

BRILLIANT BITTERNESS.

DR. TALMAGE'S SUNDAY MORNING SERMON AT THE TABERNACLE.

The Eloquent Preacher is an Optimist, and Looks Forward to the Time When Christ Will Set His Throne Between the Alleghenies and Sierra Nevadas.

BROOKLYN, April 22.—The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., preached this morning at the Tabernacle on the subject: "The Star Wormwood, or Brilliant Bitterness." The musical exercises were assisted by the organ and cornet. Thousands of voices in the main auditorium and in the adjoining parlor and lecture room and in the corridors were singing: "We'll crowd the gates with thankful songs, High as the heavens our voices raise; While earth with her ten thousand tongues Shall fill Thy courts with sounding praise."

Professor Browne rendered sonata No. 1 in D minor, by Gullmunt. After Dr. Talmage had expounded the sarcasm of Elijah at the offering of the Baalites, he spoke as follows: Revelations viii, 10-11: "There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood."

Patrick and Lowth, Thomas Scott, Matthew Henry, Albert Barnes and all the other commentators agree in saying that the Star Wormwood of my text was Attila, king of the Huns. He was so called because he was brilliant as a star, and, like wormwood, he embittered everything he touched. We have studied the Star of Bethlehem, and the Star of Peace, but my subject this hour calls us to gaze at the Star Wormwood, and my theme might be called Brilliant Bitterness.

A more extraordinary character history does not furnish than this man referred to in my text, Attila, the king of the Huns.

One day a wounded heifer came limping along through the fields, and a herdsman followed its bloody track on the grass to see where the heifer was wounded, and went on back, further and further, until he came to a sword fast in the earth, the point downward as though it had dropped from the heavens, and against the edges of this sword the heifer had been cut. The herdsman pulled up that sword and presented it to Attila.

Attila said that sword must have dropped from the heavens from the grasp of the god Mars, and its being given to him meant that Attila should conquer and govern the whole earth. Other mighty men have been delighted at being called liberators or the merciful or the good, but Attila called himself and demanded that others call him the scourge of God. At the head of 700,000 troops, mounted on Cappadocian horses, he swept everything from the Adriatic to the Black sea. He put his iron heel on Macedonia and Greece and Thracia. He made Milan and Pavia and Eads and Verona beg for mercy, which he bestowed not. The Byzantine emperors, to meet his ruinous levy, put up at auction massive silver tables and vases of solid gold. A city captured by him, the inhabitants were brought out and put into three classes. The first class, those who could bear arms, who must immediately enlist under Attila or be butchered; the second class, the beautiful women, who were made captives to the Huns; the third class, the aged men and women, who were robbed of everything and let go back to the city to pay heavy tax.

It was a common saying that the grass never grew again where the hoof of Attila's horse had trod. His armies reddened the waters of the Seine and the Moselle and the Rhine with carnage, and fought on the Catalonian plains the fiercest battle since the world stood, 300,000 dead left on the field. On and on until all those who could not oppose him with arms lay prostrate on their faces in prayer; and, a cloud of dust seen in the distance, a bishop cried: "It is the aid of God," and all the people took up the cry "It is the aid of God." As the cloud of dust was blown aside the banners of re-enforcing armies marched in to help against Attila, the scourge of God. The most unimportant occurrences he used as a supernatural resource, and after three months of failure to capture the city of Aquileia and his army had given up the siege, the flight of a stork and her young from the tower of the city was taken by him as a sign that he was to capture the city, and his army inspired with the same occurrence resumed the siege and took the walls at a point from which the conqueror in attire that his enemies could not look at him, but shaded their eyes or turned their heads.

Blain on the evening of his marriage by his bride Lideo, who was hired for the assassination, his followers bevalled him not with knives and lances. He was put into three coffins, the first of iron, the second of silver, and the third of gold. He was buried at night, and into his grave were poured the most valuable coin and precious stones, amounting to the wealth of a kingdom. The grave diggers, and all those who assisted at the burial were massacred so that it would never be known where so much wealth was entombed. The Roman empire conquered the world, but Attila conquered the Roman empire. He was right in calling himself a scourge, but instead of being the scourge of God he was the scourge of hell. Because of his brilliancy and bitterness the commentators were right in believing him to be the star Wormwood of the text. As the regions he devastated were parts most opulent with fountains and streams and rivers, you see how graphic my text is: "There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood."

