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GOOD AND BAD BOOKS

Dr. Talmage Gives Practical Hints on What to Read.

BURN UP UNCLEAN LITERATURE. The Only Way to Overcome the Evil of Impure Reading Is by Scattering

Washington, July 29 .- Dr. Talmage, who has been spending a few days in St. Petersburg, sends the following report of a discourse which. will be helpful to those who have an appetite for literature and would like some rules to guide them in the

selection of books and newspapers: text, Acts xix, 19, "Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men, and they counted the price of them and found it 50,000 pieces of silver." Paul had been stirring up Ephesus

with some lively sermons about the sins of that place. Among the more important results was the fact that the citizens brought out their bad books and in a public place made a bonfire of them. I see the people coming out with their arms full of Ephesian literature and tossing it into the flames. I hear an economist who is standing by saying: Stop this waste. Here are \$7,500 worth of books. Do you propose to burn them all up? If you don't want to read them yourselves, sell and let somebody else. read them." "No," said the people; "if these books are not good for us, they are not good for anybody else, and we shall stand and watch until last leaf has burned to ashes. They have done us a world of harm, they shall never do others and Hear the flames crackle and

Well, my friends, one of the wants of the cities is a great bonfire of bad books and newspapers. We have en-ough fuel to make a blaze 200 feet Many of the publishing houses do well to throw into the their entire stock of goods. Bring forth the insufferable trash and put it into the fire and let it be known in the presence of God and angels and men that you are going to rid your homes of the overtopping and underlying curse of profligate

literature. The printing press is the mightiest agency on earth for good and for The minister of the gospel, standing in a pulpit, has a responsible position, but I do not think it is as responsible as the position of an editor or a publisher. At what distant point of time, at what farout cycle of eternity, will cease the influence of a Henry J. Raymond, or a Horace Greeley, or a James Gor-don Bennett, or a Watson Webb, or an Erastus Brooks, or a Thomas Kinsella? Take the overwhelming statistics of the circulation of the daily and weekly newspapers and then cipher if you can how far up and how far down and how far out reach the influences of the American

printing press. What is to be the issue of all this? I believe the Lord intends the printing press to be the chief means for ing press to be the chief means for the world's rescue and evangeliza-tion, and I think that the great last battle of the world will not be fought with swords and guns, but with types and presses, a purified and gospel literature triumphing over trampling down and crushing over, trampling down and crushing out forever that which is deprayed. out forever that which is deprayed. The only way to overcome unclean literature is by scattering abroad that which is healthful. May God speed the cylinders of an honest, intelligent, aggressive, Christian printling press

ing press.

I have to tell you that the greatest blessing that ever came to the nations is that of an elevated literations is that of an elevated literations. ature, and the greatest scourge has been that of unclean literature. This last has its victims in all occupations and departments. It has helped to fill insane asylums and peni-tentiaries and almshouses and dens-of shame. The bodies of this infec-tion lie in the hospitals and in the graves, while their souls are being tossed over into a lost eternity, an avalanche of horror and despair!

The London plague was nothing to it. That counted its victims by thousands, but this modern pest has already shoveled its millions into the charnel house of the morally dead. The longest rail train that ever ran over the tracks was not long enough or large enough to carry the beast-liness and the putrefaction which have been gathered up in bad books and newspapers in the last 20 years. Now, it is amid such circumstances that I put a question of overmastering importance to you and your families. What books and newspapers shall we read? You see I group them together. A newspaper is only a book in a swifter and more portable shape, and the same rules which will apply to book reading will apwill apply to book reading will apply to newspaper reading. What shall we read? Shall our minds be the receptacle of everything that an author has a mind to write? Shall there be no distinction between the tree of life and the tree of death? Shall we stoop down and drink out of the trough which the wickedness of men has filled with pollution and shame? Shall we mire in impurity and chase fantastic will-q'-the-wisps across the swamps, when we might walk in the blooming gardens of God? Oh, no! For the sake of our present and everlasting welfare we must make an intelligent and Chris-

tian choice. Standing, as we do, chin deep in Standing, as we do, thin depending fictitious literature, the question that young people are asking is, "Shall read novels?" I reply, There are novels that are pure, good, Christian, elevating to the heart and enpobling to the life. But I have still

further to say that I believe that 75 out of the 100 novels in this day are baleful and destructive to the last degree. A pure work of fiction is history and poetry combined. It is a history of things around us with the licenses and the assumed names of poetry. The world can never pay the debt which it owes to such writers of fictian as Hawthorne and Mc-Kenzie and Landon and Hunt and Arthur and others whose names are familiar to all. The follies of high life were never better exposed than by Miss Edgeworth. The memories of the past were never more faithfully embalmed than in the writings Abroad That Which Is Ennobling of Walter Scott. Cooper's novels are healthfully redolent with the breath of the seaweed and the air of the American forest. Charles Kingsley has smitten the morbidity of the world and led a great many to appreciate the poetry of sound health, strong muscles and fresh air. Thackeray did a grand work in caricaturing the pretenders of gentility and high blood. Dickens has built his own monument in his books, which are a plea for the poor and the anathema of injustice, and there are a score of novelistic pens to-day doing mighty work for God and righteous-

