

# THE SERMON OF THE FUTURE

Talmage Says Coming Religious Discourses Must Be Brief and Full of a Living Christ—The Model Sermon Was Delivered in 18 Minutes.

Washington, Nov. 26.—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 xii, 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 I found out afterward that he meant to ask what I thought would be the characteristics of the coming sermon of the world, the sermons of the future, the word "Cumming" as a noun pronounced the same as the word coming as an adjective. But my mistake suggested to me a very important and practical theme, "The Coming Sermon."

Before the world is converted the style of religious discourse will have to be converted. You might as well go into the modern Sedan or Gettysburg with bows and arrows, instead of rifles, and expect to conquer this world for God by the old styles of exhortation and sermonology. Jonathan Edwards preached the sermon most adapted to the age in which he lived, but if these sermons were preached now they would divide an audience into two classes—those sound asleep, and those wanting to go home.

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 Nevada or in a New England farm house or amid the rice fields 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 watch towers of Zion, waiting for 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 condolence and brotherhood and life and heaven, a poor man's Christ, a rich man's Christ, an overworked man's Christ, an invalid's Christ, a farmer's Christ, a merchant's Christ, an artisan's Christ, an every man's Christ.

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 when he is getting his passengers into the lifeboat; as the fireman consuming in the burning building while he is taking a child out of the fourth story window; as in summer the strong swimmer at East Hampton or Long Branch or Cape May or Lake George himself perished while trying to save 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 the paper, 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 of the use of the day of the 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 air-brake." And as the engineer said it to me he put his hand on the air-brake to illustrate his meaning, and I looked at him and thought, "You would be just as much a hero in the same crisis."

A German sculptor made an image of Christ, and he asked his little child, two years old, what 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." Oh, my friends, what the world wants is not a cold Christ, not an intellectual Christ, but a severely magisterial Christ, but a loving Christ, spreading out His arms of sympathy to press the whole world to His loving heart!

The trouble is we preach audiences into a Christian frame, and then we preach them out of it. We forget that every auditor has so much capacity of attention, and when that is exhausted he is restless. That accident on the Long Island railroad years ago came

from the fact that the brakes were out of order, and when they wanted to stop the train they could not stop, and hence the casualty was terrific. In all religious discourse we want locomotive power and propulsion. We want at the same time stout brakes to let down at the right instant. It is a dismal thing, after a hearer has comprehended the whole subject, to hear a man say, "Now to recapitulate," and "A few words by way of application," and "Once more," and "Finally," and "Now to conclude."

Paul preached until midnight, and Eutychus got sound asleep and fell out of a window and broke his neck. Some of you would say, "Good for him." I would rather be sympathetic, like Paul, and resuscitate him. That accident is often quoted now in religious circles as a warning against somnolence in church. It is just as much a warning to ministers against prolixity. Eutychus was made a mistake when he kept on until midnight. He ought to have stopped at eleven o'clock, and there would have been no accident. If Paul might have gone on to too great length, let all those of us who are now preaching the gospel remember that there is a limit to religious discourse, or ought to be, and that in our time we have no other tollie power of miracles. Napoleon in an address of seven minutes thrilled his army and thrilled Europe. Christ's sermon on the mount, the model sermon, was less than eighteen minutes long, an ordinary mode of delivery. It is not electricity scattered all over the sky that strikes, but electricity gathered into a thunderbolt and hurled, and it is not religious truth scattered over and spread out over a vast reach of time, but religious truth projected in compact form that flashes light upon the soul and gives it indifference.

When the religious discourse of the future arrives in this land and in the Christian church, the discourse which is to arouse the world and startle the nations and usher in the kingdom, it will be a brief discourse. Hear it, all theological students, all ye men and women who in Sabbath schools and other departments are tolling for Christ and the salvation of immortals—brevity, brevity.

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 that speak of a popular sermon as though there must be some thing 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 audience 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. He got at 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 of Christ's hands? Because they all understood it, so that 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 comes, it will not be Princeton, not Rochesterian, not a verbiage, plain, practical, unique, earnest, comprehensive of all the woes, wants, sins and sorrows of an auditory.

But when that exhortation or discourse does come there will be a thousand gleaming scimiters 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 in his quiet 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 at all the churches of Christ in our great cities will be thronged!

A mother with a dead babe in her arms came to the good Siva and asked to have her child restored to life. The good 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 good 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," says the good Siva, "that is why 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. They are false reasons. 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 their 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.

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 household 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 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 meetings? Be short and spirited. Do you teach in Bible class? Though you have to study every night, be interesting. Do you accost people on the subject of religion in their homes or in public places? Study adroitness and common sense.

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 public, 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 journeymen 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 blind Barak in the Lord's conflict, we did our work in such a way that it will stand the test of the 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 labored.

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 stonemason 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 wreck, but halt the first craft, with however low a mast and however small a bulk and however poor a rudder, and however weak a captain. Better a disabled schooner that comes up in time than a full rigged brig that comes up after you have sunk.

