

RELIGIOUS ADVANCE.

REV. DR. TALMAGE PREACHES A SERMON OF HOPE.

His Text, "The Battle Ours"—George His Watchword—More Unity in Religion Than in Science—The Great Trial of Past Centuries.

BROOKLYN, Sept. 10.—This forenoon Rev. T. De Wit Talmage preached to a thronged audience in the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The keynote of the service was one of gladness. Many of the audience had been absent during the summer and had returned for this service. The pastor commenced on passages of Scripture depicting the morning of the world's deliverance. The subject of the sermon was, "The Battle Ours," the text being I Kings xx, 27, "And the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids."

With 33 kings drunk in one tent this chapter opens. They were allies plotting for the overthrow of the Lord's Israel. You know that a lion roars a flock of kids will shiver and huddle together. One lion would conquer a thousand kids. The battle opens. There are a great multitude of Syrians under General Ben-hadad, strong as lions. The Israelites are few and weak, like two little flocks of kids. Who beat? The lions, of course. Oh, no; the kids, for it all depends whether God is on the side of the lions or the kids. After the battle 100,000 Syrians lay dead on the field, and 27,000, attempting to fly, came along by a great wall, which toppled and crushed them to death.

Which was the stronger weapon—great Goliath's sword or little David's sling? David had five smooth stones from the brook. He had only one in striking down Goliath. He had a surplus of ammunition. He had enough to take down four more giants if they had appeared in the way. It all depends upon whether God is on the side of the shepherd boy or on the side of the giant.

THE PUBLISHERS AND RELIGION. There have been many in our day who have ventured the opinion that Christianity is falling back, and that in 50 years it will be extinct. They found their opinion on the assumed fact that the Bible is not as much of a book as it used to be, and that portions of it are repulsive to the people. I reply by asking, Which one of the publishing houses of New York, Philadelphia, Boston or Chicago is publishing the Bible today with the omission of a single verse or chapter? Are not our publishers intelligent men? And would they contrary to their financial interests continue to publish the Bible without the omission of a single chapter or a single verse if it were becoming an unpopular book and the people did not want it?

If Harpers or Appleton or Scribner or Lippincott should publish a Bible with the omission of one chapter, they would not sell 10 copies in 10 years. The fact that throughout Christendom there are hundreds of printing presses printing the word of God without the omission of a chapter or a verse proves that the Bible is popular, and the fact that there are more being printed in this decade than any other decade proves that the Bible is increasing in popularity.

I go through the courtrooms of the country. Wherever I find a judge's bench or a clerk's desk I find the Bible. By what other book would they take solemn oath? What is very apt to be among the bride's presents? The Bible. What is very apt to be put in the trunk of the young man when he starts for city life? The Bible. Voltaire predicted that the Bible during the nineteenth century would become an obsolete book. Well, we are pretty nearly through the nineteenth century. The Bible is not obsolete yet. There is not much prospect of its becoming obsolete, but I have to tell you that that rosette, the very rosette in which Voltaire wrote that prediction—some time ago was crowded from floor to ceiling with Bibles for Switzerland. Suppose the congress of the United States should pass a law that no Bibles should be printed in the United States.

If there are 30,000,000 grown men and women in the country, then there would be 30,000,000 people armed against such a law. But suppose the congress of the United States should pass a law that Macaulay's history or Charles Reade's novels should not be read—could you get half as large an army or the fourth as large an army? In other words, there are, as you know and I know, a thousand men who would die for their Bibles where there are 50 men who would die for any other book. The fact that there are now more Bibles being printed than ever before, that publishers find it a financial interest for them to continue the Bible, proves that this book is still the most popular book on the planet.

A SOURCE OF COMFORT. "But," say those who are antagonistic, "Christianity is falling back from the fact that the church is not as much respected as it used to be and is as influential." I reply to that with the statistic that one denomination—the Methodist church—according to a statistic given me by one of their bishops, dedicates on an average a new church every day of the year. Three hundred and sixty-five new churches in one denomination in a year and over a thousand new churches built every year in this country. Does that look as though the church were falling in its power and were becoming a worn-out institution? Around which institution in our communities gather the most ardent affection? The postoffice, the hotel, the courthouse, the city hall or the churches? Why, when our old Tabernacle was burning there were hundreds of men standing in the streets who never went to church, tears raining down their cheeks. It is because the church of God stands nearer the sympathies of the American people than any other institution. Men may caricature the church and call it a collection of hypocrites, but when their children are swept off by the diphtheria for whom do they send? To the postmaster, to the attorney general, to the aldermen, or to the pastors

of the churches? And if there be not room for the obsequies in the private home what building do they solicit? The academy of music, the hotel, public hall, courthouse? No, the churches. And if they want music on the sad occasion do they select the "Marsellaise" hymn, or "God Save the Queen," or our own grand national air? No, they want the old hymn with which we sang their old Christian mother to sleep. They want the Sunday school hymn that their little girl sang the last Sabbath afternoon she was out before she was seized with the awful sickness that broke father's heart and mother's heart. Oh, you know as well as I do—I shall not dwell on it any longer—the church of God, instead of being a worn-out institution, stands nearer the sympathies of the people than it ever did and eclipses all other institutions.

