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"WE ARE WITNESSES."

AT THE HAMPTONS.

The World Will Be Brought to God Not Through Argument, but Through Testimony-The Christian's Weapon in the Conflict Is Faith, Not Logic.

THE HAMPTONS, Aug. 21 .- "The Facts Proved" is the subject of discourse by the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., today. His text is from Acts xv, 3: "We are witnesses." Following is his sermon in full:

In the days of George Stephenson, the perfector of the locomotive engine, the scientists proved conclusively that a railway train could never be driven by steam power successfully and without peril; but the rushing express trains from Liverpool to Edinburgh, and from Edinburgh to London, have made all the nation witnesses of the splendid achievement. Machinists and navigators proved conclusively that a steamer could never cross the Atlantic ocean; but no sooner had they successfully proved the impossibility of such an undertaking than the work was done, and the passengers on the Cunard and the Inman and the National and the White Star lines are witnesses. There went up a guffaw of wise laughter at Professor Morse's proposition to make the lightning of heaven his errand boy, and it was proved conclusively that the thing could never be done; but now all the news of the wide world, by Associated Press, put in your hands every morning and night, has made all nations witnesses.

So in the time of Christ it was proved conclusively that it was impossible for him to rise from the dead. It was shown logically that when he was dead he was dead, and the heart and the liver and the lungs having ceased to perform their offices, the limbs would be rigid beyond all power of friction or arousal. They showed it to be an absolute absurdity that the dead Christ should ever get up alive; but no sooner, had they proved this than the dead Christ arose, and the disciples beheld him, heard his voice and talked with him, and they took the witness stand to prove that to be true which the wiseacres of the day had proved to be impossible; the record of the experiment and of the testimony is in the text: "Him hath God raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses."

Now, let me play the skeptic for a moment. "There is no God," says the skeptic, "for I have never seen him with my physical eyesight. Your Bible is a pack of contradictions. There never was a miracle. Lazarus was not raised from the dead, and the water was never turned into wine. Your religion is an · imposition on the credulity of the ages." There is an aged man moving in that pew as though be would like to respond Here are hundreds of people with faces a little flushed at these announcements, and all through this house there is a suppressed feeling which would like to speak out in behalf of the truth of our glorious Christianity, as in the days of the text, crying out: "We are witnesses!"

The fact is, that if this world is ever brought to God, it will not be through argument, but through testimony. You might cover the whole earth with apologies for Christianity and learned treatises in defense of religion-you would not convert a soul. Lectures on the harmony between science and religion are beautiful mental discipline, but have never saved a soul, and never will save a soul. Put a man of the world and a man of the church against each other and the man of the world will in all probability get the triumph. There are a thousand things in our religion that seem illogical to the world, and always will seem illogical.

Our weapon in this conflict is faith, not logic; faith, not metaphysics; faith, not profundity; faith, not scholastic exploration. But then, in order to have faith we must have testimony, and if 500 men, or 1,000 men, or 500,000 men, or 5,000,000 men get up and tell me that they have felt the religion of Jesus Christ a joy, a comfort, a help, an inspiration, I am bound as a fair minded man to accept their testimony. I want just now to put before you three propositions, the truth of which I think this audience will attest with overwhelming unanimity.

The first proposition is: We are witnesses that the religion of Christ is able to convert

The Gospel may have had a hard time to conquer us, we may have fought it back, but we were vanquished. You say conversion is only an imaginary thing. We know better. "We are witnesses." There never was so great a change in our heart and life on any other subject as on this. People laughed at the missionaries in Madagascar because they preached ten years without one convert; but there are 33,000 converts in Madagascar today. People laughed at Dr. Judson, the Baptist missionary, because he kept on preaching in Burmah five years without a single convert; but there are 20,000 Baptists in Burmah today. People laughed at Dr. Morrison, in China, for preaching there seven years without a single conversion; but there are 15,000 Christians in China today. People laughed at the missionaries for preaching at Tahiti for fifteen years without a single conversion, and at the missionaries for preaching in Bengal seventeen years without a single conversion; yet in all those lands there are multi-

But why go so far to find evidences of the Gospel's power to save a soul? "We are witnesses." We were so proud that no man could have humbled us; we were so hard that no earthly power could have melted us; angels of God were all around about us, they could not overcome us; but one day, perhaps at a Methodist anxious seat, or at a Presbyterian cathechetical lecture, or at a burial, or on horseback, a power seized us, and made us get down, and made us tremble, and made us kneel, and made us cry for mercy, and we tried to wrench ourselves away from the grasp, but we could not. It flung us flat, and when we arose we were as much changed as Gourgis, the heathen, who went into a prayer meeting with a dagger and a gun to disturb the meeting and destroy it, but the next day was found crying: "Oh, my great sins! Oh! my great Saviour!" and for eleven years preached the gospel of Christ to his fellow mountaineers, the last words on his dying lips being "Free grace!" Oh, it was free

tudes of Christians today.

There is a man who was for ten years a hard drinker. The dreadful appetite had sent down its roots around the palate and the tongue, and on down until the were interlinked with the vitals of the body, mind and soul; but he has not taken any stimulants for two years. What did that? Not temperance societies. Not prohibition laws. Not moral sussion. Conversion did it. "Why," said one upon whom the great change had come, "sir, I feel just as though I were somebody else."

