

# Northern Messenger

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## The Wonderful Talmage Romance.

TWO HUNDRED PEOPLE CONVERTED  
IN ANSWER TO ONE WOMAN'S  
PRAYER.

(By George T. B. Davis, in 'Ram's Horn.')

The story I am about to tell you is the most remarkable instance of answered prayer I ever knew of," said Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage to me, as I sat in the handsome drawing-room of his Washington mansion.

"I have never before narrated the tale in full for publication, but since you seem greatly interested and say it will do some good, I will relate the incident which changed the whole course of our family history; which made us a family of ministers; I being the fourth brother to enter the sacred calling and the seventh among near relatives—and which led the famous Rev. Dr. Chambers, of New York, to declare: 'I have known a great many Christian people, but the Godliest woman I ever knew was T. DeWitt Talmage's mother.'

"The event occurred in the first half of the century, in New Jersey. My grandparents were living on a farm near Somerville. A great revival meeting, conducted by Rev. Dr. Findley, was in progress at Basking Ridge, ten miles distant. My grandmother and grandfather decided to go over and attend this religious awakening. They went, remained two days, and were so stirred with holy zeal, that they returned home filled with anxiety for the conversion of their sons and daughter.

"That same evening there was a party—a levee—at a neighboring farm house. The three sons and daughter were invited. At the supper table, the mother said to them: "When you are ready to go, I wish you would come into my room a moment."

"Just before leaving, they went in wondering, and their mother said:

"Now, you are going to this party. I hope you will have a good time. But, remember that I am praying for your salvation. I expect to continue in prayer until I hear you come in at the front door."

"The children went to the party, but did not have one moment of enjoyment. They knew their mother was on her knees in her room, praying for their salvation.

"Next day, as the mother was passing through the hallway, she heard her daughter, Phoebe, in her room weeping. She found her under great religious anxiety concerning her soul's welfare. They prayed together. The light came like a flood \* \* \* Phoebe became a very consecrated woman, known far and wide for piety. She remained single that she might be a benediction to all. Going from house to house, she became an angel of mercy. She ascended to heaven at last in a chariot of the prayers of all who had known her.

"Meanwhile, on that memorable day, Phoebe said to her father:

"The boys are out by the barn in a dreadful state about their soul's salvation."

"He went out and found David in great agony of mind \* \* \* David afterward

became my father. After a season of prayer, David found the peace that only comes from above, and said:

