

RELIGION IN BUSINESS.

DR. TALMAGE BELIEVES IN TRADE AND IN HONEST TRADERS.

Producers, Manufacturers and Traders Mutually Dependent on Each Other's Honesty—Affecting Case of the French Prince Imperial.

BROOKLYN, Dec. 26.—Any person seeking the secret of Dr. Talmage's marvelous popularity with the millions of sermon hearers and sermon readers may find a clue to it in the sermon he preached at the Tabernacle this morning. It has nothing to do with abstract doctrines, but gives a clear view of what may be termed applied Christianity. His text was Proverbs iii, 6, "In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy path."

"A promise good enough for many kinds of life, but not for my kind of life," says some business man, "the law of supply and demand controls the business world." But I have reason to say that it is a promise to all persons in any kind of honest business.

There is no war between religion and business, between ledgers and Bibles, between churches and counting houses. On the contrary, religion accelerates business, sharpens men's wits, sweetens acerbity of disposition, blips the blood of phlegmatics and throws more velocity into the wheels of hard work. It gives better balancing to the judgment, more strength to the will, more muscle to industry and throws into enthusiasm a more consecrated fire. You cannot in all the round of the world show me a man whose honest business has been despoiled by religion.

The industrial classes are divided into three groups—producers, manufacturers and traders. Producers, such as farmers and miners. Manufacturers, such as those who turn corn into food, and wool and flax into apparel. Traders, such as make profit out of the transfer and exchange of all that which is produced and manufactured. A business man may belong to any one or all of these classes, and not one is independent of any other.

When the prince imperial of France fell on the Zulu battlefield because the strap fastening the stirrup to the saddle broke as he lunged to it, his comrades all escaping, but he falling under the lances of the savages, a great many people blamed the emperor for allowing her son to go forth into that battlefield, and others blamed the English government for accepting the sacrifice, and others blamed the Zulus for their barbarism. The one most to blame was the harness maker who fashioned that strap of the stirrup out of shoddy and imperfect material, as it is found to have been afterwards. If the strap had held, the prince imperial would probably have been alive today. But the strap broke. No prince independent of a harness maker.

High, low, wise, ignorant, in one occupation, I in another, all bound together. 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.

HIGH OCCUPATION ON BUSINESS MEN. 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 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 am not talking to you from an abstraction. Though never having been in business life, I know all about business men.

In my first parish at Belleville, New Jersey, ten miles from New York, a large portion of my audience was made up of New York merchants. Then I went to Syracuse, a place of intense commercial activity, and then I went to Philadelphia and lived long among the merchants of that city, than whom there are no better men on earth, and for more than twenty-two years I have stood in this presence, Sabbath by Sabbath, preaching to audiences, the majority of whom are business men and business women. It is not an abstraction to which I speak, but a reality with which I am well acquainted.

In the first place, I remark that business life was intended as a school of energy. God gives us a certain amount of raw material out of which we are to hew our character. Our faculties are to be reset, rounded and sharpened up. Our young folks having graduated from school or college, need a higher education, that which the routine and collision of everyday life alone can effect. Energy is wrought out only in a fire. After a man has been in business activity ten, twenty, thirty years, his energy is not to be measured by weights or plummets or ladders. There is no height it cannot scale, and there is no depth it cannot fathom, and there is no obstacle it cannot thrash.

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 higgler? No. God placed you in that school of energy that you might be developed for Christian work. If the undeveloped talents in the Christian churches of today were brought out and thoroughly harnessed, I believe the whole world would be converted to God in a short time. There are so many deep streams that are turning no mill wheels and that are harnessed to no factory bands. 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.

WORK FOR GOD AS WELL AS FOR SELF. 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, in South Wales, saw 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, 'I shall 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 com-

mercial 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." Oh, if the same energy put forth for the world could be put forth for God! Oh, if a thousand men in these great cities who have achieved a fortune could see it their duty to do all business for Christ and the alleviation of the world's suffering.

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. Cash book 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, overrunning great stocks of goods and making you break the dozen. More bad debts on the ledger. More counterfeit bills in the drawer. More debts to pay for other people. More meanness on the part of partners in business. Annoyance after annoyance, vexation after vexation and loss after loss.

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. Other men have been brightened up under the process. They were like rocks, all the more valuable for being blasted. At first they had to choke down their wrath, at first they had to bite their lip, at first they thought of some stinging retort they would like to make, but they conquered their impetiveness. They have kind words now for sarcastic flings. They have gentle behavior now for unmanly customers. They are patient now with unfortunate debtors. They have Christian reflections now for sudden reverses. Where did they get that patience? By hearing a minister preach concerning it on Sabbath? Oh, no. They got it just where you will get it—if you ever get it at all—selling hats, discounting notes, turning banisters, plowing corn, tinning roofs, pleading causes. Oh, that amid the turmoil and anxiety and exasperation of everyday life you might hear the voice of God saying: "In patience possess your soul. Let patience have her perfect work."

