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Ah! my friends, have we been mistaken! Does God hear and answer prayer, or does he not! Hezekiah was sick unto death, he prayed for his life; God heard him, and added fifteen years to that lifetime. The prayer saved him-the lump of figs applied being merely the God appointed human in strumentality. Christianity's New Foe-Religious Dissec-"But," says some one, "I don't believe the

"A BAD BOIL CURED."

ALISM IN RELIGION.

multiplication of loaves and fishes,

recovered."-Il Kings, xx, 5, 7.

human instrumentality, cured the king.

thousand men.

which nothing can break away.

The morning light is breaking. The darkness disappears.

swered?

opening hymn was:

tion and the Brushing Away of the Old Bible." Ah! then we will have to part com-Religion of Christ-Are Prayers Anpany for four or five minutes, for it is useless to try to argue with any man with whom you cannot stand upon common ground. In BROOKLYN, Dec. 23.-At the Tabernacle any argument, if you would be successful, today the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., there must be some common data to start read and expounded a chapter about the from. It is foolish to try to prove to a man The that twice three are six, provided he does not admit the multiplication tables or that two and two are four, if he does not admit the addition table.

Dr. Talmage took as the subject of his ser-My first address, therefore, is to those who "A Bad Boil Cured." The text was: do believe in the Bible. I want to tell you "I have heard thy prayer; behold, I will heal thee. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and Isai it on the boil and he it. Here are two cases of sickness precisely Luxurious living is not healthy. The second generation of kings, and queens, and lords, and princes is apt to be brainless and invalid. The second crop of grass is almost not. Why? God blesses the one remedy, always short. Royal blood is generally and does not bless the other. Prayer has scrofulous. You will not be surprised, then, helped many a blundering doctor through to hear that King Hezekiah had disorders with a case that would have otherwise become which broke out in a carbuncle, virulent and completely unmanageable. There is such a deathful. The Lord told him he must die: thing as Gospel hygiene, as Christian pharbe did not want to die. He turned his face to the wall, so that his payer would not be interrupted, and cried to God for his ness, goes only to human resources, when life. God heard the prayer and an- we have these instances of the Lord's swered it, saying: "Behold, I will heal help in the sick room. Before you call thee." But there was human instrumentality the doctor while he is there, and after he to be employed. This carbuncle needed a "cataplasm." That is a tough word we use to show how much we know. If in the pulpit we always used words the people under- have a doctor who knows how to pray. God stood, we never should have any reputation send salvation to all the doctors! Sickness for learning Well, this carbuncle needed a wald be oftener balked, death would be "cataplasm," which is a poultice. Your old oftener hurled back from the door sill if medwould be oftener balked, death would be mother, who doctored her ewn children in ical men came into the sick room like Isaiah the time when physicians were not as plenty as they are now, will tell you that the very and the word of the Lord in their mouths. best poultice is a fig, and that was what she SOME MEN WHO BELIEVED IN PRAYER.

used upon the carbuncle of King Hezekiah. John Abercrombie, the most celebrated The power of God, accompanied by this physician of Scotland, prayed when he went into the sick room, and he wrote no more In this age of discovery, when men know ably about "diseases of the brain ' than about so much it almost kills them, and write so "the philosophy of the moral feelings," I wisely it almost kills us, it has been found don't know how much of the medical success out that prayer to God is a dead failure. All of Sydenham, and Cooper, and Harvey, and things are arranged according to inexorable Rush depended upon the fact that they knew law. There is no use in praying to God for how to pray as well as to prescribe. I don't rain in time of drought. The "weather want a physician who sees no God in human probabilities" in the morning papers will de anatomy to doctor my broken bones. If God cide the question, rain or no rain, and the made us (and I think he did), and if the whole nation in prayer before God would Bible is true (and I am rather disposed to not bring down a single drop. I am not now think it is), then it is not strange that prayer speaking of an imaginary theory, but of that which is believed by ten thousand times ten troduces a new cause. When God made the law, he did not make it so strong he could If sickness comes to your household, it will not break it. If God made our bodies, when depend entirely upon ventilation, good diet, they are broken he is the one to mend them; and the skill of the doctors, as to whether your child gets well. The father might pray to do it. If my furnace in the cellar breaks all day, and the mother might pray all night down, there is no one so competent to -it would not have any effect upon the case. repair it as the manufacturer. If my watch If squills, belladonna, paregoric and gruel do stops, there is no one so competent to set it the work, your child will get well; if not, going as the one who made it. If the body not. There is a cast iron God seated at the is disordered, call in the Maker of it. It is head of the universe, holding in the cold not all, as these physicists tell us, a matter grasp of his metal fingers a band of law from of ventilation or poisoned air, of cleanliness or dirt, of nutritious diet or poor fare. 1 Men and women of God, at this point the have known people to get well in rooms great battle of Christianity is to be fought. The great foc of Christianity to day is ration-tight shut, and I have known them to die

