

'TIS ONE SUGGESTED BY THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION.

No Matter How Uncertain is the Belief of the So-Called Advanced Clergy, Dr. Talmage's Faith is Secure and Easily Understood by All.

Talmage's Creed.

Dr. Talmage's text was taken from Luke 17, "And He came down with them and stood in the plain."

Christ on the mountains is a frequent study. We have seen him on the Mount of Olives, Mount of Beatitudes, Mount Moriah, Mount Calvary, Mount of Ascension, and it is glorious to study Him on these great natural elevations. But how is it that never before have we noticed Him on the plain? Amid the rocks, high up on the mountain, Christ had passed the night, but now, at early dawn, He is coming down with some special friends, stepping from shelving to shelving, here and there a loosened stone rolling down the steep sides ahead of Him, until He has reached a level place, so that He can be approached without climbing from all sides. He is on the level. My text says, "He came down with them and stood in the plain."

Now that is what the world wants to-day more than anything else—a Christ on the level, easy to get at, no ascending, no descending, approachable from all sides—Christ on the plain. The question among all consecrated people to-day is, What is the matter with the ministers? Many of them are engaged in picking holes in the text and apologizing for this and apologizing for that. In an age when the whole tendency is to pay too little reverence to the Bible, they are fighting against Bibliolatry, or too much reverence for the Bible. They are building a place of chemistry, or the canal boat of the place of the limited express rail train. What a theological farce it is. Ministers fighting against too much reverence for the Scriptures, ministers making apology for the Scriptures, ministers pretending to be friends of the Bible, yet doing the Book more damage than all the blatant infidels on all the earth.

The trouble is our theologians are up in the mountain in a fight about the clouds about things which they do not understand. Come down on the plain and stand beside Christ, who never preached a technicality or a didacticism. What do you, O wise headed ecclesiastical, know about the decrees of God? Who cares for your subsparliamentarism? What a spectacle we have in our denominations to-day; committees trying to patch up an old creed made two or three hundred years ago so that it will fit on the Nineteenth century. Why do not our millinery establishments take out of the garment the coal scuttle hats which your great-grandmothers wore and try to fit them on the head of the modern maiden? You cannot fix up a three-hundred-year-old creed so as to fit our time. Princeton will sew on a little piece, and Union Seminary will sew on a little piece, and Allegheny Seminary and Danville Seminary will sew on a little piece, and by the time the creed is done it will be as variegated as Joseph's coat of many colors. Think of having to change an old creed to make it clear that all infants dying go to Heaven.

I am so glad that the committees are going to let the babies in. Thank you. So many of them are already in that all the hills of Heaven look like a Sunday-school anniversary. Now what is the use of fixing up a creed which left any doubt on the subject? No man ever doubted that all infants go to Heaven, unless he was a Herod or a Charles Guiteau. I was opposed to overhauling the old creed at all, but now that it has been lifted up and its imperfections set up in the sight of the world, I say, Overhaul it with me, make a new creed. There are to-day in our denomination 500 men who could make a better one. I could make a better one myself.

As we are now in process of changing the creed, and no one knows what we are expected to do, or will do, in three years hence we are expected to believe, I could not wait, and so I have made a creed of my own which I intend to observe the rest of my life. I wrote it down in my memorandum book some six months ago, and the rings of Saturn are now round it. The glorious Lord, to trust Him, love Him and obey Him is all that is required. To that creed I invite all mankind. *T. De Witt Talmage.*

The reason Christianity has not made more rapid advance is because the people are asked to believe too many things. There are, I believe, to-day millions of good Christians who have never joined the church and are not counted among the Lord's friends because they cannot believe all the things that they are required to believe. One of the things a man is expected to believe in order to enter the church and reach Heaven has no more to do with his salvation than the question, How many volucres are in the moon? or, How far apart from each other are the rings of Saturn? or, How many teeth there were in the jawbone with which Samson smote the Philistines? I believe 10,000 things, but none of them have anything to do with my salvation, except these two—I am a sinner and Christ can help me to be a Christian. I believe that the octave consists of five tones and two semitones, and all the Handels and Haydns and Mozarts and Wagners and Schumanns of all ages must do their work within the range of those five tones and two semitones. So I have to tell you that all the theology that will be of practical use in our world is made of the two facts of human sinfulness and divine atonement. Within that octave swing the Song of Moses and the Lamb, the Christmas chant about Bethlehem and the Hallelujah of all the choirs standing on seas of glass.

