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Aug. 9. THOS. MOORE.

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Custom Planing, Hand-sawing, Scroll Sawing, Shaping, promptly attended to.
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DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

"IS THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION A CHEAT?" HIS SUBJECT.

A Delusion that Numbers 200,000,000 Souls as Dupes, that Has Conquered the Heathen, that Has Reformed the Drunkard, that is Joy on Earth.

BROOKLYN, Jan. 30.—At the Tabernacle this morning the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., baptized by immersion a number of persons who preferred that mode, as on the Sunday previous he had baptized by sprinkling those who so desired. Professor Browne, the organist, rendered the Sonata in C minor by Rheinberger. The opening hymn, sung by the whole congregation, was that beginning:

O happy day that fixed my choice
On thee, my Saviour and my God.

After reading another list of those who during the week had united with the church, Dr. Talmage discussed the subject, "Is the Christian Religion a Cheat?" His text was: "He made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver," Ezekiel xxi, 21. The preacher said:

Two modes of divination by which the king of Babylon proposed to find out the will of God: He took a bundle of arrows, put them together, mixed them up, then pulled forth one and by the inscription on it decided what city he should first assault. Then an animal was slain, and by the lighter or darker color of the liver the brighter or darker prospect of success was inferred. That is the meaning of the text: "He made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver."

Stupid delusion! And yet all the ages have been filled with delusions. It seems as if the world loves to be hoodwinked; the delusion of the text is only a specimen of a vast number of deceits practiced upon the human race. In the latter part of the last century Johanna Southcote came forth pretending to have divine power, made prophecies, had chapels built in her honor and 100,000 disciples came forth to follow her. About five years before the birth of Christ Apollonius was born, and he came forth, and after five years being speechless, according to the tradition, he healed the sick and raised the dead, and preached virtue, and, according to the myth, having deceased, was brought to resurrection!

The Delphic Oracle deceived vast multitudes of people; the Pythoness, seated in the temple of Appolo, uttering a crazy jargon from which the people guessed or misguessed their individual or national fortunes or misfortunes. The utterances were of such a nature that you could read them any way you wanted to read them. A general going forth to battle, consulted the Delphic Oracle, and he wanted to find out whether he was going to be safe in the battle or killed in the battle, and the answer came forth from the Delphic Oracle in such words that, if you put the comma before the word "never," it means one thing, and if you put the comma after the word "never," it means another thing just opposite. The message from the Delphic Oracle to the general was: "Go forth, return never in battle shalt thou perish." If he was killed, that was according to the Delphic Oracle; if he came home safely, that was according to the Delphic Oracle. So the ancient auguries deceived the people. The priests of those auguries, by the flight of birds, or by the intonation of thunder, or by the inside appearance of slain animals, told the fortunes or misfortunes of individuals or nations. The sibyls deceived the people. The sibyls were supposed to be inspired women who lived in caves and who wrote the sibyl line books, afterward purchased by Tarquin the Proud. So late as the year 1829 a man arose in New York, pretending to be a divine being, and playing his part so well that wealthy merchants became his disciples and threw their fortunes into his discipleship. And so in all ages there have been necromancies, incantations, witchcrafts, sorceries, magical arts, enchantments, divinations and delusions. The one of the text was only a specimen of that which has been transpiring in all ages of the world. None of these delusions accomplished any good. They deceived, they pauperized the people, they were as cruel as they were absurd. They opened no hospitals, they healed no wounds, they wiped away no tears, they emancipated no serfdom.

But there are those who say that all these delusions combined are as nothing compared with the delusion now abroad in the world, the delusion of the Christian religion. That delusion has to-day two hundred million dupes. It proposes to encircle the earth with its girdle. That which has been called a delusion has already overshadowed the Appalachian range on this side the sea, and it has overshadowed the Balkan and Caucasian ranges on the other side the sea. It has conquered England and the United States. This champion delusion, this hoax, this swindle of the ages, as it has been called, has gone forth to conquer the islands of the Pacific; the Melanasia and the Micronesia and Malayan Polynesia have already surrendered to the delusion. Yea, it has conquered the Indian archipelago, and Borneo, and Sumatra, and Celebes and Java have fallen under its wiles. In the Fiji islands, where there are 120,000 people, 102,000 have already become the dupes of this Christian religion, and if things go on as they are now going on, and if the influence of this great hallucination of the ages cannot be stopped, it will swallow the globe. Supposing, then, that Christianity is the delusion of the centuries, as some have pronounced it, I propose this morning to show you what has been accomplished by this chimera, this fallacy, this hoax, this swindle of the ages.

And in the first place, I remark that this delusion of the Christian religion has made wonderful transformations of human character. I will go down the aisle of any church in Christendom and I will find on either side that aisle those who were once profligate, profane, unclean of speech and unclean of action, drunken and lost. But by the power of this delusion of the Christian religion they have been completely transformed, and now they are kind and amiable, and genial and loving, and useful. Everybody sees the change. Under the power of this great hallucination they have quit their former associates, and whereas they once found their chief delight among those who gambled and swore and raced horses, now they find their chief joy among those who go to prayer meetings and churches, so complete is the delusion. Yea, their own families have noticed it—the wife has noticed it, the children have noticed it. The money that went for rum now goes for books and for clothes and for education. He is a new man. All who know him say there has been a wonderful change. What is the cause of this change? This great hallucination of the Christian relion. There is as much difference between what he is now and what he once was as between a rose and a nettle, as between a dove and a vulture, as between day and night. Tremendous delusion!