Now, I say, books like these, read at right times and read in right prowith other books, cannot help but be ennobling and purifying; but, alas, for the loathsome and tupure literature that has come in the shape of novels, like a freshet overflowing all the banks of decency and common sense! They are coming from some of the most celebrated publishing houses. They are coming with recommendation of some of our religious newspapers. They lie your centre table to curse your children and blast with their infernal fires generations unborn.

I shall take all the world's litera-ture—good novels and bad, travels true and false, histories faithful and incorrect, legends beautiful and monstrous, all tracts, all chronicles, all poems, all family, city, state and national libraries—and pile them up in a pyramid of literature, and then I shall bring to bear upon it some grand, glorious, infallible, unmis-takable Christian principles. God help me to speak with reference to my last account and help you to lis-I charge you in the first place to

stand aloof from all books that give

false pictures of life. Life is neither a tragedy nor a farce. Men are not all either knaves or heroes. Women are neither angels nor furies. And yet if you depended on much of the literature of the day you would get the idea that life instead of being something earnest, something practi-cal, is a fitful and fantastic and extravagant thing. How poorly prepared are that young man and wo-man for the duties of to-day who spent last night wandering through brilliant passages descriptive of magnificent knavery and wickedness! The man will be looking all day long for his heroine in the office, by the forge, in the factory, in the counting room, and he will not find her, and he will be dissatisfied. A man who gives himself up to the indiscriminate reading of novels will be nerveless, in-ane and a nuisance. He will be fit neither for the store, nor the shop, nor the field. A woman who gives herself up to the indiscriminate reading of novels will be unfit for the duties of wife, mother, sister, daugh-There she is, hair disheveled, vacant, cheeks pale, countenance hands trembling, bursting into tears at midnight over the fate af some unfortunate lover; in the daytime when she ought to be busy, staring by the half hour at nothing, biting her finger nails into the quick. The carpet that was plain before will be plainer after having wandered through a romance all night long in tescallated hells of castles. tessellated halls of castles. And our industrious companion will be more unattractive than ever, now that you have walked in the romance through parks with plumed prin-cesses or lounged in the parlor with the polished desperado.

Again, abstain from all those books which, while they have some good have also an admixture of which, while they have the which, while they have read books that had two elements in them—the good and the bad. Which stuck to you? The bad! The heart of most people is like a sieve, which lets the small particles of gold fall through, but keeps the great cinders. Once in awhile there is a mind like a loadstone which, plunged amid steel and brass filings, gathers up the steel and repels the brass. But it is generally exactly the opposite. If you attempt to plunge through a hedge of burrs to get one blackberry, you will attempt to plunge through a hedge of burrs to get one blackberry, you will get more burs than blackberries. You cannot afford to read a bad book, however good you are. You say, "The influence is insignificant." I tell you that the scratch of a pin has sometimes produced lockjaw. Alas, if through curiosity, as many do you pry into an evil book, your do, you pry into an evil book, your curiosity is as dangerous as that of the man who would take a torch into a gunpowder mill merely to see whether it would really blow up or

Again, I charge you to stand off from all those books which corrupt the imagination and inflame the passions. I do not refer now to that kind of book which the villain has under his coat waiting for the school to get out, and then, looking both ways to see that there, is no policeman around the block, offers policeman around the block, offers the book to your son on his way home. I do not speak of that kind. of literature, but that which evades the law and comes out in polished style, and with acute plot sounds the toesin that rouses up all the term ressions of the soul. To-day baser passions of the soul. To-day, under the nostrils of the people, there is a fetid, reeking, unwashed literature, enough to poison all the fountains of public virtue and smite your sons and daughters as with the wing of a destroying angel, and it is time that the ministers of the gospel blew the trumpet and rallied the forces of righteousness, all armed to this great battle against a deprayed literature.

Again, abstain from those books baser passions of the soul.