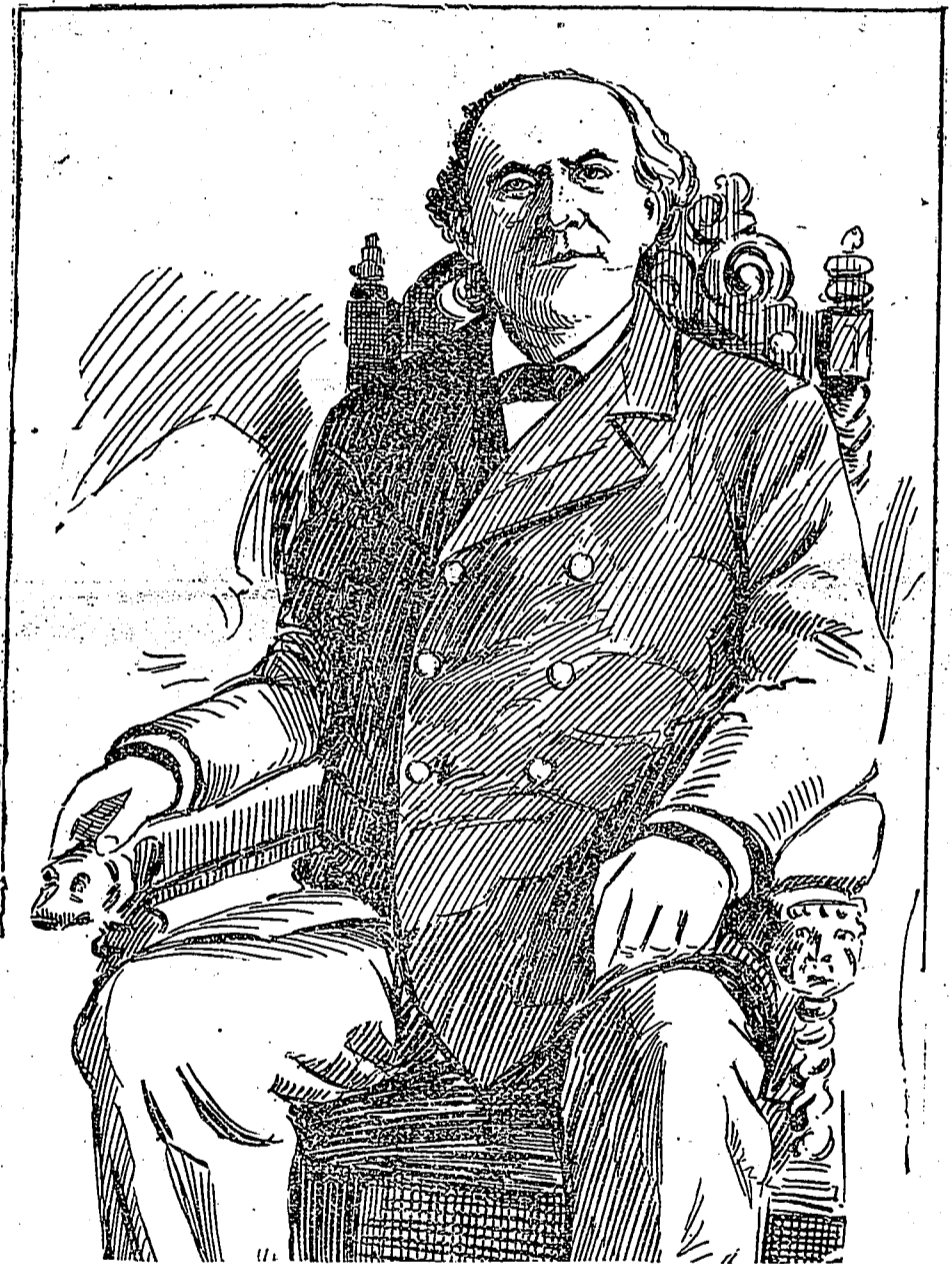
"Father, you had better hunt up Samuel and Josiah."

"Samuel was discovered near by. He also was undergoing a powerful religious awakening. He, too, found Christ \* \* \* and afterward became the leading minister of the South, and the president of Oglethorpe University. His name stands as a synonym for pulpit eloquence, and for everything good and great. To this day, you cannot

so intensely wrought upon, that he could not keep his glorious secret to himself. He ran down the lane to the farm of our neighbor, Mr. Van Nest.

"Perhaps not by chance," said Dr. Talmage with a smile, "he met Miss Katherine Van Nest on the road near her home. He poured into her sympathetic ears the entire story. She was of that high-strung emotional and noble nature that she instantly and immediately entered the Christian life.

"The story of those conversions so roused



THOMAS DE WITT TALMAGE.

mention his name in the South, without people taking off their hats in reverence.

"But, returning to that hour, Samuel, said:

"Have you seen Josiah, father? He's somewhere around. You had better see him."

"After hunting some time, he was found in the same state of mind as his brothers. In a few moments Christ took possession of his soul \* \* \* he preached the gospel for forty years: as grand a soul as ever lived.

"As the hours of that wonderful day sped by like a dream, David's soul became

the whole neighborhood, that at the next communion service more than two hundred persons joined the church—among them my future father and mother.

"David and Katherine married. Children gathered around their hearth-stone. My mother, remembering the way the Lord had answered prayer in the previous generation, started to have the same blessing in her own household. Every Saturday afternoon, for years, she went over to the house of a neighbor. No one knew why she went. It was kept a secret till after her death. Then it was discovered that that meeting was a conspiracy of five mothers to pray for