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VOL. XXVIII.

ELIZABETH CITY, N. C., FRIDAY, JULY 28, 1899.

NO. 18.

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### BUYERS AND SELLERS

BUSINESS LIFE THE SUBJECT OF DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

The Great Divine Pays a High Compliment to the Integrity of the Business Man of Today—Denounces Trickery in Trade.

Copyright, Louis Klopf, 1899. WASHINGTON, July 23.—Integrity and trickery in business life form the subject of Dr. Talmage's sermon today, and the contrast he establishes between the two is a striking one. The text is Proverbs xx, 14: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he is gone his way then he boasteth."

Palaces are not such prisons as the world imagines. If you think that the only time kings and queens come forth from the royal gates in procession and gorgeously attended, you are mistaken. Incognito by day or by night and clothed in citizen's apparel or the dress of a working woman, they come out and see the world as it is. In no other way could King Solomon, the author of my text, have known everything that was going on. From my text I am sure he must, in disguise, some day have walked into a store of ready made clothing in Jerusalem and stood near the counter and heard a conversation between a buyer and a seller. The merchant put a price on a coat, and the customer began to dicker and said: "Absurd! That coat is not worth what you ask for it. Why, just look at the coarseness of the fabric! See that spot on the collar! Besides that, it does not fit. Twenty dollars for that? Why, it is not worth more than \$10. They have a better article than that and for lower price down at Clothier, Etem & Bros. Besides that, I don't want it at any price. Good morning." "Hold!" says the merchant. "Do not go off in that way. I want to sell you that coat. I want some payments to make, and I want the money. Come, now, how much will you give for that coat?" "Well," says the customer, "I will split the difference. You asked \$20, and I said \$10. Now, I will give you \$15." "Well," says the merchant, "it is a great sacrifice, but take it at that price."

Then the customer with a roll under his arm started to go out and enter his own place of business, and Solomon in disguise followed him. He heard the customer as he unrolled the coat and said: "Boys, I have made a great bargain. How much do you guess I gave for that coat?" "Well," says one, wishing to compliment his enterprise, "you gave \$30 for it." Another says, "I should think you got it cheap if you give \$25." "No," says the buyer in triumph, "I got it for \$15. I beat him down and pointed out the imperfections until I really made him believe it was not worth hardly anything. It takes me to make a bargain. Ha, ha!" Oh, man, you got the goods for less than they were worth by positive falsehood, and no wonder, when Solomon went back to his palace and had put off his disguise, that he sat down at his writing desk and made for all ages a crayon sketch of you, "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he is gone his way then he boasteth."

shows the arrival at one of our hotels of a young merchant from one of the inland cities. He is a comparative stranger in the great city, and, of course, he must be shown around, and it will be the duty of some of our enterprising houses to escort him. He is a large purchaser and has plenty of time and money, and it will pay to be very attentive. The evening is spent at a place of doubtful amusement. Then they go back to the hotel. Having just come to town, they must, of course, drink.

A friend from the same mercantile establishment drops in, and usage and generosity suggest that they must drink. Business prospects are talked over, and the stranger is warned against certain dilapidated mercantile establishments that are about to fail, and for such kindness and magnanimity of caution against the dishonesty of other business houses of course it is expected they will—and so they do take a drink. Other merchants lodging in adjoining rooms find it hard to sleep for the clatter of decanters, and the coarse carousal of these "hall fellows well met" waxes louder. But they sit not all night at the wine cup. They must see the sights. They stagger forth with cheeks flushed and eyes bloodshot. The outer gates of hell open to let in the victims. The wings of lost souls fit among the lights, and the steps of the carousers sound with the rumbling thunders of the lost. Farewell to all the sanctities of home! Good night, sister, father, slumbering in the inland home, in some vision of that night catch a glimpse of the ruin which would rend out their hair by the roots and bite the tongue till the blood spouted, shrieking out, "God save him!"