Have you ever thought how many embittered lives there are about us, misanthropic, morbid, acrid, saturnine? The European plant from which wormwood is extracted, artemisia absinthium, is a perennial plant and all the year round it is ready to exude its oil. And in many human lives there is a perennial distillation of acrid experiences. Yes, there are some whose whole work is to shed a baleful influence on others. There are Attilas of the home, or Attilas of the social circle, or Attilas of the church, or Attilas of the state, and one-third of the waters of all the world, if not two-thirds the waters, are poisoned by the falling of the star Wormwood. It is not complimentary to human nature that most men, as soon as they get great power, become overbearing. The more power men have the better, if their power be used for good. The less power men have the better, if they use it for evil.

Birds circle round and round and round before they swoop upon that which they are aiming for. And if my discourse so far has been swinging round and round, this moment it drops straight on your heart and asks the question: Is your life to others a benediction or an embitterment, a blessing or a curse, a balsam or a wormwood?

Some of you, I know, are morning stars, and you are making the dawning life of your children bright with gracious influences, and you are beaming upon all the opening eyes, prisms of philanthropic and Christian endeavor, and you are heralds of that day of gospelization which will yet flood the moun-

tains and valleys of our sin scorched earth. Hail, morning star! Keep on shining with encouragement and Christian hope.

Some of you are evening stars, and you are cheering the last days of old people, and though a cloud sometimes comes over you through the querulousness or unreasonableness of your old father and mother, it is only for a moment, and the star soon comes out clear again and is seen from all the balconies of the neighborhood. The old people will forgive your occasional shortcomings, for they themselves several times lost their patience with you when you were young and slapped you when you did not deserve it. Hail, evening star! Hang on the darkening sky your diamond coronet.

But are any of you the star Wormwood? Do you scold and growl from the thrones paternal or maternal? Are your children overlastingly pecked at? Are you always crying, "Hush!" to the merry voices and swift feet and their laughter, which occasionally trickles through at wrong times and is suppressed by them until they can hold it no longer and all the barriers burst into unlimited guffaw and cachinnation, as in high weather the water has trickled through a slight opening in the mill dam, but afterward makes wider and wider breach until it carries all before it with irresistible freshet. Do not be too much offended at the noise your children now make. It will be still enough when one of them is dead. "Then you would give your right hand to hear one shout from their silent voices or one step from the still foot. You will not any of you have to wait very long before your house is still as the grave. Alas! that there are so many homes not known to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, where children are put on the limits and whacked and cuffed and ear-pulled and senselessly called to order and answered sharp and suppressed until it is a wonder that under such processes they do not all turn out Modocs and Nana Sahibs.

What is your influence upon the neighborhood, the town or the city of your residence?

I will suppose that you are a star of wit. What kind of rays do you shoot forth? Do you use that splendid faculty to irradiate the world or to rattle it? I bless all the apostolic college of humorists. The man that makes me laugh is my benefactor. I do not thank anybody to make me cry. I can do that without any assistance. We all cry enough. We have enough to cry about. God bless all skillful punsters, all repartecists, all propounders of ingenious conundrums, all those who mirthfully surprise us with unusual juxtaposition of words. Thomas Hood and Charles Lamb and Sidney Smith had a divine mission, and so have their successors in these times. They stir into the acid beverage of life the saccharine. They make the cup of earthly existence, which is sometimes stale, effervesce and bubble. They placate animosities. They foster longevity. They slay follies and absurdities which all the sermons of all the pulpits cannot reach. They have for examples Elijah, who made fun of the Baalites when they called down fire and it did not come, suggesting that their heathen god had gone hunting, or was off on a journey, or was asleep and nothing but vociferation could wake him, saying: "Cry aloud for he is a god; either he is talking or pursuing or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." They have an example in Christ, who with healthful sarcasm showed up the lying, hypocritical Pharisees, by suggesting that such perfect people like themselves needed no improvements, saying: "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

But what use are you making of your wit? Is it smothered with profanity and insolence? Do you employ it in amusement at physical defects for which the victims are not responsible? Are your powers of mimicry used to put religion in contempt? Is it a bunch of nettlesome invective? Is it a bolt of unjust scorn? Is it fun at others' misfortune? Is it glee at their disappointment and defeat? Is it bitterness put drop by drop into a cup? Is it like the squeezing of artemisia absinthium into a draught already distastefully pungent? Then you are the star Wormwood. Yours is the fun of a rattle-snake trying how well it can sting. It is the fun of a hawk trying how quick it can strike out the eye of a dove.

