

OUR CHURCHES.

Their Doors Should Open Towards Both Worlds.

Dr. Talmage Says the Church Has Much to Do With Both of Them—Some of the Things in Which Many Churches Are Deficient.

In the following sermon Rev. T. De Witt Talmage shows that the old-style humdrum sermon will not do for this age. New methods and means must be devised to meet new problems. His text is Psalm 20: 2: "Send thee help from the sanctuary."

If you should ask 50 men what the church is, they would give you 50 different answers. One man would say: "It is a convention of hypocrites." Another, "It is an assembly of people who feel themselves a great deal better than others." Another, "It is a place for gossip, where volverine dispositions devour each other." Another, "It is a place for the cultivation of superstition and cant." Another "It is an arsenal where theologians go to get pikes and muskets and shot." Another, "It is an art gallery, where men go to admire grand arches, and exquisite fresco, and musical warble, and the Dantesque in gloomy imagery." Another man would say, "It is the best place on earth except my own home." "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

Now, whatever the church is, my text tells you what it ought to be—a great, practical, homely, omnipotent help. "Send thee help from the sanctuary." The pew ought to yield restfulness for the body. The color of the unholy ought to yield pleasure to the eye. The entire service ought to yield strength for the soul and struggle of every-day life. The Sabbath ought to be a rehearsal to all the six days of the week, drawing them in the right direction. The church ought to be a magnet, visibly and mightily affecting all the homes of the worshippers. Every man gets roughly jostled, gets abused, gets cut, gets insulted, gets slighted, gets exasperated. By the time the Sabbath comes he has an accumulation of six days of annoyance, and that is a starveling church service which has not strength enough to take that accumulated annoyance and hurl it to perdition. The business man sits down in church head-ache from the week's engagements. Perhaps he wishes he had tarried at home on the lounge with the newspapers and the slippers. That man wants to be cooled off, and graciously diverted. The first wave of the religious service ought to dash clear over the hurricane decks, and leave him dripping with holy and glad and heavenly emotion. "Send thee help from the sanctuary."

In the first place, sanctuary help ought to come from the music. A woman dying in England persisted in singing to the last moment. The attendants tried to persuade her to stop, saying it would exhaust her and make her disease worse. She answered, "I must sing; I am only practicing for the heavenly choir." Music on earth is a rehearsal for music in heaven. If you are going to take part in that great orchestra, it is high time that we were stringing and drumming our harps. They tell us that Thalberg and Gottschalk never would go into a concert until they had first in private rehearsal, although they were such masters of the instrument. And can it be that we expect to take part in the great oratorio of heaven if we do not rehearse here?

But I am not speaking of the next world. Sabbath song ought to set all the week to music. We want more harmony, not more artistic expression, but more volume in our church music. The English dissenting churches far surpass our American churches in this respect. An English audience of one thousand people will give more volume of sacred song than an American audience of two thousand people. Oh, you ought to have heard them sing in Surrey chapel. I had the opportunity of preaching the anniversary—I think the nineteenth anniversary—sermon in Rowland Hill's old chapel, and when they lifted their voices in sacred song it was simply overwhelming; and then, in the evening of the same day, in Agricultural Hall, many thousand voices lifted in doxology. It was like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of many thunders, and like the voice of heaven.

Now, I am no worshiper of noise, but I believe that if our American churches would with full heartiness of soul, and full emphasis of voice sing the songs of Zion, this part of sacred worship would have tenfold more power than it has now. Why not take this part of the sacred service and lift it to where it ought to be. All the annoyances of life might be drowned out by that sacred song. Do you tell me that it is not fashionable to sing very loudly? Then, I say, away with the fashion. We dam back the great Mississippi of congregational singing, and let a few drops of melody trickle through the dam. I say, take away the dam, and let the billows roar on their way to the oceanic heart of God. Whether it is fashionable to sing loudly or not, let us sing with all possible emphasis.

marshal the voice. Let the voice fall into line, and in companies, and in battalions, by storm take the obduracy and sin of the world. If you cannot sing for yourself, sing for others. By trying to give others good cheer you will bring good cheer to your own heart.

Again I remark, that sanctuary help ought to come from the sermon. Of a thousand people in any audience, how many want sympathetic help? Do you guess a hundred? Do you guess five hundred? You have guessed wrong. I will tell you just the proportion. Out of a thousand people in any audience there are just 1,000 who need sympathy and help.

