

THE COMING SERMON.

Dr. Talmage on Future Modes of Preaching the Gospel.

How He Thinks Religious Truths Should Be Presented—Says Ministers Should Preach the Living Christ.

(Copyright, 1893, by Louis Klepsch.) Washington, Nov. 19.

In this discourse Dr. Talmage addresses all Christian workers and describes what he thinks will be the modes of preaching the Gospel in the future; text, Romans 12:7. "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering."

While I was seated on the piazza of a hotel at Lexington, Ky., one summer evening, a gentleman asked me: "What do you think of the coming sermon?" I supposed he was asking me in regard to some new discourse of Dr. Cumming, of London, who sometimes preached startling sermons, and I replied: "I have not seen it."

But there is a discourse of the future. Who will preach it? I have no idea. In what part of the earth it will be born I have no idea. In which denomination of Christians it will be delivered I cannot guess.

That discourse of exhortation may be born in the country meeting house on the banks of the St. Lawrence or the Oregon or the Ohio or the Tombigbee or the Alabama. The person who shall deliver it may this moment be in a cradle under the shadow of the Sierra Nevadas or in a New England farmhouse or amid the ricefields of southern savannas, or this moment there may be some young man in one of our theological seminaries, in the junior or middle or senior class, shaping that weapon of power, or there may be coming some new baptism of the Holy Ghost on the churches, so that some of us who now stand in the watchtowers of Zion, waking to a realization of our present inefficiency, may preach it ourselves.

That coming discourse may not be 50 years off. And let us pray God that its arrival may be hastened while I announce to you what I think will be the chief characteristics of that discourse or exhortation when it does arrive, and I want to make my remarks appropriate and suggestive to all classes of Christian workers.

First of all, I remark that that future religious discourse will be full of a living Christ in contradistinction to didactic technicalities. A discourse may be full of Christ though hardly mentioning His name, and a sermon may be empty of Christ while every sentence is repetition of His titles. The world wants a living Christ, not a Christ standing at the head of a formal system of theology, but a Christ who means pardon and sympathy and consolation and brotherhood and life and Heaven, a poor man's Christ, an overworked Christ, an invalid's Christ, a farmer's Christ, a merchant's Christ, an artisan's Christ, an every man's Christ.

A symmetrical and fine worded system of theology is well enough for theological classes, but it has no more business in a pulpit than have the technical phrases of an anatomist or a psychologist or a physician in the sickroom of a patient. The world wants help, immediate and world uplifting, and it will come through a discourse in which Christ shall walk right down into the immortal soul and take everlasting possession of it, filling it as full of light as is this noonday firmament.

That sermon or exhortation of the future will not deal with men in the threadbare illustrations of Jesus Christ. In that coming address there will be instances of vicarious suffering taken right out of everyday life, for there is not a day when somebody is not dying for others—as the physician saving his diphtheritic patient by sacrificing his own life; as the ship captain going down with his vessel while his is getting his passengers into the lifeboat; as the fireman consuming in the burning building while he is taking a child out of a fourth-story window; as in summer the strong swimmer at East Hampton or Long Branch or Cape May or Lake George himself perished trying to rescue the drowning; as the newspaper boy one summer, supporting his mother for some years, his invalid mother, when offered by a gentleman 50 cents to get some special paper, and he got it, and rushed up in his anxiety to deliver it and was crushed under the wheels of the train and lay on the grass with only strength enough to say: "Oh, what will become of my poor, sick mother now?"

Vicarious suffering—the world is full of it. An engineer said to me on a locomotive in Dakota: "We men seem to be coming to better appreciation than we used to. Did you see that account the other day of an engineer who to save his passengers stuck to his place, and when he was found dead in the locomotive, which was upside down, he was found still smiling, his hand on the airbrake?" And as the engineer said it to me he put his hand on the airbrake to illustrate his mean-

ing, and I looked at him and thought: "You would be just as much a hero in the same crisis." Oh, in that religious discourse of the future there will be living illustrations taken out of everyday life of vicarious suffering—illustrations that will bring to mind the ghastlier sacrifice of Him who in the high places of the field, on the cross, fought our battles and endured our struggle and died our death.

