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THE

ARCH-FIEND OF THE NATIONS.

A SERMON

PREACHED SUNDAY MORNING, OCT. 19, 1884.

BY

REV. DR. T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

NEW YORK :

The National Temperance Society and Publication House,

58 READE STREET.

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The Arch-Fiend of the Nations.

*A Sermon Preached Sunday Morning,
October 19, 1884.*

BY REV. DR. T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

“Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine.”—
JOEL i. 5.

NOAH did the best and the worst thing for the world. He built an ark against the deluge of water, but introduced a deluge against which the human race has ever since been trying to build an ark—the deluge of drunkenness. In the opening chapters of the Bible we hear his staggering steps. Shem and Japheth tried to cover up the disgrace, but there he is, drunk on wine at a time in the history of the world when, to say the least, there was no lack of water.

INEBRIATION,

having entered the world, has not retreated. Abigail, the fair and heroic wife who saved the flocks of Nabal, her husband, from confiscation by invaders, goes home at night and finds him so intoxicated she cannot tell him the story of his narrow escape. Uriah came to see David, and David got him drunk and paved the way for the despoliation of a household. Even the church bishops needed to be charged to be sober and not given to too much wine; and so familiar were the people of Bible times with the staggering and falling motion of the

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FROM THE HEIRS OF
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inebriate that Isaiah, when he comes to describe the final dislocation of worlds, says: "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard."

Ever since apples and grapes and wheat grew the world has been tempted to unhealthful stimulants. But the intoxicants of the olden time were an innocent beverage, a harmless orangeade, a quiet syrup, a peaceful soda-water, as compared with the liquids of modern inebriation, into which a madness, and a fury, and a gloom, and a fire, and a suicide, and a retribution have mixed and mingled. Fermentation was always known, but it was not until a thousand years after Christ that distillation was invented.

While we must confess that some of the ancient arts have been lost, the Christian era is superior to all others in the bad eminence of whiskey and rum and gin. The modern drunk is a hundred-fold worse than the ancient drunk. Noah in his intoxication became imbecile, but the victims of modern alcoholism have to struggle with whole menageries of wild beasts and jungles of hissing serpents and perditions of blaspheming demons. An

ARCH-FIEND ARRIVED

in our world, and he built an invisible caldron of temptation. He built that caldron strong and stout for all ages and all nations. First he squeezed into the caldron the juices of the forbidden fruit of Paradise. Then he gathered for it a distillation from the harvest fields and the orchards of the hemispheres. Then he poured into this caldron capsicum, and copperas, and logwood, and deadly nightshade, and assault and battery, and vitriol, and opium, and rum, and murder, and sulphuric acid, and theft, and potash, and cochineal, and red carrots, and poverty, and death, and hops. But it was a dry compound, and it must be moistened and it must be liquefied, and so the arch-fiend poured into that caldron the tears of centuries of orphanage and widowhood, and he poured in the blood of twenty thousand assassinations. And then the arch-fiend took a shovel that he had brought up from the furnaces beneath, and he put that shovel into

THIS GREAT CALDRON

and began to stir, and the caldron began to heave, and rock, and boil, and sputter, and hiss, and smoke, and the nations gathered around it with cups, and tankards, and demijohns, and kegs, and there was enough for all, and the arch-fiend cried: "Aha! champion fiend am I. Who has done more than I have for coffins, and graveyards, and prisons, and insane asylums, and the populating of the lost world? And when this caldron is emptied I'll fill it again, and I'll stir it again, and it will smoke again, and that smoke will join another smoke—the smoke of a torment that ascendeth for ever and ever.

"I drove fifty ships on the rocks of Newfoundland and the Skerries and the Goodwins. I defeated the Northern army at Fredericksburg. I have ruined more senators than will gather next winter in the national councils. I have ruined more lords than will be gathered in the House of Peers. The cup out of which I ordinarily drink is a bleached human skull, and the upholstery of my palace is so rich a crimson because it is dyed in human gore, and the mosaic of my floors is made up of the bones of children dashed to death by drunken parents, and my favorite music—sweeter than *Te Deum* or triumphal march—my favorite music is the cry of daughters turned out at midnight on the street because father has come home from the carousal, and the seven-hundred-voiced shriek of the sinking steamer because the captain was not himself when he put the ship on the wrong course. Champion fiend am I! I have kindled more fires, I have wrung out more agonies, I have stretched out more midnight shadows, I have opened more Golgothas, I have rolled more Juggernauts, I have damned more souls than any other emissary of diabolism. Champion fiend am I!"

