



How air ye, Bob? I lowed Yeller Jack had caught ye shars.

THE people have fought a good fight. The town is reeking with the fumes of carbolic acid, and the gutters are white with lime. For days the preparations to resist the incoming of yellow fever have been in progress. All the time it has been creeping nearer, nearer. The papers told of the quarantining of the many towns, one against the other. At first, train loads of wildly frightened people rushed by with closed doors and windows. At last the trains ceased to run. Nowhere could an asylum of refuge be found. Every door was closed to the wretched wanderers, and every man's hand was against them. The lines were drawn tighter and tighter. The trains were discontinued. With them ceased news from the outside world.

There had been no mail for several days. Then came a paper—and it bore the news that the elusive disease had gradually been spreading and was coming closer. The strain was beginning to tell upon the people. The quarantine guards were doubled and no person was allowed to enter. In the town the inhabitants congregated upon the corners and talked fearfully. Each tried to be brave and to show his companions that he was not afraid, but each knew what the other was thinking.

The town was strangely quiet. People spoke in awed tones of voice. A few of the stores were open—the majority of them were locked. Even should the fever come there was no place to which the people might go. On every side were determined men guarding the roads, and they were armed with shotguns, which they would use without hesitancy should one attempt to pass the lines. Every person viewed the other with suspicion. They were afraid of each other—of themselves. It was worth as much as a man's life for him to say he felt badly. He would be hustled off to the pesthouse to die like a stricken dog.

The weekly paper, in a spirit of enterprise, had undertaken to get out a daily issue during the excitement. It was a "yellow journal," for the fever was its sole topic. It got one or two short telegrams a day from more or less authentic sources, and these were industriously padded out.

One morning the telegraph boy emerged from the depot office and ran down the middle of the street toward the Gazette office. He had a message for the paper. As he passed the crowd of men congregated on the street corner he held the large envelope conspicuously. The men shuddered as they caught sight of it.

The Mayor came up and joined the crowd. He was the leading citizen and had the largest store in the place. He began to joke with them in a jovial manner, but he too had a hunted look. Each minute the scourge was coming nearer. It slipped through the cordons of determined men drawn about the town. It seemed to be in the very air, invincible in its onward march. Men are brave when they have a foe they can fight, but in the presence of an unseen enemy they are cowards.

The sun mounted higher and higher. The noon hour passed, yet the men did not think of dinner. They are hungry for news. At last from down the street two small boys bolted out from the Gazette office holding in their arms a dozen or so copies of the "extra."

"Extry!" they bawled, "all about 'yeller fever. Twenty died yesterday—sixty new cases!" The men bought papers, and devoured their contents in nervous haste. It was the same old tale, of the onward march of the yellow death. There was not a rift of hope in sight. It was spreading, and was beyond human control.

"Wall," said the town drunkard—he had just had a drink. "I hain't skeered, fer cole weather er comin' soon, en th' 'll fix Mister Yeller Jack."

Two months till frost, and two months the fever'll be all over the face of the earth. And we'll be God knows where."

The Mayor came hurriedly out of his store. He held a small sheet of yellow paper in his hand—and it trembled till the paper fell. He was an ashy color, and his eyes had a strained look about them. He walked rapidly to the corner where the idle men congregated. They saw him coming, and a sort of nervous tremor went over them.

"Boys," he said, "it's coming; I just got this telegram from the Mayor of Carlin—you know that's only fifteen miles away. It says there are five cases there."

There was a silence for a moment or two, and then someone ejaculated slowly and solemnly: "God have mercy on us!"

The others could hardly comprehend it. They expected it, yet they could not realize that it was actually so.

GO THOU AND PREACH

TALMAGE TELLS WHAT THE FUTURE SERMON WILL BE.

The World Wants a Living Christ—Condensation of the Demand of the Age—Why People Do Not Go to Church—An Appeal to the Unsaved Soul.

Our Washington Pulpit.

Most appropriate to the times we live in was Dr. Talmage's discourse of last Sunday. All Christian workers will read it with interest. His text was Luke ix, 49, "Go, thou, and preach the kingdom of God."

The gospel is to be regnant over all hearts, all circles, all governments and all lands. The kingdom of God spoken of in the text is to be a universal kingdom, and just as wide as that will be the realm sermonic. "Go, thou, and preach the kingdom of God." We hear a great deal in these days about the coming man, and the coming woman, and the coming time. Some one ought to tell us of the coming sermon. It is a simple fact that everybody knows that most of the sermons of to-day do not reach the world. The vast majority of the people of our great cities never enter church.

The sermon of to-day carries along with it the dogwood of all ages. Hundreds of years ago it was decided what a sermon ought to be, and it is the attempt of many theological seminaries and doctors of divinity to hew the modern pulpiter utterances into the same old style proportions. Book sellers will tell you they dispose of a hundred histories, a hundred novels, a hundred poems to one book of sermons. What is the matter? Some say the age is the worst of all ages. It is better. Some say religion is wearing out, when it is wearing in. Some say there are so many who despise the Christian religion. I answer there never was an age when there were so many Christians or so many friends of Christianity as this age—our age, as to others a hundred to one. What is the matter, then? It is simply because our sermon of to-day is not suited to the age. It is the cannibal in an age of locomotive and electric telegraph. The sermon will have to be shaken out of the old grooves or it will not be heard and it will not be read.

The Coming Sermon.