BUSINESS A SCHOOL OF LIFE. 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. Business is a severe schoolmistress. If pupils will not learn, she strikes them over the head and the heart with severe losses. You put \$5,000 into an enterprise. It is all gone. You say, "That is a dead loss." Oh, no. You are paying the schooling. That was only tuition, very large tuition—I told you it was a severe schoolmistress—but it was worth it. You learned things under that process you would not have learned in any other way.

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, what are you going to do with the intelligence? Do you suppose God put you in this school of information merely that you might be sharper in a trade, that you might be more successful as a worldling? Oh, no; it was that you might take that useful information and use it for Jesus Christ.

Can it be that you have been dealing with foreign lands and never had the missionary spirit, wishing the salvation of foreign people? Can it be that you have become acquainted with all the outrages inflicted in business life, and that you have never tried to bring to bear that Gospel which is to extirpate all evil and correct all wrongs and illumine all darkness and lift up all wretchedness and save men from this world and the world to come? Can it be that understanding all the intricacies of business you know nothing about those things which will last long after all bills of exchange and consignments and invoices and rent rolls shall have crumpled 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?

A SCHOOL FOR INTEGRITY. I remark, also, that business life is a school for integrity. No man knows what he will do when he is tempted. There are thousands of men who have kept their integrity merely because they never have been tested. A man was elected treasurer of the state of Maine some years ago. He was distinguished for his honesty, usefulness and uprightness, but before one year had passed he had taken of the public funds for his own private use, and was buried out of office in disgrace. Distinguished for virtue before. Distinguished for crime after. You can see the names of men just like that, in whose hearts, integrity you had complete confidence, but placed in certain crises of temptation they were overboard.

Never so many temptations to scandalousness 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 goods; so much plundering in commercial life, that if a man talk about living a life of complete commercial accuracy there are those who ascribe it to greenness and lack of tact. More need of honesty now than ever before—trial honesty, complete honesty, more than in those times when business was a plain affair, and woolens were woolens and silks were silks and men were men.

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; of 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 carried on triumphantly. But they remember a time when they could have robbed a partner, or have absconded with the funds of a bank, or sprung a snap judgment, or made a false assignment, or borrowed illicitly

without any effort 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 sensing 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 flinching—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."

Oh, what a school of integrity business life is! If you have ever been tempted to let your integrity cringe before present advantage; if you have ever wakened up in some embarrassment and said: "Now I'll step a little aside from the right path and no one will know it, and I'll come all right again. It is only once." Oh, that only he has ruined tens of thousands of men for this life and blasted their souls for eternity. It is a tremendous school, business life—a school of integrity. A merchant in Liverpool got a five pound bank of England note, and holding it up toward the light he saw some interlineations in what seemed red ink.

He finally deciphered the letters, and found out that the writing had been made by a slave in Algiers, saying in substance, "I never got this note until I had to leave to inform my brother, John Dean, living near Carlisle, that I am a slave of the bey of Algiers." The merchant sent word, employed government officers and found who this man was spoken of in this bank bill. After awhile the man was rescued, who for eleven years had been a slave of the bey of Algiers. He was immediately emancipated, but was so worn out by hardship and exposure he soon after died. Oh, if some of the bank bills that come through your hands could tell all the scenes, through which they have passed, it would be a tragedy eclipsing any drama of Shakespeare, mightier than King Lear or Macbeth.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF BUSINESS MEN. As I go on in this subject, I am impressed with the importance of our having more sympathy with business men. Is it not a shame that we in our pulpits do not often preach about their struggles, their trials and their temptations? Men who toil with the hand are not to be very sympathetic with those who toil with the brain. The farmers who raise the corn, and the oats, and the wheat sometimes are tempted to think that grain merchants have an easy time, and get their profits without giving any equivalent. Plato and Aristotle were so opposed to merchandise that they declared commerce to be the curse of the nations, and they advised that cities be built at least ten miles from the seacoast.

But you and I know that there are no more industrious or high minded men than those who move in the world of traffic. Some of them carry burdens heavier than hods of brick, and are exposed to sharper things than the east wind, and climb mountains higher than the Alps or Himalayas, and if they are faithful Christ will at last say to them: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

We talk about the martyrs of the Piedmont valley, and the martyrs among the Scotch highlands, and the martyrs at Oxford. There are just as certainly martyrs of Wall street and State street, martyrs of Fulton street and Broadway, martyrs of Atlantic street and Chestnut street, going through hotter fires, or having their necks under sharper axes. Then it behooves us to bask in all freeness from our lives if this subject be not to be so cold and dreary to the time when we are at school, and we remember the rod, and we remember the hard tasks, and we complained grievously, but now we see it was for the best. Business life is a school, and the tasks are hard, and the chastisements sometimes are very grievous, but do not complain. The hotter the fire the better the refining.

There are men before the throne of God this day in triumph who on earth were cheated out of everything but their coffin. They were used, they were imprisoned for debt, they were throttled by constables with a whole pack of writs, they were sold out by the sheriffs, they had no compromise with their creditors, they had to make assignments. Their dying hours were ever annoyed by the sharp ringing of the door bell by some impetuous creditor who thought it was outrageous and impudent that a man should dare to die before he paid the last three shillings and sixpence. And a friend who had many misfortunes. Everything went against him. He had good business quality and was of the best morals, but he was one of those men, such as you have sometimes seen, for whom everything seems to go wrong. His life became to him a plague. When I heard he was dead I said, "God, be good to the sheriff!" Who are those justrous souls before the throne? When the question is asked, "Who are they?" the angels standing on the son of glass respond, "These are they who were of great business trouble and had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb."