alism, that comes out from our schools, and right under patent ventilators. 1 have universities, and magazines and newspapers, known children sickly who every day had to scoff at Bible truth and caricature the old their bath, and I have known children robust. religion of Jesus. It says Jesus is not God, the washing of whose faces would make their for it is impossible to explain how he can be divine and human at the same time. The God did not make the law and then run

Bible is not inspired, for there are things in away from it. What is a law of nature? It it that they don't like. Regeneration is a is only God's usual way of doing things. farce: there is good enough in us, and the only But he has said that if his children ask him thing is to bring it out. Development is the to do a thing, and he can consistently do it, word-development. The Garden of Eden isa he will do it. Go on with your pills, and fairy story and no more to be believed than the plasters, and nostrums, and elixirs, and your "Arabian Nights," or "Gulliver's Travels," or catholicon, but remember that the mightiest "Robinson Crusce." We all started as ba- agency in your recovery is prayer. Prayer boons, and are blood relations to that monkey to God brought the kine

peril, and they will cry out: "God have mercy on us!" I challenge that these men who don't believe in prayer charter a steamer, go out in the Narrows, swing out S00 or 900 miles to sea, and then heave to and wait for a cyclone. And after the cyclone comes and the vessel has gone under ten times, when they did not expect it would rise again, and the bulwarks have been knocked in, and the masts are gone-if they do not pray I will surrender my theory Do you tell me that this instinct which God has put in us, he put there just to mock us for his own cruel amusement? If God implanted that instinct in the human heart it was because in his own heart there was something responsive. To prove that God does hear prayer, I put

on the witness stand Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Micah, John, Paul, Peter and King Hezekiah. Fell me, ye ancient battle fields, ye Oriental threshing floors, ye Judean corn fields, ye Galilean fishing smacks, is God deaf and dumb and blind before all human petition) That God answers prayer, I bring the ten millions facts of Christendom to prove. There has never paper enough come out of the paper mills to write the story Has not many a mother prayed back her bad boy from the ends of the earth-from Canton, from Madras, from Constantinople-until he knelt beside her in the old homestead/ Have there not been desperadoes and renegades who have looked into the door of a prayer meeting to laugh and scoff at it, who have been drawn by the power of prayer, until they ran to the altar crying out for mercy! Did not the blacksmith in Lyons, N. Y., pray to God until there came a great awakening that shook the community]

A STORY OF HOW PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED. In my parish in Philadelphia one night at a meeting I asked a young man to go into a room at the side of the church and talk upon the theme of religion. He grew violently angry, and shook his fists at me. We resolved to pray for that young man, and we prayed that he might yield his soul to God. And when, next night at the meeting, the side door was flung open, he was the first to step in. Prayer had captured him, I had a classmate in college, whose uncie, Dr. John Scudder, of India, wrote to him, saying, "I will pray for you every day until such a day, and then I will give my attention to some other subject." The last day of these prayers, when they had all gathered up before the throne of God, my classmate surrendered his soul to Jesus. This is no second hand story. I saw the letter, and I knew the young man. But why should I go so far? I have had in my own experience, and I have had in the history of my own family, the evidence that God answers prayer. My mother, with three Christian women, assembled week after week and prayed for their children; they kept up that prayer meeting of four persons year after year. The world knew nothing of it. God answered all those prayers. All the group came in , the eleven sous and daughters of my mother came in, myself the last. Sickness came to my household-hopeless sickness, as it seemed to many. At 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon the invalid was carried to the steamer for Savannah. At 11 o'clock the next day, being Sunday, standing in this very place, a man of God prayed for the recovery of the sick one. At that time, 11 o'clock, she who had been prostrated three weeks, with some help walked up on deck. The occurrence was as near to being miraculous as 1 can imagine. That she was hope-lessly sick, people who sat up with her night after night, and are here, can testify. That the prayer for her recovery was offered in this pulpit, thousands of people could testify. That at 11 o'clock on that Sunday morning she walked up on deck, as by a miraculous recovery, I call the passengers on the San Jacinto, commanded by Capt. Atkins, Dec. 16, to testify. This is no second hand story. Prayer impotent! If I dared to think there was no force in prayer, methinks God, after all he has done for me and mine, would strike me dead. Prayer impotent! Why it is the mightiest force in the universe. Lightning has no speed, the Alpine avalanche has no

