

REV. DR. TALMAGE

The Eminent New York Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "The Gates of Hell."

TEXT: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Matthew xvi., 18.

Entranced, until we could endure no more of the splendor, we have often gazed at the shining gates, the gates of pearl, the gates of heaven. But we are for awhile to look in the opposite direction and see, swinging open and shut, the gates of hell.

I remember, when the Franco-Prussian war was going on, that I stood one day in Paris looking at the gates of the Tuileries, and I was so absorbed in the sculpturing at the top of the gates—the masonry and the bronze—that I forgot myself, and after awhile, looking down I saw that there were officers of the law scrutinizing me, supposing no doubt I was a German and looking at those gates for adverse purposes. But, my friends, we shall not stand looking at the outside of the gates of hell. In this sermon I shall tell you of both sides, and I shall tell you what those gates are made of. With the hammer of God's truth I shall pound on the brazen panels, and with the lantern of God's truth I shall flash a light upon the shining hinges.

Gate the First—Impure literature. Anthony Comstock seized twenty tons of bad books, plates and letterpress, and when our Professor Cochran, of the Polytechnic Institute poured the destructive acids on those plates they smoked in the righteous annihilation, and yet a great deal of bad literature of the day is not gripped of the law. It is strewn in your parlors. It is in your libraries. Some of your children read it at night after they have retired, the gas burner swung as near as possible to their pillow. Much of this literature is under the title of scientific information. A book agent with one of these infernal books, glossed over with scientific nomenclature, went into a hotel and sold in one day 100 copies and sold them all to women! It is appalling that men and women who can get through their family physician all the useful information they may need, and without any contamination, should wade chin deep through such accursed literature under the plea of getting useful knowledge, and that printing presses, hoping to be called decent, lend themselves to this infamy. Fathers and mothers, be not deceived by the title, "medical works." Nine-tenths of those books come hot from the lost world, though they may have on them the names of the publishing houses of New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. Then there is all the novelette literature of the day flung over the land by the million. As there are good novels that are long, so, I suppose, there may be good novels that are short, and so there may be a good novelette, but it is the exception. No one—mark this—no one systematically reads the average novelette of this day and keeps either integrity or virtue. The most of these novelettes are written by broken-down literary men for small compensation, on the principle that, having failed in literature elevated and pure, they hope to succeed in the tainted and nasty. Oh, this is a wide gate of hell! Every panel is made out of a bad book or newspaper. Every hinge is the interjoined type of a corrupt printing press. Every bolt or lock of that gate is made out of the plate of an unclean pictorial. In other words, there are a million men and women in the United States to-day reading themselves into hell!

When in one of our cities a prosperous family fell into ruins through the misdeeds of one of its members, the amazed mother said to the officer of the law: "Why, I never supposed there was anything wrong, I never thought there could be anything wrong." Then she sat weeping in silence for some time and said: "Oh, I have got it now! I know, I know! I found in her bureau after she went away a bad book. That's what slew her." These leprous booksellers have gathered up the catalogues of all the male and female seminaries in the United States, catalogues containing the names and residences of all the students, and circulars of death are sent to every one, without any exception. Can you imagine anything more deathful? There is not a young person, male or female, or an old person, who has not had offered to him or her a bad book or a bad picture. Scour your house to find out whether there are any of these adders coiled on your parlor center table or coiled amid the toilet set on the dressing case. I adjure you before the sun goes down to explore your family libraries with an inexorable scrutiny. Remember that one bad book or bad picture may do the work for eternity. I want to arouse all your suspicions about novelettes. I want to put you on the watch against everything that may seem like surreptitious correspondence through the postoffice. I want you to understand that impure literature is one of the broadest, highest, mightiest gates of the lost.

Gate the Second—The dissolute dance. You shall not divert to the general subject of dancing. Whatever you may think of the parlor dance or the methodic motion of the body to sounds of music in the family or the social circle, I am not now discussing that question. I want you to unite with me this hour in recognizing the fact that there is a dissolute dance. You know of what I speak. It is seen not only in the low haunts of death, but in elegant mansions. It is the first step to eternal ruin for a great multitude of both sexes. You know, my friends, what postures and attitudes and figures are suggested of the devil. They who glide into the dissolute dance glide over an inclined plane, and the dance is swifter and swifter, wilder and wilder, until, with the speed of lightning,

they whirl off the edges of a decent life into a fiery future. This gate of hell swings across the annex of many a fine parlor and across the ballroom of the summer watering place. You have no right, my brother, my sister, you have no right to take an attitude to the sound of music which would be unbecoming in the absence of music. No Chickering grand of city parlor or fiddle of mountain picnic can consecrate that which God hath cursed.