But our antagonists go on and say that Christianity is falling back, in the fact that infidelity is bolder now and more blatant than it ever was. I deny the statement. Infidelity is not near so bold now as it was in the days of our fathers and grandfathers. There were times in this country when men who were openly and above board infidel and antagonistic to Christianity could be elected to high office. Now, let some man wishing high position in the state proclaim himself the foe of Christianity and an infidel, how many states of the Union would he carry; how many counties; how many wards in Brooklyn? Not one.

Ah, my friends, infidelity in this day is not half as bold as it used to be. If it comes now, it is apt to come under the disguise of rhetoric or fantastic sentimentality. I know if a man with great intelligence does become an infidel and begins an attack on Christianity it makes great excitement.—Of course it does, and people come to the conclusion, weakened Christians come to the conclusion, that everything is going overboard because some man of strong intellect assails Christianity.

If a man jumps overboard from a Canadian steamer, he makes more excitement than all the 500 sane passengers who continue in the berths or on the decks, but does that stop the ship? Does that wreck all the 500 passengers? It makes great excitement when a man leaps from a platform or a pulpit into infidelity, but does that hinder our glorious Bible from taking its millions into the skies? I tell you infidelity is not half as bold now as it used to be.

DIVERSITY OF SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT. Do you suppose such things could be enacted now as were enacted in the days of Robespierre, when a shameless woman was elected to be goddess, and she was carried on a golden chair to a cathedral, and the people bowed down to her as a divine being and burned incense before her—she to take the place of the Bible, and of Christianity, and of the Lord Almighty? And while that ceremony was going on in the cathedral, in the chapels and in the corridors adjoining the cathedral scenes of drunkenness and debauchery and obscenity were enacted such as the world had never seen. Could such a thing as that transpire now? No, sir. The police would swoop on it, whether in Paris or New York. Infidelity is not half as bold now as it used to be.

"But," say our antagonists, "Christianity is falling back because science, its chief enemy, is triumphing over it." Now, I deny that there is any war between science and revelation. There is not a fact in science that may not be made to harmonize with the statements of the Bible. So said Hugh Miller; so said Joseph Henry; so said Professor Hitchcock; so said Professor Silliman; so said Professor Mitchell.

Joseph Henry, the leading scientist of America, better known and honored in the royal societies transatlantic than any other American, lived and died a believer in the religion of Jesus Christ. Joseph Henry knew all the facts of geology and yet believed the book of Genesis. He knew all the facts of astronomy and yet believed the book of Joshua, the sun and moon standing still. Joseph Henry knew all the anatomy of man and fish and yet believed the book of Jonah.

If the scientists of the day were all agreed, and they came up with solid front to attack our Christianity, perhaps they might make some impression upon it, but they are not agreed. It is often said that we religionists are falling in our advocacy of Christianity because we differ in our theology. I tell you we do not differ inside the church in theology half as much as they differ outside the church in science. If they reject our religion because we differ on some minor points, we might just as well reject science because the scientists differ, but as far as I can tell the war of infidel sciences against Christianity is not so severe as it is used to be, because these men are antagonistic to each other, and as far as I can tell it is going to be a war between telescopes and telegraphs, Leyden jar and Leyden jar, chemical apparatus and chemical apparatus. They do not agree on anything.

Do you suppose that this Bible theory about the origin of life is going to be overturned by men who have different theories—50 different theories—about the origin of life? And when Agassiz comes out and puts both feet on the doctrine of evolution and says in regard to many scientists, "I notice that these young naturalists are adopting as theories in science things which have not passed under observation," Agassiz saw what we all see—that there are men who talk very wisely who know but very little, and that just as soon as a young scientist finds out the difference between the feelers of a wasp and the horns of a beetle he begins to patronize the Almighty and go about talking about culture as though it were spelled c-u-l-t-u-r-e-a-r-c-u-l-u-r!