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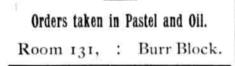
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squirming about on the top of that hand or- figs being the God directed human instrugan. Lazarus was not dead when Christ prementality. tended to raise him; he was only playing

1 would have you also see-for it is another dead. The water was not changed into wine at the wedding, but Christ brought in some also be accompanied by means. It is an outwine that he had found elsewhere to make rage to ask God to do a thing while we sit up the deficiency. Christ did not walk on indolent. The prayer, to be acceptable, the sea, but on the shore, so near that it must come not only from the heart, but from the hands. We must work while we pray, devotion and work going together. Luther What is stil more alarming is, that Chriscame to Melanethou's bedside and prayed for tian men dare not meet this ridicule. There his recovery, and insisted, at the same time, is not one Christian man in five that can, unblanched, stand in the presence of all this rail- that he should take some warm soup, the lery, saying: "I believe in the whole Bible, soup being just as important as the prayer. and in every single statement that it makes." In the time of the great plague that came to Christian men try to soften the Bible down to York, of England, the priests prayed all suit the skeptics. The skeptics sneer at the night and all day for the removal of the dividing of the Red sea; and the Christian plague, but did not think of clearing out the dead dogs and cats that lay in the gutters, goes to explaining that the wind blew a hurricane from one direction a good while, causing the sickness. We must use means as until all the water piled up; and besides, that well as supplications. If a man has "evenit was low water anyhow, and so the Israel. ing prayers," asking for health, and then sits man be found a liar. tes went through without any trouble. down to a full supper of indigestibles Why not be frank and say: "I believe the at 11 o'clock at night, his prayer Lord God Almighty came to the brink of the is a mockery. A farmer has no right to Red sea, and with his right arm swung back pray for the safety of his family when he knows there is no cover on the cistern. The the billows on the right side, and with his Christian man, reckless about his health, left arm swung back the billows on the left side, and the abashed water ought not to expect the same answer to his up hundreds of feet high, prayer as the Christian man expects who retires regularly at 10 o'clock at night, and while through their glassy wall the sea monsters gazed with affrighted eyes on takes his morning bath with the appendix of the passing Isrealites?" The rationalist comes a Turkish towel. Paul said to the passengers to you saying: "How about Jonah and the of the Alexandrian corn ship that they should whalet Do you really believe that fish get safe ashore, but he told them they must use means, and that was: "Stick to the old story?' There were never so many Nantucket fishermen after one whale as there ship!" God is not weak, needing our help, but God is strong, and asks us to co-operate have been rationalists flinging harpoons at with him that we may be strong, too. Pray the Mediterranean sea monster, and from that one whale they have got enough oil to light by all means, but don't forget the fig poulten thousand souls to perdition. A skeptic tice.

