

REV. DR. TALMAGE

The Eminent Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "A Call to Outsiders."

Text: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."—John x., 16.

There is no monopoly in religion. The grace of God is not a little property that we may fence off and have all to ourselves. It is not a king's park at which we may look through the barred gateway, wishing that we might go in and see the deer and the stately and pluck the flowers and fruits in the royal conservatory. No. It is the Father's orchard, and everywhere there are bars that we may let down and gates that we may swing open.

In my boyhood next to the country school-house there was an orchard of apples, owned by a very lame man, who, although there were apples in the place perpetually decaying and by scores and scores of bushels, never would allow any of us to touch the fruit. One day, in the sinfulness of a nature inherited from our first parents, who were ruined by the same temptation, some of us invaded that orchard, but soon retreated, for the man came after us at a speed reckless of making his lameness worse and cried out, "Boys, drop those apples, or I'll set the dog on you."

Well, my friends, there are Christian men who have the church under severe guard. There is fruit in this orchard for the whole world, but they have a rough and unsympathetic way of accosting outsiders, as though they had no business here, though the Lord wants them all to come and take the largest and ripest fruit on the premises. Have you an idea, because you were baptized at thirteen months of age, and because you have all your life been under hallowed influences, that therefore you have a right to one whole side of the Lord's table, spreading yourself out and taking up the entire room? I tell you no. You will have to haul in your elbows, for I shall place on either side of you those whom you never expected would sit there, for, as Christ said to His favored people long ago, so He says to you and to me, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

MacDonald, the Scotchman, has four or five dozen head of sheep. Some of them are browsing on the heather; some of them are lying down under the trees; some of them are in his yard—they are scattered around in eight or ten different places. Cameron, his neighbor, comes over and says: "I see you have thirty sheep. I have just counted them." "No," says MacDonald, "I have a great many more sheep than that. Some are here and some are elsewhere. They are scattered all around about. I have 4000 or 5000 in my flocks. Other sheep I have which are not in this fold."

So Christ says to us. Here is a knot of Christians, and there is a knot of Christians, but they make up a small part of the flock. Here is the Episcopal fold, the Methodist fold, the Lutheran fold, the Congregational fold, the Presbyterian fold, the Baptist and the Pedo-Baptist fold; the only difference between these last two being the mode of sheep washing, and so they are scattered all over, and we come with our statistics and say there are so many thousands of the Lord's sheep, but Christ responds: "No, no. You have not seen more than one out of 1000 of My flock. They are scattered all over the earth. Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

Christ in my text was prophesying the conversion of the gentiles with as much confidence as though they were already converted, and He is now, in the words of my text, prophesying the coming of a great multitude of outsiders that you never supposed would come in, saying to you and saying to me, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

In the first place, I remark that the Heavenly Shepherd will find many of His sheep among the nonchurchgoers. There are congregations where they are all Christians, and they seem to be completely finished, and they remind one of the skeleton leaves which by chemical preparation have had all the greenness and verdure taken off them and are left cold and white and delicate, nothing wanting but a glass case to put over them. The minister of Christ has nothing to do with such Christians but to come once a week and with ostrich feather dust off the accumulation of the last six days, leaving them bright and crystalline as before. But the other kind of a church is an armory, with perpetual sound of drum and life, gathering recruits for the Lord of Hosts. We say to every applicant: "Do you want to be on God's side—the safe side and the happy side? If so, come in the armory and get equipped. Here is a bath in which to be cleansed. Here are sandals to put upon your feet. Here is a helmet for your brow. Here is a breastplate for your heart. Here is a sword for your right arm, and yonder is the battlefield. Quit yourselves like men."

There are some here who say, "I stopped going to church ten or twenty years ago." My brother, is it not strange that you should be the first man I should talk to to-day? I know all your case. I know it very well. You have not been accustomed to come into religious assemblage, but I have a surprising announcement to make to you—you are going to become one of the Lord's sheep. "Ah," you say, "it is impossible. You don't know how far I am from anything of that kind." I know all about it. I have wandered up and down the world, and I understand your case. I have a still more startling announcement to make in regard to you—you are not only going to become one of the Lord's sheep, but you will become one to-day. You will stay after this service to be talked with about your

soul. People of God, pray for that man. That is the only use for you here. I shall not break off so much as a crumb for you, Christians, in this sermon, for I am going to give it all to the outsiders. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

When the Atlantic went to pieces on Mars' rock, and the people clambered upon the beach, why did not that heroic minister of the gospel of whom we have all read sit down and take care of those men on the beach, wrapping them in flannels, kindling fire for them, seeing that they got plenty of food? Ah, he knew that there were others who would do that. He says: "Yonder are men and women freezing in the rigging of that wreck. Boys, launch the boat." And now I see the oar blades bend under the strong pull, but before they reached the rigging a woman was frozen and dead. She was washed off, poor thing. But he says, "There is a man to save," and he cries out: "Hold on five minutes longer, and I will save you. Steady; steady. Give me your hand. Leap into the lifeboat. Thank God, he is saved!"