A German sculptor made an image of Christ, and he asked his little child, two years old, who it was, and she said: "That must be some very great man." The sculptor was displeased with the criticism, so he got another block of marble and chiseled away on it two or three years, and then he brought in his little child, four or five years of age, and said to her: "Who do you think that is?" She said: "That must be the One who took little children in His arms and blessed them." Then the sculptor was satisfied. Oh, my friends, what the world wants is not a cold Christ, not an intellectual Christ, not a severely magisterial Christ, but a loving Christ, spreading out His arms of sympathy to press the whole world to His loving heart!

But I remark also that the religious discourse of the future of which I speak will be a popular discourse. There are those in these times who speak of a popular sermon as though there must be something wrong about it. As these critics are dull themselves, the world gets the impression that a sermon is good in proportion as it is stupid. Christ was the most popular preacher the world ever saw and, considering the small number of the world's population, had the largest audiences ever gathered. He never preached anywhere without making a great sensation. People rushed out in the wilderness to hear him reckless of their physical necessities. So great was their anxiety to hear Christ that, taking no food with them, they would have fainted and starved had not Christ performed a miracle and fed them. Why did so many people take the truth at Christ's hands? Because they all understood it. He illustrated his subject by a hen and her chickens, by a bushel measure, by a handful of salt, by a bird's flight and by a lily's aroma. All the people knew what he meant, and they flocked to Him. And when the religious discourse of the future appears it will not be Princetonian, nor Rochesterian, nor Andoverian, nor Middletonian, but Olivetian—plain, practical, unique, earnest, comprehensive of all the woes, wants, sins and sorrows of an auditory.

But when the exhortation or discourse does come there will be a thousand gleaming scimeters to charge on it. There are in so many theological seminaries professors telling young men how to preach, themselves not knowing how, and I am told that if a young man in some of our theological seminaries says anything quaint or thrilling or unique faculty and students fly at him and set him right and straighten him out and smooth him down and chop him off until he says everything just as everybody else says it. Oh, when the future religious discourse of the Christian church arrives all the churches of Christ in our great cities will be thronged! The world wants spiritual help. All who have buried their dead want comfort. All know themselves to be mortal and to be immortal, and they want to hear about the great future. I tell you, my friends, if the people of our great cities who have had trouble only thought they could get practical and sympathetic help in the Christian church, there would not be a street in Washington or New York or any other city which would be passable on the Sabbath day if there were a church on it, for all the people would press to that asylum of mercy, that great house of comfort and consolation.

A mother with a dead babe in her arms came to the god Siva and asked to have her child restored to life. The god Siva said to her: "You go and get a handful of mustard seed from a house in which there has been no sorrow and in which there has been no death, and I will restore your child to life." So the mother went out, and she went from house to house and from home to home looking for a place where there had been no sorrow and where there had been no death, but she found none. She went back to the god Siva and said: "My mission is a failure. You see, I haven't brought the mustard seed. I can't find a place where there has been no sorrow and no death." "Oh!" said the god Siva. "Understand, your sorrows are no worse than the sorrows of others. We all have our griefs, and all have our heartbreaks." Laugh, and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone; For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,

But has trouble enough of its own. We hear a great deal of discussion now all over the land about why people do not go to church. Some say it is because Christianity is dying out and because people do not believe in the truth of God's Word, and all that. The reason is because our sermons and exhortations are not interesting and practical and helpful. Some one might as well tell the whole truth on this subject, and so I will tell it. The religious discourse of the future, the Gospel sermon to come forth and shake the nations and lift people out of darkness, will be a popular sermon, just for the simple reason that it will meet the woes and the wants and the anxieties of the people.

There are in all our denominations ecclesiastical mummies sitting around to frown upon the fresh young pulpits of America to try to awe them down, to cry out: "Tut, tut, tut! Sensational!" They stand to-day preaching in churches that hold a thousand people, and there are a hundred persons present, and if they cannot have the world saved in their way it seems as if they do not want it saved at all. I do not know but the old way of making ministers of the Gospel is better—a collegiate education and an ap-

prenticeship under the care and home attention of some earnest, aged Christian minister, the young man getting the patriarch's spirit and assisting him in his religious service. Young lawyers study with old lawyers, young physicians with old physicians, and I believe it would be a great help if every young man studying for the Gospel ministry could get himself in the home and heart and sympathy and under the benediction and perpetual presence of a Christian minister.