There is a sea captain who swore all the way from New York to Havana, and from Havana to San Francisco, and when he was in port he was worse than when he was on the sea. What power was it that washed his tongue clean of profanities, and made him a psalm singer? Conversion by the Holy Spirit. There are thousands of people in this house to-night who are no more what they once were than a waterlily is nightshade, or a morning lark is a vulture, or day is night. Now, if I should demand that all those

people in this house who have felt the converting power of religion should rise, so far from being ashamed, they would spring to their feet with more alacrity than they ever sprang to the dance, the tears mingling with their exhibaration as they cried: "We are witnesses!" And if they tried to sing the old Gospel hymn they would break down with emotion by the time they got to the second

Ashamed of Jesus, that dear friend On whom my hopes of heaven depend? No! When I blush be this my shame, That I no more revere his name,

Again I remark that "we are witnesses" of

the Gospel's power to comfort. When a man has trouble the world comes in and says: "Now get your mind off this; go out and breathe the fresh air; plunge deeper into business," What poor advice, Get your mind off of it! when everything is upturned with the bereavement and everything reminds you of what you have lost. Get your mind off of it! They might as well advise you to stop thinking. You cannot stop thinking, and you cannot stop thinking in that direction. Take a walk in the fresh air! Why, along that very street or that very road she once accompanied you. Out of that grassplot she plucked flowers, or into that show window she looked, fascinated, saying: "Come, see the pictures." Go deeper into business! Why, she was associated with all your business ambition, and since she has gone you have no ambition left. Oh, this is a clumsy world when it tries to comfort a broken heart! I can build a Corliss engine, I can paint a Raphael's "Madonna," I can play a Beethoven's "Symphony" as easily as this world can comfort a broken heart. And yet you have been comforted.
How was it done? Did Christ come to you and say: "Get your mind off this; go out and breathe the fresh air; plunge deeper into business?" No. There was a minute when he came to you-perhaps in the watches of the night, perhaps in your place of business, perhaps along the street-and he breathed something into your soul that gave peace, rest, infinite quiet, so that you could take out the photograph of the departed one and look into the eyes and the face of the dear one, and say: "It is all right; she is better off; I would not call her back. Lord, I thank thee that thou hast comforted my poor heart."

There are Christian parents here who are willing to testify to the power of this Gospel to comfort. Your son had just graduated from school or college and was going into business, and the Lord took him. Or your daughter had just graduated from the young ladies' seminary and you thought she was going to be a useful woman and of long life; but the Lord took her and you were tempted to say: "All this culture of twenty years for nothing!" Or the little child came home from school with the hot fever that stopped not for the agonized prayer or for the skillful physician, and the little child was taken. Or the babe was lifted out of your arms by some quick epidemic, and you stood wondering why God ever gave you that child at all, if so soon he was to take it away. And yet you are not repining, you are not fretful, you are not fighting against God.

What has enabled you to stand all the trial? "Oh," you say, "I took the medicine that God gave my sick soul. In my distress I threw myself at the feet of a sympathizing God; and when I was too weak to pray or to look up he breathed into me a peace that I think must be the foretaste of that heaven where there is neither a tear, nor a farewell, nor a grave." Come, all ye who have been out to the grave to weep there-come, all ye comforted souls, get up off your knees. Is there no power in this Gospel to soothe the heart? Is there no power in this religion to quiet the worst paroxysm of grief! There comes up an answer from comforted widowhood, and orphanage and childlessness, saying: "Aye, aye, we are witnesses!"

Again, I remark that we are witnesses of the fact that religion has power to give composure in the last moment. I shall never forget the first time I confronted death. We went across the cornfields in the country. I was led by my father's hand and we came to the farm house where the bereavement had come, and we saw the crowd of wagons and carriages; but there was one carriage that especially attracted my boyish attention, and it had black plumes. I said: "What's that? what's that? Why those black tassels at the top?" and after it was explained to me, I was lifted up to look upon the bright face of an aged Christian woman, who three days before had parted in triumph. The whole scene made an impression I never forgot.

In our sermons and in our lay exhortations we are very apt, when we want to bring illustrations of dying triumph, to go back to some distinguished personage-to a John Knox or a Harriet Newell. But I want you for wit-

I want to know if you have ever seen anything to make you believe that the religion of Christ can give composure in the final hour. Now, in the courts, attorney, jury and judge will never admit mere hearsay. They demand that the witness must have seen with his own eyes, or heard with his own ears, and so I am critical in my examination of you now, and I want to know whether you have seen or heard anything that makes you believe that the religion of Christ gives comfort in the final hour.

"Oh, yes," you say, "I saw my father and mother depart. There was a great difference in their deathbeds. Standing by the one we felt more veneration. By the other there was more tenderness." Before the one you bowed perhaps in awe. In the other case you felt as if you would like to go along with her. How did they feel in that last hour? How did they seem to act? Were they very much frightened? Did they take hold of this world with both hands as though they did not want to give it up? "Oh, no," you say; "no, I remember as though it were yesterday; she had a kind word for us all, and there were a few mementoes distributed among the children, and then she told us how kind we must be to our father in his loneliness, and then she kissed us goodby and went asleep as a child in a cradle."

What made her so composed? Natural courage? "No," you say; "mother was very nervous. When the carriage inclined to the side of the road she would cry out. She was always rather weakly." What, then, gave her composure? Was it because she did not care much for you and the pang of parting was not great? "Oh," you say, "she showered upon us a wealth of affection; no mother ever loved her children mere than mother loved us. She showed it by the way she nursed us when we were sick, and she toiled for us until her strength gave out." What, then, was it that gave her composure in the last hour? Do not hide it. Be frank and let me know. "Oh," you say, "it was because she was so good. She made the Lord her portion, and she had faith that she would go straight to glory, and that we should all meet her at last at the foot of the throne."

Here are people who say: "I saw a Christian brother die, and he triumphed." And some one else: "I saw a Christian sister die, and she triumphed." Some one else will say: "I saw a Christian daughter die and she triumphed." Come, all ye who have seen the last moments of a Christian, and give testimony in this cause on trial. Uncover your heads, put your hand on the old family om which they used to read the promise in the presence of promises. it you will tell the truth, the ued on page three.

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