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SLANDERS ANSWERED.

DR. TALMAGE REFUTES THE FALSE DOCTRINES OF ANTI-CHRISTIANS.

A Few Words for the Benefit of the Enemies of Evangelism - The Plague of Unbelief That is Now Rampant in the World - Doctrines of the Sect.

BROOKLYN, Jan. 27. - The Rev. Dr. T. De Witt Talmage's sermon this morning was on "Slanders Against Religion Answered." His text was: "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." - Rev. x, 10, 11. The reverend gentleman said:

Domitian, the Roman emperor, had in his realm a troublesome evangelist who would keep preaching, and so he exiled him to a barren island, as now the Russians exile convicts to Siberia, or as sometimes the English government used to send prisoners to Australia. The island I speak of is now called Patmos, and is so barren and unproductive that its inhabitants live by fishing.

But one day the evangelist of whom I speak, sitting at the mouth of a cavern on the hill side, and perhaps half asleep under the drone of the sea, has a supernatural dream, and before him pass, as in panorama, time and eternity. Among the strange things that he saw was an angel with a little book in his hand, and in his dream the evangelist asked for this little book, and the angel gave it to him, and told him to eat it up. As in a dream things are sometimes incongruous, the evangelist took the little book and ate it up. The angel told him beforehand that it would be very sweet in the mouth, but afterward he would be troubled with indigestion. True enough, the evangelist devoured the book, and it becomes to him a sweetness during the mastication, but afterward a physical bitterness.

Who the angel was and what the book was no one can tell. The commentators do not agree, and I shall take no responsibility of interpretation, but will tell you that it suggests to me the little book of creeds which skeptics take and chew up and find a very luscious morsel to their witicism, but after a while it is to them a great distress. The angel of the church hands out this little book of evangelism, and the antagonists of the Christian church take it and eat it up, and it makes them smile at first, but afterward it is to them a dire dyspepsia.

THE REASONS WHY CREEDS ARE NECESSARY. All intelligent people have creeds - that is, favorite theories which they have adopted. Political creeds - that is, theories about tariff, about finance, about civil service, about government. Social creeds - that is, theories about manners and customs and good neighborhood. Aesthetic creeds - that is, theories about tapestry, about bric-a-brac, about styles of ornamentation. Religious creeds - that is, theories about the Deity, about the soul, about the great future. The only being who has no creed about anything is the idiot. This scoffing against creeds is always a sign of profound ignorance on the part of the scoffer, for he has himself a hundred creeds in regard to other things. In our time the beliefs of evangelistic churches are under a fusillade of caricature and misrepresentation. Men set up what they call orthodox faith, and then they rake it with the musketry of their denunciation. They falsify what the Christian churches believe. They take evangelical doctrines and set them in a harsh and repulsive way, and put them out of the association with other truths. They are like a mad anatomist, who, desiring to tell what a man is, dissects a human body and hangs up in one place the heart, and in another place the two lungs, and in another place an ankle bone, and says that is a man. They are only fragments of a man wrenched out of their God-appointed places.

Evangelical religion is a healthy, symmetrical, well jointed, rosette, bounding life, and the scalpel and the dissecting knife of the infidel or the atheist cannot tell you what it is. Evangelical religion is as different from what it is represented to be by these enemies as the scarecrow which a farmer puts in the cornfield to keep off the ravens is different from the farmer himself.

