

A NEW YEAR'S SERMON.

PREACHED BY THE GREAT BROOKLYN DIVINE.

He Describes a Forward Movement—The Conflict Between Right and Wrong—Christians Should Not Lose Courage, but Should Pass on to Victory.

Dr. Talmage's sermon of last Sunday is a ringing battle cry to ministers and Christians everywhere calling upon them to join in a combined charge on the trenches of sin an Satan.

The eminent preacher spoke as follows from the text Luke xxiv. 47: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

For a few months, in the providence of God, I have two pupils, one in Brooklyn and the other in New York, and through the kindness of the printing press an ever widening opportunity. To all such hearers and readers I come with an especial message. The time has arrived for a forward movement such as the church and the world have never seen. That there is a need for such a religious movement is evident from the fact that never since our world was swung out among the planets has there been such an organized and determined effort to overthrow righteousness and make the whole Bible a derision. Meanwhile alcoholism is taking down its victims by the hundreds of thousands, and the political parties go down their knees, practically saying: "Oh though a high-um jug' we know down before the State. Give us the offices, city, State and National. Oh, give us the offices and we will worship them for ever and ever. Amen."

The Christian Sabbath meanwhile, appointed for physical, mental, and spiritual rest, is being secularized and abolished. As if the bad publishing houses of our own country had exhausted their literary fifth, the French and Russian seers have been invited to pour their scurrility and moral slush into the trough where our American swine are now swallowing. Meanwhile, there are enough houses of infamy in all our cities, open and unmeasured of the law, to invoke the omnipotent wrath which buried Sodom under a deluge of brimstone. The pandemoniac world, I think, has massed its troops, and they are this moment plying their batteries upon family circles, church circles, social circles, political circles, and national circles. Apollyon is in the saddle, and, riding to the head of his myrmidons, would capture the world for darkness and woe.

That is the side of the conflict now rasing. On the other side we have the most magnificent gospel machinery that the world ever saw or human invention. In the first place, there are more than 80,000 ministers of religion, and, take them as a class, more consecrated, holier, more consistent, more self-denying, more faithful men never lived. I know them by the thousands. I have met them in every city, I am told, not by them, but by people outside our profession, people engaged in Christian and reformatory work, that the clergy of America are at the head of all enterprises, and whoever else fail they may be depended on. The truth of this is demonstrated by the fact that when a minister of religion does fail, it is so ministerial that the newspapers report it as something startling, while a hundred men in other callings may go down without the matter being considered as especially worth mentioning.

In addition to their equipment in moral character the clergy of this country have all that the schools can give. All archaeological, rhetorical, scientific, scholastic, literary attainments. So much for the Christian ministry of all denominations. In the next place, on our side of the conflict we have the grandest churches of all time, and higher style of membership and more of them, and a host without number of splendid men and women who are doing their best to have this world purified, elevated, glorified. But we all feel that something is wanting. Enough hearty songs have been sung and enough earnest sermons preached within the last six months to save all the cities of America; and saving the cities you have the world, for they overthrow all the land either with their religion or their infamy.

But look at some of the startling facts. It is nearly nineteen hundred years since Jesus Christ came by the way of Bethlehem caravans to save the world, yet the most of the world has been no more inclined by this most stupendous fact of all eternity than if on the first Christmas night the beasts of the stall, amid the bleating of their own young, had not heard the bleating of the Lamb that was to be slain. Out of the eighteen hundred million of the human race, four hundred million are without God and without hope in the world, the camel driver of Arabia, Mahomet, with his nine wives, having half as many disciples as our blessed Christ, and more people are worshiping chunks of painted wood and carved stone than are worshiping the living and eternal God. Meanwhile, the most of us who are engaged in Christian work—I speak for myself as well as others—are toiling up to our full capacity of body, mind, and soul, harnessed up to the fast buckles not able to draw pound more than we are drawing, or lift an atom more than we are lifting.

What is the matter? My text lets you the secret. We all need courage, the power from on high. Not muscular power, not logical power, not scientific power, not social power, not financial power, not brain power, but power from on high. With it we could accomplish more in one week than without it in a hundred years. And I am going to get it, if in answer to prayer, earnest and long continued, God will grant it, his unworthy servant.

Several times in the history of the church and the world has this power from on high been demonstrated. In the Seventeenth century, after a great season of moral depression, this power from on high came down upon John Tillotson and Owen and Flavel and Baxter and Bungay, and there was a deluge of mercy higher than the tops of the highest mountains of sin. In the Eighteenth century, in England and America, religion was at a low water mark.

The infidel writings of Shaftesbury and Hobbes and Chubb had done their work. But power from on high came upon both the Wesleys and Lady Huntington on the other side the Atlantic, and upon William Tennant and Gilbert Tennant and David Brainerd on this side the Atlantic, and both hemispheres felt the tread of a pardoning God. Coming to later date there may be here and there in this audience an aged man or woman who can remember New York in 1831, when this power from on high descended most wondrously. It came upon pastors and congregations and theaters and commercial establishments. Chatham Street Theater, New York, was the scene of a most tremendous religious awakening.