But, I remark again, the religious discourse of the future will be an awakening sermon. From altar rail to the front door step, under that sermon, an audience will get up and start for Heaven. There will be in it many a staccato passage. It will not be a lullaby. It will be a battle charge. Men will drop their sins, for they will feel the hot breath of pursuing retribution on the back of their necks. It will be sympathetic with all the physical distresses as well as the spiritual distresses of the world. Christ not only preached, but he healed paralysis, and he healed epilepsy, and he healed the dumb and the blind and the lepers.

That religious discourse of the future will be an everyday sermon, going right down into every man's life, and it will teach him how to vote, how to bargain, how to plow, how to do any work he is called to do, how to wield trowel and pen and pencil and yardstick and plane. And it will teach women how to preside over their households and how to educate their children and how to imitate Miriam and Esther and Vashti and Eunice, the mother of Timothy, and Mary, the mother of Christ, and those women who on northern and southern battlefields who were mistaken by the wounded for angels of mercy, fresh from the throne of God.

Yes, I have to tell you, the religious discourse of the future will be a reported sermon. If you have any idea that printing was invented simply to print secular books, and stenography and phonography were contrived merely to set forth secular ideas, you are mistaken. The printing press is to be the great agency of Gospel proclamation. It is high time that good men, instead of denouncing the press, employ it to scatter forth the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The vast majority of people in our cities do not come to church, and nothing but the printed sermon can reach them and call them to pardon and life and peace and Heaven.

So I cannot understand the nervousness of some of my brethren of the ministry. When they see a newspaper man coming in they say: "Alas, there is a reporter!" Every added reporter is 10,000, 50,000, 100,000 immortal souls added to the auditory. The time will come when all the village, town and city newspapers will reproduce the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and sermons preached on the Sabbath will reverberate all around the world, and, some by type and some by voice, all nations will be evangelized.

The practical bearing of this is upon those who are engaged in Christian work, not only upon theological students and young ministers, but upon all who preach the Gospel and all who exhort in meetings and all of you if you are doing your duty. Do you exhort in prayer meeting? Be short and spirited. Do you teach in Bible class? Though you have to study every night, be interesting. Do you exhort people on the subject of religion in their homes or in public places? Study adroitness and use common sense. The most graceful and most beautiful thing on earth is the religion of Jesus Christ, and if you awkwardly present it it is defamatory. We must do our work rapidly, and we must do it effectively. Soon our time for work will be gone.

A dying Christian took out his watch and gave it to a friend and said: "Take that watch. I have no more use for it. Time is at an end for me, and eternity begins." Oh, my friends, when our watch has ticked away for us the last moment, and our clock has struck for us the last hour, may it be found we did our work well, that we did it in the very best way, and whether we preached the Gospel in pulpits or taught Sabbath classes, or administered to the sick as physicians, or bargained as merchants, or pleaded the law as attorneys, or were busy as artisans or husbandmen or as mechanics, or were, like Martha, called to give a meal to a hungry Christ, or, like Hannah, to make a coat for a prophet, or, like Deborah, to rouse the courage of some timid Barak in the Lord's conflict, we did our work in such a way that it will stand the test of judgment! And in the long procession of the redeemed that march around the throne may it be found that there are many there brought to God through our instrumentality and in whose rescue we exult. But let none of us who are still unsaved wait for that religious discourse of the future. It may come after our obsequies. It may come after the stonewater has chiseled our name on the slab 50 years before. Do not wait for a great steamer of the Cunard or White Star line to take you off the wreck, but hail the first craft, with however low a mast and however small a bulk and however poor a rudder and however weak a captain.

Instead of waiting for that religious discourse of the future (it may be 40, 50 years off), take this plain invitation of a man who to have given you spiritual eyesight would be glad to be called the spittle by the hand of Christ put on the eyes of a blind man and who would consider the highest compliment of this service if, at the close, 500 men should start from these doors, saying: "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not. This one thin 'I know'—whereas I was blind, now I see."

Swifter than shadows over the plain, quicker than birds in their autumnal flight, hastier than eagles to their prey, his you to a sympathetic Christ. The orchestras of Heaven have strung their instruments to celebrate your rescue: And many were the voices around the throne. Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own.

HE HAD A REASON.

Why the Cautious Juror Didn't Believe in Circumstantial Evidence.