Righteousness Rewarded. Again, business men are sometimes tempted to throw off personal responsibility, shifting it to the institution to which they belong. Directors in banks and railroad and insurance companies sometimes shirk personal responsibility, and how often, when some banking house or financial institution explodes through fraud, respectable men in the board of directors say, "Why, I thought all was going on in an honest way, and I am utterly confounded with this demerit!" The banks and the fire and life and marine insurance companies and the railroad companies will not stand up for judgment in the last day, but those who in them acted righteously will receive, each for himself, a reward, and those who acted the part of neglect or trickery will, each for himself, receive a condemnation.

Unlawful dividends are not clean because God, because there are those associated with you who grab just as big a pile as you do. He who contentences the dishonesty of the firm or of the corporation, and how often, when some banking house or financial institution explodes through fraud, respectable men in the board of directors say, "Why, I thought all was going on in an honest way, and I am utterly confounded with this demerit!"

ness to that time? Are you adjourning your joys? Suppose that you achieve all you expect—and that the vision I mention is not up to the reality, because the fountains will be brighter, the house grander and the scenery more picturesque—the mistake is none the less fatal.

What charm will there be in rural quiet for a man who has for 30 or 40 years been conforming his entire nature to the excitements of business? Will flocks and herds with their bleat and moan be able to silence the insatiable spirit of acquisitiveness which has for years had full swing in the soul? Will the hum of the breeze soothe the man who now can find his only enjoyment in the stock market? Will leaf and cloud and fountain charm the eye that has for three-fourths of a lifetime found its chief beauty in hogheads and bills of sale? Will parents be competent to rear their children for high and holy purpose if their infancy and boyhood and girlhood were neglected when they are almost ready to enter upon the world and have all their habits fixed and their principles stereotyped? No; now is the time to be happy. Now is the time to serve your Creator. Now is the time to be a Christian. Are you too busy? I have known men as busy as you are who had a place in the store lot, where they went to pray. Some one asked a Christian sailor where he found any place to pray in the sea. He said, "I can always find a quiet place at masthead." And in the busiest day of the season, if your heart is right, you can find a place to pray. Busy thoroughfares are good places to pray in as you go to meet your various engagements. Go home a little earlier and get introduced to your children. Be not a galleys slave by day and night, lashed fast to the oar of business. Let every day have its hour for worship and intellectual culture and recreation. Show yourself greater than your business.

She Didn't Like the Job. "I used to work for a collection agency in one of the northern cities," said a lady perfumery drummer, "and my experience was tolerably exciting. My duty was to sit at a roll top desk in the office and impregnate the proprietor. Light work, did you say? Just my duty. All day long men would come in red eyed to lick the boss. 'Where's the fellow that sends out these blackmailing letters?' was the usual salutation. Then I would smile sweetly and say: 'I'm the proprietress. What can I do for you?' At that the visitor would look dazed, mutter things under his breath and walk off.

"Well, things went along all right for nearly a month. Then one day a little, wiry chap walked in carrying a black cane. 'Where's the boss?' he said. I gave the usual fairy story. 'Don't believe a word of it,' he replied, 'still I can't beat a woman.' He thought awhile, and something in his eye made me feel creepy. 'I'll have to take it out on the fixtures,' he said finally, and upon my word, he broke every blessed thing in the shop. He did it quickly and systematically, and you never saw such an awful ruin! As a wind up he broke the chandelier and made me a polite good day. When the proprietor came in, he had a fit. It was after that I went into the perfumery business. The work is harder, but it is much less trying on one's nerves."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

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### Business Integrity.

There are no higher virtues of men in all the world than those now at the head of mercantile enterprises in the great cities of this continent. Their casual promise is as good as a bond with piles of collaterals. Their reputation for integrity is as well established as that of Petrarch residing in the family of Cardinal Colonna. It is related that when there was great disturbance in the family the cardinal called all his people together and put them under oath to tell the truth except Petrarch; when he came up to swear, the cardinal put away his book and said, "As for you, Petrarch, your word is sufficient." Never since that world stood have there been so many merchants whose transactions can stand the test of the ten commandments. Such bargain makers are all the more to be honored, because they have withstood year after year temptations which have flung so many flat and flung them so hard they can never, never recover themselves. While all positions in life have powerful temptations to evil there are special temptations of allurements which are peculiar to each occupation and profession, and it will be useful to speak of the peculiar temptations of business men.

