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Vapo-Cresolene is sold by druggists everywhere. A 50-cent bottle, containing the Vapo-Cresolene, which will last a lifetime, and a bottle of Cresolene, which will last a lifetime, for 25 cents. It is a most valuable remedy for all the ailments mentioned above. It is also a most valuable remedy for all the ailments mentioned above.

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DELUSION OF DELAY

"And They All With One Consent Began to Make Excuses."

APOLOGIES WHICH ARE MADE.

In This Discourse Rev. Dr. Talmage Preaches Out the Folly and Danger of Postponing the Acceptance of the Gospel Invitation—How Men Reason Themselves Into Skepticism.

Entered According to Act of Parliament of Canada in the year 1901, by William Bell, Toronto, at the Dept. of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Washington, April 13.—In the following discourse, prepared by Dr. Talmage before his illness, the folly and danger of postponing the acceptance of the gospel invitation are exposed on the text, Luke xiv, 18: "And they all with one consent began to make excuse."

After the invitations to a levee are sent out the regrets come in. One man apologizes for non-attendance on one ground, another on another ground. The most of the regrets are founded on prior engagements. So in my text a great banquet was spread, the invitations were circulated, and now the regrets come in. The one gives an agricultural reason, the other a stock dealer's reason, the other a domestic reason. All pour reasons. The fact was, they did not want to go. "And they all with one consent began to make excuse."

So now God spreads a great banquet. It is the gospel feast, and the table reaches across the hemispheres, and the invitations go out, and multitudes come and sit down and drink out of the chalice of God's love, while other multitudes decline coming, the one giving this apology, and the other giving that apology, "and they all with one consent began to make excuse." I propose, so far as God may help me, to examine the apologies which men make for not entering the Christian life.

Apology the first: I am not sure there is anything valuable in the Christian religion. It is pleaded that there are so many impositions in this day; so many things that seem to be real are sham. A gilded outside may have a hollow inside. There is so much quackery in physics, in ethics, in politics, that men come to the habit of incredulity, and after awhile they allow that incredulity to collide with our holy religion. But, my friends, I think religion has made pretty good record in the world. How many wounds it has saved! How many pillars of fire it has lifted in the midnight wilderness! How many altars struck deserts it has turned into the gardens of the Lord! How it hath stilled the chopped sea! What rosy light it hath sent streaming through the rift of the storm-cloud! What cheer for thirty Hagar and Ishmael! What manna whiter than coriander seed it hath dropped all around the camp of hardly bested pilgrims! How it has kept the lamps burning around deathbeds, through the darkness that lowers into the sepulcher! What flashes of resurrection morn!

Best of all, that this religion has made so many heroes. It brought Sumnerfield, the Methodist, across the Atlantic ocean with his silver trumpet to blow the acceptable year of the Lord until it seemed as if all our American cities would take the kingdom of heaven by violence. It sent Jehudi Ashmun into Africa alone, in a continent of naked heathens, to lift the standard of civilization and Christianity. It made John Milton among poets, Raphael among painters, Christopher Wren among architects, Thorwaldsen among sculptors, Handel among musicians. Nothing is religion? Why, then, all those Christians were deceived when in their dying moment they thought they saw the castles of the blessed, and your child, that with unutterable agony you put away into the grave, you will never see him again nor hear his sweet voice nor feel the throbb of his young heart. There is nothing in religion? Sickness will come upon you. Roll and turn on your pillow; no relief. The medicine may be bitter, the night may be dark, the pain may be sharp, no relief. Christ never comes to the sick-room. Let the pain stab; let the fever burn; curse it and die. There is nothing in religion? After awhile death will come. You will hear the pawing of the pale horse on the threshold. The spirit will be breaking away from the body, and it will take flight—whither, whither? There is no God, no ministering angels, to conduct, no Christ, no heaven, no home. Nothing in religion? Oh, you are not willing to adopt such a dismal theory!

And yet the world is full of skeptics. And let me say there is no class of people for whom I have a warmer sympathy than for skeptics. We do not know how to treat them. We deride them, we caricature them. We, instead of taking them by the soft hand of Christian love, clutch them with the iron pinches of ecclesiasticism. Oh, if you knew how those men had fallen away from Christianity and become skeptics you would not be so rough on them! Some were brought up in homes where religion was overdone. The most wretched day in the week was Sunday. Religion was driven into them with a triphammer. They had a surfeit of prayer meetings. They were stuffed and choked with catechisms. They were told by their parents that they were the worst children that ever lived because they liked to ride down hill better than to read "Pilgrim's Progress." They never heard their parents talk of religion but with the corpse of the mouth drawn down and the eyes rolled up. Others went into skepticism through maltreatment on the part of some who professed religion. There is a man who says: "My part-

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ner in business was conspicuous in prayer meeting, and he was officious in all religious circles, but he cheated me out of \$3,000, and I don't want any of that religion." Then there are others who get into skepticism by a natural persistence in asking questions, why or how? How can God be one being in three persons? They cannot understand it. Neither can I. How can God be a complete sovereign and yet man a free agent? They cannot understand it. Neither can I. They cannot understand why a holy God lets sin come into the world. Neither can I. They say: "Here is a great mystery; here is a disciple of fashion, frivolous and godless all her days; she lives on to be an octogenarian. Here is a Christian mother, training her children for God and heaven, self-sacrificing, Christlike, indispensable seemingly to that household; she gets a cancer and dies." The skeptic says, "I can't explain that." Neither can I.