REMARKABLE ANSWER TO PRAYER. 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.' I said it only happened so. You are an infidel. God answered that man's prayer. Oh, you want business grace.

Commercial ethics, business honors, 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 the 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 triumphant. There are men to-day who fought the battle and gained the victory. People come out of the man's store, and they say, 'Well, if there was a Christian in that store, that integrity kept the books, and was the customers. Light from the store world flashed through the show window.

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 ached 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."

The Wife of Bismarck. The influence of the Princess Bismarck over her husband has been strong, enduring and elevating, and has never for a moment wavered. It is no doubt true, as the prince so often says, that what he is she has made him. Always she has enjoyed his entire confidence and knows his diplomatic intentions and plans from conception to fruition, the trust which he places in her discretion and devotion being implicit. By her marriage with Prince Bismarck she has had three children, all of whom are living, Herbert, William and Marie, now the Countess of Rantzau, who lives with her parents and three little sons at Friedrichsruh.

The family goes but little into society, preferring rather to entertain their friends in their home. The princess is a fine musician, her taste for classical music being strongly developed. And one of the prettiest sights at the castle is the evening picture of Bismarck, sitting in his armchair, poking meditatively at the fire, while his wife plays Beethoven's sonatas to him and the family and guests sit about listening and enjoying.

She is of a quick, lively disposition, with good taste, clever wit and intelligence of more than ordinary quality. She is a most prudent and economical housekeeper, famous in times past for the delicious little dinners which she could concoct with the smallest of outlays.

Her religious character is strong to the degree of bigotry. Having inherited a strain of Evangelical piety—her parents were staunch Moravians—she has a feeling of such intense hatred for the French, whom she regards as a nation of heretics, that she was most bitter in her denunciation of them and strongly urged in her advice to her husband to exterminate them, her sole reason for all this being a fanatical zeal for the well being of the Evangelical religion.—Ladies' Home Journal.

Hints for Dollies. Dollies made to match the lunch cloth would be very pretty. A narrow hem and two narrow bands of drawnwork, with feather stitching done in pointed lines, will make the appropriate edge, and the space within may be occupied by an initial or left plain.

A set of dollies containing allusions to the months, both in text and flowers, will be a charming remembrance for an artistic friend when the gift-season comes, as come it will long before we are ready for it, if we long ago began our preparations. The little linen dollies with hemstitched edge can be bought so cheaply that it is not worth while to make them. Draw upon each one of the set a flower or flowers appropriate to a certain month and write a motto to be worked in outline stitch with black silk. A pretty sentiment for one— "September waves her goldenrod." On one side of the dolly is a beautifully worked spray of goldenrod done with yellow silk in French knots. On another one the flowers are roses—the motto, "Sweetest roses welcome June."

Some other sentiments which may be accompanied by suggestive flowers are: "The violet hides from March's rough caress." "Our vine wreathed king, October." "Poppies bloom in the field in fair July." "Hips and haws in bleak November." "September's child, the meadow bell." "The stately fox glove, August's love." "The stately holly of December." "The gracious pine not even January's blast can strip." "The lichen soft in February's wintry smile." "Fruitful's promise comes in May." "November's frost lays bare the nuts." "Anemone, sweet April's lady." In working the quotations emphasis is given to the name of the month by working it in a color, while the remainder of the lettering is done with black.—Harper's Bazar.

A Clever Girl's Surprise. A certain young woman who, her family says, she might think up clever things, thought up a specially clever one a month ago. The family knew as soon as she came down in the morning from her air of supreme self satisfaction that she had an idea working somewhere back in her brain. But for a week or more she kept her own counsel; then, one morning, when they came in to breakfast, they knew. For at each place was a small plate of hot buttered toast, and on every slice appeared the monogram of some one member of the family in every yellow against a golden brown background.

And when everybody had wondered enough to satisfy the vanity even of this exacting young woman, she was induced to go down into the kitchen and display the contrivance by which she had brought it all about. It was made like an ordinary toaster, only that the center was composed of a monogram, which was held in the frame by a single wire attached to each side. When the bread was put in and held over the fire the metal of the monogram kept its outline from browning, and when the rest of the surface was crisp and brown the letter device was just touched with creamy yellow. The rack was made of ordinary wire, and the letters were of tin. There was a toaster for each member of the family, so that the self esteem of all might be equally ministered to, and the toasters were capable of holding but one slice at a time.

"The beauty of this toaster," explained the clever young woman, "is that they could be made in silver and used for dinner favors."

But her father shook his head ruefully and said, "I don't see the beauty of that."—New York Sun.

On Easy Terms. Mrs. Winterbloom—I faced so nicely Christmas. Harold, open the piano your papa gave me for Mrs. Van Twiller to look at.

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