

LOUP CITY NORTHWESTERN

GEO. E. BENSCHOTER, Editor and Pub. LOUP CITY, NEBRASKA.

It is stated that in New York 'one cent will buy a square meal'—a soda cracker, probably.

A Philadelphia woman has had her husband arrested for not giving her an Easter bonnet. The worm will turn.

There will be no danger of a whisky famine as long as the supply of water and prussic acid does not run out.

The announcement that Missouri highwaymen looted a train shows that the spirit of Jesse James goes marching on.

As if he hadn't suffered enough already they have put a Mr. Nelson of St. Joseph, Mo., in jail for having thirteen wives.

The Massachusetts judges who decided that a Wall street margin is a wager would undoubtedly call a spade a spade.

The announcement of Gen. Otis that he doesn't mean to write a book will tend to endear him to the hearts of the people.

The czar of Russia is obliged to keep his subjects well scattered. His latest edict is that three men in a bunch constitute a mob.

Tennyson's original manuscript of 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' sold for \$440, which could hardly be called a light charge.

A Chicago man named Junk has secured a divorce in California. It is understood that the Junks have been much given to scraps.

A woman bookkeeper in Philadelphia has confessed to embezzling \$15,000. There is no field woman cannot fill if given the chance.

The Kentuckian who shot at a man and crippled a blooded colt is entitled to great sympathy. His mistake will cost him some money.

Truly wonderful is the news that comes from Gotham. Policemen there who do their duty are not to be punished for being so reckless.

Cecil Rhodes intimates in his will that he regarded the muddled oaf as an important member of society. It's about up to Kipling to change his mind.

In the event of a separation it is probable that Queen Wilhelmina's husband will demand an amount of alimony that will wreck the bank of Holland.

A students' demonstration planned in St. Petersburg for April 1 was suppressed. The government did not want to take any chances of being April fooled.

"Jesse slammed a speedy one to the tall timbers for a trio of cushions and Rhody sent him over the last quarter with a daisy cutter through second." Sound familiar?

Mrs. Daisy A. Gentleman of Chicago, who is suing for a divorce, can hardly claim that her husband is no Gentleman, although she declares that he punched her in the face.

A German author has published a dictionary of cuss words. He has found 25,000 of them. If they are all German it will be pretty hard to keep that language from spreading.

The woman who steals from her husband to give to charity may consider it no more than fair to keep out a little with which to buy the prize when the club meets at her house.

The thief who returned the jewels stolen from a church may think that he has atoned for his acts, but we rather think that repentance based on fear does not count for much.

You can never discourage a woman about loving. If she can't love her husband she is content to love her children; if she hasn't any children she will manage to get along loving her pets.

The claim made for Aguilardo that he provides liberally for his mother in-law will win high praise for him until it is remembered that all of his provisions come from Uncle Sam's commissary.

A barber in Richmond, Va., shaved President Duke of the American Tobacco company on Sunday and received for his work a check for \$3,000 to pay off a church debt. The fact that this money came from tobacco and was paid for work done on Sunday is not expected to result in the church's refusing it.

Those young women of Hoboken who are praying for husbands, are to be commended for their great faith; but were they wise maidens, they would so contrive as to bring the young men to their knees instead of falling upon their own.

The Massachusetts supreme court has decided that people who lose their money in bucket-shops may get it back. Anyone who succeeds in doing so ought to be able to make a fortune by exhibiting himself through the country.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

PLEA TO ALL TO ACCEPT THE GOSPEL INVITATION.

Text from the Fourteenth Chapter of Luke: 'And They All with One Consent Began to Make Excuse'—The Necessity for Religion.

(Copyright, 1902, Louis Klopsch, N. Y.)

Washington, April 13.—In the following discourse, prepared by Dr. Talmage before his illness, the folly and danger of postponing the acceptance of the gospel of 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 nonattendance on one ground, another on another. The most of the regrets are founded on prior 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 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 out of the chalices 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. 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! 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. 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 nor hear his sweet voice nor feel the throbs of his young heart.

There is nothing in religion? Sicknes 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 pawing 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 skeptics. And let me say there is no class of people for whom I have a warmer sympathy than for skeptics. 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 skeptics you would not be so rough on them!