Admiral Farragut, one of the most admired men of the American navy, early became a victim of this Christian delusion, and seated not long before his death, at Long Branch, he was giving some friends an account of his early life. He said:

"My father went down in behalf of the United States government to put an end to Aaron Burr's rebellion. I was a cabin boy and went along with him. I could swear like an old salt. I could gamble in every style of gambling. I knew all the wickedness there was at that time abroad. One day my father cleared everybody out of the cabin except myself, and locked the doors. He said: 'David, what are you going to do? What are you going to be?' 'Well,' I said, 'father, I am going to follow the sea.' 'Follow the sea! and be a poor, miserable, drunken sailor, kicked and cuffed about the world and die of a fever in a foreign hospital?' 'Oh, no,' I said, 'father, I will not be that; I will tread the quarter deck and command, as you do.' 'No, David,' my father said; 'no, David, a person that has your principles and your bad habits will never tread the quarter deck or command.' My father went out and shut the door after him, and I said then: 'I will change, I will never swear again, I will never drink again, I will never gamble again.' And, gentlemen, by the help of God, I have kept those three vows to this time. I soon after that became a Christian, and that decided my fate for time and for eternity."

Another captive of this great Christian delusion! There goes Saul of Tarsus on horseback at full gallop. Where is he going? To destroy Christians. He wants no better play spell than to stand and watch the hats and coats of the murderers who are massacring God's children. There goes the same man. This time he is afoot. Where is he going now? Going on the road to Ostia to die for Christ. They tried to whip it out of him, they tried to scare it out of him, they thought they would give him enough of it by putting him into a windowless dungeon, and keeping him on small diet, and denying him a cloak, and condemning him as a criminal, and howling at him through the street; but they could not freeze it out of him, and they could not sweat it out of him, and they could not pound it out of him, so they tried the surgery of the sword, and one summer day in 66 he was decapitated. Perhaps the mightiest intellect of the 6,000 years of the world's existence hoodwinked, cheated, cajoled, duped by the Christian religion. Ah! that is the remarkable thing about this delusion of Christianity, it overpowers the strongest intellects. Gather the critics, secular and religious, of this century together and put a vote to them as to which is the greatest book ever written, and by large majority they will say "Paradise Lost." Who wrote "Paradise Lost?" One of the fools who believed in this Bible, John Milton. Benjamin Franklin surrendered to this delusion, if you may judge from the letter that he wrote to Thomas Paine, begging him to destroy the "Age of Reason" in manuscript and never let it go into type, and writing afterward, in his old days: "Of this Jesus of Nazareth I have to say that the system of morals He left and the religion he has given us are the best things the world has ever seen or is likely to see." Patrick Henry, the electric champion of liberty, enslaved by this delusion, so that he says: "The book worth all other books put together is the Bible." Benjamin Rush, the leading physiologist and anatomist of his day, the great medical scientist—what did he say? "The only true and perfect religion is Christianity." Isaac Newton, the leading philosopher of his time—what did he say? That man surrendering to this delusion of the Christian religion, crying out: "The sublimest philosophy on earth is the philosophy of the Gospel." David Brewster, at the pronunciation of whose name every scientist the world over bows his head, David Brewster saying: "O, this religion has been a great light to me, a very great light all my days." President Thiers, the great French statesman, acknowledging that he prayed when he said: "I invoke the Lord God in whom I am glad to believe." David Livingstone, able to conquer the lion, able to conquer the panther, able to conquer the savage, yet conquered by this delusion, this hallucination, this great swindle of the ages, so when they find him dead they find him on his knees. William E. Gladstone, the strongest intellect in England to-day, unable to resist this chimera, this fallacy, this delusion of the Christian religion, goes to the house of God every Sabbath, and often, at the invitation of the rector, reads the prayers to the people. O, if those mighty intellects are overborne by this delusion, what chance is there for you and for me?

Beside that, I have noticed that first rate infidels cannot be depended on for steadfastness in the proclamation of their sentiments. Goethe, a leading skeptic, was so wrought upon by this Christianity that in a weak moment he cried out: "My belief in the Bible has saved me in my literary and moral life." Rousseau, one of the most eloquent champions of infidelity, spending his whole life warring against Christianity, cries out: "The majesty of the Scriptures amazes me." Altamont, the notorious infidel, one would think he would have been safe against this delusion of the Christian religion. Oh, no. After talking against Christianity all his days, in his last hours he cried out: "Oh, Thou blasphemed but most indulgent Lord God, hell itself is a refuge, if it hide me from Thy frown!" Voltaire, the most talented infidel the world ever saw, writing 250 publications, and the most of them spiteful against Christianity, himself the most notorious libertine of the century—one would have thought he could have been depended upon for steadfastness in the advocacy of infidelity and in the war against this terrible chimera, this delusion of the Gospel. But no; in his last hour he asks for Christian burial, and asks that they give him the sacrament of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why, you cannot depend upon these first rate infidels—you cannot depend upon their power to resist this great delusion of Christianity. Thomas Paine, the god of modern skeptics, his birthday celebrated in New York and Boston with great enthusiasm—Thomas Paine, the paragon of Bible haters; Thomas Paine, about whom his brother infidel William Carver wrote, in a letter which I have at my house, saying that he drank a quart of rum a day and was too mean and too dishonest to pay for it; Thomas Paine, the adored of modern infidleity; Thomas Paine, who stole another man's wife in England and brought her to this land; Thomas Paine, who was so squalid and so loathsome and so drunken and so profligate and so beastly in his habits, sometimes picked out of the ditch, sometimes too filthy to be picked out; Thomas Paine—one would have thought that he could have been depended on for steadfastness against this great delusion. But no. In his dying hour he begs the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy.

Powerful delusion, all conquering delusion, earthquaking delusion of the Christian religion. Yea, it goes on, it is so impertinent.

(Continued on page 3.

NOTWITHSTANDING

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EVERY DEPARTMENT

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Jan. 17.