These young people want it just as much as the old. The old people sometimes seem to think they have a monopoly of the rheumatism, and the neuralgias, and the headaches, and the physical disorders of the world; but I tell you there are no such monopolies as these. Do you know that much of the work is done by the young? Raphael died at thirty-seven; Richelieu at thirty-one; Gustavus Adolphus died at thirty-eight; Innocent III. came to his mightiest influence at thirty-seven. Cortez conquered Mexico at thirty; Don John von Lepanto at twenty-five; Grotius was attorney general at twenty-four; and I have noticed amid all classes of men that some of the severest battles and toughest work comes before thirty. Therefore we must have our sermons and our exhortations in prayer meeting all sympathetic with the young. And so with these people further on in life. What do these doctors and lawyers and merchants and mechanics care about abstractions of religion? What they want is help to bear the whimsicalities of patients, the browbeating of legal opponents, the unfairness of customers who have plenty of fault-finding for every imperfection of handiwork, but no praise for twenty excellences. What does the brainracked, hand-blistered man care for Zwingli's "Doctrine of Original Sin," or Zwingli's "Doctrine of Original Sin," or Augustine's "Retractions"? You might as well go to a man who has the pleurisy and put on his side a plaster made out of Doctor Parr's "Treatise on Medical Jurisprudence."

While all of a sermon may not be helpful alike to all, if it be a Christian sermon preached by a Christian man, there will be help for every one somewhere. We go into an apothecary's store. We see others being weighed on; we do not complain because we do not immediately get the medicine; we know our turn will come after a while. And so while all parts of a sermon may not be appropriate to our case, if we wait prayerfully, before the sermon is through, we shall have the divine prescription. I say to young men who are going to preach the gospel; we want in our sermons not more metaphysics, nor more imagination, nor more logic, nor more profundity. What we want in our sermons and Christian exhortations is more sympathy. When Father Taylor preached in the Sailors' Bethel at Boston, the Jack Tars felt they had help for their duties among the ratlines and the forecables. When Richard Weaver preached to the operatives in Oldham, England, all the workmen felt they had more grace for the spin-dies. When Dr. South preached to the kings and princes and princesses, all the mighty men and women who heard him felt preparation for their high station.

I say to young men who are entering the ministry, we must put on more force, more energy, and into our religious services more vivacity, if we want the people to come. You look into a church court of any denomination of Christians. First, you will find the men of large common sense and earnest look. The education of their minds, the piety of their hearts, the holiness of their lives qualify them for their work. Then you will find in every church court of every denomination a group of men who utterly amaze you with the fact that such semi-imbidity can get any pulpits to preach in! These are the men who give forlorn statistics about church decadence. Frogs never croak in running water; always in stagnant. But you take to all Christian workers, to all Sunday school teachers, to all evangelists, to all ministers of the gospel, if we want our Sunday schools, and our prayer meetings, and our churches to gather the people, we must freshen up. The simple fact is the people are tired of the humdrum of religionists. Religious humdrum is the worst of all humdrum. You say over and over again, "Come to Jesus," until the phrase means absolutely nothing. Why do you not tell them a story which will make them come to Jesus in five minutes? You say that all Sunday school teachers and all evangelists and all ministers must bring their illustrations from the Bible. Christ did not when He preached. The most of the Bible was written before Christ's time, but where did He get His illustrations? He drew them from the lilies, from the ravens, from salt, from a candle, from a bushel, from long-faced hypocrites, from gnats, from moths, from large gates and small gates, from a camel, from the needle's eye, from yeast in the dough of bread, from a mustard seed, from fishing nets, from debtors and creditors. That is the reason why multitudes followed Christ. His illustrations were so easy and so understandable. Therefore, my brother Christian worker, if you and I find two illustrations for a religious subject, and the one is a Bible illustration and the other is outside of the Bible, I will take the latter, because I want to be like my master. Looking across to a hill, Christ saw the city of Jerusalem. Talking to the people about the conspiracy of Christian example, He said: "The world is looking at you; be careful. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." While He was speaking of the divine care of God's children a bird flew past. He said, "Behold the ravens." Then looking down into the valley, all covered at that season with flowers, He said, "Consider the lilies." Oh, my brother Christian worker, what is the use of our going away off in some obscure part of history, or on the other side of the earth to get an illustration when the earth and the heavens are full of illustrations. Why should we go away off to get an illustration of the vicarious suffering of Jesus when as near us as Bloomfield, N. J., two little children were walking on the rail track, and a train was coming, but they were on a bridge of trestle work, and the little girl took her brother

and let him down through the trestle work as gently as she could toward the water, very carefully and lovingly and cautiously, so that he might not be hurt in the fall, and might be picked up by those who were standing near by. While doing that the train struck her, and hardly enough of her body was left to gather into a funeral dirge. What was that? Vicarious suffering. Like Christ. Pang for others. Woe for others. Suffering for others. Death for others.

