

**Business in Religion and Religion in Business.**

"Goodness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."—(1 Tim. 4:8.)

Some one has said that religion needs business as a husband, and business needs religion as a helping, counselling, loving, cheering wife. The bible is full of instruction on the subject of this morning's subject. Take a few business maxims from the New Testament: "Be not slothful in business;" "Owe no man anything;" "Let no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter;" "Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of another;" "Bear ye one another's burdens;" "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them;" "Do good unto all men."

Religion in business and business in religion is, therefore, a subject of eminent appropriateness for pulpit discussion. Said Henry Ward Beecher: "The act of learning how to live with your fellow men is the art of learning how to live with God and angels, but that art has been largely left out in the teaching of our churches for years and years." Probably so in his earlier years. But, thank God, not so much now.

We are fast learning that the question of men going to heaven when they die depends upon their attitude to God in Christ and fellow men while they live. True living means happy dying.

You will notice that our subject has a twofold division:

- I. *Business in religion,* and
- II. *Religion in business.*

It is in this order that I desire to treat it.

- I. *Business in religion.*

Many good people combine religion with business who never

think of combining business with religion. They live their religious life in a most unbusinesslike manner, and hence fail in it. In other words they do not make it their one great occupation. Religion is business: the most important God has entrusted to man. The London merchants were right when, after being converted, telegraphed to their brother in a foreign country: "Come at once; very important business;" and when he came said that it was to ask him to pray with them and attend services with them, and to so attend to this religious business that he, too, would be converted. You will remember the wonderful child some 1900 years ago who astounded the great doctors of the law in the Temple at Jerusalem, and said to his mother: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Oh! what a grand conception that was of life! Christ did not make his religion a mere pleasant, Sabbath day side issue—to ease his conscience, to entertain him, and to use it for a comfortable assurance that when he died he would have a reasonable hope of going to heaven.

What is meant by business in religion?

1. That as in business matters practical common sense is used, so in religion we should not act upon abstract, creedal principles only, using it or attending to it only on Sabbath, but every day. "God doesn't split up our lives into slices and say: 'In this church building you must obey God, but in yonder store it doesn't matter if the devil is king. On this Sunday you must mind the bible, but tomorrow you may sell stale poultry for fresh, and pile inferior fruit upon the false fruit baskets, and keep knaves out of jail by law quibbles,' and adulterate your articles, and take advantage of those who are in money straits to extort usury."

"A slovenly carpenter was once heard at a weekly prayer-meeting to pray with great fervency for the spread of Christ's cause—a cause which he disgraced and hindered in his sphere every time he stood at his work bench. When he ended his prayer a hearty 'amen' came from a servant who put her mistress out of temper a hundred times a day by her carelessness. A clerk also was there who, although he taught a class in the mission school on Sundays was always late at his employer's store on weekdays. He whispered 'amen' too, and meant it so far as he knew himself. A lady heard as she listened resolved to join the church missionary society and then went home and found unreasonable fault with the cook. And others, too, felt warmed to do something for Christ who never seemed to have thought that religion, like charity, begins at home. The mechanic who is powerful in class meeting and weak at his trade, is no credit to the cause he professes. The servant who drops tears feelingly at religious services and drops dishes unfeelingly in the kitchen has her tenderness altogether too much on one side." The business man who is kind and helpful at home and in the church, and overworks while he underpays his clerks is no christian. The woman who has smiles and kind words in her club and social meetings, but is cross and irritable and gloomy at home, and ignores the poor, the suffering, the helpless, the fallen is lacking in one important element that goes to make up true Christian womanhood.

Then by business in religion is meant bringing into religion the spirit that helps business succeed.