A good story is being told about a juror who was drawn for service in the criminal court recently on a murder case. He was one of those men who was willing to do his part as a good citizen, but he had a prejudice against circumstantial evidence which was so strong he could not dispel it from his mind, and it finally became necessary to excuse him.

He answered the questions put to him by the prosecuting attorney to qualify, but when the attorney for the defendant got down to where he asked him if he would convict a person on circumstantial evidence he hesitated.

"Why do you hesitate?" asked the judge.

"Well, I'll be frank with you," replied the juror. "I don't believe in it."

"If the evidence was so overwhelming that there could be no doubt about the guilt of the prisoner, wouldn't you vote to convict?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Judge, can I whisper to you?"

"Yes."

There was a three-minute conversation between the judge and the juror, at the conclusion of which the judge smiled, and then he said: "Juror, you are excused."

The attorneys did not forget the incident, and at the end of the day's session they asked the judge what the trouble was with Mr. —, naming the juror who was excused.

The judge said the man told him he was the owner of a farm in Cheektowaga, and among his live stock was a handsome pet calf. One day while he was out in the barnyard chopping at a fence with an ax this calf made a break to get out of the yard. With the ax still in his hand he ran after the animal and caught him by the tail. Just as he was dragging it back from an opening in the fence a member of the family happened along, and, seeing him with the ax in his hand, concluded he was suffering with an attack of senile dementia, and in his fury was trying to hack the poor beast into veal cutlets.

"Judge, I was perfectly rational, and I protested that I was attempting nothing of the kind," said the juror, "but appearances were against me, and to this day I am unable to convince my family that I was not crazy and was not trying to murder that calf. That's the reason I am against circumstantial evidence."—Buffalo News.

HE LOST ALL.

Including That Winsome But Changeable Creature, the Lovely Birdy Jones.

It was the first perfect day of the glad springtime. The warm sun-brightened the country landscape, and the odor of opening apple blossoms came upon the laden atmosphere. The lazy clouds floated dreamily in the sky overhead, chiefly because they could not go aloft nor on the trolley cars. The rural roads were smooth under the hammer of innumerable wheels, and Clarence Wheeler had stolen Birdy Jones from her haughty Soho home for a ramble on his '97 tandem among the highways—the township. Stopping from the run, they rested beneath a great oak tree which overhung a wayside spring. Cowbells tinkled in the wood lot below the meadow, and little lambs with wabbling legs three sizes too big for them gambled on the short green grass. On a broad, flat stone that looked down upon the crystal water Birdy spread upon the lunch they had carried in the tandem box, and Clarence brought water in a romantic tin can that he had found hard by.

The soft winds toyed with the girl's bleached tresses, which streamed over her face like a photograph picture of the west wind to illustrate Longfellow's poems. Her cheeks flushed with the vigor of exercise and robust health, and when the young man approached her from the spring his whole thought was centered upon the winsome beauty of the divine creature. He sat down by her side. His soul drank in the charm of the picture. She looked up from the can of potted beef that she was opening, with a smile of confident approval on her young face. Suddenly her eye kindled and the rosy flush of young womanhood gave way to a ghastly pallor. Her lip curled in scorn. Her classic head was lifted in anger. "Merciful heaven!" shrieked the young man. "Tell me, dearest girl, what is the matter?"

But she stepped back, and striking the attitude that she had learned at the Soho Amateur Dramatic club, she pointed her finger at him and said, in tones that would wither a load of hay: "All is lost, Clarence Wheeler; you are sitting in the pie!"—Pittsburgh Times.

Shirt Waist Puffers. Ruffettes are the latest shirt waist "puffers." A bright girl invented them, and told another girl, and she told some one else, and so it has come to be a fad with everyone who knows how to make them. The first shirt waist puffer was made of some horrid, stiff crinoline or other hard fabric, and made the front of the waist pout out too much. With this new ruffette it is a simple matter to make the most limp and dejected of silks or muslins stand out in the proper way. Take a foundation piece, and over that stitch three rows of ruffles about long enough to run across the breast from arm seam to arm seam of your shirt front. With two of the latest gold safety pins fasten this to your under bodice securely, and you have as dainty a device as you would care to have for warm weather. It does away with padding and inner linings. Starch added to the ruffles will make them stand out more firmly.

—N. Y. Herald.

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