So there are those here to-day who are safe on the shore of God's mercy. I will not spend any time with them at all, but I see there are some who are freezing in the rigging of sin and surrounded by perilous storms. Pull away, my lads! Let us reach them. Alas, one is washed off and gone. There is one more to be saved. Let us push out for that one. Clutch the rope. Oh, dying man, clutch it as with a death grip. Steady, now, on the slippery places. Steady. There—saved, saved! Just as I thought. For Christ has declared that there are some still in the breakers who shall come ashore. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

Christ commands His ministers to be fishermen, and when I go fishing I do not want to go among other churches, but into the wide world, not sitting along Hohokus creek, where eight or ten other persons are sitting with hook and line, but, like the fishermen of Newfoundland, sailing off and dropping net away outside, forty or fifty miles from shore. Yes, there are nonchurchgoers here who will come in. Next Sabbath they will be here again or in some better church. They are this moment being swept into Christian associations. Their voice will be heard in public prayer. They will die in peace, their bed surrounded by Christian sympathies and to be carried out by devout men to be buried, and on their graves be chisled the words, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." And on resurrection day you will get up with the dear children you have already buried and with your Christian parents who have already won the palm. And all the grand and glorious history begins this hour. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

I remark again, the Heavenly Shepherd is going to find a great many of His sheep among those who are positive rejectors of Christianity. I do not know how you came to reject Christianity. It may have been through hearing Theodore Park's preach, or through reading Renan's "Life of Jesus," or through the infidel talk of some young man in your store. It may have been through the trickery of some professed Christian man who disgusted you with religion. I do not ask you how you became so, but you frankly tell me that you do reject it. You do not believe that Christ is a divine being, although you admit that He was a very good man. You do not believe that the Bible was inspired of God, although you think there are some very fine things in it. You believe that the Scriptural description of Eden was only an allegory. There are fifty things that I believe that you do not believe. And yet you are an accommodating man. Everybody that knows you says that of you. If I should ask you to do a kindness for me, or if any one else should ask of you a kindness, you would do it. Now, I have a kindness to ask of you to-day. It is something that will cost you nothing and will give me great delight. I want you by experiment to try the power of Christ's religion. If I should come to you, and you were very sick, and doctors had given you up and said there was no chance for you, and I should take out a bottle and say: "Here is a medicine that will cure you. It has cured fifty people, and it will cure you," you would say, "I have no confidence in it." I would say, "Won't you take it to oblige me?" "Well," you would say, "if it's any accommodation to you, I'll take it." My friend, will you be just as accommodating in matters of religion? There are some of you who have found out that this world cannot satisfy your soul. You are like the man who told me one Sabbath after the service was over: "I have tried this world and found it an insufficient portion. Tell me of something better." You have come to that. You are sick for the need of divine medication.

Now I come and tell you of a physician who will cure you, who has cured hundreds and hundreds who were as sick as you are. "Oh," you say, "I have no confidence in Him." But will you not try Him? Accommodate me in this matter; oblige me in this matter; just try Him. I am very certain He will cure you. You reply, "I have no especial confidence in Him, but if you ask me as a matter of accommodation introduce Him." So I introduce Him—Christ, the Physician who has cured more blind eyes and healed more ghastly wounds and bound up more broken hearts than all the doctors since the time of Esculapius. That Divine Physician is here. Are you not ready to try him? Will you not, as a pure matter of experiment, try Him and state your case before Him this hour? Hold nothing back from Him. If you cannot pray, if you do not know how to pray any other way, say: "O Lord Jesus Christ, this is a strange thing for me to do. I know nothing about the formulas of religion. These Christian people have been talking so long about what Thou canst do for me I am ready to do whatever Thou commandest me to do. I am ready to take whatever Thou commandest me

to take. If there be any power in religion, as these people say, let me have the advantage of it." Will you try that experiment now? I do not at this point of my discourse say that there is anything in religion, but I simply say try it. Do not take my counsel or the counsel of any clergyman, if you despise clergymen. Perhaps we may be talking professionally; perhaps we may be prejudiced in the matter; perhaps we may be hypocritical in our utterances; perhaps our advice is not worth taking. Then take the counsel of some very respectable laymen, as John Milton, the poet; as William Wilberforce, the statesman; as Isaac Newton, the astronomer; as Robert Boyle, the philosopher; as Locke, the metaphysician. They never preached or pretended to preach, and yet putting down, one his telescope, and another his parliamentary scroll, and another his electrician's wire, they all declare the adaptedness of Christ's religion to the wants and troubles of the world. If you will not take the recommendation of ministers of the gospel, then take the recommendation of highly respectable laymen.