Again, abstain from those books

some of the finest rhetoric have been brought to make sin attractive. Vice is a horrible thing anyhow. It is born in shame, and it dies howling in the darkness. In this world it is scourged with a whip of scorpions, but afterward the thunders of God's but afterward the thunders of God's wrath pursue it across a boundless desert, beating it with ruin and woe. When you come to paint carnality, do not paint it as looking from behind embroidered curtains or through lattice of royal seraglio, but as writhing in the agonies of a city hospital, Cursed be the books that try to make impurity decent and crime attractive and hypocrisy noble! Cursed be the books that swarm with libertines and desperadoes, who make the brain of young people whirl with villainy! authors who write them, ye publish ers who print them, ye booksellers who distribute them, shall be cut to pieces, if not by an aroused com-munity, then at last by the hail of divine vengeance, which shall sweep to the lowest pit of perdition all ye murderers of souls. I tell you, though you may escape in this world, you will be ground at last under the hoof of eternal calamities, and you will be chained to the rock, and you will have the vultures, of despair clawing at your soul, and those whom you have destroyed will come around to torment you, and to pour

hotter coals of fury upon your head, and rejoice eternally in the outcry of your pain, and the howl of your damnation. "God shall wound the hairy scalp of him that goeth on in his trespasses."
The clock strikes midnight. A fair form bends over a romance. The eyes flash fire. The breath is quick and irregular. Occasionally the color

irregular. Occasionally the color dashes to the cheek and then dies out. The hands tremble as though a guardian spirit were trying to shake the deadly book out of the grasp. Hot tears fall. She laughs with a shrill voice that drops dead at its own sound. The sweat on her brow is the spray the river of death. The clock strikes 4, and the rosy dawn soon after begins to look through the lattice upon the pale form that looks like a detained specter of the night. Soon in madhouse she will mistake her ringlets for curling serpents and thrust her white hand through the bars of the prison and smite her head, rubbing it back as though push the scalp from the skull, shrieking: "My brain! My brain!" Oh, stand off from that! Why will you go sounding your way amid the reefs when there is such a vast ocean in

which you may voyage, all sail set? Much of the impure pictorial literature is most tremendous for ruin. There is no one who can like good pictures better than I do. The quick-est and most condensed way of impressing the public mind is by pic-ture. What the painter does by his brush for a few favorites, the graver does by his knife for the mil-What the author accomplishes by 50 pages the artist does by a flash. The best part of a painting that costs \$10,000 you may buy for 10 cents. Fine paintings belong to the aristocracy of art. Engravings belong to the democracy of art. You do well to gather good pictures in vour homes

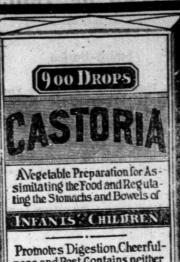
But what shall I say of the prostitution of art to purposes of iniquity? These death warrants of the soul are at every street corner. They smite the vision of the young man pollution. Many a young man buying a copy has bought his eternal discomfiture. There may be enough poison in one bad picture to poisor. one soul, and that soul may poison ten, and ten fifty, and fifty dreds, and the hundreds thousands until nothing but the measuring line of eternity can tell the height and depth and ghastliness and horror of the great undoing. The work of death that the wicked author does in

whole book the bad engraver may a whole book the bad engraver may do on a half side of a pictorial; Under the guise of pure mirth the young man buys one of these sheets. He unrolls it before his comrades amid roars of laughter, but long after the paper is gone the result may amid roars of laughter, but long af-ter the paper is gone the result may, perhaps, be seen in the blasted im-aginations of those who saw it. The queen of death holds a banquet every night, and these periodicals are the invitation to her quests.

invitation to her guests. Cherish good books and newspa-pers. Beware of bad ones. The as-sassin of Lord Russell declared that he was led to go into crime by read-ing one vivid romance. The conse-crated John Angell James, then whom crated John Angell James, then whom England never produced a better man, declared in his old age that he had never yet got over the evil effects of having for 15 minutes once read a bad book. But I need not go so far off. I could tell you of a comrade who was great hearted, noble and who was great hearted, noble and generous. He was studying for an generous. He was studying for an honorable profession, but he had an infidel book in his trunk, and he said to me one day, "De Witt, would you like to read it?" I said, "Yes, I would." I took the book and read it only for a few minutes. I was generous. it only for a few minutes. I was really startled with what I saw there, and I handed the book back to him and said, "You had better destroy that book." No, he kept it. He read it He reread it. After he gave up religion as awhile myth. He gave up God as a nonentity. He gave up the Bible as a fable. He gave up the church of

Christ as a useless institution. He gave up good morals as being unnecessarily stringent. I have heard of him but twice in many years. The time before the last I heard of him he was a confirmed inebriate. The last I heard of him he was coming out of an insane asylum—in body, mind and soul an awful wreck. I believe that one infidel book killed him for two worlds. Go home to-day and look through your library, and then, having look-

ed through your library, look on the stand where you keep your pictorials and newspapers and apply the Christian principles I have laid down this hour. If there is anything in your home that cannot stand the test do nome that cannot stand the test do not give it away, for it might spoil an immortal soul; do not sell it, for the money you get would be the price of blood; but rather kindle a your kitchen hearth or in fire on your back yard and then drop the



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