I can see how men reason themselves into skepticism. With burning feet I have trodden that blistering earth. I know what it is to have a hundred nights poured into one hour. There are men in the arid desert of doubt who would give their thousands of dollars if they could get back to the old religion of their fathers. Such men are not to be caricatured, but helped, and not through their heads, but through their hearts. When these men really do come into the kingdom of God, they will be worth far more to the cause of Christ than those who again examine the evidences of Christianity. If, therefore, I address men and women who have drifted away into skepticism, I throw out no scold; I rather imply you by the memory of those good old times when you knelt at your mother's knee and said your evening prayer and those other days of sickness when she watched all night and gave you the medicines at just the right time and turned the pillow when it was hot and with hand long-ago turned to dust soothed your pains and with that voice you will never hear again unless you join her in the better country told you never mind, you would be better by and by, and by that dying couch where she talked so lowly, catching her breath between the words by all those memories I ask you to come and take the same religion. It was good enough for her; it is good enough for you. Aye, I make a better plea for the world and the death throes of the Son of God, who approaches you in infinite love with torn brow and lacerated hands and whipped back, crying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!"

Other persons apologize for not entering the Christian life because of the incorrigibility of their temperaments. Now, we admit it is harder for some people to become Christians than for others, but the grace of God never came to a mountain that it could not climb or to an abyss that it could not enter or to a headgate that it could not break. The wildest horse that ever trod Arabian sands has been broken bit and trace. The maddest torrent tumbling from mountain shelves

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ing has been harnessed to the mill wheel and the factory band, setting a thousand shuttles all a-buzz and a-clatter. And the wildest, the haughtiest, the most ungovernable man ever created by the grace of God may be subdued and sent out on ministry of kindness, as God sends an August thunderstorm to water the wild flowers down in the grass. Peter, with nature's tempestuousness, the sea that he once tried to walk, at one look from Christ went out and wept bitterly. Rich harvests of grace may grow on the summit of the jagged steep, and flocks of Christian graces may find pasture in fields of crumpled and rock. Converting grace has lifted the drunkard from the ditch and snatched the knife from the hand of the assassin and the false keys from the burglar and in the pestiferous lanes of the city met the daughter of sin under the din lamplight and scattered her sorrow and her guilt with the words, "Thy sins are forgiven; go, and sin no more." For scarlet sin a scarlet atonement.