Is there not some mode of getting out of the way those nonessential things, these superfluous, these diversities from the main issue? Is there not some way of bringing the church down out of the mountain of controversy and conventionalism and to put it on the plain where Christ stands? The present of the things is like this: In a famine struck district a table has been provided and it is loaded with food enough for all. The odors of the meats fill the air. Everything is ready. The platters are full. The chalices are full. The baskets of fruit are full. Why not let the people

in? The door is open. Yes, but there is a cluster of wise men blocking up the door, discussing the contents of the cauldor standing midtable. They are shaking their fists at each other.

One says there is too much vinegar in that cauldor, and one says there is too much sweet oil, and another says there is not the proper proportion of red pepper. I say, "Get out of the way and let the hungry people come in." Now, our blessed Lord has provided a cauldor of peace, and the oxen and the fatlings have been killed, and all the vineyards and orchards of Heaven crown the table. The world has been invited to come, and they look in, and they are hungry, and now would you pour in by the million to this world-wide table, but the door is blocked up by controversies and men with whole libraries on their backs are disputing as to what proportion of sweet oil and cayenne pepper should make up the "good" oil of the way and let the hungry world come in.

The Christian church will have to change its tack, or it will run on the rocks of demotion. The world's population annually increases 15,000,000. No one pretends that half that number of people converted to God. There are more than twice as many Buddhists as Protestants; more than twice as many Buddhists as Roman Catholics. Protestants, 135,000,000; Catholics, 195,000,000; Buddhists, 400,000,000. There are 175,000,000 Mohammedans and 20,000,000 Brahmins. Meanwhile many of the churches are only religious clubhouses, where a few people go on Sunday morning, averaging one person to a pew or one person to a half dozen pews, and leaving the minister at night to sweat through the pews and sing the hymns of a lone traveler, unless, by a Sunday evening sacred concert, he can get out an audience of respectable size.

The vast majority of the church membership around the world puts forth no direct effort for the salvation of men. Did I say that there would be no change? I correct that and say, there will be a change. If there be 15,000,000 persons added every year to the world's population, there will be 30,000,000 added to the church and 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 and 60,000,000 and 70,000,000 and 80,000,000 and 90,000,000 and 100,000,000 added to the church. How is it to be done? It will be done when the church will meet Christ on the plain. Come down out of the mountain of exclusiveness. Come down out of the mountain of pride. Come down out of the mountain of formalism. Come down out of the mountain of indifference.

Astronomers have been busy measuring worlds, and they have told us how great is the circumference of this world and how great is its diameter. Yes, they have kept on until they have weighed the earth, and found it to weigh 6,000,000,000,000,000,000 tons. But by no science has the weight of this world's trouble been weighed. Now, Christ standing on the level of our humanity stands in sympathy with every trouble. There are so manyaching heads. His ache is our ache. There are so many weary feet. His weariness is our weariness. He is weary with the long journey up and down the land that loved Him not. There are so many persecuted souls. Every hour of His life was under human outrage. The world had no better place to receive Him than a cattle farm, a factory, a shop, a snip on His cheek and a spear in His side.

So intensely human was He that there has not been in all our race a grief or infirmity or exhaustion or pang that did not touch Him once, and that does not touch Him now. The lepers, the paralytics, the dumb, the blind, the lame, the courtisan, the repentant brigand—which one did He turn off, which one did He not pity, which one did He not help? The universal trouble of the world is bereavement. One may escape all the other troubles, but not bereavement. Out of that bitter cup every one must take a drink. For instance, in order that all might know how He sympathizes with those who have lost a daughter, Christ comes to the house of Jairus. There is such a big crowd around the door and His disciples have to push their way in.

