

BRILLIANT BITTERNES.

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 Alleghanies 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 corridor, joined in singing:

Well crowd thy gates with thankful songs, High as the heavens and 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 Gullinunt. After Dr. Talmage had expounded the sarcasm of Elijah at the offering of the Baalites he spoke as follows:

Revelation viii, 10-11: "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."

Patrick and Louth, 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 morning star of the revelation, 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 herdsmen 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 herdsmen 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 Thrace. He made Milan and Pavia and Paris and Verona beg for mercy, which he bestowed not. The Byzantine castles to meet his ravenous 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, 800,000 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 occurrence 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 sight 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 stork had emerged. So brilliant was the conqueror in attire that his enemies could not look at him, but shaded their eyes or turned their heads.

Slain on the evening of his marriage by his bride Ildico, who was hired for the assassination, his followers bewailed him not with tears but with blood, cutting themselves 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 by 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 the 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 all 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. Yea, there are some whose whole work is to shed a bale-

ful 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 down 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 enterprises of philanthropic and Christian endeavor, and you are heralds of that day of gospelization which will yet flood all the mountains and valleys of our sin-cursed 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 everlastingly 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 exclamation, 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 stiller than you want it. 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 rankle 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 and have enough to cry about. God bless all skillful pansters, all reparteeists, 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 besmirched with profanity and uncleanness? Do you employ it in amusement at physical defects for which the victims are not responsible? Are your powers of mimicry used to put ridicule in contempt? Is it a bunch of nettlesome invectives? Is it a bolt of unjust scorn? Is it fun at other's 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 rattlesnake 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 abriculture 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 Lennox 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 he must get it. Suppose by your 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-fourths, 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 pall bearers may make the gates of your sepulcher quake by striking your worldly will coffin against them, but the hand 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 especial 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 thumb. 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 space 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 fountain, 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 by smiles, 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 met 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 young lives; are you lowly in ambition or 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 bazars filled with upholstery from Dodan, 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 who dry their nets where once she stood, 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; Carnae 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 ruthless defaced her sculptured wall and broke obelisks and left her indescribable temples great skeletons of granite? What spirit of destruction spread the lair of wild beasts in her royal sepulchers, and taught the miserable cottagers of today to build huts in the courts 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 250 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 Amyctis, who had been brought up in a mountainous country and could not endure the flat country round Babylon; these 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: "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" What battering ram smote the walls? What plowshare upturned the gardens? What long fierce blast of storm put out this light which illumined 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, and, 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 precarious 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 of hardy 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 bank of lakes began to rival cities by the sea. The land quakes with the rush of the rail car and the steamers are charred white with the steamer's wheels. Fabulous bushels of western wheat meet on the way fabulous tons of eastern coal. Furs from the north pass on the rivers fruits 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 sixty millions 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 Alleghanies 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 saving lesson neither from civil war nor raging epidemic, nor drought, nor mildew, nor scourge of locust and grasshopper, if the political corruption which has poisoned the fountains of public virtue, and belittling the high places of authority, making free government at times a hissing and a byword in all the land, 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 Sampson 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 balked on its high march. It reeled under the blow of calamity. It fell. And as it was going down all the despotisms of earth, from the top of bloody thrones, began to shout: "Alas, so would we have it," while struggling and oppressed people looked out from dungeon bars with tears and groans and cries of untold agony, the scorn of those and the woe of those 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!"

Do Our Authors Weep?

T. B. Aldrich does not weep or aspire to invoke tears in others. Mrs. Burnett says she is always moved by what moves others. Mark Twain thinks he weeps, and he probably does—in his way. Edward Everett Hale is inclined to make light of the inquiry and would like to hear from others on the subject. Miss Amelia Rives, the latest American genius, has wept copiously while writing. Miss Rives is nothing if not intense. Mr. Frank R. Stockton doesn't engage in a kind of composition that invokes tears.—Boston Herald.

Fanaticism at Fochow.

The Lancet states that a medical missionary nearly lost his life through an outbreak of fanaticism at Fochow, China. It seems that the doctor, who was attending a patient with hemorrhage, immediately proceeded to check the latter in disregard of a native superstition, according to which delay should have been made until the patient's friends had finished consulting the gods in the joss house. The patient died, and the Chinese would have boiled the doctor in oil but for the courage of some of the converts.—New York Post.

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INSURANCE. Consult your best interest by insuring in the Phoenix, Hartford or Aetna companies, about which there is no question as to the high standing and fair dealing. TORNAO POLICIES.—The present year bids fair to be a disastrous one from tornadoes and wind storms. This is fore-shadowed by the number of storms we have already had—the most destructive one so far this year having occurred at Mt. Vernon, Ill., where a large number of buildings were destroyed or damaged. The exemption from tornadoes last year renders their occurrence more probable in 1888. Call at our office and get a Tornado Policy. Unimproved lands for sale or exchange.

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Probate Notice. In the matter of the last will and testament of Robert L. Douglas, deceased. Notice is hereby given that on the 5th day of May, A. D. 1888, at the county judge's office in Plattsmouth, Cass county, Nebraska, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon, the following matter will be heard and considered: The application of Mrs. W. Wise to admit to probate an alleged and certified copy of the last will and testament of Robert L. Douglas, late of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Dated April 12, 1888. By order of the court. C. BURSSELL, County Judge. —All job work of every kind done at the HERALD office on short notice.