It makes me sick to see these literary fops going down the street with a copy of Darwin under one arm and a case of transfused grasshoppers and butterflies under the other arm, talking about the "Survival of the Fittest," and Huxley's "Protoplasm," and the "Nebular Hypothesis," and talking to us common men as though we were fools! If they

agreed in their theories and came up with solid facts against Christianity, I say perhaps they might make some impression, but they do not agree. Darwin charges upon Lamarck, Wallace upon Cope. Herschel even charged upon Ferguson. They do not agree about the gradation of the species; they do not agree about embryology. What do they agree about?

Herschel wrote a whole chapter on what he calls "Errors in Astronomy." La Place says that the moon was not put in the right place; that if it had been put four times the distance from our world there would have been more harmony in the universe. But Lioville comes up just in time to prove that the Lord was wise and put the moon in the right place. How many colors woven into the light? Seven, says Newton. Three, says David Brewster. How high is the arched borealis? Two and a half miles high, says Linn. One hundred and sixty-five miles, says Twinkl? How far is the sun from the earth? Seventy-six million miles, says Lacaille; 82,000,000 miles, says Humboldt; 90,000,000 miles, says Henderson; 104,000,000 miles, says Mayer. Only a little difference of 28,000,000 miles! These men say we do not agree in religion. Do they agree in science? Have they come up with solid front to assault our glorious Christianity?

Even mathematicians do not agree. Taylor's logarithms are found to have faults in them. The French metric system has wrong calculations. Talk about exact sciences! They are inexact. As far as with my little knowledge I have been able to explore, the only exact science is Christianity. There is nothing under which you can so appropriately write, "Quod erat demonstrandum."

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon your verdict?" the court or the clerk says to the jury, having been out all night, on coming in. "Have you agreed on your verdict?" If they say yes, the verdict is taken and recorded. If they say, "No, we have not agreed," they are sent back to the jury room. If one jurymen should say, "I think the man is guilty of murder," and another jurymen should say, "I think he is guilty of assault and battery with intent to kill," the judge would lose his patience and say, "Go back to your room now and make up a verdict. Agree on something."

Well, my friends, there has been a great trial going on for centuries and for ages between Skepticism, the plaintiff, versus Christianity, the defendant. The scientists have been impelled and sworn on the jury. They have been gone for centuries, some of them, and they come back, and we say, "Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon a verdict?" They say, "No, we have not agreed." Then we say, "Go back for a few more centuries and then come in and see if you can agree, see if you can render some verdict." Now, there is not the meekest prisoner in the Tombs court who would be condemned by a jury that could not agree, and yet you expect us to renounce our glorious Christianity for such a miserable verdict as these men have rendered, they themselves not having been able to agree.

A WEAK BOMBARDMENT. But my subject shall no longer be defensive; it must be aggressive. I must show you that instead of Christianity falling back it is on the march, and that the coming religion of the world is to be the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ 10,000 times intensified. It is to take possession of everything—of all laws, all manners, all customs, all cities, all nations. It is going to be so mighty as compared with what it has been, so much more mighty that it will seem almost like a new religion.

I adopt this theory because Christianity has gone on straight ahead notwithstanding all the bombardment, and infidelity has not destroyed a church, or crippled a minister, or rooted out one verse of the Bible, and now their ammunition seems to be pretty much exhausted. They cannot get anything new against Christianity, and if Christianity has gone on under the bombardment of centuries and still continues to advance may we not conclude that, as the powder and shot of the other side seem to be exhausted, Christianity is going on with more rapid stride?

I find an encouraging fact in the thought that the secular press in this day and the pulpit seem harnessed in the same team for the proclamation of the gospel. Tomorrow there will not be a banker on Wall street or State street or Third street who will not have in his pocket or on his table treatises on Christianity, calls to repentance and Scripture passages, 20 or 30 of them, in the reports of the Christian churches of this city and other cities. Why, that thing would have been impossible a few years ago. Now on Monday morning and Monday evening the secular press spreads abroad more religious truth than all the tract societies of the country spread in the other six days. Blessed be the tract societies! We hail them, and we hail these others.

I say it would have been impossible a few years ago. Hundreds of letters would have come to the secular newspaper offices, saying, "Stop my paper; we have religion on Sunday; don't give us any through the week. Stop my paper." But I have been told that many of the secular papers have their largest circulation on Monday morning, and the whole population of this country are becoming sermon readers. Besides that, have you not noticed the papers proclaiming themselves secular almost every week have religious discussions in them?