First, as in the scene of the text, business men are often tempted to sacrifice plain truth, the seller by exaggerating the value of goods and the buyer by depreciating them. We cannot but admire an expert salesman. See how he first induces the customer into a mood favorable to the proper consideration of the value of the goods. He shows himself to be an honest and frank salesman. How carefully the lights are arranged till they fall just right upon the fabric! Glancing with goods of medium quality, he gradually advances toward those of more thorough make and of more attractive pattern. How he watches the moods and whims of his customer. With what perfect calmness he takes the order and bows the purchaser from his presence, who goes away, having made up his mind that he has bought the goods at a price which will allow him a living margin when he again sells them. The goods were worth what the salesman said they were and were sold at a price which will not make it necessary for the house to fall every ten years in order to fix up things.

Insidious Strategems. But with what burning indignation we think of the insidious strategems by which goods are sometimes disposed of. A glance at the morning papers

reveals the arrival at one of our hotels of a young merchant from one of the inland cities. He is a comparative stranger in the great city, and, of course, he must be shown around, and it will be the duty of some of our enterprising houses to escort him. He is a large purchaser and has plenty of time and money, and it will pay to be very attentive. The evening is spent at a place of doubtful amusement. Then they go back to the hotel. Having just come to town, they must, of course, drink.

Again, business men are often tempted to postpone their enjoyments and duties to a future season of entire leisure. What a sedative the Christian religion would be to all our business men, if instead of postponing its uses to old age or death, they would take it into the store or factory or worldly engagements now! It is folly to go amid the uncertainties of business life with no God to help. A merchant in a New England village was standing by a horse, and the horse lifted his foot to stamp it in a pool of water, and the merchant, to escape the splash, stepped into the door of an insurance agent, and the agent said, "I suppose you have come to renew your fire insurance?" "Oh," said the merchant, "I had forgotten that!" The insurance was renewed, and the next day the house that had been insured was burned. Was it all accidental that the merchant, to escape a splash from a horse's foot, stepped into the insurance office? No; it was providential. And what a mighty solace to a business man when the agent said, "I suppose you have come to renew your fire insurance?" "Oh," said the merchant, "I had forgotten that!"

Adjourning Joys. Many, although now comparatively straitened in worldly circumstances, have a goodly establishment in the future planned out. They have in imagination built up a large and beautiful house in the country, not difficult of access from the great town, for they will often have business at the city and will often have business at the city and will often have business at the city.

Again, business men are often tempted to make the habits and customs of other traders their own. There are commercial usages which will not stand the test of the last day. Yet men in business are apt to do as their neighbors do. If the majority of the traders in any locality are lax in principle, the commercial code in that community will be spurious and dishonest. It is a hard thing to stand close by the law of right when your next door neighbor by his looseness of dealing is enabled to sell goods at a cheaper rate and decoy your customers. Of course, you who promptly meet all your business engagements, paying when you promise to pay, will find it hard to compete with that merchant who is hopelessly in debt to the importer for the goods and to the landlord whose store he occupies and to the clerks who serve him. There are a hundred practices prevalent in the world of traffic which ought never to become the rule for honest men. Their wrong does not make your right. Sin never becomes virtue by being multi-

plied and admitted at brokers' board or merchants' exchange. Because others smuggle a few things in passenger trunks, because others take usury when men are in tight places, because others palm off worthless indorsements, because others do nothing but blow bubbles, do not, therefore, be overcome of temptation. Hollow pretension and fictitious credit and condemnation of outraged communities the curse of God will come blow for blow. God's law forever and forever is the only standard of right and wrong and not commercial ethics.

Young business men, avoid the first business dishonor, and you will avoid all the rest. The captain of a vessel was walking near the mouth of a river when the tide was low, and there was a long stout anchor chain, into one of the great links of which his foot slipped, and it began to swell, and he could not withdraw it. The tide began to rise. The chain could not be loosened nor filed off in time, and a surgeon was called to amputate the limb, but before the work could be done the tide rolled over the victim, and his life was gone. I have to tell you, young man, that just one wrong into which you may slip may be a link of a long chain of circumstances from which you cannot be extricated by any quantity of good works or any help from others, and the tides will roll over you as they have over many.