Before the world is converted the sermon will have to be converted. You might as well go into a modern, Sedan or Gettysburg with bows and arrows instead of rifles and bombshells and parks of artillery as to expect to conquer this world for God by the old styles of sermology. Jonathan Edwards preached the sermons best adapted to the age in which he lived. But if those 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 coming sermon—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 coming sermon 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 be a young man 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 in some 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 the realization of our present inefficiency, may preach it ourselves. That coming sermon may not be twenty 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 sermon when it does arrive, and I want to make the remarks appropriate and suggestive to all classes of Christian workers.

First of all, I remark that that coming sermon will be full of a living Christ, in contradistinction to didactic technicalities. A sermon may be full of Christ, though hardly mentioning his name, and a sermon may be empty of Christ, while every sentence is repetitions 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. 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.

The World Wants Help.

A symmetrical and nicely 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 physician in the sick room of a patient. The world wants help, immediate and world uplifting, and it will come through a sermon 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 the noonday firmament. That sermon of the future will not deal with men in the threadbare illustrations of Jesus Christ. In that coming sermon there will be instances of vicarious sacrifice taken right out of everyday life, for there is not a day somebody is not dying for others. As the physician, saving his diphtheric patient by sacrificing his own life as the ship captain, going down with his vessel, while he 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 last summer the strong swimmer at Long Branch or Cape May or Lake George himself perished trying to rescue the drowning, as the newspaper boy not long ago, 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?"

Oh, in that coming sermon of the Christian church there will be living illustrations taken from everyday life of vicarious suffering—illustrations that will bring to mind the ghastly sacrifice of him who, in the high places of the field and on the cross, fought our battle and wept our griefs and endured our struggles and died our death.

The Image of Christ.

Christ, and he asked his little child, 2 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, 4 or 5 years of age, and he 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 into his loving heart.

But I remark, again, that the coming sermon of the Christian church will be a short sermon. Condensation is demanded by the age in which we live. No more need of long introductions and long applications and so many divisions to a discourse that it may be said to be hydra headed. In other days men got all their information from the pulpit. There were few books, and there were no newspapers, and there was little travel from place to place, and people would sit and listen two and a half hours to a religious discourse, and "seventeenthly" would find them fresh and chipper. In those times there was enough room for a man to take an hour to warm himself up to the subject and an hour to cool off. But what was a necessity then is a superfluity now. Congregations are full of knowledge from books, from newspapers, from rapid and continuous intercommunication, and long disquisitions of what they know already will not be abused. If a religious teacher cannot compress what he wishes to say to the people in the space of forty-five minutes, better adjourn it to some other day.

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 came from the fact that the brakes were out of order, and when they wanted to stop the train they could not stop; 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."

The Model Sermon.

Paul preached until midnight, and Eutyclus got sound asleep and fell out of a window and broke his neck. Some 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. Eutyclus was wrong in his somnolence, but Paul made a mistake when he kept on until midnight. He ought to have stopped at 11 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 apostolic power or 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 at 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, spread out, over a vast reach of time, but religious truth projected in compact form that flashes light upon the soul and rives its indifference.

When the coming sermon arrives in this land and in the Christian church—the sermon which is to arouse the world and startle the nations and usher in the kingdom—it will be a brief sermon. Hear it, all theological students, all ye just entering upon religious work, all ye men and women who in Sabbath schools and other departments are toiling for Christ and the salvation of immortals. Brevity, brevity!

But I remark also that the coming sermon of which I speak will be a popular sermon. 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 audience ever gathered. He never preached anywhere without making a great sensation. People rushed out in their 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 coming sermon of the Christian church appears, it will not be Princetonian, not Rochesterian, not Andoverian, not Middletonian, but Olivetian—plain, practical, unique, earnest, comprehensive of all the woes, wants, sins, sorrows and necessities of an auditory.

Churches Will Be Thronged.

But when that sermon does come, there will be a thousand gleaming seminaries 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 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 coming sermon 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 hurried 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 these 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 Boston 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 Veda and asked to have her child restored to life. The god Veda 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 Veda 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 god Veda, "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. They are false reasons.

Why People Do Not Go to Church.

The reason is because our sermons are not interesting and practical and sympathetic and helpful. Some one might as well tell the whole truth on this subject, and so I will tell it. "The sermon 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 pupils 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.

But I remark again the sermon of the future will be an awakening sermon. From altar rail to the front doorstep, 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 purging retribution on the back of their necks. It will be a sermon 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 ten lepers.

That sermon 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, 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 initiate 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 sermon 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. 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.

An Appeal to the Unsaved.

Oh, my friends, when our watch has ticked away for us for 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 were the busy as mechanics, or were the busy as 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 the judgment. And in the long procession of the redeemed that marches round the throne may it be found there are many there brought to God through our instrumentality and in whose rescue we are exultant. But, oh, you unsaved, wait not for that coming sermon. It may come after your obsequies. It may come after the stonemason has chiseled our name on the slab fifty years before. Do not wait for a great steamer line to take you off the wreck, but haul the first craft, with however low a mast, and however small a hull, 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 coming sermon—it may be twenty, fifty 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 stoner 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.

The one who has already already struck the match, to celebrate your rescue.

And many were the voices around the throne Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own. Copyright, 1897.

The cheeks become pale from fear because the mental emotion diminishes the action of the heart and lungs and so impedes the circulation.