*Promptness and persevering interest.*

No business succeeds without these. And so "if our religion means business, it will take just as much rain, just as much heat, just as

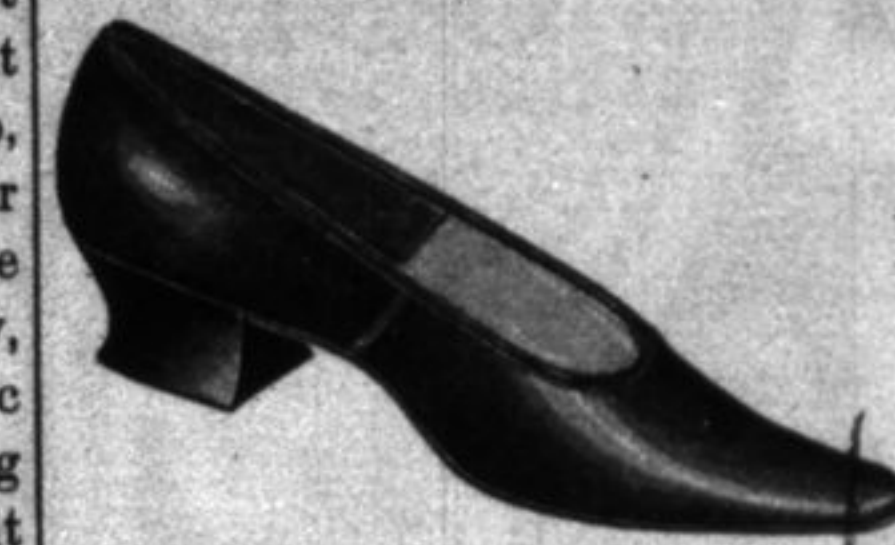
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much cold, just as much weariness, to keep us from church and christian duty as from our daily occupations. What would you think of a man who went to his business only in fair weather? What success would you expect for a young man who never went to his work when the thermometer was above or below temperate? How long would you employ a man who did not come to his work when he found himself a little weary or indisposed or not feeling like it? How many excuses for absence from meetings, or on Sunday, or on week days, or for other neglects of duty would stand the analysis of the question: "Would this same excuse be sufficient to keep me from an expected pleasure?" That question is a good standard for measuring a christian's excuses.

2. Take again *patience*. No man expects in a month or two to build up an extensive business. A farmer knows well that he must plow and sow, and then patiently wait for the harvest. A religious life is a steady, slow growth, not a spasmodic matter.

3. *Carefulness*. Slovenliness, inattention in business is ruin. So in religion. One stitch dropped may mar the fabric. One link carelessly welded may, when the storms come, set the boat adrift, loosened forever from safe moorings.

4. *Business-likeness*.

If you profess to be religious be so from principle. It is businesslike to do so. Such a Christian is not thrown off the track very easily. God grant the world christians who are so from principle. "I don't see you at Dr. John's church any more." "No, Maude, the colors the sun throws through those new stained glass windows were too trying to my complexion, so I was obliged to sever my connection with the church." Bah!

*in Business.*  
If it is necessary to have business spirit in religion it is just as necessary to have religious spirit in business. What do I mean? This: Business conducted on religious principles. "Oh! but," you say, "that can't be done and succeed." "What?" "Yes, I mean every word I say," said a young business man to me, "you can't carry your religion into business any length and expect to succeed." Is that true? Ah! me, what if it should be true? But it isn't.

Some time ago I sent a circular letter to a large number of representative men in all avocations of life, asking them what they would recommend to a young man starting in life's work as regards church life. The universal answer, even from those who were not church people themselves, was most earnest and hearty: "be religious, practically, honestly, genuinely so." "I asked," says Dr. Crafts, "a prominent business man of Chicago who has been active in the very heart of its commercial life for sixteen years to make a careful list of its one hundred richest men, and then tell me how many of them were church members. His report was 70 church members; 24 attended church, and I think are not members, all but six in closest touch with the church; three I consider disipated, and three are Jews whom I consider good citizens."

He goes on to say: "One of the wealthiest manufacturers of Philadelphia told me that the percentage in that city was as good as in Chicago." Rev. Dr. Washington Gladden is authority for the statement that about three-fourths of the business men of Springfield, Mass., are actively engaged in Christian work."

Why, it would be a most marvelous thing if one could not be religious and succeed in business. Of course, we are now speaking of legit-

II. But now consider *Religion*

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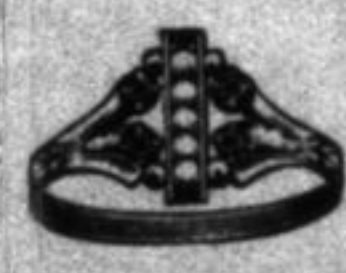
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