Drunkenness is the greatest evil of this nation, and it takes no logical process to prove to this audience that

A DRUNKEN NATION

cannot long be a free nation. So I go on in this brief series of Sabbath morning discourses, showing you the perils that

threaten the destruction of American institutions. I had not time to conclude these subjects last Sabbath morning, and I shall go on this Sabbath morning, and the following at least, discussing these subjects. I call your attention to the fact that drunkenness is not subsiding, certainly that it is not at a stand-still, but that it is on

AN ONWARD MARCH,

and it is a double-quick. Beginning near by, I have seen more drunken people in Brooklyn and in New York in the last six weeks than in any two years of my life, and so have you, if you have been passing up and down these streets much. There is more rum swallowed in this country, and of a worse kind, than was ever swallowed since the first distillery began its work of death. Where there was one drunken home there are ten drunken homes. Where there was one drunkard's grave there are twenty drunkards' graves.

According to United States government figures, in 1840 there were 23,000,000 gallons of beer sold; last year there were 551,000,000 gallons. According to the governmental figures, in the year 1840 there were 5,000,000 gallons of wine sold; last year there were 25,000,000 gallons of wine. It is on the increase. Talk about crooked whiskey—by which men mean the whiskey that does not pay the tax to government—I tell you all strong drink is crooked. Crooked Otard, crooked Cognac, crooked schnapps, crooked beer, crooked wine, crooked whiskey—because it makes a man's path crooked, and his life crooked, and his death crooked, and his eternity crooked.

If I could gather all the armies of the dead drunkards and have them come to resurrection, and then add to that host all the

ARMIES OF LIVING DRUNKARDS,

five and ten abreast, and then if I could have you mount a horse and ride along that line for review, you would ride that horse until he dropped from exhaustion, and you would mount another horse and ride until he fell from exhaustion, and you would take another and another, and you would ride along hour after hour, and day after day. Great host, in regi-

ments, in brigades. Great armies of them. And then if you had voice stentorian enough to make them all hear, and you could give the command, "Forward, march!" their first tramp would make the earth tremble. I do not care which way you look in the community to-day, the evil is increasing.

I call attention to the fact that there are thousands of people born with a thirst for strong drink—a fact too often ignored. Along some ancestral lines there runs the river of temptation. There are children whose swaddling-clothes are torn off the shroud of death.

THE DRUNKARD'S WILL.

Many a father has made a will of this sort : " In the name of God, amen. I bequeath to my children my houses and lands and estates; share and share shall they alike. Hereto I affix my hand and seal in the presence of witnesses." And yet perhaps that very man has made another will that the people have never read, and that has not been proved in the courts. That will put in writing would read something like this: " In the name of disease and appetite and death, amen. I bequeath to my children my evil habits, my tankards shall be theirs, my wine-cup shall be theirs, my destroyed reputation shall be theirs. Share and share alike shall they in the infamy. Hereto I affix my hand and seal in the presence of all the applauding harpies of hell."

From the multitude of those who have the evil habit born with them this army is being augmented. And I am sorry to say that a great many of the drug-stores are abetting this evil, and alcohol is sold under the name of

BITTERS.

It is bitters for this, and bitters for that, and bitters for some other thing, and good men deceived, not knowing there is any thralldom of alcoholism coming from that source, are going down, and some day a man sits with the bottle of black bitters on his table, and the cork flies out, and after it flies a fiend and clutches the man by his throat and says : "Aha! I

have been after you for ten years. I have got you now. Down with you, down with you!" Bitters! Ah! yes. They make a man's family bitter, and his home bitter, and his disposition bitter, and his death bitter, and his hell bitter. Bitters! A vast army, all the time increasing. And let me also say that it is as thoroughly organized as any army, with commander-in-chief, staff officers, infantry, cavalry, batteries, sutlerships, and flaming ensigns, and that every candidate for office in America will yet have to pronounce himself the friend or foe of the liquor-traffic.

I have in my possession a circular of a brewers' association, a circular sent to all candidates for office; it has been sent, or will be sent—a form to be filled up saying whether the candidate is a friend of the liquor-traffic or its enemy; and if he is an enemy of the business, then the man is doomed; or if he declines to fill up the circular and send it back, his silence is taken as a negative answer.

It seems to me it is about time for the 17,000,000 professors of religion in America to

TAKE SIDES.

It is going to be an out-and-out battle between drunkenness and sobriety, between heaven and hell, between God and the devil. Take sides before there is any further national decadence, take sides before your sons are sacrificed and the new home of your daughter goes down under the alcoholism of an embruted husband. Take sides while your voice, your pen, your prayer, your vote may have any influence in arresting the despoliation of this nation. If the 17,000,000 professors of religion should take sides on this subject it would not be very long before the destiny of this nation would be decided in the right direction. Certainly, sermons setting forth the perils that threaten the destruction of our American institutions would be a very poorly planned course of sermons if they did not speak of drunkenness. Is it a State evil or is it

A NATIONAL EVIL ?