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 \$3,000, and I don't want any of that religion." Then there are others who go 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 can not 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 as if on an octogenarian. Here is a Christian mother, training her children for God and for heaven, self-sacrificing, Christ-like, 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 men in the arid desert of doubt who would give their thousands of dollars if they could get back 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 chariot 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 plead 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, you would be better by and by, 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 make a 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. 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.

Rich harvests of grace may grow 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."

Converting grace has lifted the drunkard from the ditch and snatched the knife from the hand of the assassin and the false keys from the burglar, and in the pestiferous lanes 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; go, and sin no more." For scarlet sin a scarlet atonement.

Other persons apologize for not entering the Christian life because of the inconsistencies of those who profess religion. 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. These lights are merely poisonous miasmata. My friends, on your way to heaven you will want a better light than the will-o'-the-wisp which dance on the rotten character of moribund Christians. Exudations 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 back the waters as a commander wheels his host. The judgment will come, with its thunder shod solemnities. Oh, then we will not stop and say, "There was a mean Christian; there was a cowardly Christian; in that day as now, 'If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest thou alone shall bear it.'"

Why, my brother, the inconsistency of Christians, so far from being an argument to keep you away from God, ought to be an argument to drive you to Him. 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.

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 weakened the arm of the mechanic or scattered the sales of the merchant. They bolt their store doors against it and fight it back with trowels and with yardsticks 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 sail a ship; it can buy 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 plumb line, to the carpenter as his plane, to the child as his marbles.

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 on toward eternity bare-headed and barefooted and homeless and friendless than to go through life without religion.

Why, my friends, 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 splendors or the hand for choral harps 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 yet. That is very like those persons who send regrets and say, "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, nothing in the grace of God, that tends toward a doleful view of human life. I have not much sympathy with Addison's description of the "Vision 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 as Christian men are bound to take a cheerful view of life, we must also confess that life is a great uncertainty, and that man who says "I can't become a Christian yet" is running a risk infinite. You 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 a while 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 fair 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 a 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 that 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 procrastinations.

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 Allegheny 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 disenchantment. Rush not into the presence of the King ragged with sin when you may have this robe of righteousness. Dash not your feet to 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.

Judge's Witty Remark. In a certain case tried by Judge F. Carroll Brewster in the old court room at Chestnut and Sixth streets a point was warmly argued by two young lawyers. The judge's decision displeased the younger counsel, who in a heated manner said: "Will your honor note an exception?" "Certainly," said the judge, and leaned forward to make the entry on his docket. At that instant a heavy casting of the arms of Pennsylvania became detached from the ceiling and fell upon the judge's chair, crushing the back and striking the floor with a great noise.

The judge calmly finished his note. A backward glance informed him of what had happened. With his inimitable smile and a meaning look at the "exceptioner," he dismissed the incident with the remark: "It is not always well to be an up-right judge."—Philadelphia Times. The wife of the man with a strong will regards it as a clear case of stubbornness.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON IV, APRIL 27; ACTS 11:14-15—GENTILES RECEIVED.

Golden Text—"Whosoever Believeth on Him Shall Receive Remission of Sins"—Acts 10:43—The Return of Peter to Jerusalem.

I. Peter Returns to Jerusalem.—Vs. 1, 2. "The apostles and brethren that were in," rather, throughout "Judea heard." The news of such an event in the capital would rapidly spread throughout the church, all the more rapidly because it was a strange event, contrary to common strongly held beliefs, and such as to awaken a great deal of very earnest, if not bitter, discussion.

"Peter was come up to Jerusalem." He came with six leading Christians of Joppa, who had witnessed the scenes at Caesarea (Acts 11: 12). This taking of the witnesses with him implies that Peter went to Jerusalem at least in part to defend his course, and to correct misapprehensions which were certain to arise from exaggerated reports and the distortions of prejudice.

II. Peter Criticized by the Stricter Jews.—Vs. 2, 3. "They that were of the circumcision," that is, "the champions of the circumcision," the stricter Jewish Christians, who were "not simply Jews, but had a strong and deep feeling regarding the necessity of circumcision. With the exception of the recent converts, none except Jews were members of the church of Christ. 'Contented with him.' The same word is used of Michael the Archangel contending with the devil (Jud. 9). It is difficult to 'understand the vehemence and intensity of the battle which the most enlightened apostles had to wage against the Judaic Christians.' Their central belief was that God was 'a respecter of persons,' and was full of partiality for special favorites. The Pharisees drew back the hem of his garment if he seemed to pass a Gentile or a publican or one of 'the masses'."