Gate the Third—Indiscreet apparel. The attire of woman for the last few years has been beautiful and graceful beyond anything I have known, but there are those who will always carry that which is right into the extraordinary and indiscreet. I charge Christian women, neither by style of dress nor adjustment of apparel, to become administrative of evil. Perhaps none else will dare to tell you, so I will tell you that there are multitudes of men who owe their eternal damnation to what has been at different times the boldness of womanly attire. Show me the fashion plates of any age between this and the time of Louis XVI of France and Henry VIII of England, and I will tell you the type of morals or immorals of that age or that year. No exception to it. Modest apparel means a righteous people. Immodest apparel always means a contaminated and depraved society. You wonder that the city of Tyre was destroyed with such a terrible destruction. Have you ever seen the fashion plate of the city of Tyre? I will show it to you:

"Moreover, the Lord saith, because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes; walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet, in that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the rings and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins."

That is the fashion plate of ancient Tyre. And do you wonder that the Lord God in His indignation blotted out the city, so that fishermen to-day spread their nets where that city once stood?

Gate the Fourth—Alcoholic beverage. Oh, the wine cup is the patron of impurity! The officers of the law tell us that nearly all the men who go into the shambles of death go in intoxicated, the mental and the spiritual abolished, that the brute may triumph. Tell me that a young man drinks, and I know the whole story. If he becomes a captive of the wine cup, he will become a captive of all other vices. Only give him time. No one ever runs drunkenness alone. That is a carrion crow that goes in a flock, and when you see that beak ahead you may know the other beaks are coming. In other words, the wine cup unbalances and dethrones one's better judgment, and leaves one to prey of all the evil appetites that may choose to alight upon his soul. There is not a place of any kind of sin in the United States to-day that does not find its chief abettor in the chalice of inebriety. There is either a drinking bar before or one behind, or one above, or one underneath. These people escape legal penalty because they are all licensed to sell liquor. The courts that license the sale of strong drink license gambling houses, license libertinism, license disease, license death, license all sufferings, all murders, all woe. It is the courts and the legislature that are swinging wide open this grinding, creaky, stupendous gate of the lost.

But you say: "You have described these gates of hell and shown us how they swing in to allow the entrance to the doomed. Will you not, please, before you get through the sermon, tell us how these gates of hell may swing out to allow the escape of the penitent?" I reply, but very few escape. Of the thousand that go in 999 perish. Suppose one of these wanderers should knock at your door. Would you admit her? Suppose you knew where she came from. Would you ask her to sit down at your dining table? Would you ask her to become the governess of your children? Would you introduce her among your acquaintanceships? Would you take the responsibility of pulling on the outside of the gate of hell while the pusher on the inside of the gate is trying to get out? You would not. Not one of a thousand of you would dare to do so. You would write beautiful poetry over her sorrows and weep over her misfortunes, but give her practical help you never will. But, you say, "Are there no ways by which the wanderer may escape?" Oh, yes! Three or four. The one way is the sewing girl's garter, dingy, cold, hunger blasted. But, you say, "Is there no other way for her to escape?" Oh, yes! Another way is the street that leads to the river at midnight, the end of the city dock, the moon shining down on the water making it look so smooth she wonders if it is deep enough. It is. No boatman near enough to hear the plunge. No watchman near enough to pick her out before she sinks the third time. No other way? Yes; by the curve of the railroad at the point where the engineer of the lightning express train cannot see a hundred yards ahead to the form that lies across the track. He may whistle "down brakes," but not soon enough to disappoint the one who seeks her death. But, you say, "Isn't God good, and won't He forgive?" Yes, but man will not, woman will not, society will not. The church of God says it will, but it will not. Our work, then, must be prevention rather than cure.