But I will change this, and I will suppose you are a star of worldly prosperity. Then you have large opportunity. You can encourage that artist by buying his picture. You can improve the fields, the stables, the highway, by introducing higher style of fowl and horse and cow and sheep. You can bless the world with pomological achievement in the orchards. You can advance arboriculture and arrest this deathful iconoclasm of the American forests. You can put a piece of sculpture into the niche of that public academy. You can endow a college. You can stock a thousand bare feet from the winter frost. You can build a church. You can put a missionary of Christ on that foreign shore. You can help ransom a world. A rich man with his heart right. Can you tell me how much good a James Lenox or a George Peabody or a Peter Cooper or a William E. Dodge did while living, or is doing now that he is dead? There is not a city, town or neighborhood that has not glorious specimens of consecrated wealth.

But suppose you grind the face of the poor. Suppose when a man's wages are due you make him wait for them because he cannot help himself. Suppose that because his family is sick and he has had extra expenses he should politely ask you to raise his wages for this year, and you roughly tell him if he wants a better place to go and get it. Suppose in that manner you act as though he were nothing and you were everything. Suppose you are selfish and overbearing and arrogant. Your first name ought to be Attila, and your last name Attila, because you are the star Wormwood and you have embittered one-third, if not three-thirds, of the waters that roll past your employes and operatives and dependents and associates, and the long line of carriages which the undertaker orders for your funeral in order to make the occasion respectable, will be filled with twice as many dry, tearless eyes as there are persons occupying them. The clumsy pal bearers may make the gates of your sepulcher quake by striking your silver hand-bells off against them, but the world will feel no jar as you go out of it.

There is an erroneous idea abroad that there are only a few geniuses. There are millions of them; that is, men and women who have special adaptation and quickness for some one thing. It may be great, it may be small. The circle may be like the circumference of the earth or no larger than a thimble. There are thousands of geniuses here this morning, and in some one thing you are a star. What kind of a star are you? You will be in this world but a few minutes. As compared with eternity the stay of the longest life on earth is not more than a minute. What are we doing with that minute? Are we embittering the domestic, or social, or political fountains, or are we like Moses, who, when the Israelites in the wilderness complained that the waters of Lake Marah were bitter and they could not drink them, their leader cut off the branch of a certain tree and threw that branch into the water, and it became sweet and slaked the thirst of the suffering host? Are we with a branch of the tree of life sweetening all the brackish fountains that we can touch? Dear Lord, send us all out

on thy mission. All around us embittered lives, embittered by persecution, embittered by hypercriticism, embittered by poverty, embittered by pain, embittered by injustice, embittered by sin. Why not go forth and sweeten them? Why not smile, by inspiring words, by benefactions, by hearty counsel, by prayer, by gospelized behavior. Let us remember that if we are wormwood to others we are wormwood to ourselves, and our life will be bitter and our eternity bitter. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only sweetening power that is sufficient. It sweetens the disposition. It sweetens the manners. It sweetens life. It sweetens mysterious Providences. It sweetens afflictions. It sweetens death. It sweetens everything. I have heard people asked in social company: "If you could have three wishes gratified what would your three wishes be?" If I could have three wishes I wish this morning I tell you what they would be. First—More of the grace of God. Second—More of the grace of God. Third—More of the grace of God. In the door yard of my brother John, missionary in Amoy, China, there is a tree called the emperor tree, the two characteristics of which are that it always grows higher than its surroundings, and its leaves take the form of a crown. If this emperor tree be planted by a rose bush it grows a little higher than the bush, and spreads out above it a crown. If it be planted by the side of another tree it grows a little higher than that tree and spreads above it a crown. Would God that this religion of Christ, a more wonderful emperor tree, might overshadow all your lives; are you lowly in ambition and circumstance, putting over you its crown, are you high in talent and position, putting over you its crown. Oh, for more of the saccharine in our lives and less of the wormwood!

What is true of individuals is true of nations. God sets them up to revolve as stars, but they may fall wormwood.

Tyre—the atmosphere of the desert fragrant with spices coming in caravans to her fairs; all seas cleft into foam by the keels of her laden merchantmen; her markets rich with horses and camels from Togarmah, her bazaars filled with upholstery from Delian, with emeralds and coral and agate from Syria, with wines from Helbon, with embroidered work from Ashur and Chilmad. Where now the gleam of her towers, where the roar of her chariots, where the masts of her ships? Let the fishermen dry their nets where once she stood, let the sea that rushes upon the barrenness where once she challenged the admiration of all nations, let the barbarians who set their rude tents where once her palaces glittered, answer the question. She was a star, but by her own sin turned to wormwood and has fallen.