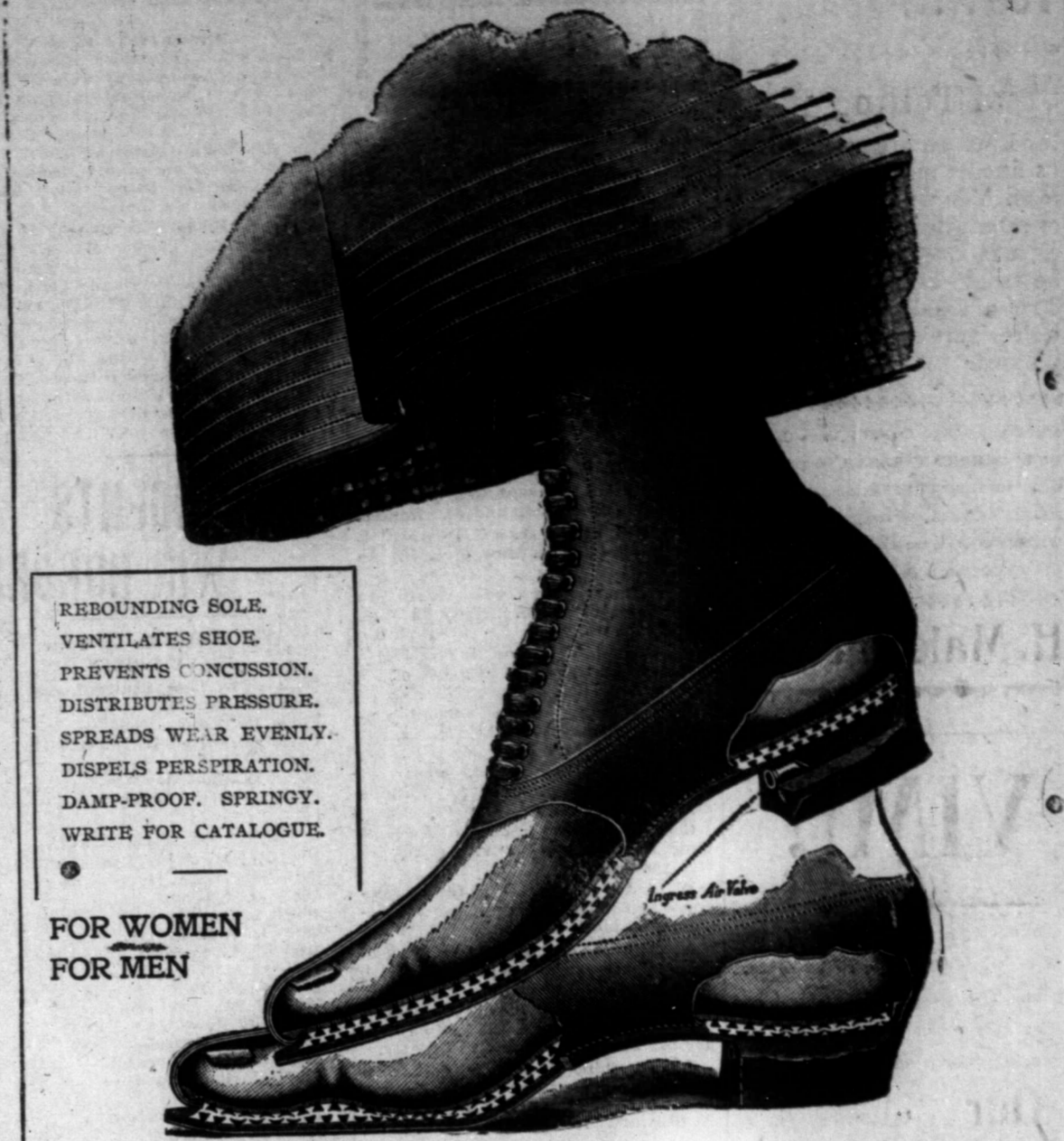
Other persons apologize for not entering the Christian life because of the inconsistencies of those who profess religion. There are thousands of poor farmers. They do not know the nature of soils or the proper rotation of crops. Their corn is short-er than their neighbors. But who declines being a farmer because there are so many poor farmers? There are thousands of incompetent merchants. They buy at the wrong time. They get cheated in the sale of their goods. Every bale of goods is to them a bale of disaster. They fail after awhile and go out of business. But who declines to be a merchant because there are so many incompetent merchants? There are thousands of poor lawyers. They cannot draw a declaration that will stand the test. They cannot recover a debt because they are at the wrong end of the law. But who declines to be a lawyer because there are so many incompetent lawyers? Yet there are tens of thousands of people who decline being religious because there are so many unworthy Christians. Now, I say it is illogical. Poor lawyers are nothing against jurisprudence; poor physicians are nothing against medicine; poor professors of religion are nothing against our glorious Christianity.

Sickness will come, and we will be pushed out toward the Red Sea which divides this world from the next, and not the inconsistency of Christians but the rod of faith will wave back the waters as a command-er wheels his host. The judgment will come, with its thunder, and solemnly and say, "There was a man Christian; there was a cowardly Christian; there was an impure Christian." In that day as now, "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." Why, my brethren, the inconsistency of Christians, so far from being an argument to keep you away from God, ought to be an argument to drive you to him. The best place for a skeptic, doctor, or a poor doctor, the best place for an enterprising merchant to open his store is in a place where the bargain makers do not understand their business. The best place for you who want to become the illustrious and complete Christian, the best place for you is to come right down among us who are so incompetent and so inconsistent sometimes. Show us how. Give us an example.

Other persons apologize for not becoming Christians because they lack time, as though religion muddled the brain of the accountant or tripped the tongue of the orator or weakened the arm of the mechanic or scattered the briefs of the lawyer or interrupted the sales of the merchant. Both the doors against it and fight it back with trowels and with yardsticks and cry, "Away with your religion from our store, our office, our factory." They do not understand that religion in this worldly world will help you to do anything you ought to do. It can lay a keel; it can sail a ship; it can buy a cargo; it can work a pulley; it can pave a street; it can be a workman; it can write a constitution; it can marshal a host. It is as appropriate to the astronomer as his telescope, to the chemist as his laboratory, to the mason as his plumb line, to the child as his marbles, to grandfather as his staff.

Other persons apologize for not entering the Christian life because it is time enough yet. That is very like those persons who send regrets and say, "I will come in perhaps at 11 or 12 o'clock; I will not be there at the opening of the banquet, but I will be there at the close." Not yet! Not yet! Now, I do not give any doleful view of this life. There is nothing in my nature, nothing in the grace of God, that tends toward a doleful view of coming life. I have not much sympathy with Addison's description of the "Vision of Mirza," where he represents human life as being a bridge of a hundred arches and both ends of the bridge covered with clouds and the race coming on, the most of them falling down through the first span and all of them falling down through the last span. It is a very dismal picture. I have not much sympathy with the Spanish proverb which says, "The sky is good and the earth is good; that which is bad is between the earth and the sky." But, what we as Christians are bound to take a cheerful view of life, we must also confess that life is a great uncertainty and that man who says "I can't become a Christian because there is time enough yet" is running a risk infinite. Be not among those who give their whole life to the world and then give their corpse to God. It does not seem fair that while our pulses are in full play of health we serve ourselves and serve the world and then make God

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