Men appreciate the importance of having a good business stand, a store on the right side of the street or in the right block. Yet every place of business is a good stand for spiritual culture. God's angels hover over the world of traffic to sustain and build up those who are trying to do their duty. Tomorrow if in your place of worldly engagement you will listen for it you may hear a sound louder than the rattle of drays and the shuffle of feet and the clink of dollars stealing into your soul, saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you."

Yet some of those sharpest at a bargain are cheated out of their lives by carelessness by stratagems more palpable than any "drop game" of the street. They make investments in things everlastingly below par. They put their valuables in a safe not fireproof. They give full credit to influences that will not be able to pay one cent on the dollar. They plunge into a labyrinth from which no bankrupt law or "two-thirds enactment" will ever extricate them. They take late their part in the world, the flesh and the devil, and the enemy of all righteousness will hasten through eternal ages and the pain will be all his own. His life could not be outwitted, at last tumbled into spiritual desolation and was swindled out of heaven.

Perhaps some of you saw the fire in New York in 1835. Aged men tell us that it beggared all description. Some stood on the housetops of Brooklyn and looked at the red ruin that swept down the streets and threatened to obliterate the metropolis. But the commercial world will yet be started by a greater conflagration, even the last one. Bills of exchange, policies of insurance, mortgages and bonds and government securities will be consumed in one lick of the flame. The houses and the United States mint will turn to ashes. Gold will run molten into the dust of the street. Exchanges and granite blocks of merchandise will fall with a crash that will make the earth tremble. The flashing up of the great light will show the righteous way to their thrones. Their best treasures in heaven, they will go up and take possession of them. The tolls of business life, which make their brains and raped their nerves for so many years, will have forever ceased. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Men Who Live in Vests. In the bushmen of Australia we find, perhaps, the lowest order of men that are known. They are so primitive that they do not know enough to build even the simplest forms of huts for shelter. The nearest they could approach to it is to gather a lot of twigs and grass, and taking them into a thicket or jungle, they build a nest for a home, much as does a bird. The nest is usually built large enough for the family, and if the latter be very numerous then the nests are of a very large size. Into this place they all turn and scuddle and curl up together like so many kittens. Sometimes the twigs will grow together and for a way of natural covering, but there is never any attempt at constructing a protection from the rain and storms, and it is a marvel how they endure them.

But, though the bushmen of Australia are the very lowest in the scale of ignorance, they possess a rare instinct, that equals that of many animals and is in its way as wonderful as man's reason. It is almost impossible for them to be lost. Even if they be led away from their home, blindfolded, for miles, when released they will unerringly turn in the right direction and "make their way to their nest home, and, though these are all very singular, they never make a mistake."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Dark Horse. "Say, pa, what is a dark horse?" asked the little son of a well known east side politician, having frequently heard his father use that expression in speaking of controversial matters. "A dark horse, my son, is one that never comes to light."—Columbus (O.) State Journal.

Hint to Beginners. "Don't you think I write with a great deal of dash?" inquired the new woman reporter. "Yes," replied the city editor, "and I'd much prefer to have you use commas and semicolons."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Did you ever See a Snow Storm in Summer? We never did; but we have seen the clothing at this time of the year so covered with dandruff that it looked as if it had been out in a regular snow storm. No need of this snow storm. As the summer sun would melt the falling snow so will Ayer's Hair Vigor melt these flakes of dandruff in the scalp. It goes further than this: it prevents their formation. It has all other properties: it will restore color to gray hair in just ten times out of every ten cases. And it does *not* irritate the roots of the hair. Thin hair becomes thick hair; and short hair becomes long hair. We have a book on the Hair and Scalp. It is yours, for the asking. If you do not obtain all the benefits you expected from the use of the Vigor, return the doctor about it. Probably there is some difficulty with your general health, which may be easily remedied. Write for a copy of the book. D. C. AYER, Lowell, Mass.

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