Does it belong to the North, or does it belong to the South ?
Does it belong to the East, or does it belong to the West ?

Ah! there is not an American river into which its tears have not fallen and into which its suicides have not plunged. What ruined that Southern plantation?—every field a fortune, the proprietor and his family once the most affluent supporters of summer watering-places. What threw that New England farm into decay and turned the roseate cheeks that bloomed at the foot of the Green Mountains into the pallor of despair? What has smitten every street of every village, town, and city of this continent with a moral pestilence? What will send thousands of men on the first Tuesday in November to the ballot-box maudlin, incompetent, filthy, and blasphemous? Strong drink.

To prove that this is a national evil I call up

THREE STATES

in opposite directions—Maine, Iowa, and Georgia. Let them testify in regard to this. State of Maine says: “It is so great an evil up here we have anathematized it as a State.” State of Iowa says: “It is so great an evil out here we have prohibited it by constitutional amendment.” State of Georgia says: “It is so great an evil down here that ninety counties of this State have made the sale of intoxicating drink a criminality.” So the word comes up from all sources, and it is going to be a Waterloo, and I want you to know on what side I am going to be when that Waterloo is fully come, and I want you to be on the right side. Either drunkenness will be destroyed in this country or the American government will be destroyed. Drunkenness and free institutions are coming into a death-grapple.

Oh! how many are waiting to see if something cannot be done. Thousands of drunkards waiting who cannot go ten minutes in any direction without having the temptation glaring before their eyes or appealing to their nostrils, they fighting against it with enfeebled will and diseased appetite, conquering, then surrendering, conquering again and surrendering again, and crying: “How long, O Lord! how long before these infamous solicitations shall be gone?” And how many

mothers there are waiting to see if this national curse cannot lift! Oh!

IS THAT THE BOY

that had the honest breath who comes home with breath vitiated or disguised? What a change! How quickly those habits of early coming home have been exchanged for the rattling of the night-key in the door long after the last watchman has gone by and tried to see that everything was closed up for the night! Oh! what a change for that young man who we had hoped would do something in merchandise, or in artisanship, or in a profession that would do honor to the family name long after mother's wrinkled hands are folded from the last toil! All that exchanged for startled look when the door-bell rings, lest something has happened; and the wish that the scarlet fever twenty years ago had been fatal, for then he would have gone directly to the bosom of his Saviour. But alas! poor old soul, she has lived to experience what Solomon said: "A foolish son is a heaviness to his mother."

Oh! what a funeral it will be when that boy is brought home dead. And how mother will sit there and say: "Is this my boy that I used to fondle and that I walked the floor with in the night when he was sick? Is this the boy that I held to the baptismal font for baptism? Is this the boy for whom I toiled until the blood burst from the tips of my fingers, that he might have a good start and a good home? Lord, why hast Thou let me live to see this? Can it be that these swollen hands are the ones that used to wander over my face when rocking him to sleep? Can it be that this is the swollen brow that I once so rapturously kissed? Poor boy! how tired he does look. I wonder who struck him that blow across the temples? I wonder if he uttered a dying prayer? Wake up, my son; don't you hear me? wake up! Oh! he can't hear me. Dead, dead, dead! 'O Absalom, my son, my son, would God that I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'"

I am not much of a mathematician, and I cannot estimate it; but is there any one here quick enough at figures to esti-

mate how many mothers there are waiting for something to be done? Ay, there are many wives waiting for domestic rescue. He promised something different from that when, after the long acquaintance and the careful scrutiny of character, the hand and the heart were offered and accepted. What a hell on earth a woman lives in who has

A DRUNKEN HUSBAND!

O Death, how lovely thou art to her, and how soft and warm thy skeleton hand! The sepulchre at midnight in winter is a king's drawing-room compared with that woman's home. It is not so much the blow on the head that hurts as the blow on the heart. The rum fiend came to the door of that beautiful home, and opened the door and stood there, and said: "I curse this dwelling with an unrelenting curse. I curse that father into a maniac, I curse that mother into a pauper. I curse those sons into vagabonds. I curse those daughters into profligacy. Cursed be bread-tray and cradle. Cursed be couch and chair, and family Bible with record of marriages and births and deaths. Curse upon curse." Oh! how many wives are there waiting to see if something cannot be done to shake these frosts of the second death off the orange-blossoms! Yea,

GOD IS WAITING,

the God who works through human instrumentalities, waiting to see whether this nation is going to overthrow this evil; and if it refuse to do so God will wipe out the nation as He did Phœnicia, as He did Rome, as He did Thebes, as He did Babylon. Ay, He is waiting to see what the Church of God will do. If the Church does not do its work, then He will wipe it out as He did the Church of Ephesus, Church of Thyatira, Church of Sardis. The Protestant and Roman Catholic churches to-day stand side by side with an impotent look, gazing on this evil, which costs this country more than a billion dollars a year to take care of the 800,000 paupers, and the 315,000 criminals, and the 30,000 idiots, and to bury the 75,000 drunkards.

