

SERMON BY DR. TALMAGE

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE TALKS OF THE SWORD AND ITS MISSION.

His Text Isaiah xxiv, 5: "My sword shall be bathed in heaven..."

BROOKLYN, N. Y., June 1.—Chaplain T. DeWitt Talmage this evening preached the annual sermon before the Thirteenth regiment, in the Academy of Music.

The subject of the sermon was "The Sword—Its Mission and Its Doom." The text, Isaiah xxiv, 5: "My sword shall be bathed in heaven."

Three hundred and fifty-one times does the Bible speak of that sharp, keen, curved, inexorable weapon, which flashes upon us from the text—the sword. Sometimes the mention is complimentary and sometimes denigratory, sometimes as drawn, sometimes as sheathed. In the Bible, and in much secular literature, the sword represents all javelins, all muskets, all carbines, all guns, all police clubs, all battle axes, all weapons for physical defense or attack.

A SWORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. The sword of the text was bathed in heaven; that is, it was a sword of righteousness, as another sword may be bathed in hell, and the sword of cruelty and wrong.

So now the sword has its uses, although it is a sheathed sword. There is not an armory in Brooklyn, or New York, or Philadelphia, or Chicago, or Charleston, or New Orleans, or any American city, that could be spared.

What more consecrated thing in the world than Joshua's sword, or Caleb's sword, or Gideon's sword, or David's sword, or Washington's sword, or Marion's sword, or Lafayette's sword, or Wellington's sword, or Kosciuszko's sword, or Garibaldi's sword, or hundreds of thousands of American swords that have again and again been bathed in heaven.

In December last I looked off and saw in the distance the battlement of Marathon, and I asked myself what was it that, on that most tremendous day in history, stopped the Persian hosts, representing not only Persia, but Egypt, and Tripoli, and Afghanistan, and Babelochistan, and Armenia; a host that had Asia under foot and proposed to put Europe under foot, and, if successful in that battle, would have submerged by Asiatic barbarism European and American civilization?

THE SWORD'S WORK FOR GOOD. What put an end to infamous Louis XVI's plan of universal conquest, by which England would have been made to kneel on the steps of the Tuileries and all Europe paralyzed? The sword of Marlborough, of Blenheim, of Minden, when the Roman war eagles, whose beaks had been punched into the hearts of nations, must be brought down from their perches.

While passing through France last January my nerves tingled with excitement and I rose in the car, the better to see the battlefield of Chalons, the mounds and breastworks still visible, though nearly five hundred years ago they were shovelled up.

there, Attila, the heathen monster, called by himself the "Scourge of God, for the punishment of Christians," his life a massacre of nations, came to ignominious defeat, and he put into one great pile the wooden saddles of his cavalry, and the spoils of the cities and kingdoms he had sacked, and placed on top of this holocaust the women who had accompanied him in his devastating march, ordering that the torch be put to the pile.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES. To come down to later ages, all intelligent Englishmen unite with all intelligent Americans in saying that it was the best thing that the American colonies swung off from the government of Great Britain.

It would have been the worst absurdity of 4,000 years if this continent should have continued in loyalty to a throne on the other side of the world, and had named a governor general for the United States as there is a governor general for Canada. We have had splendid queens in our American capital, but we could hardly be brought to support a queen on the other side of the Atlantic, lovely and good as Victoria is.

IT IS A SHEATHED SWORD. So now the sword has its uses, although it is a sheathed sword. There is not an armory in Brooklyn, or New York, or Philadelphia, or Chicago, or Charleston, or New Orleans, or any American city, that could be spared.

You remember how, when the soldiers were all away to the war in 1864, what conflagrations were kindled in the streets of New York, and what negroes were hung. Some of you remember the great riots in Philadelphia at fires, sometimes kindled just for the opportunity of uproar and despoliation.

But the Seventh regiment, under Gen. Duryea, marched through Broadway, preceded by mounted troops, and at the command: "Fire! Guards! Fire!" the mob scattered, and New York was saved.

ARBITRAMENT WILL TAKE ITS PLACE. Arbitrament will take the place of war between nation and nation, and national armies will be disbanded as a consequence, and the time will come—God hasten it!—when there will be no need of an American army or navy, or a Russian army or navy.

their own life by looking down into the gun barrel to see if it is loaded, or getting the ramrod fast in their boot leg, are prompt as the sunrise, keen as the north wind, potent as a thunderbolt, and accurate, and regular, and disciplined in their movements as the planetary system.

Well, does, then, I say to the legislatures, and governors, and mayors, and all official places upon larger armories and better places for drill and more generous equipment for the militia. The sooner the sword can safely go back to the scabbard to stay there, the better; but until the hilt clings against the case in that final lodgment, let the sword be kept free from rust; sharp all along the edge, and its point like a needle, and the handle polished, not only by the chamois of the regimental servant, but by the hand of brave and patriotic officers, always ready to do their full duty.