Those gates of hell are to be prostrated just as certainly as God and the Bible are true, but it will not be done until Christian men and women, quitting their prudery and squeamishness in this matter, rally the whole Christian sentiment of the church and assail these great evils of society. The Bible utters its denunciation in this direction again and again, and yet the piety of the day is such a namby pamby sort of thing that you cannot even

quote Scripture without making somebody restless. As long as this holy imbecility reigns in the church of God, sin will laugh you to scorn. I do not know but that before the church wakes up matters will get worse and worse, and that there will have to be one lamb sacrificed from each of the most carefully guarded folds, and the wave of uncleanness dash to the spire of the village church and the top of the cathedral tower.

Prophets and patriarchs and apostles and evangelists and Christ Himself have thundered against these sins as against no other, and yet there are those who think we ought to take, when we speak of these subjects, a tone apologetic. I put my foot on all the conventional rhetoric on this subject, and I tell you plainly that unless you give up that sin your doom is sealed, and world without end you will be chased by the anathemas of an incensed God. I rally you to a besiegement of the gates of hell. We want in this besieging host no soft sentimentalists, but men who are willing to take and give hard knocks. The gates of Gaza were carried off, the gates of Thebes were battered down, the gates of Babylon were destroyed, and the gates of hell are going to be prostrated.

The Christianized printing press will be rolled up as the chief battering ram. Then there will be a long list of aroused pulpits, which shall be assailing fortresses, and God's red-hot truth shall be the flying ammunition of the contest, and the sappers and the miners will lay the train under these foundations of sin, and at just the right time God, who leads on the fray, will cry, "Down with the gates!" and the explosion beneath will be answered by all the trumpets of God on high, celebrating universal victory.

But there may be one wanderer that would like to have a kind word calling homeward. I have told you that society has no mercy. Did I hint, at an earlier point in this subject, that God will have mercy upon any wanderer who would like to come back to the heart of infinite love?

A cold Christmas night in a farmhouse. Father comes in from the barn, knocks the snow from his shoes and sits down by the fire. The mother sits at the stand knitting. She says to him, "Do you remember it is the anniversary to-night?" The father is angered. He never wants any allusion to the fact that one had gone away, and the mere suggestion that it was the anniversary of that sad event made him quite rough, although the tears ran down his cheeks. The old house dog that had played with the wanderer when she was a child comes up and puts his head on the old man's knee, but he roughly repulses the dog. He wants nothing to remind him of the anniversary day.

A cold winter night in a city church. It is Christmas night. They have been decorating the sanctuary. A lost wanderer of the street, with thin shawl about her, attracted by the warmth and light, comes in and sits near the door. The minister of religion is preaching of Him who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and the poor soul by the door said: "Why, that must mean me! Mercy for the chief of sinners; bruised for our iniquities; wounded for our transgressions."

The music that night in the sanctuary brought back the old hymn which she used to sing when, with father and mother, she worshiped God in the village church. The service over, the minister went down the aisle. She said to him: "Were those words for me? 'Wounded for our transgressions.' Was that for me?" The man of God understood her not. He knew not how to comfort a shipwrecked soul, and he passed on, and he passed out. The poor wanderer followed into the street.

"What are you doing here, Meg?" said the police. "What are you doing here to-night?" "Oh," she replied, "I was in to warm myself." And then the rattling cough came, and she held to the railing until the paroxysm was over. She passed on down the street, falling from exhaustion, recovering herself again, until after awhile she reached the outs of the city, and passed on into the country road. It seemed so familiar. She kept on the road, and she saw in the distance a light in the window. Ah, that light had been gleaming there every night since she went away. On that country road she passed until she came to the garden gate. She opened it and passed up the path where she played in childhood. She came to the steps and looked in at the fire on the hearth. Then she put her fingers to the latch. Oh, if that door had been locked she would have perished on the threshold for she was near to death! But that door had not been locked since the time she went away. She pushed open the door. She went in and lay down on the hearth by the fire. The old house dog growled as he saw her enter, but there was something in the voice he recognized, and he frisked about her until he almost pushed her down in his joy.

In the morning the mother came down, and she saw a bundle of rags on the hearth, but when the face was uplifted, she knew it, and it was no more old Meg of the street. Throwing her arms around the returned prodigal, she cried: "Oh, Maggie!" The child threw her arms around her mother's neck and said, "Oh, mother!" And while they were embraced a rugged form towered above them. It was the father. The severity all gone out of his face, he stooped and took her up tenderly and carried her to mother's room and laid her down on mother's bed, for she was dying. Then the lost one, looking up into her mother's face, said: "Wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities!" Mother, do you think that means me?" "Oh, yes, my darling," said the mother. "If mother is so glad to get you back, don't you think God is glad to get you back?"