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 sinner or no, I know not. This one thing 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, hie you to a sympathetic Christ. The chieftains 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.

**Soldiers and Quinine.**

There is one essential of the "shinews of war," that is not usually taken account of. The Medical News says that more than 125,000,000 grains of quinine have been taken by United States soldiers during the past year. It says that some of the military patients in the army hospitals in Cuba and Puerto Rico took as much as 300 grains a week during several weeks. Hardly any of those who were in service in the West Indies failed to take some quinine during their stay. The Confederacy is often said to have failed largely for want of quinine.

**Kruger Has 104 Grand Children.**

The Boer President has been married twice, had one child by first wife and 10 by the second. His grandchildren number 104. He has done his share toward surprising England with the size of the Transvaal army.

Those who make the worst use of their time most complain of its shortness.—La Bruyere.

"Old Skinfint is dead." "Yes, he's gone to that burn whence no traveler returns."

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON NO. X  
DEC. 3, 1899.

Keeping the Sabbath.—Neh. 13:15-22.

Time.—B. C. 426. Place.—Jerusalem. Persons.—Nehemiah. Jews. Men of Tyre.

Commentary.—(Read introduction.) Connecting links.—Ezra the scribe was probably dead, for his successor, Zadok, is mentioned, Chapter xiii, 13. It is not likely that the great abuses referred to could have arisen had he been in Jerusalem. After his death, and during Nehemiah's absence, the opposing enemies who had been silenced by Nehemiah took courage and opened the floodgates of evil, so that a deluge of sin rushed in. As a natural consequence crimes and sins increased rapidly.—sorcery, adultery, false swearing, oppression, cheating the widow and fatherless; but especially was there a return to the custom of mixed marriages. Eliashib's own grandson, Manasseh, married the daughter of Sanballat of Samaria, Chapter xiii, 28. Others not only married heathen wives, but put away their true Jewish wives to do it. Then was added the sin of Sabbath-breaking.

15. In those days.—Upon his return to Jerusalem, and while he was engaged in making the reforms above mentioned. In Judah.—The land of the Jews, where God's law should have been most sacred. The people had become so bold that no effort seemed to be made to conceal their Sabbath-breaking. Treading wine presses. These were large vats, about eight feet square, and over a foot deep, into which grapes were thrown and trodden by feet of men, and the juice flowed into a lower smaller vat. On the Sabbath—a direct violation of the ancient law (Ex. xx, 8-11), as well as of the recent covenant made by the people.—Hurlbut. Bringing in sheaves.—In the east farmers live in villages and towns, and go forth to cultivate the surrounding country. It is not unusual for them to bring their harvest home to thresh it. The farmers brought their grain into Jerusalem, at the time of Nehemiah, to secure it from robbers, the country being in an unsettled condition.—Thompson. There was an express command against doing this on the Sabbath. Ex. xxxiv, 21. Lading asses.—Regardless of the law for animals. Deut. v, 14; Jer. xvii, 21. Wine, grapes and figs.—For storage and sale. This required a large working force, and tempted the people to buy and trade on the Sabbath.—Peloubet. I testified against them.—Gave them the testimony of God's Word against it.

16. There dwelt men of Tyre.—Devoted to commerce, they had formed a little settlement in Judea, for the sale of their merchandise, fish and other things. 17. I contended with the nobles.—Not the rulers of v. xi, but the higher classes generally.—Lange. Nehemiah was as quick to undertake to remedy this flagrant evil as he was to perceive it. He used his official authority.—Pentecost. They desired the freshest food for their feasts and encouraged breaking the law for the gratification of their carnal appetites.—Rawlinson. This that ye do.—They were responsible in that they permitted it.—Gray.

18. Did not your fathers thus? Why was Jerusalem destroyed? Where had the nation been carried into captivity? Why were they now weak and poor and scattered? 19. Began to be dark.—Their Sabbath began at sunset the previous day. The city gates would have been closed at sundown, but Nehemiah ordered them closed earlier, when the shadows were lengthening, that secular work should not be carried on to the last allowable moment.—Rawlinson. After the Sabbath.—Next morning, after the Sabbath. My servants.—His own body-guard, whom he could trust. No burden.—Though the gates were closed against traffic, foot passengers were admitted through the small wicket if they carried no burden, that the people might thus attend worship in the temple.—Rawlinson.

20. Merchants lodged without.—Not believing that the command would be strictly enforced, they camped outside the walls, waiting for the gates to be opened on Sabbath morning as usual. 21. I will lay hands on you.—Proceed to violent measures: arrest and treat you as criminals.—Whedon. Was Nehemiah too severe? "They that forsake the law praise the wicked; but such as keep the law contend with them." Came no more.—Vice conjoined at will bid defiance to counsel and reproof, but may be made cowardly if magistrates will sit on the throne of judgment. The cure was lasting, for in our Saviour's time the Jews were overscrupulous about Sabbath sanctity.—Com. Com.