The Question at Issue. This involved two points: (1) the eating with Gentiles (v. 3), of which Peter is here accused; (2) the receiving of the Gentiles into the church without their first becoming Jews. McGiffert says that "in Acts 11; 3 the disciples of Jerusalem are represented as contending with Peter because he had gone in to men uncircumcised and had eaten with them; but it is a striking fact that, in the address which follows, Peter does not defend himself against that charge, but against the charge of recognizing a Gentile as a Christian disciple, and admitting him to baptism, which is an entirely different matter." For if Gentiles were acknowledged as disciples and admitted to the church without becoming proselytes, then Jews must eat with them at least in the Lord's Supper. So that Peter, answering the charge of admitting Gentiles to the church, answered at the same time the charge of eating with Gentiles.

Why the Discussion was so Intense. The Jewish Christians desired the Gentiles to become disciples, but thought the only divine way was through their becoming Jews as well as Christians. They were divinely set apart from heathen by the distinction of unclean and clean in food and social customs.

All the promises of the Messiah, of the redemption of the world, of the enlargement of the kingdom of God, were made to the Jews. The Jews were God's chosen people, their religion was divine and true. To ignore this, to receive men into the kingdom in another way than commanded to proselytes by God himself, and practiced for ages, was not this an insult to God, to religion, to the Bible, to all their history for eighteen hundred years? Peter's action was to them contrary to God, destroying the very foundations of religion, blotting out the promises, blasting their most precious hopes. Nothing but a new divine command could reverse the divine commands of the past. But Jesus himself, the Son of God, the latest revelation from God, was a Jew, who kept the Jewish law, preached to the Jews, declared that not a jot or tittle of the law should fail till all was fulfilled.

III. Peter's Answer to Their Criticisms.—Vs. 4-7. The story in these verses is a repetition of last Sunday's lesson, so that need not take up the separate verses, but merely give a summary of his argument. 1. God himself, the God of the Jews, directed Peter plainly to do what he did. 2. He did this, first, by a vivid illustration while Peter was in a trance. 3. His own voice bade him go to Cornelius, who also had been directed by God's shining angel to send for Peter. 4. God made disciples of these Gentiles without their becoming Jews. 5. He sent the Holy Spirit upon these Gentile disciples exactly as he had sent the Holy Spirit on the Jewish disciples at Pentecost, making no distinction. 6. Here were six witnesses to these facts besides Peter.

Note. That what Peter did was done by divine direction, and with the divine approval.

That this did not contradict what God had ordained before, or show any changeableness in God, but was the natural and necessary result and outcome of his previous commands and ordinances.

IV. The Church Acquires Peter, and Rejoices in the Salvation of the Gentiles.—V. 18. "They held their peace." They were silenced for a time. There was no answer to Peter's argument from facts, and they ceased from their criticisms. More than this they "glorified God," for it was a new manifestation of God's glory, his gracious love, his goodness and wisdom and power. Long had God shown mercy to Israel, but now the door was thrown wide open to the Gentiles, and God also to them had "granted repentance unto life." So, like the angels in heaven, the church on earth "rejoiced over one sinner that repented." The action of the church was an onward movement. The Jews could live as Jews, and yet be Christians; the Gentiles could be Christians and remain Gentiles. It was a movement toward Unity.

Practical Suggestions. These perplexing questions were a part of the discipline and training of the church. They are so still. They keep the church awake and thinking. They keep it out of dullness and deadness. They train it in the virtues of kindly judgment and forbearance. Unrest, change, criticism of the past, are often a sign of fuller life, of springtime, of growth.

Illustration. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is of the utmost value. That which he indorses and blesses must be good in its essentials. The fruits of the Spirit are the real test, both for ourselves and others. Here's a Snake Story. In the zoological gardens at Nimes, France, a tessellated snake, recently devoured within a week a black-marked snake only three-quarters of an inch less in length than itself and a viperine snake of seventeen inches. The former could not have been in exactly prime condition, for it had not, at the time of its death, touched food for 393 days. One of the viperine snakes in the Nimes collection, though not the one in question, had previously fasted for 464 days.

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