From the throng of people I conclude that this girl must have been very popular; she was one of those children whom everybody likes. After Christ got in the house there was such a loud weeping that the ordinary tones of voice could not be heard. I do not wonder. The dead daughter was 12 years of age. It is about the happiest time in most lives.

Only 12 years of age! So fair, so promising, so full of life a few days ago, and now so dead that she is no more to a daughter dead! The room is full of folks, but yonder is the room where the young sleeper is. The crowd cannot go in there. Only six friends enter—five besides Christ—three friends, and of course the father and mother. They have the right to go in. The heaviest part of the grief was theirs. All eyes in that room are on the face of this girl. There lay the beautiful hand, white and finely shapen, but it was not lifted in greeting to any of the group.

Christ said and said, "This child of that hand said, with a tone and accentuation charged with tenderness and command, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise!" And without a moment's delay she arose, her eyes wide open, her cheeks turned from white to red rose, and the parents cry, "She lives! She lives!" and in the next room they take up the sound, "She lives! She lives!" and the throng in front of the doorway repeat it, "She lives! She lives!" Will not all those who have lost a daughter wish that such a Christ as that could sympathize with their grief?

On another occasion he showed how he felt about the loss of a son. Here are the obsequies. A long procession, a widowed mother following her only son. I know not how long the husband and father had been gone, but this young man, who had now come to be a young man, the leadership of that household had fallen. I think he had got to be the breadwinner. He was proud of his mother, and she of him. He never lacked anything as long as he lived. And there is no grander spectacle on earth than a young man standing between want and a widowed mother. But that young man had fallen lifeless under accident or disaster, and was being carried out.

Only a few hours in that land are allowed to pass between decease and burial. It is the same day or the next. And there they move on. Christ meets the procession. His eye picks out the chief mourner, and he has his hand on the mourner's shoulder, as if to say to the pall-bearers: "Stop! There will be no burial to-day. That broken heart must be healed. That mother must have her home healed. And then looking into the face of the young man, he says, "This lands the face is always exposed in such a procession, Christ speaks one sentence, before which Death fell prostrate under the bier." He sat up, while the overjoyed mother and his father in his arms, and well nigh smothered him with her ca-

resses, and the air was rent with congratulations.

Can any one who has ever lost a son doubt that Christ sympathizes with such sorrows? How many there are who need that particular comfort. It was not hollow sentiment when, after Edmund Burke, the greatest orator of his time, had lost his son, and the bereaved father, crossing the pasture field, met the horse that had belonged to that deceased son, that the orator threw his arms around the horse's neck and kissed the dumb brute. It was not hollow sentiment when David, the psalmist, cried out in the news of his son's death, although he had been a desperately bad boy: "Oh, Absalom, my son! my son! Would God I had died for thee, Oh, Absalom, my son! my son!" But for such and all other bereavement there is divine condolence.

Christ on the plain. I care not from where you approach Him, you can touch Him and get His help. Is it mental depression you suffer? Remember Him who said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" Is it a struggle for bread? Remember Him who fed the 5,000 with but two loaves and a few biscuits, neither of the biscuits larger than your fist. Is it chronic ailment? Remember the woman who for eighteen years was bent almost double, and lifted, her face until she could look into the blue sky. Are you a sailor and spend your life battling with the waves? Remember Him who flung the tempest of Genesareth flat on the crystal pavement of the quiet sea.

And see how he made an immortal liturgy out of the psalmist's cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner, a prayer so short that the most overworked offender can utter it, and yet long enough to win celestial dominion. It was well put by a man who had been converted, and who remembered that in his dissolute days he found it hard to get occupied with the most ordinary duty, a certificate of good character. In commending Christ to the people he said, "Bless God, I have found out that Jesus will take a man without a character!" Christ on a level with suffering humanity. My text says, "He came down with them and stood in the plain." No climbing up through attributes you cannot understand. No ascending the heights of beautiful rhetoric of prayer. No straining after elevations you cannot reach. No hunting for a God that you cannot find. He came straight to Him and looking into His face and taking His hand and asking for His pardon, His comfort, His grace, His Heaven.