Protagoras boasted that out of the sixty years of his life forty years he had spent in ruining youth; but the arch-fiend of the nations may make the more infamous boast that all its life it has been ruining the bodies, minds, and souls of the human race.

Put on your spectacles and take a candle, and examine the platforms of the two leading

POLITICAL PARTIES

of this country, and see what they are doing for the arrest of this evil and for the overthrow of this abomination. Resolutions—oh! yes, resolutions about Mormonism! It is safe to attack that organized nastiness two thousand miles away. But not one resolution against drunkenness, which would turn this entire nation into one bestial Salt Lake City. Resolutions against political corruption, but not one word about drunkenness, which would rot this nation from scalp to heel. Resolutions about protection against competition with foreign industries, but not one word about protection of family and church and nation against the scalding, blasting, all-consuming, damning tariff of strong drink put upon every financial, individual, spiritual, moral, national interest. The Democratic party—in power for the most of the time for forty years—what did that national party do for the extirpation of this evil? Nothing, absolutely nothing, appallingly nothing. The Republican party has been in power for about a quarter of a century. What has it done as a national party to extirpate this evil? Nothing, absolutely nothing, appallingly nothing. I look in another direction.

THE CHURCH

of God is the grandest and most glorious institution on earth. What has it in solid phalanx accomplished for the overthrow of drunkenness? Have its forces ever been marshalled? No, not in this direction. Not long ago a great ecclesiastical court assembled in New York, and resolutions arraigning strong drink were offered, and clergymen with strong drink on their tables and strong drink in their cellars defeated the

resolutions by threatening speeches. They could not bear to give up their own lusts. I tell this audience what many of you may never have thought of, that to-day—not in the millenium, but to-day—the Church holds the balance of power in America; and if Christian people—the men and the women who profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ and to love purity and to be the sworn enemies of all uncleanness and debauchery and sin—if all such would march side by side and shoulder to shoulder, this evil would soon be overthrown. Think of 300,000 churches and Sunday-schools in Christendom marching shoulder to shoulder! How very short a time it would take them to put down this evil, if all the churches of God, transatlantic and cisatlantic, were armed on this subject!

Of course it is not the province of the sermon I preach this morning to dwell so much as I shall hereafter upon the ways to contend against these great national evils, but I shall not let the opportunity pass in this discourse, whether it is logically a part of it or not—I shall not let this opportunity pass without charging you, the voters of America, on the first Tuesday in November, to go from your knees to the ballot-box, and then from the ballot-box back to your knees. Ask God what to do, and He will make it plain. Do not ask your political party. Vote with reference to that day when you must give an account.

YOUNG MEN OF AMERICA,

pass over into the army of teetotalism. Whiskey, good to preserve corpses, ought never to turn you into a corpse. Tens of thousands of young men have been dragged out of respectability, and out of purity, and out of good character, and into darkness by this infernal stuff called strong drink. Do not touch it! Do not touch it!

A CONEY ISLAND TRAGEDY.

In the front door of this church, summer before last, this scene occurred: Sabbath morning a young man was entering here for divine worship. A friend passing along the street said: "Joe, come along with me; I am going

down to Coney Island, and we'll have a gay Sunday." "No," replied Joe; "I have started to go here to church, and I am going to attend service here." "O Joe," his friend said, "you can go to church any time! The day is bright, and we'll go to Coney Island, and we'll have a splendid time." The temptation was too great, and the twain went to the beach, spent the day in drunkenness and riot. The evening train started up from Brighton. The young men were on it. Joe, in his intoxication, when the train was in full speed, tried to pass around from one seat to another, and fell and was crushed. Under the lantern, as Joe lay bleeding his life away on the grass, he said to his comrade: "John, that was a bad business, your taking me away from church; it was a very bad business. You ought not to have done that, John. I want you to tell the boys to-morrow when you see them that rum and Sabbath-breaking did this for me. And, John, while you are telling them, I will be in hell, and it will be your fault."

Is it not time for me to pull out from the great organ of God's Word, with many banks of keys, the *tremolo* stop? "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it moveth itself aright in the cup, for at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Ay, is it not time for me to pull out the trumpet stop of the text? "Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine."

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