Before I speak of the doom of the sword let me also say that it has developed the grandest nature that the world ever saw. It has developed courage—that sublime energy of the soul which defies the universe when it feels itself to be in the right. It has developed a self sacrifice which relegates the idea that our life is worth more than anything else, when for a principle it throws that life away, as much as to say: It is not necessary that I live, but it is necessary that righteousness triumph.

It was the sword which on the northern side developed a Grant, a McClellan, a Hooker, a Hancock, a Sherman, a Sheridan, and Admirals Farragut and Porter, and on the southern side a Lee, a Jackson, a Hill, a Gordon and the Johnstons, Albert Sydney and Joseph E., and Admiral Semmes, and many Federals and Confederates whose graves in national cemeteries are marked "Unknown," yet who were just as self-sacrificing and brave as any of their major generals, and whose resting places all up and down the banks of the Andros coggin, the Hudson, the Potomac, the Mississippi and the Alabama, have recently been snowed under with white flowers typical of resurrection, and strewn with red flowers commemorative of the carnage through which they passed, and the blue flowers illustrative of the skies through which they ascended.

THE SWORD IS DOOMED. But the sword is doomed. There is one word that needs to be written in every throne room, in every war office, in every navy yard, in every national council.

But until disarmament and consequent arbitration shall be agreed to by all the great governments, any single government that dismantles its fortresses, and spikes its guns, and breaks its sword, would simply invite its own destruction. Suppose, before such general agreement, England should throw away her sword; think you France has forgotten Waterloo? Suppose before such general agreement, Germany should throw away her sword; how long would Alsace and Lorraine stay as they are? Suppose the czar of Russia before any such general agreement should throw away his sword; all the eagles and vultures and lions of European power would gather for a piece of the Russian bear.

Side by side the two movements must go. Complete armament until all agree to disarmament. At the same command of "Halt!" all nations halting. At the same command of "Ground arms!" all muskets thumping. At the same command of "Break ranks!" all armies disbanding. That may be nearer than you think. The standing army is the nightmare of nations.

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THE GOOD TIME COMING. So we are glad that the Isaiah prophecy, that the time is coming when nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Indeed, both swords shall go back into the scabbard—the sword bathed in heaven and the sword bathed in hell. In a war in Spain a soldier went on a skirmishing expedition, and, secluded in a bush, he had the opportunity of shooting a soldier of the other

army who had strolled away from his tent. He took aim and dropped him. Running up to the fallen man he took his knapsack, for spoil, and a letter dropped out of it, and it turned out to be a letter signed by his own father; in other words, he had shot his brother. If the brotherhood of man be a true doctrine, then he who shoots another man always shoots his own brother.

After war has wrought such cruelties, how glad will we be to have the Old Monster himself die. Let his dying couch be spread in some dismantled fortress through which the stormy winds howl. Give him for a pillow a battered shield, and let his bed be hard with the rusted bayonets of the slain. Cover him with the coarsest blanket that picket ever wore, and let his only cup be the bleached bone of one of his war chargers, and the last taper by his bedside expire as the midnight blast sighs into his ear: "The candle of the wicked shall be put out."

To-night against the sky of the glorious future I see a great blaze. It is a foundry in full blast. The workmen have stirred the fires until the furnaces are seven times heated. The last wagon load of the world's swords has been hauled into the foundry, and they are tumbled into the furnace, and they begin to glow and redden and melt, and in hissing and sparkling liquid they roll on down through the crevice of rock until they fall into a mold shaped like the iron foot of a plow. Then the liquid cools off into a hard metal, and, brought out on an anvil, it is beaten and pounded and fashioned, stroke after stroke, until that which was a weapon to reap harvests of men becomes an implement turning the soil for harvests of corn, the sword having become the plowshare.

Officers and comrades of the Thirteenth regiment of state militia: After another year of pleasant acquaintance I hail you with a salutation all made up of good wishes and prayers. Honored with residence in the best city of the best land under the sun, let us dedicate ourselves anew to God and country and home! In the English conflict called "The War of the Roses," a white rose was the badge of the house of York, and the red rose the badge of the house of Lancaster, and with these two colors they opposed each other in battle. To enlist you in the Holy War for all that is good against all that is wrong, I pin over your heart two badges, the one suggestive of the blood shed for our redemption, and the other symbolic of a soul made white and clean—the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. Be these henceforth our regimental symbols—Rose and Lily, Lily and Rose!

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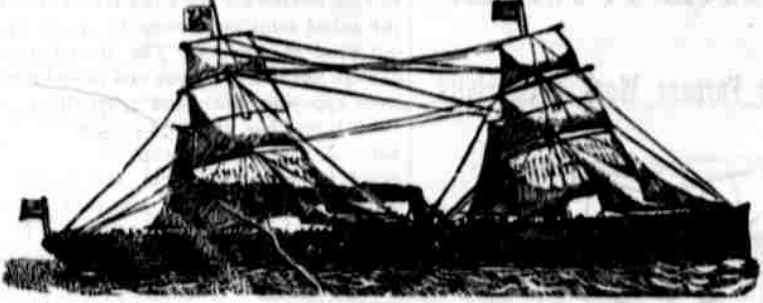


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