what you are to do in another state of being. You will not do anything. "Impossible," you say. "There is something that tells me that death is not the appendix, but the preface, to life. There is something that tells me that on this side of the grave I only get started and that I shall go on forever. My power to think says 'forever,' my affections say 'forever,' my capacity to enjoy or suffer, 'forever.'"

Well, you defeat me in my three experiments. I have only one more to make, and if you defeat me in that I am exhausted. A mighty One on a knoll back of Jerusalem one day, the skies filled with forked lightnings and the earth filled with volcanic disturbances, turned His pale and agonized face toward the heavens and said: "I take the sins and sorrows of the ages into my own heart. I am the expiation. Witness, earth and Heaven and hell, I am the expiation." And the hammer struck Him, and the spears punctured him, and Heaven thundered: "The wages of sin is death!" "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" "I will by no means clear the guilty!" Then there was silence for half an hour, and the lightnings were drawn back into the scabbard of the sky, and the earth ceased to quiver, and all the colors of the sky began to shift into a rainbow woven out of the falling tears of Jesus, and there was red as of the bloodshedding, and there was blue as of the bruising, and there was green as of the heavenly foliage, and there was orange as of the day dawn, and along the line of the blue I saw the words: "I was bruised for their iniquities," and along the line of red I saw the words: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and along the line of the green I saw the words: "The leaves of the Tree of Life for the healing of the nations," and along the line of the orange I saw the words: "The day spring from on high hath visited us," and then I saw the storm was over, and the rainbow rose higher and higher until it seemed retreating to another heaven, and, planting one column of its colors on one side of the eternal hill, and planting the other column of its colors on the other side the eternal hill, it rose upward and upward, "and, behold, there was a rainbow about the throne." Accept that sacrifice and quit worrying. Take the tonic, the inspiration, the longevity, of this truth. Religion is sunshine; that is health. Religion is fresh air and pure water; they are healthy. Religion is warmth; that is healthy. Ask all the doctors, and they will tell you that a quiet conscience and pleasant anticipations are hygienic. I offer you perfect peace now and hereafter.

What do you want in the future world? Tell me, and you shall have it. Orchards? There are trees with 12 manner of fruits, yielding fruit every month. Water scenery? There is the river of Life from under the throne of God, clear as crystal, and the sea of glass mingled with fire. Do you want music? There is the oratorio of the Creation led on by Adam, and the oratorio of the Red sea led on by Moses, and the oratorio of the Messiah led on by St. Paul, while the archangel with swinging baton controls the 144,000 who make up the orchestra. Do you want reunion? There are your children waiting to kiss you, waiting to embrace you, waiting to twist garlands in your hair. You have been accustomed to open the door on this side the sepulcher. I open the door on the other side the sepulcher. You have been accustomed to walk in the wet grass on the top of the grave. I show you the under side of the grave. The bottom has fallen out, and the long ropes with which the pall bearers let down your dead let them clear through into Heaven.

Glory be to God for this robust, healthy religion! It will have a tendency to make you live long in this world, and in the world to come you will have eternal life. "With long life I will satisfy him."

There are 1,000 vessels which cross the Atlantic ocean regularly every month, some of them twice a month.

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE.—Notice is hereby given that letters testamentary upon the estate of David M. Swartz, late of Chapman twp., Snyder county, Pa., deceased have been issued in due form of law to the undersigned, to whom all indebted to said estate should make immediate payment and those having claims against it should present them duly authenticated for settlement.
WM. H. SWARTZ,
Executor.