What is the use of our going away off to find an illustration in past age, when during the great forest fires in Michigan, a mail carrier on horseback, riding on, pursued by those flames which had swept over a hundred miles, saw an old man by the roadside, dismounted, helped the old man on the horse, saying: "Now whip up and get away." The old man got away, but the mail carrier perished. Just like Christ dismounting from the glory of Heaven to put us on the way of deliverance, then falling back into the flames of sacrifice for others. Pang for others. Woe for others. Death for others. Vicarious suffering.

Again I remark that sanctuary help ought to come through the prayers of all the people. The door of the eternal storehouse is hung on one hinge, a gold hinge, the hinge of prayer; and when the whole audience lay hold of that door, it must come open. There are many people spending their first Sabbath after some great bereavement. What will your prayer do for them? How will it help the tomb in that man's heart? Here are people who have not been in church before for ten years; what will your prayer do for them? How will it help in arranging their apparel after entrance, and spend the second prayer, the "long prayer," in wishing it were through, and spend the last prayer in preparing to start for home. The most insignificant part of every religious service is the sermon. The more important parts are the scripture lesson and the prayer. The scripture lesson is God talking to man. Prayer is man talking to God. Oh, if we understood the grandeur and the pathos of this exercise of prayer, instead of being a dull exercise, we would imagine that the room was full of divine and angelic appearances.

But, my friends, the old style of church will not do the work. We might as well now try to take all the passengers from Washington to New York by stage coach, or all the passengers from Albany to Buffalo by canalboat, or do all the barling of the world with bow and arrow as with the old style of church to meet the exigencies of this day. Unless the church in our day will adapt itself to the time, it will become extinct. The people reading newspapers and books all the week, in alert, picturesque, and resounding style, will have no patience with Sabbath humdrum. We have no objection to sanctifying ourselves and all the paraphernalia of clerical life; but these things make no impression—make no safe impression on the great masses of the people than the ordinary business suit that you wear on Pennsylvania avenue or Wall street. A tailor cannot make a minister. Some of the poorest preachers wear the best clothes; and many a backwoodsman has dismounted from the saddlebags, and in his linen duster preached a sermon that shook earth and heaven with its Christian eloquence. No new gospel, only the old gospel in a way suited to the time. No new church, but a church to be the asylum, the inspiration, the practical sympathy, and the eternal help of the people.

Through the church gates set Heavenward how many of your friends and mine have gone? The last time they were out of the house they came to church. The early pilgrims ended at the altar of public worship, and then they marched out to a bigger and brighter assemblage. Some of them were so old they could not walk without a cane or two crutches; now they have eternal juvenescence. Or they were so young they could not walk except as the maternal hand guided them; now they bound with the hilarities celestial. The last time we saw them they were wasted with malaria or pulmonary disorder, but now they have no fatigue and no difficulty of respiration in the pure air of heaven. How I wonder when you and I will cross over! Some of you have had about enough of the thumping and flailing of this life. A draught from the fountains of Heaven would do you good. Complete release you could stand very well. If you got on the other side, and had permission to come, though you were invited to come back and join your friends on earth, you would say: "No, let me tarry here until they come; I shall not risk going back; if a man reaches Heaven he had better stay here."

In Freyburg, Switzerland, there is the trunk of a tree four hundred years old. That tree was planted to commemorate an event. About ten miles from the city the Swiss conquered the Burgundians, and a young man wanted to take the tidings to the city. He took a tree branch and ran with such speed the ten miles that when he reached the city waving the tree branch he had only strength to cry, "Victory!" and dropped dead. The tree branch that he carried was planted, and it grew to be a great tree twenty feet in circumference, and the remains of it are there to this day. My hearer when you have fought your last battle with sin and death and hell, and they have been routed in the conflict, it will be a joy worthy of celebration. You will fly to the city and cry, "Victory!" and drop at the feet of the great King. Then the palm branch of the earthly race will be planted to become the outbranching tree of everlasting rejoicing.