Go back a few years when there was not a decent paper in the United States that had not a discussion on the doctrine of eternal punishment. Small wit as I am, I know, but there was not an infidel, intelligent man in the United States that as a result of that controversy in regard to eternal punishment did not ask himself the question, "What is to be my eternal destiny?" And some years ago when Tyndal offered his prayer gauge there was not a secular paper in the

United States that did not discuss the question: "Does God ever answer prayer? May the creature impress the Creator?" Are not all these facts encouraging to every Christian and every philanthropist? Besides that, the rising generation are being saturated with gospel truth as no other generation by this international series of Sunday school lessons. Formerly the children were expected only to nibble at the little infantile Scripture stories, but now they are taken from Genesis to Revelation, the strongest minds of the country explaining the lessons to the teachers, and the teachers explaining them to the classes, and we are going to have in this country 8,000,000 youth trained for Christianity. Hear it! Hear it!

Besides that, you must have noticed, if you have talked on these great themes, that they are finding out that while science is grand in secular directions worldly philosophy grand in secular directions, they cannot give any comfort to a soul in trouble.

COMFORT IN THE GOSPEL. Talking with men on steamboats and in rail cars, I find they are coming back to the comfort of the gospel. They say, "Somehow human science doesn't comfort me when I have any trouble, and I must try something else." And they are trying the gospel.

Take your scientific consolation to that mother who has just lost her child. Apply the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest." Tell her that her child died because its life was not worth as much as the life of one that lived. Try that if you dare. Go to that dying man with your transcendental phraseology and tell him he ought to have confidence in the great "to be," and the everlasting "now," and the eternal "what is it?" and go on with your consolation and see if he is comforted.

Go to that woman who has lost her husband and tell her it was a geological necessity that that man passed out of existence, just as the megatherium disappeared in order to make room for a higher style of creation, and go on with your consolation and tell her that there is a possibility that 10,000,000 years from now we ourselves may be geological specimens on the geological shelf, petrified specimens of the extinct human race.

And after you have got all through with your consolation, if the poor afflicted soul is not utterly crushed, I will send out the plainest Christian from my church, and with one half hour of prayer and the reading of Scripture promises the tears will be staid, and the consolation and the joy in that house will be like the calmness of an Indian summer sunset. There will be a glory flooding the house from floor to cupola. Oh, people are finding out themselves—and they all have troubles—they find that philosophy and science do not help them when there is a dead babe in the house. They are coming back to our glorious old-fashioned sympathies religion.

Oh, young man, do not be ashamed to be found on the side of the Bible. Do not join those young men who in this day put their thumb in their vest and swagger about the street and the stores talking about the glorious nineteenth century, about its light being sufficient without any Bible and without any Christ and without any God. The time is coming—we may not live to see it, but I should not be surprised if we did see it—when this whole country is to be one great church, the forests, the aisles, the Allegheny and the Rocky mountains the pillars, the chain of inland lakes the baptistries, and the worship the halleluiah chorus to him who was and is and shall be evermore. Oh, come over to the majority—come under the banner of Emanuel.

Vernon was the son of an English squire. He was brought up in great elegance. There was a man working on the place of the name of Ralph. Vernon used to often talk with Ralph. After awhile Vernon went off to college and came back with his mind full of skepticism. He talked his skepticism to Ralph the workman. After awhile Vernon went from home again, was gone for years, came back, and among his first questions when getting home was, "Where is Ralph?" "Oh," said the father, "Ralph is in prison waiting for the day of execution."

Vernon hastened to see Ralph. Ralph, looking through the wicket of the prison, said: "Vernon, how glad you are to come and see me! I am glad to see you. I hardly expected you would come and see me. I don't blame you; I don't blame anybody; only blame myself; but, Vernon, I want you to promise me one thing. Will you?" Vernon replied, "I will." "I want you to promise me never to talk skepticism in the presence of anybody. You see it might do them harm. When you used to say there was nothing in the Bible, and it didn't make any difference how we lived, we would come out happy at the last, somehow it had a bad influence upon me, and I went from bad to worse until I am here, and I must die for my crimes."

By almost superhuman effort the sentence was changed, and he was to be transported to another country for life. The ship going there was wrecked on Van Diemen's Land. Among those who perished was Ralph, the victim of Vernon's skepticism. Vernon tells the story today with tears and a broken heart, but it is too late! Oh, do not talk skepticism; do not talk skepticism! Let God be true, though every man be found a liar.

The Cruiser Sank, Not the Box. Admiral Tryon's dispatch box, which was found floating after the Victoria had foundered, was specially made to contain the code of signals. Of course it was desired to keep this code a secret, so in order to provide against the risks of accidents the box was lined with lead and perforated with many holes to insure its at once sinking to the bottom of the sea if it happened to come into the water. It would be interesting to know who were the designers of this box, which, being specially constructed to sink, floated safely and is now at the admiralty, a most practical proof of the fallibility of our so-called experts.—London Truth.

BALD HEADS!



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