Christ on the level. When during the siege of Sebastopol an officer had commanded a private soldier to stand on the parapet and fire on the enemy and the ammunition as it was handed up, while he, the officer, stood in a place sheltered from the enemy's guns, Gen. Gordon leaped upon the wall to help him, and commanded the officer to follow him, and then closed with the words, "Now order me to do anything that you are afraid to do yourself." (Glory be to God, the Captain of our salvation has Himself gone through all the exposures in which He commands us to be courageous. He has been through it all, and now offers His sympathy in similar struggles.)

Oh, join Him on the plain. As long as you stay up in the mountain of your pride you will get no help. That is the reason so many never find the salvation of the Gospel. They sit high up in the Mont Blanc of their opinionativeness, and they have their opinion about God, and their opinion about the soul, and their opinion about eternity. Have you any idea that your opinion will have any effect upon two tremendous facts, that you are a sinner, and that Christ is ready at your earnest prayer to save you?

In the final day of your life how much will your opinion be of much importance before the blast of the archangel's trumpet. When the life of this planet shall be thrashed out with the flail of thunderbolts, nobody will ask about your opinions. Come down out of the mountain of opinionativeness and meet Christ on the plain, where you must meet Him or never meet Him at all, except as you meet Him on the judgment throne.

A Christian easy to get at. No armed sentinels to challenge you. No ruthless officer to scrutinize the papers you present. Immediate response. Immediate forgiveness. Immediate solace. Through what struggle people must go to get a pardon from worldly authority! By what hoops of fire they must pass, by what nervous strain of anxiety, by what adroitness. A Count of Italy was condemned to death at Milan. The Countess, hearing of the sentence, hastened to Vienna to seek his pardon. The death warrant was already on its way. The Countess, arriving at Vienna in the night, hastened to the palace gates. The attendants forbade her entrance at all, and especially at night, but she overcame them with her entreaties, and the Empress was awakened, and the Countess, sitting before the Emperor's husband, and for the Emperor was awakened to hear the same plea.

Commutation of sentence was granted, but how could she overtake the officer who had started with the death warrant, and could she get too late to save the life of her husband? By four relays of horses and stopping not a moment for food she reached the city of Milan as her husband was on the way to the scaffold. Just in time to save him and not a moment to spare, she came up. You see there were two difficulties in the way. The one was to get the pardon sized and the other was to bring it to the right place in time. Glory be to God, we need go through no such exigency. No long road to travel. No pitiless sentinels at a palace gate. Pardon here, Pardon now. Pardon for the asking. Pardon forever. A Saviour easy to get at. A Christ on the plain!

It is said that the greatest dread of a gambler is that he will be paralyzed. They nearly all expect to die from a stroke of some kind. It may be from the fact that a great many of them have gone that way. If a man with a withered arm or leg should happen in a gambling house the dealer would quit his chair. Another dread of gamblers is a man who comes in to play with a game in his hand. That is regarded as bad luck to the house.—*Pittsburgh Telegraph.*

Deacon Jones is one of your self-pitied men. When at his evening prayers, his gun was fired beneath the window. The deacon jumped to his feet like a jack-in-a-box. But he recovered his equanimity in an instant, and quietly remarked, "I don't know whether that fellow killed his prey or not, but I know that he spoiled mine."

—Boston Transcript.

NORTHWEST GROWING.

IT HAS BEEN BOTH RAPID AND STEADY.

Cheerful Outlook for the Residents of South Dakota and Nebraska—A Careful Review of the Situation—Rapid Settlement Still Ahead.

The Past, Present and Future.

JOSEPH SAMPSON, President of the Fidelity Loan and Trust Company, Sioux City, has given to the public the following encouraging and interesting article:

In the month of June, 1888, accompanied by a friend, I drove across the country northwest from Storm Lake to Sheldon, in O'Brien County, to attend a land convention being held under the auspices of Geo. D. Perkins, the newly appointed Commissioner of Immigration for the State of Iowa. The distance between Storm Lake and Sheldon is a straight line across the country is about six miles. On this drive we passed over many solid sections of vacant prairie. After leaving Buena Vista County and getting into the corner of Clay and O'Brien counties we began to note vacated houses and abandoned farms, the number growing quite large as we came near the county seat town of Primglar, where we stopped for refreshments. While we were eating lunch the proprietor of the restaurant begged us to buy his farm, which we had passed on the way. It lay two miles east of town and was mortgaged for about \$600. He wanted \$200 for his equity, but we felt that we would not be safe in offering him \$100 for his home- stead subject to the mortgage for fear he would take us up. This would have made the farm cost us less than \$5 an acre. It had a comfortable little house and a nice grove of trees, and about eighty acres under cultivation. We had noted the farm on our way along with especial interest on account of the over-supply of dilapidated machinery that we saw scattered around the house and in the grove adjoining. Hundreds of farms we found could be bought on as favorable terms in several of the counties of Northwestern Iowa at this time, and the burning questions that were discussed at the land convention were how to attract settlers to our prairies and how to best promote the prosperity of those already settled. We discussed flax growing, dairy business, blue grass, timber, etc. During the convention we heard from Alexander P. Edie, representing Scotch colonists, and Close Bros., representing English colonists. L. S. Collin, of Fort Dodge, made a stirring address, pointing out the necessity of keeping the lands for American farmers who would yet come in by the thousands and appreciate the magnificent opportunities our prairies afforded of founding fine homes. Willis Drummond, jr., of Chicago, was on hand with his lieutenants, representing the mortgage banks of St. Paul, Kansas City, and other men were on hand representing the land grant departments of other railroad companies. These gentlemen were all perfectly willing to let the land be invaded by the peasantry of Europe, or India, for that matter, provided the lands were sold at fair prices and a good first cash payment made on the purchase.

Looking back across only the brief period of eleven years, and thinking of the really elevate character of Northwestern Iowa in that year when we were all so anxious to promote immigration, one is lost in wonder and surprise at the swift changes that have taken place in this portion of Iowa. Since that day in June the railway system of Northwestern Iowa has been perfected to a wonderful extent, so that it is impossible for a farmer to get more than ten miles from a railway station. The Northwestern line has been built through from Eagle Grove to Hardward and beyond; the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern line through from Grundy Center to Waterloo and Sioux Falls; the Illinois Central branches from Cherokee to Onawa and Sioux Falls; and, last but not least, the Sioux City & Northern, with its great lake outlet for the products of the soil. If some one had predicted our immigration in 1880 the things that would come to pass during these eleven years, indicating the compact settlement of the prairies, the enormous rise in the price of lands, and the industrial and agricultural changes incident to improved methods of farming, all who were present at the convention would have voted the man a "visionary" or perhaps insane.

Taking up the cue from what we have all seen of Northwestern Iowa since 1880, may not we who live here in Sioux City be entirely justified in glancing to west and northwest of us to find the conditions that surround the people of Dakota and Nebraska, in a certain sense surrounded just the same as the people of Northwestern Iowa were ten years ago? May we not also be entirely justified in looking for much greater progress and development during the next ten years in the section referred to than has been made by us in Iowa between the years 1880 and 1892? The soil of the prairies west of us is as fertile as that of Iowa, perhaps more so, having a larger quantity of lime in the soil, thus making sure a better quality and yield of small grain. The climate is the same. The one drawback that has been menacing the people of portions of South Dakota, namely, the lack of moisture is now in a far way to be overcome by irrigation. It is clearly shown that the irrigation of immense areas of South Dakota is purely a mechanical question; that is to say, a question of reaching the underground flow of water, and then, when it is found, distributing it properly in the right season over the land in crop. Millions of acres, however, that are yet to be brought into cultivation, will yield profitable crops without irrigation, so that whether irrigation becomes the commercial success that is hoped for or not, still the State of South Dakota is capable of sustaining an agricultural population ten times greater than it has at present, and it will not cost the State lands as compactly settled as a the lands of some of the Eastern States.

To give more than a mere hint at the filling up of Dakota and Nebraska that is sure to come within the next ten years would seem to be unnecessary, for what the thoughtful man has fully concluded in the idea of the rapid settlement of the cheap lands west of us. There is to each body of cheap lands to be found on the globe having the same climate, conditions and railway facilities. No other section of the country to-day presents such a field for land investment or speculation.

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