And there she lay dying, and all their dreams and all their prayers were filled with the words, "Wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," until, just before the moment of her departure, her face lighted up, showing the pardon of God

and dropped upon her soul. And there she slept away on the bosom of a pardoning Jesus. So the Lord took back one whom the world rejected.

TEMPERANCE.

WHAT HATH GOOD TEMPLARY DONE?

Do ye talk of the failure of Temperance, And ask what has Templary done? Then I'll tell you a story of gladness, Of joy o'er the laurels she's won. So fair is the angel of Temperance, So gracious and kind is her mien, That wherever her banner has floated There may her triumphs be seen.

With a heavenly message she came To where riotous ruin held sway, And waving her white hand to heaven, She swept all the dark snares away. And the desert grew fragrant with beauty, Dark places shone bright in Hope's sun, Dishonor gave place unto duty— All this has Good Templary done.

She roamed thro' the city's dark alleys, Where greed bartered virtue for gold, And brought from thence sad little children, So young, yet so haggard and old; And she clad the poor feet that were bare, Gave bread where before there was none, Taught lips that used cursing a prayer— All this has Good Templary done.

Talk not of the failure of Templary, Nor ask where the triumphs have been, For wherever her banner has floated, Oh there may her trophies be seen. And I know in a beautiful future, From dawn to the setting of sun, A land she has blessed and redeemed, Shall tell what Good Templary hath done.

THREE LITTLE DRUNKARDS.

Three ragged little Italian boys, whose ages ranged from nine to twelve years, staggered into City Hall Park so much under the influence of liquor that they were hardly able to stand.

They halted near the fountain, where a large crowd gathered to watch their drunken antics, which continued until Park Policemen Ryerson and Sheehan came along. One of the young inebriates was hustled away by some other boys, but the others were captured. One of the prisoners threatened with his tiny fists the policeman who held him, while the other, the youngest of the trio and small for his years, begged his captor for a drink of whisky. This lad was barefooted.

The children must have swallowed the stuff only a short time before, for they had not been in custody many minutes when they collapsed into utter helplessness, and the smaller had to be carried to the Oak street police station. Neither of them was able to give his pedigree or make any statement.

The policemen finally took them up town to the rooms of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children on a Third Avenue "L" train, which was crowded with returning excursionists.—New York Herald.

THE TREATING HABIT.

Men do not become drunkards in a day. Generally it is a slow process. Most young men owe their downfall to being considered genial in company. A tip-top fellow, as it were, one who is not willing to be thought a milkop. He seldom begins through mere animal love of drink. It is generally sociability, generosity, companionship, a false idea of what friendship, decency or propriety requires that leads him astray. It is this detestable habit of "treating" the prevailing idea that it is the proper thing. If you want to do an excellent thing for yourself and your friends, if you feel you cannot come up to the standard of total abstinence, shut down on treating. Neither accept nor offer a treat. This will be a great step forwards for you in embracing total abstinence, which is the best and surest thing to do, if you are in earnest, to suppress the ravages of intemperance.—Pittsburg Catholic.

TEMPERANCE NEWS AND NOTES.

A blow at the saloon always hits the devil square in the face.

Every man who drinks a little drinks a great deal too much.

It costs the young man a pearl of great price for his first drink.

The Philadelphia bartender who recommended spring water as a summer drink was right.

It is said that in India they call liquor sold over a licensed bar "Government shame water."

Of the 317 students in the British Congregational theological schools, 301 are total abstainers.

During the past twenty years the consumption of alcoholic liquor has fallen off one-half in England, and has doubled in France.

The graduating class of the Indiana Law School had a flow of wit and good humor at its recent banquet, but not of wine, which the class voted to exclude from the menu.

Hon. Carroll D. Wright, the well-known statistician, recently stated that facts show that "for every dollar the people receive from the saloon they pay out twenty-one."

The annual parliamentary return of England relating to brewing shows that over 300 breweries were closed last year, and that the number of them has fallen from 10,000 to a little over 9000 in twelve months.

The Freshmen class in the Boston Technological School did away with all kinds of intoxicating liquors at their class banquet. It was carried only by a hard fight. This is the first class in this institution to banish liquors from its banquet. It is to be hoped that others will follow the good example.