A committee of Christian gentlemen called upon the lessers of the theater and said they would like to buy the lease of the theater. He said, "What do you want in for?" They replied, "For a church." "For wh-a-1?" said the owner. "For a church" was the reply. The owner said, "You may have it, and I will give you a thousand dollars to help you on with your work." Arthur

Tappan, a man mighty persecuted in his time, but a man, as far as him in his last days, as honest and pure and good as any man I ever knew, stepped on the stage of Old Chatham Theater as the actors were closing their morning rehearsal, and said, "There will be preaching here to-night on this stage," and then gave out and sang with such people as were there the old hymn:

The voice of free grace cries, escape to the mountain.

For all that believe Christ has opened a fountain.

The drama of the theater was turned into a prayer room, and eight hundred persons were present at the first meeting. For seventy successive nights religious services were held in that theater, and such scenes of mercy and salvation as will be subjects of conversation and congratulation among the ransomed in glory as long as heaven lasts. But I come to a later time—1857

—remembered by many who are here. I entered the office of the ministry. It was a year of hard times. A great panic had flung hundreds of thousands of people penniless. Starvation entered habitations that had never before known a want. Domestic life, in many cases, became a tragedy. Suicide, garroting, burglary, assassination were rampant. What an awful day that was when the banks went down! There has been nothing like it in thirty years, and I think God's name may not be anything like it in the next thirty centuries. Talk about your Black Fridays! It was Black Saturday, Black Sunday, Black Monday, Black Tuesday, Black Wednesday, Black Thursday as well as Black Friday.

This nation in its extremity fell helpless before the Lord and cried for pardon and peace, and upon ministers and laymen the power from on high descended. Engine houses,warehouses, factories, from 12 to 1 o'clock while the operatives were resting, were opened for prayers and sermons and inquiry rooms, and Burton's old theater on Chambers street, where our ancestors used to assemble to laugh at the comedies, and all up and down the streets, and out on the docks and on the deck of ships lying at the wharf, people sang, "All hail the power of Jesus' name," while others cried for mercy. A great mass meeting of Christians on a week day, in Jayne's hall, Philadelphia, telegraphed to Fiditon street prayer meeting in New York, saying, "What hath God wrought?" and a telegram went back saying, "Two hundred souls saved at our meeting to-day."

The day came when the Narrows in our harbor, the captain reported that himself and all the crew had been converted to God between New Orleans and New York. In the busiest parts of our busiest American cities, where the worshippers of Mammon had been counting their golden heads, men began to calculate, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" The waiters in restaurants after the closing of their day's work knelt among the tables where they had served. Policemen asked consent of the commissioners of police to be permitted to attend religious meetings.

At Alibey members of the New York legislature assembled in the room of the Court of Appeals at half past 5 o'clock in the morning for prayer and praise. Printed invitations were sent out to the friends of New York saying, "Come as suits your convenience best, whether in or out of citizens' dress, but come!" One thousand persons knelt among the rocks. Egyptian knelt among the looms. Sailors knelt among their hammocks. Schoolmasters knelt among their classes. A gentleman traveling said there was a line of prayer meetings from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast, and from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico.

As the power from on high in 1857 was more remarkable in academics of music and lyceum halls and theaters than in churches, why not this winter of 1891 of singular entertainment where we are during the rebuilding of our Brooklyn Tabernacle, so grandly and graciously treated by the owners and lessors and lessees; why not expect and why not have the power from on high, comforting power, comforting power, saving power, omnipotent power? My opinion is that in this cluster of cities by the Atlantic coast there 50,000 people now ready to accept the gospel call, if, freed from all the conventionalities of the church, it were earnestly and with strong faith presented to them?

In these brilliant assemblies there are hundreds who are not frequenters of churches, and who do not believe much if at all in ministers of religion or ecclesiastical organizations. But God knows you have stragglers in which you need help and beavements in which you want solace, and persecutions in which you ought to have defense, and perplexities in which you need guidance, and with a profound thoughtfulness you stand by the grave of the old year, and the cradle of the young year, wondering where you will be and what you will be when "rolling years shall cease to move."

Power from on high descended upon them! Men of New York and Brooklyn I offer you God and heaven! From the day you came to these cities what a struggle you have had! I can tell from your earwax countenances, and the deep sigh you have breathed that you want reformation, and it is greater than Blucher when he is beaten at Wellington; greater than the Bank of England when last month it re-enforced the Barings—namely, the God who, through Jesus Christ, is ready to pardon all your sin, comfort all your sorrows, scatter all your doubts, and swing all the shining gates of heaven wide open before your redeemed spirit. Come into the kingdom of God. Without a half second of delay he will fit, his unworthy servant.