22. Commanded the Levites.—Assigning the duty to his servants was but a temporary arrangement. The permanent charge was committed to the Levites, who had been entrusted with the duty when the gates were first set up. Chapter vii, 1.—Pul. Com. Cleanse themselves.—That is, to purify themselves from ceremonial uncleanness and come and attend to guarding the gates as a religious duty. To sanctify the Sabbath.—Secure its sanctity by preventing further profanation.—Whedon. Remember me, O my God.—This prayer is not one of self-gloryification, but of faith in God's truth. A man who knows he is doing right in the sight of God can say so to God without presumption. It is a testimony of God's grace, and he can rejoice in it. Concerning this also.—As he had in other things before. Happy is he who at the close of each undertaking can pray thus.—Bib. Mus. Spare me.—From all dependence upon my own worth. Spare me to continue faithful. Here is no claim to honor for faithful service, but humble desire to be kept so devoted to God

that he may still be entrusted with God's work.

Teachings.—When we are doing God's will we need have no fear of men. If we forsake God's law we will forsake His worship. When God speaks through men sinners are afraid. When we have been obedient we must still depend upon God's mercy.

**PRACTICAL SURVEY.**

Sabbath-breaking. When the Jews fell into this sin they said by their actions that they had left God out of their lives entirely. It seemed most strange that after the long years of captivity and the struggle to rebuild the temple and city wall, that the people should so soon lapse into such gross sins. One after another of the direct commands or laws of God were broken. It had been but eighteen years since the great gathering of the people to hear the public reading of the Scriptures, at which time they placed themselves under covenant to keep the law, bring tithes and observe the set ceremonies of their religion. Yet, at the first opportunity, they seemed ready to receive the evil that was waiting for their welcome.

Sabbath reform. Nehemiah paved the way for this by cleaning the temple, driving Tobiah from his feathered nest, and putting his goods out after him. Then he called for the Levites, who had been driven to self-support, and put them again in their sacred offices and prepared for the worship of the temple. Then, lest no time should be given for preparation of the Sabbath, Nehemiah ordered the city gates closed a little earlier than usual. He would make it harder to disobey God, and thus hope to turn their attention to religion. Success did not come at once, nor without some emphatic measures. If the people would recall the firmness of Nehemiah in his former dealings with heathen enemies, they might well conclude that no trifling would now be tolerated. It was business, and righteously business. It was for God and for the good of His people. All their former history had shown that no man prospers who fights against God.

**PROSPECTING MADE EASY.**

Interesting Invention for the Discovery of Precious Metals.

Mr. E. H. Brown, of Chicago, is the inventor of a process which he says may revolutionize the entire prospecting business. He bases his entire process upon electrical laws, which have been known for many years. By measuring given distances of land, and by finding by means of instruments the average resistance offered to the electric current, the presence of mineral deposits is noticed. Whenever the resistance offered is strikingly lower than elsewhere in the immediate vicinity, it is because the current finds metal.

The instrument is not two feet long and weighs only a few pounds. It is a combination of the principles of the telephone, modified, wheatstone bridge, and Lord Kelvin's inductive balance. In finding resistance two metal rods are placed in the earth 200 feet apart, two wires connecting with the rods are attached to the machine, and a current is passed through the machine. On the upper surface of the instrument are two wires which are marked, figures representing the resistance offered. These wires are connected with a telephone receiver, which is held to the ear. A rod is passed along the wires and through the receiver a slight sound can be heard. When the sound ceases the rod is upon the figures which represent the resistance.

**CHILDREN'S MODES.**

Styles for Little Ones, Lads as Well as Lassies.

Long cloaks and ulsters of double-faced Scotch cloakings, trimmed with velvet or fringe, are very fashionable for misses and girls this winter.

For boys single and double-breasted top coats of frieze, Oxford mixtures or Kersey in brown, blue and black, are en vogue.

Bedford cord, cashmere and elder-down, trimmed with satin ribbon and fancy silk braid, are most used in the creation of infants' winter coats.

Middy suits will continue in popularity for boys' winter wear.

A jacket of black velvet, with a skirt of bright Scotch plaid, is considered very smart for a girl's suit just now.

For the very diminutive specimens of femininity slips of white cashmere, richly embroidered, to be worn with a detached gimp of any preferred description, are much in vogue.

Girls from 12 to 16 now follow the lead of their elders, and wear side-closing skirts that fit faultlessly about the hips.

Many dip fronts and scalloped edges are seen among the short jackets of the most exclusive tailor suits.

**Shrewd Advice.**

The virtues of a keen business man are often negative rather than positive, says the Youth's Companion. It is said that a great broker once told his son that only two things were necessary to make a great financier. "And what are those, papa?" the son asked.

"Honesty and sagacity." "But what do you consider the mark of honesty to be?" "Always to keep your word." "And the mark of sagacity?" "Never to give your word."

**Women in Australia.**

The disproportion of the sexes is still very great in West Australia—for example, there are only fifty-four thousand women in a population of one hundred and sixty-eight thousand.

That stomach trouble will cease if you will take Miller's Compound Iron Pills. One after each meal.

The future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother.—Bonaparte.