For instance, these enemies of evangelism say that the Presbyterian church believes that God is a savage sovereign, and that he made some men just to damn them, and that there are infants in hell a span long. These old slanders come down from generation to generation. The Presbyterian church believes no such thing. The Presbyterian church believes that God is a loving and just sovereign, and that we are free agents. "No, no! that cannot be," say these men who have chewed up the creed and have the consequent embittered stomachs. "That is impossible; if God is a sovereign, we can't be free agents." Why, my friends, we admit this in every other direction. I, De Witt Talmage, am a free citizen of Brooklyn. I go when I please and I come when I please, but I have at least four sovereigns. The church court of our denomination; that is my ecclesiastical sovereign. The mayor of this city; he is my municipal sovereign. The governor of New York; he is my state sovereign. The president of the United States; he is my national sovereign. Four sovereigns have I, and yet in every faculty of body, mind and soul I am a free man. So, you see, it is possible that the two doctrines go side by side, and there is a common sense way of presenting it, and there is a way that is repulsive. If you have the two doctrines in a worldly direction, why not in a religious direction? If I choose to-morrow morning to walk into the Mercantile library and improve my mind, or to go through the conservatory of my friend at Jamaica, who has flowers from all lands growing under the arches of glass, and who has an aquarium all aquirm with trout and gold fish, and there are trees bearing oranges and bananas - if I want to go there, I could. I can free to go. If I want to go over to Hoboken and leap into a furnace of an oil factory, if I want to jump from the platform of the Philadelphia express train, if I want to leap from Brooklyn bridge, I may. But suppose I should go to-morrow and leap into the furnace at Hoboken, who would be to blame? That is all there is about sovereignty and free agency. God rules and reigns, and he has conservatories and he has blast furnaces. If you want to walk in the gardens, walk there. If you want to leap in the furnaces you may.

SOME MISCONCEPTIONS THAT FILL MEN'S MINDS. Suppose now a man had a charmed key with which he could open all the jails, and he should open Raymond Street jail and the New York Tombs and all the prisons on the continent. In three weeks what kind of a country would this be! all the inmates turned out of these prisons and penitentiaries. Suppose all the reprobates, the bad spirits, the outrageous spirits, should be turned into the New Jerusalem. Why, the next morning the gates of pearl would be found off hinges, the linchpin would be gone out of the chariot wheels, the "house of many mansions" would be burglarized. Assault and battery, arson, libelism and assassination would reside in the capital of the skies. Angels of God would be insulted on the streets. Heaven would be

a dead failure, if there were no great lock up. If all people, without regard to their character, when they leave this world, go right into glory, I wonder if in the temple of the skies Charles Guitenau and John Wilkes Booth occupy the same pew! Your common sense demands two destinies! And then as to the Presbyterian church believing there are infants in perdition, if you will bring me a Presbyterian of good morals and sound mind who will say that he believes there ever was a baby in the lost world, or ever will be, I will make him a deed to the house I live in, and he can take possession to-morrow.

So the Episcopal church is misrepresented by the enemies of evangelism. They say that church substitutes forms and ceremonies for heart religion, and it is all a matter of liturgy and genuflection. False again. All Episcopalians will tell you that the forms and creeds of their church are worse than nothing unless the heart go with them.

So also the Baptist church has been misrepresented. The enemies of evangelism say the Baptist church believes that unless a man is immersed he will never get into heaven. False again. All the Baptists, close communion and open communion, believe that if a man accept the Lord Jesus Christ he will be saved, whether he be baptized by one drop of water on the forehead, or be plunged into the Ohio or Susquehanna, although immersion is the only gate by which one enters their earthly communion.

The enemies of evangelism also misrepresent the Methodist church. They say the Methodist church believes that a man can convert himself, and that conversion in that church is a temporary emotion, and that all a man has to do is to kneel down at the altar and feel bad and then the minister pats him on the back and says: "It is all right," and that is all there is of it. False again. The Methodist church believes that the Holy Ghost alone can convert a heart, and in that church conversion is an earthquake of conviction and a sunburst of pardon. And as to mere "temporary emotion," I wish we all had more of the "temporary emotion" which lasted Bishop James and Matthew Simpson for a half century, keeping them on fire for God until their holy enthusiasm consumed their bodies.