Many of my hearers to-day are what the world calls and what I would call splendid fellows, and they seem happy enough, and are jolly and obliging, and if I were in trouble I would go to them with as much confidence as I would to my father if he were yet alive. But when they go to their rooms at night, or when the excitement of social and business life are off, they are not content, and they want something better than this world can offer. I understand them well, I would, without any fear of being thought rough, take my right hand on their other shoulder, and my left hand on their other shoulder, and push them into the kingdom of God. But I cannot. Power from on high, lay hold of them!

At the first communion after the dedication of our former church, three hundred and twenty-eight souls stood up in the aisle and publicly espoused the cause of Christ. At another time four hundred souls, at another time five hundred. And our four thousand five hundred membership were but a small part of those who within those sacred walls took upon themselves the vows of the Christian. What turned them? What saved them? Power from the level? No; power from on high.

But greater things are to be seen if ever these cities and ever this world is to be taken for God. There is one class of men and women in all these assemblies in whom I have especial interest, and that is those who had good fathers and mothers once, but they are dead. What multitudes of us are orphans! We may be 40, 50, 60 years old, but we never get

used to having father and mother gone. Oh, how often we have had troubles that we would like to have told them, and we always felt as long as father and mother were alive, had some one to whom we could go. Now, I would like to ask if you think that all their prayers in your behalf had been answered. "No," you say, "but it is too late, the old folks are gone now."

I must courteously contradict you. It is not too late. I have a friend in the ministry who was attending the last hours of an aged Christian, and my friend said to the old Christian, "Is there trouble on your mind?" The old man turned his face to the wall for a few moments, and then said: "Only one thing, I hope for the salvation of my ten children, but one of them is yet saved; yet I am sure they will be. God means to wait until I am gone." So he died. When my friend told the circumstances of the ten had found the Lord, and I have no doubt the other two before this meeting. For seventy successive nights religious services were held in that theater, and such scenes of mercy and salvation as will be subjects of conversation and congratulation among the ransomed in glory as long as heaven lasts. But I come to a later time—1857

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The history of these recovered fountains for you God only knows. They may have been offered in the solemn birth hour. They may have been offered when you were down with scarlet fever or diphtheria or membranous croup. They may have been offered some night when you were sound asleep in the trundle bed, and your mother came in to see if you were rightly covered in the cold winter night. They may have been offered at that time which comes at least once in almost every one's life, when your father and mother had hard work to make a living, and they feared that want would come to them and you. They may have been offered when the lips could no longer move and the eyes were closed for the long sleep.

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CARL DUNDER'S LUCK.

"Nobody has Two Times Alike in This Country."

"Well, where have you been for the last three months?" queried Sergeant Bendall yesterday, as Carl Dunder softly opened the door of the Woodbridge Street Station about a foot and squeezed through the aperture.

"Oh, I was keeping quiet. I like to speak to you a few words to-day."

"All right."

"Der odder day a man comes by my place and drinks a glass of beer and says me a game of dominoes and says his name was Shon White. Dot makes no deefence to me if he has Sheorge Washington. His must pay me shust so quick or I knock him out."

"Course."

"Vhell, he pays me und seems like a decent fellow, and puttup soon he says he has a check on der bank and likes me to go and say his was Shon White."

"And you went?"

"Vhell, I like to oblige."

"And you identified him?"

"Vhell, when I know he was Shon White how could I help it? Dot was a bough check for fifteen dollar, and I had to pay it. I doan' see how it was."

"Um! Anything more?"

"Somebody doan' play me dot vhat again. My ere teeth vhas etful queek. In two days a fellow comes along mit a subscription paper. He says he likes me to put down a dollar for der poor. I asked him his name, and he says it was Peter Davis. Sergeant, you should see me knock him ofer middle of last Shuh."

"Yes, and you'll have to pay for it. He was at the police court this morning to get a warrant for you."

"A warrant for me!" But he vhas a schwindler!"

"Oh, no, he wasn't; he was all right."

"Vhell, I might ash vell stamp into deifer. How vhas to tell about this? Nothings vhas two times alike."

"Anything else?"

"Vhell, you see, a man comes into my place mit a package and says his was Carl Dunder. I vhas. Here vhas some express from Chicago, and he has to collect \$2. Sergeant, dot was all right, Sergeant?"

"Looks that way."

"Of course she does, but after he goes avay und I open dat package I find a lot of brickbats in it. He vhas an awful swell."

"Well?"

"Vhell, some onder man's come in mit a package and says his was my name Carl Dunder. Yes. He vhas some package for me from New York, and I had to pay \$1. Sergeant, I shumps on dat man and knocks him so cold dot his own uncle doan' know him and he beliefs he vhas a young man from Troy."

"Then you spotted him?"

"Spots! Spots! Yes, I see some spots!" He belongs to der regular express company, and he vhas going to sue me for five thousand dollars! Can you see how she vhas? One time it vhas all wrong, und der next time it vhas all right. Nobody vhas two times alike."

"Going away?"

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