O men, skeptical and struck through with unrest, would you not like to have some of the peace which broods over our souls to-day? I know all about your doubts. I have been through them all. I have gone through all the curriculum. I have doubted whether there is a God, whether Christ is God, I have doubted whether the Bible was true, I have doubted the immortality of the soul, I have doubted my own existence. I have doubted everything, and yet out of that broad desert of doubt I have come into the hot, luxuriant, sunshiny land of gospel hope and peace and comfort, and so I have confidence in preaching to you and asking you to come in. However often you may have spoken against the Bible, or however much you may have caricatured religion, step ashore from that rocking and tumultuous sea. If you go home to-day adhering to your infidelities, you will not sleep one wink. You do not want your children to come up with your skepticism. You cannot afford to die in that midnight darkness, can you? If you do not believe in anything else, you believe in love—a father's love, a mother's love, a wife's love, a child's love. Then let me tell you that God loves you more than them all. Oh, you must come in. You will come in! The great heart of Christ echoes to have you come in, and Jesus this very moment—whether you sit or stand—looks into your eyes and says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

Again I remark that the Heavenly Shepherd is going to find a great many sheep among those who have been flung of evil habits. It makes me sad to see Christian people give up a prodigal as lost. There are those who talk as though the grace of God were a chain of forty or fifty links, and after they had run out there was nothing to touch the depth of a very bad case. If they were hunting and got off the track of the deer, they would look longer among the brakes and bushes for the lost game than they have been looking for that lost soul. People tell us that if a man have delirium tremens twice he cannot be reclaimed; that after a woman has sacrificed her integrity she cannot be restored. The Bible has distinctly intimated that the Lord Almighty is ready to pardon 490 times—that is seventy times seven. There are men before the throne of God who have wallowed in every kind of sin, but saved by the grace of Jesus and washed in His blood they stand there radiant now. There are those who plunged into the very lowest of all the hells in New York who have for the tenth time been lifted up, and finally, by the grace of God, they stand in heaven gloriously rescued by the grace promised to the chief of sinners. I want to tell you that God loves to take hold of a very bad case. When the church casts you off, and when the club-room casts you off, and when society casts you off, and when business associates casts you off, and when father casts you off, and when mother casts you off, and when everybody casts you off, your first cry for help will bend the eternal God clear down into the ditch of your suffering and shame.

The Good Templars cannot save you, although they are a grand institution. The Sons of Temperance cannot save you, although they are mighty for good. Signing the temperance pledge cannot save you, although I believe in it. Nothing but the grace of the eternal God can save you, and that will if you will throw yourself on it. There is a man in this house who said to me: "Unless God helps me I cannot be delivered. I have tried everything, sir, but now I have got in the habit of prayer, and when I come to a drinking saloon I pray that God will take me safe past, and I pray until I am past. He does help me." For every man given to strong drink there are scores of traps set, and when he goes out on business to-morrow he will be in infinite peril, and no one but the everywhere present God can see that man through. Oh, they talk about the catacombs of Naples, and the catacombs of Rome, and the catacombs of Egypt—the burial places under the city where the dust of a great multitude lies—but I tell you New York has its catacombs, and Boston its catacombs, and Philadelphia its catacombs. They are the underground restaurants, full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Young man, you know it. God help you. There is no need of going into the art gallery to see in the skillful sculpture that wonderful representation of a man and his sons wound around with serpents. There are families represented in this house that are wrapped in the martyrdom of fang and scale and venom—a living Laocoon of ghastliness and horror. What are you to do? I am not speaking into the air. I am talking to hundreds of men who must be saved by Christ's gospel or never saved at all. What are you going to do?