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER ILLUSTRATED. tells you that Jonah would have been killed That God answers prayers offered in the in the process of swallowing, and that he right spirit, seconded by our own effort, is could not, anyhow, have lived three days in the first and the last lesson of this text, and such close quarters, but would have been it is a lesson that this age needs to learn. If smothered by the poor ventilation. How the all communication between earth and heaven good Christians immediately go to work, and try to explain the whole thing by is cut off, let us know it. If all the Chrisnatural laws, so as to please the rationalists, and say that a whale is an never reach him, then, I say, let silencesmite air breeding fish; that every little the lips of the afflicted world, and the nations while it comes to the surface, and that the does answer prayer. The text shows it. You say: "I don't believe the Bible; I think whale that swallowed Jonah did the same thing, and thus got a supply for itself and You say: "I don't believe the Bible; I think for the prophet. Why not rather say that that those things were merely coincidences, God can do anything; and he could take prayer." Do you say that/ Was it mere happen so that Elijah prayed for rain just the throat would not have been half large as the rain was going to come anyhow? Did enough ordinarily to let him pass, and could have kept him alive in the whale five years without any air, if he had chosen to! Who Daniel pray in the will beasts' den just at the time when all the lions happened to have made the whale? God. Who made Jonah? lockjaw? Did Jesus pray at the grave of Lazarus just at the time when Lazarus was in New Orleans. They have large stables, God. Then he could do anything he pleased going to dress himself and come out anyhow! WHAT REMAINS OF THE BIBLE WITHOUT Did Jesus lose his place in his sermon, and MYSTERY! make a mistake, when he said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; make a mistake, when he said: "Ask, and it parts of the city and suburbs who are enthe miraculous and supernatural you surrenknock, and it shall be opened unto youf" der the Bible. Take the supernatural out of And, lest some were so stupid they could not is not so uncertain as the poultry business. the Bible, and you make it a collection of understand it, he goes out "For every one lies and humbugs, in preference to which I that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh choose "Æsop's Fables." They are what they findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

pretend to be-fables. But if, after all that the Bible declares, Jesus is not God, an 1 Lazarus But some one persists in saying: "I don't believe anything of the Bible." Then I appeal to your own instincts. Prayer in cerwas not raised from the dead, and the water was not turned into wine, and the Red sea was not divided, and in answer to prayer Families and Parties supplied with all Hezekiah's boil did not get well, then the Bi-delicacies at short notice. Ice Cream for ble is the worst fraud ever perpetrated in of the lungs. Put a company of men-I don't tain circumstances is as natural to man as Hezekiah's boil did not get well, then the Bi- the throbbing in the pulse, as the respiratiou pay well and are possible for women who are cure how bad they are-in some imminent yuna.

ries of a few skeptics, or a good many skeptics, stand beside the experience of Gen. Havelock, who came out in front of the Englesson of the subject-that our prayer must | lish army, lifted his hat, and called upon the Lord Almighty? or of George Washington, who at Valley Forge was found upon his knees in prayer? or of William Wilberforce, who went from the British parliament to the closet of devotion? or of Latimer, who stood with his hands on fire, in martyrdom, praying for his persecutors? Was Washington weak? Was Havelock weak? Wilberforce weakt Was Latimer Was weak? Bring all the affairs of your store, of your soul, of your body, of your friends, of your church, before him, and the great day of eternity will show you that the best in vestments you ever made were your prayers, and though you may have broken promises you made to God, God never broke his promises to you. Let God be true, though every

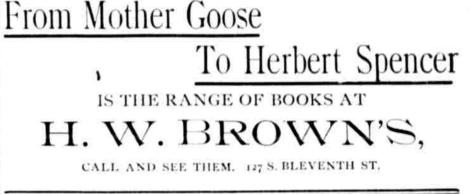
> PRAYERS ARE ALMOST INVARIABLY AN-SWERED.

And now, in conclusion, I have to present you some checks, blank checks, on the bank of heaven, written in blood, and signed by the hand wounded on the cross. It is not safe for you to give a blank check with your name to it. You do not know what might be written above. But here is a blank check which God says I can give you, it is signed by the handwriting of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you can fill it up with anything you want to. "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find." I do not say that your prayer will be answered in just the way you expect, but I do say it will be answered in the best way. Oh! will you trust him? This is the outcome of all this subject.

If I should ask the men and women in this audience who have found God a prayer answering God to rise up, you would nearly all rise up. In time of darkness and trouble, as in time of light and prosperity, he answered you. I commend you to that God to whom your parents dedicated you in in-fancy. They believed so much in prayer tian prayers that are going up toward God never reach him, then, I say, let silencesmite for you. Having heard you in days that their last word was a supplication of prosperity, he will not reject your last petition, when in the darkened room, after they have wiped the dew of death from your brow, and the whole group of loved ones that those things were merely coincidences, have kissed you good by, you have only which are often brought as answers to strength enough left to pray: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

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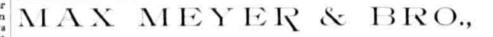
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