Hundred-gated Thebes—for all time to be the study of antiquarian and hieroglyphist; her stupendous ruins spread over twenty-seven miles, her sculptures presenting in figures of warrior and chariot the victories with which the now forgotten kings of Egypt shook the nations; her obelisks and columns; Carnac and Luxor, the stupendous temples of her pride. Who can imagine the greatness of Thebes in those days, when the hippodrome rang with her sports and foreign royalty bowed at her shrines and her avenues roared with the wheels of processions in the wake of returning conquerors? What dashed down the vision of chariots and temples and thrones? What hands pulled upon the columns of her glory? What ruthlessness defaced the sculptured wall and broke obelisks and left her indescribable temples great skeletons of granite? What spirit of destruction spread the hair of wild beasts in her royal sepulchers, and taught the miserable cottagers of today to build huts in the corners of her temples, and sent desolation and ruin skulking behind the obelisks and dodging among the sarcophagi and leaning against the columns and stooping under the arches and weeping in the waters which go mournfully by, as though they were carrying the tears of all ages? Let the mummies break their long silence and come up to shiver in the desolation, and point to fallen gates and shattered statues and defaced sculpture, responding: "Thebes built not one temple to God. Thebes hated righteousness and loved sin. Thebes was a star, but she turned to wormwood and has fallen."

Babylon—with her 350 towers and her brazen gates and her embattled walls, the splendor of the earth gathered within her palaces, her hanging gardens built by Nebuchadnezzar to please his bride Amyttas, who had been brought up in a mountainous country and could not endure the flat country round Babylon, those hanging gardens built, terrace above terrace, till at the height of 400 feet there were woods waving and fountains playing, the verdure, the foliage, the glory looking as if a mountain were on the wing. On the tip top a king walking with his queen, among statues snowy white, looking up at birds brought from distant lands and drinking out of tankards of solid gold, or looking off over rivers and lakes upon nations subdued and tributary, crying: "I am not this great Babylon which I have built!" What battering ram smote the walls? What plowshare upturned the gardens? What army shattered the brazen gates? What long, fierce blast of storm put out this light which illuminated the world? What crash of discord drove down the music that poured from palace window and garden grove, and called the banqueters to their revel and the dancers to their feet? I walk upon the scene of desolation to find an answer and pick up pieces of bitumen and brick and broken pottery, the remains of Babylon, as in the silence of the night I hear the surging of that billow of desolation which rolls over the scene. I hear the wild waves saying, "Babylon was proud. Babylon was impure. Babylon was a star, but by sin she turned to wormwood and has fallen."

From the persecutions of the Pilgrim Fathers and the Huguenots in other lands God set upon these shores a nation. The council fires of the aborigines went out in the greater light of a free government. The sound of the war whoop was exchanged for the thousand wheels of enterprise and progress. The mild winters, the fruitful summers, the healthful skies charmed from other lands a race hardly men who loved God and wanted to be free. Before the woodman's ax forests fell and rose again into ships' masts and churches' pillars. Cities on the banks of lakes begin to rival cities by the sea. The land quakes with the rush of the rail car and the waters are churned white with the steamer's wheel. Fabulous bulks of western wheat meet on the way fabulous tons of eastern coal. Furs from the north pass on the rivers from the south. And trading in the same market is Maine lumberman and South Carolina rice merchant and Ohio farmer and Alaska fur dealer. And churches and schools and asylums scatter light and love and mercy and salvation upon 60,000,000 of people.

I pray that our nation may not copy the crimes of the nations that have perished, and our cup of blessing turn to wormwood and like them we go down. I am by nature and by grace an optimist, and I expect that this country will continue to advance until the world shall put on millennial era, and that when Christ comes again he will set his throne somewhere between the Alleghenies and the Sierra Nevadas. But be not deceived. Our only safety is in righteousness toward God

and justice toward man. If we forget the goodness of the Lord to this land, and break His Sabbaths, and improve not by the dire disasters that have again and again come to us as a people, and we learn a saving lesson neither from civil war nor raging epidemics, nor drought nor mildew nor scourge of locust and grasshopper, if the political corruption which has poisoned the fountains of public virtue and beslimed the high places of authority, making free government at times a hissing and a byword in all the earth; if the drunkenness and licentiousness that stagger and blaspheme in the streets of our great cities, as though they were reaching after the fame of a Corinth and a Sodom, are not repented of we will yet see the smoke of our nation's ruin; the pillars of our national and state capitals will fall more disastrously than when Sangson pulled down Dagon; and future historians will record upon the page bedewed with generous tears the story that the free nation of the west arose in splendor which made the world stare. It had magnificent possibilities. It forgot God. It hated justice. It hugged its crime. It halted on its high march. It reeled under the blow of calamity. It fell. And as it was going down all the despots of earth from the top of bloody thrones began to shout: "Aha, so would we have it," while struggling and oppressed peoples looked out from dungeon bars with tears and groans and cries of untold agony, the scorn of those and the woe of these uniting in the exclamation: "Look yonder! There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood!"