Do not put your trust in bromide of potassium, or in Jamaica ginger, or anything that apothecaries can mix. Put your trust only in the eternal God, and He will see you through. Some of you do not have temptations every day. It is a periodic temptation that comes every six weeks, or every three

months, when it seems as if the powers of darkness kindle around about your tongue the fires of the pit. It is well enough at such a time, as some of you do, to seek medical counsel, but your first and most important cry must be to God. If the fiends will drag you to the slaughter, make them do it on your knees. O God, now that the paroxysm of thirst is coming again upon that man, help him! Fling back into the pit of hell the fiend that assaults his soul this moment. Oh, my heart aches to see men go on in this fearful struggle without Christ.

There are in this house those whose hands so tremble from dissipation that they can hardly hold a book, and yet I have to tell you that they will yet preach the gospel, and on communion days carry around consecrated bread, acceptable to everybody, because of their holy life and their consecrated behavior. The Lord is going to save you. Your home has got to be rebuilt. Your physical health has got to be restored. Your worldly business has got to be reconstructed. The church of God is going to rejoice over your discipleship. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

While I have hope for all prodigals, there are some people in this house whom I give up. I mean those who have been churchgoers all their life, who have maintained outward morality, but who, notwithstanding twenty, thirty, forty years of Christian advantages, have never yielded their heart to Christ. They are gospel hardened. I could call their names now, and if they would rise up they would rise up in scores. Gospel hardened! A sermon has no more effect upon them than the shining moon on the city pavement. As Christ says, "The publicans and harlots will go into the kingdom of God before them." They have resisted all the importunity of divine mercy and have gone during these thirty years through most powerful earthquakes of religious feeling, and they are farther away from God than ever. After awhile they will lie down sick, and some day it will be told that they are dead. No hope!

But I turn to outsiders with a hope that thrills through my body and soul. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." You are not gospel hardened. You have not heard or read many sermons during the last few years. As you came in to-day everything was novel, and all the services are suggestive of your early day. How sweet the opening hymn sounded in your ears, and how blessed is this hour! Everything suggestive of heaven. You do not weep, but the shower is not far off. You sigh, and you have noticed that there is always a sigh in the wind before the rain falls. There are those here who would give anything if they could find relief in tears. They say: "Oh, my wasted life! Oh, the bitter past! Oh, the graves over which I have stumbled! Whither shall I fly? Alas for the future! Everything is dark—so dark, so dark! God help me! God pity me!" Thank the Lord for that last utterance. You have begun to pray, and when a man begins to petition that sets his heaven flying this way, and God steps in and beats back the hounds of temptation to their kennels, and around about the poor wounded soul puts the cover of His pardoning mercy. Hark, I hear something—something fall! What was that? It is the bars of the fence around the sheepfold. The shepherd lets them down, and the hunted sheep of the mountain bound in, some of them their fleece torn with the brambles, some of them their feet lame with the dogs, but bounding in. Thank God! "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

DARE TO DIE?

Christian, ask yourself this question. You must die, and may die very soon. Dare you die today? Is your house and your heart set in order, so that you can meet your Judge with a smile, and not with fear? Were you to sit at the gate of glory and wait for charges against your life (before your entrance) would you dare to meet them? Would your children come up and say, he has done his duty to us; his prayers, and councils, and life have ever pointed to the path of purity? Would the church testify that you have been faithful to every obligation, and kept your covenant vows with scrupulous exactness? Would your minister affirm that you had stayed his hands, and ever stood ready to co-operate with him in efforts to save souls? Would the impatient say, you have ceased not to warn us and beseech us to come to Christ? The Sabbath school, and the heathen, and the destitute of our land, would they declare that you have done your duty? God has his eye on all these things, and will judge you according to the truth in all these cases. My brother, have you done your whole duty, so that you can give in your account without fear of accusation, in regard to your various responsibilities? Are you worldly, penurious, cold, formal, seldom in the prayer-meeting, morose in your family, careless about the salvation of souls? Oh how the eye of God will search you, and how you will quail before him! Dare you go into his presence in such a state? Are you in such a state? Then, how dare you die? But you will die. You cannot avoid it. Suddenly, it is likely you may be called. How dare you live so careless, and hoard up your money without regard to a dying world? You are a steward, and are squandering your Lord's substance. Suppose you should employ a man at \$30 a month, to manage your business in your absence. On your return, you find he has neglected your business, rode around in your carriage, spent his time in pleasure and folly, or in hoarding the income of your farm for his own good. You call him to an account and demand why he has behaved thus, and he replies, just to show how you treat your God, what could you say? With such treatment, dare you meet your God? If you live thus, dare you die? Let us search and try our ways and prepare to meet our God.—Morning Star.