IT IS THE IGNORANT MAN WHO DISBELIEVES. So all the evangelical denominations are misrepresented. And then these enemies of evangelism go on and hold up the great doctrines of Christian churches as absurd, dry and inexplicable technicalities. "There is your doctrine of the Trinity," they say. "Absurd beyond all bounds. The idea that there is a God in three persons. Impossible. If it is one God he can't be three, and if there are three they can't be one." At the same time all of us - they with us - acknowledge trinities all around us. Trinity in our own make-up - body, mind, soul. Body with which we move, mind with which we think, soul with which we love. Three, yet one man. Trinity in the air - light, heat, moisture - yet one atmosphere. Trinity in the court room - three judges on the bench, but one court. Trinities all around about us, in earthly government and in nature. Of course, all the illustrations are defective for the reason that the natural cannot fully illustrate the spiritual. But suppose an ignorant man should come up to a chemist and say: "I deny what you say about the water and about the air; they are not made of different parts. The air is one, I breathe it every day. The water is one, I drink it every day. You can't deceive me about the elements that go to make up the air and the water." The chemist would say: "You come up into my laboratory and I will demonstrate this whole thing to you." The ignorant man goes into the chemist's laboratory, and sees for himself. He learns that the water is one and the air is one, but they are made up of different parts. So here is a man who says: "I can't understand the doctrine of the Trinity." God says: "You come up here into the laboratory after your death, and you will see - you will see it explained, you will see it demonstrated." The ignorant man cannot understand the chemistry of the water and the air until he goes into the laboratory, and we will never understand the Trinity until we go into heaven. The ignorance of the man who cannot understand the chemistry of the air and water does not change the fact in regard to the composition of air and water. Because we cannot understand the Trinity, does that change the fact?

"And there is your absurd doctrine about justification by faith," say these antagonists who have chewed up the little book of evangelism, and have the consequent embittered stomach - "justification by faith, you can't explain it." I can explain it. It is simply this: When a man takes the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour from sin, God lets the offender off. Just as you have a difference with some one, he has injured you, he apologizes, or he makes reparation, you say: "Now, that's all right, that's all right." Justification by faith is this: a man takes Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and God says to the man: "Now it was all wrong before, but it is all right now; it is all right." That was what made Martin Luther what he was. Justification by faith, it is going to conquer all nations.

"There is your absurd doctrine about regeneration." These antagonists of evangelism say. What is regeneration? Why, regeneration is reconstruction. Anybody can understand that. Have you not seen people who are all made over again by some wonderful influence? In other words, they are just as different now from what they used to be as possible. The old Constellation, man-of-war, lay down here at the Brooklyn navy yard. Famine came to Ireland. The old Constellation was fitted up, and though it had been carrying gunpowder and bullets, it took bread to Ireland. You remember the enthusiasm as the old Constellation went out of our harbor, and with what joy it was greeted by the famishing nation on the other side the sea. That is regeneration. A man loaded up with sin and death loaded up with life. Refitted. Your observation has been very small, indeed, if you have not seen changes in character as radical as that.

AN ILLUSTRATION WITH A MORAL. A man came into this church one night, and he was intoxicated, and at an utterance of the pulpit he said in a subdued tone, "That's a lie!" An officer of the church tapped him on the shoulder and said, "You must be silent, or you must go out." The next night that stranger came and he was converted to God. He was in the liquor business. He resigned the business. The next day he sent back the samples that had just been sent him. He began to love that which he hated. I baptized him by immersion in the baptistry under this platform. A large salary was offered him if he would return to his former business. He declined it. He would rather suffer with Jesus Christ than be prospered in the world. He wrote home a letter to his Christian mother. The Christian mother wrote back, congratulating him, and said: "If in the change of your business you have lack of means, come home; you are always welcome home." He told of his conversion to a dissolute companion. The dissolute companion said: "Well, if you have become a Christian, you had better go over and talk to that dying girl. She is dying with quick consumption in that house." The new convert went there. All the surroundings were dissolute. He told the dying girl that Jesus would save her. "Oh," said she, "that can't be, that can't be! What makes you think so?" "I have it here in a

(Continued on page three.)

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