MEN OF NEWSPAPER NOTE.

What the Press Says in the Way of Gossip—Interesting Paragraphs.

Henry Bergh wrote four plays in his youth. The Prince of Wales' favorite author is Macaulay.

Gladstone is said to have got £250 for a magazine article.

The sultan went into mourning for Emperor William, although it is contrary to Turkish custom.

Bronson Howard recently made the witty remark that he would rather be playwright than president.

Gen. Von Moltke says that Gen. Boulanger "knows something." From such a pessimist as Von Moltke this is high praise.

A peer of England, who is somewhat hard up financially, has accepted an engagement as traveling man to well known firm of piano makers.

Oscar Wilde has had his dining room and all the furniture in it painted white, for the reason that "dead white is the only back ground against which a man looks picturesque in evening dress."

In an interview between Henry M. Stanley and a newspaper correspondent the distinguished explorer said: "I have been in Africa seventeen years, and I have never met a man who would kill me if I folded my hands."

Mr. Labouchere says the prince imperial of Russia is so weak, both mentally and physically, that in less excited circles he would be regarded as being within measurable distance of congenital idiocy.

Emperor William was chivalrous toward woman of all degrees. He kissed the hands of ladies who were of his circle when he met them in private, and like Louis XIV, he would stand aside to let a house maid go past him.

The great Hungarian patriot, Louis Kossuth, believes that his life is nearly ended. He has been residing for the last 25 years at Turin, Italy, engaged in completing his biography. He is nearing the 80th year of his age.

Although Robert Bonner has owned the fastest horses in the country, and is ever on the alert for new acquisitions, it is said that he rarely goes to witness a horse race and never bets on one. He never drives a horse on Sunday, and never permits one of his horses to be driven on that day.

M. Bapst, a Paris Jeweler, in a recent lecture alleged that the secretly guarded battery of Charlemagne is nothing more than a musician's baton, and that underneath the red velvet surrounding the handle are engraved the words: "This baton is my property, — singer in Notre Dame, 1280."

Count Zang, who died in Vienna recently, made a fortune of \$8,000,000 by the sale of Vienna bread. In 1842 he opened the first shop in Paris for the production of Vienna bread, and the bakery still exists on the Rue Richelieu under the name of the Maison Zang. Zang was sometimes spoken of as "the well-bread count."

It is a somewhat singular fact that Admiral Porter, the head of the navy, should receive a higher salary than the commander of the armies. He is paid \$13,000 a year, while Lieut. Gen. Sheridan receives only \$11,000, although the latter is allowed a commutation of \$100 a month for quarters and forage for four horses. Gen. Sherman, as general of the army, and Gen. Grant also received \$13,000.

Emperor Frederick rises daily at 7:30 o'clock, when he takes a cup of peptonized chocolate. At 9:30 o'clock he has breakfast, which consists chiefly of fish, poultry or veal. At 1 o'clock he dines on soup, fish, a joint and a sweet. At 4 o'clock he takes coffee and at 5 o'clock he has a supper of meat or poultry. The emperor drinks much milk, which is sometimes qualified with a little whisky. He is said to be very beneficial to water, which is also to be very beneficial to him, but he drinks little wine.

Now Explorer De Brazza turns up in Paris and confuses the rumor mongers by declaring that he is not dead, that he has not been fighting the Ogowe natives, and that he has not spent in seven months all the money voted him for twelve, all of which interesting items have been spread abroad within the past year. The governor of the French Congo says, moreover, that the trade with the Ogowe tribes last year reached the respectable total of \$340,000, more than double the amount of 1886; that he is at peace with everybody, has two steamboats running, and is getting a part of the Congo ivory trade away from the Congo State.

Count Herisson, in his recently published elaborate defense of Marshal Bazaine, entitled "La Legende de Metz," points out that a cruel fate has overtaken all the principal actors in the trial of that general. D'Andlau, the chief witness against him, has just been sentenced to five years' imprisonment as a trader in decorations; the Duc d'Aumale, who presided over the court martial, is exiled; Col. Rossel was shot as a Communist; Gambetta died a tragic death; Boyenval committed suicide, and Valcour, Gambetta's secretary, was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for frauds committed in Belgium. All the generals composing the court which tried Bazaine either are dead or have been retired.

Highest Balloon Ascent. The highest recorded balloon ascent was by Glaisher and Coxwell from Wolverhampton, England, Sept. 5, 1862. They rose to the height of seven miles. According to Glaisher, in 3,500 balloon ascensions only fifteen deaths have occurred.—Chicago Herald.

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J. H. LONG, Analytical Chemist, Chicago Medical College.

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