A SICILIAN MYSTERY

PRINCESS CARINI FOUR YEARS A PRISONER IN HER OWN HOME.

Shut Up in a Closet With Her Blind Daughter by Her Steward Lover and Starveling Curious Light on South Italian Life—Ingenious Fortune Hunting.

Palermo, the most wideawake and important city in Sicily, has just been startled by the discovery that it was possible for two well-known women of noble family to be kept close prisoners for four years in their own palace on one of the principal streets of the town without any one knowing it. A reputable lawyer recently informed the police authorities that the Princess Carini, a member of the highest aristocracy of Sicily, was kept prisoner with her blind 20-year-old daughter in her villa in the Via della Libertà by her steward, Giovanni Cannella. A large force of police and carabinieri was sent to the villa to make sure that no one escaped; at the door the porter told them that the Princess was travelling abroad. They passed him and were stopped by Cannella's mother, who told them they could not enter the house in the Princess's absence. They arrested her, broke in the doors, and after a long search found the two women in a dark closet, nearly naked, half frozen and starving. Cannella's family and all the servants were arrested, the remarkable story of the Princess was verified, and the police are now hunting for the accomplices in the crime.

Maria La Grua, Princess Carini, had plenty of excitement during the course of her life. In her youth she was a noted society beauty and at 18 married the Marchese Artale di Bollalto e Sant'Agostino. After some years of married life her husband surprised her with a lover, secured a judicial separation with the custody of her children, but left to her the youngest child, a little girl born blind of whom he denied that he was the father. This was about twenty years ago. The Princess led a fast life after that, taking one lover after another, losing her money at Monte Carlo and estranging all her relatives by open scandal; even Palermo society had to give her up. When the cholera epidemic broke out in Sicily in 1855, however, the Princess Carini volunteered as a nurse and spent months in the hospitals of Palermo tending the sick.

In 1892 her mother died, leaving her an estate that yields an income of \$10,000 a year. The Princess, by that time a middle-aged woman, fell in love with Cannella, then a clerk earning \$2 a week, and a married man, though she did not know it. She made him her steward at a high salary and set up a strange sort of a household, such as are not uncommon, however, in southern Europe. The Princess, with her daughter, occupied rooms on the ground floor of one wing of the palace, the steward, with his family, rooms in the opposite wing, and they took their meals together. Cannella then prepared his plan to obtain possession of the whole of the Princess's fortune. Little by little he removed all of the old servants and put in their places creatures of his own. He maltreated the Princess and her daughter, forbade their appearing at the windows or on the balconies, and spread the story that they had gone abroad. When he found the statement accepted by whatever persons inquired for the Princess, his usage of the women grew harsher, he deprived them of clothes, of fuel, and of food, so that they were forced to beg for bread from the gardener and such servants as they saw from time to time. His intention was apparently to drive them mad or to kill them slowly.

The unfortunate women were completely in his power. The Princess, half out of her mind, signed every paper that he directed her to sign. Cannella meanwhile lived in fine style, kept a carriage, but showed himself to be a careful administrator of the property which he intended should be his. So matters went on for four years. At last Cannella drew up a will for the Princess to sign by which everything was bequeathed to him. That roused the Princess; through all her adventures she had shown a passionate fondness for her helpless daughter, and when the will was signed, if they were not both suppressed, her child would be left at Cannella's mercy. She refused to do his bidding, and, working on the gardener's feelings, induced him to take a letter to the lawyer, who called in the police.

As this affair occurred in Sicily, the Italian newspapers attributed it to the workings of the Mafia. This seems very unlikely. Cannella's accomplices arrested so far are members of his own family and dependents of his; those sought for are the persons to whom he entrusted his stealings. The scheme, Machiavellian in its simplicity, was carried out with the strict attention to business that marks the Italian lower classes, and could have been foiled at any time had the Princess Carini roused herself to action as she did at the end.

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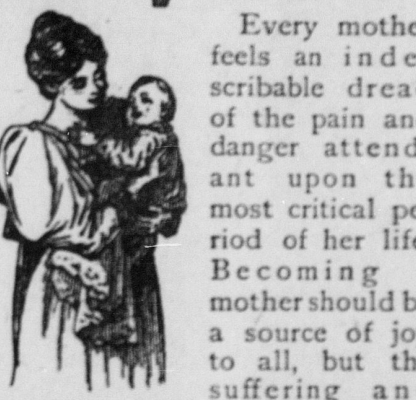
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