AT THE TABERNACLE.

DR. TALMAGE THINKS THE GOLDEN CALF IS STILL WORSHIPED.

The Mad Folly of the Israelites and the Rage of Moses—As the People Then Were Punished So Are All Who Worship the Golden Calf in These Latter Days.

BROOKLYN, Nov. 13.—The subject of discourse chosen by Rev. Dr. Talmage for his first sermon after the national election was one peculiarly appropriate to the money making spirit of the times. It was "The Golden Calf," the text selected being Exodus xxxii, 20, "And he took the calf which they had made and burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder and strewed it upon the water and made the children of Israel drink of it."

People will have a god of some kind, and they prefer one of their own making. Here come the Israelites, breaking off their golden earrings, the men as well as the women, for in those times there were masculine as well as feminine decorations. Where did they get these beautiful gold earrings, coming up as they did from the desert? Oh, they "borrowed" them of the Egyptians when they left Egypt. These earrings are piled up into a pyramid of glittering beauty. "Any more earrings to bring?" says Aaron. None. Fire is kindled; the earrings are melted and poured into a mold, not of an eagle or a war charger, but of a calf; the gold cools off; the mold is taken away, and the idol is set upon its four legs.

"An altar is built in front of the shining calf. Then the people throw up their arms and gyrate and shriek and dance mightily and worship. Moses has been six weeks on Mount Sinai, and he comes back and hears the howling and sees the dancing of these golden calf fanatics, and he loses his patience, and he takes the two plates of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments and flings them so hard against a rock that they split all to pieces. When a man gets mad he is very apt to break all the Ten Commandments!

"Moses rushes in and he takes this calf god and throws it into a hot fire until it is melted all out of shape, and then pulverizes it—not by the modern appliance of nitro-muriatic acid, but by the ancient appliance of niter, or by the old fashioned file. He makes for the people a most nauseating draft. He takes this pulverized golden calf and throws it in the only brook which is accessible, and the people are compelled to drink of that brook or not drink at all.

FLOWED AROUND THE WORLD.

But they did not drink all the glittering stuff thrown on the surface. Some of it flows on down the surface of the brook to the river, and then flows on down to the river to the sea, and the sea takes it up and bears it to the mouth of all the rivers, and when the tides set back the remains of this golden calf are carried up into the Hudson, and the East river, and the Thames, and the Clyde, and the Tiber, and men go out and they skim the glittering surface, and they bring it ashore, and they make another golden calf, and California and Australia break off their golden earrings to augment the pile, and in the fires of financial excitement and struggle all these things are melted together, and while we stand looking and wondering what will come of it, lo! we find that the golden calf of Israelitish worship has become the golden calf of European and American worship.

I shall describe to you the god spoken of in the text, his temple, his altar of sacrifice, the music that is made in his temple, and then the final breaking up of the whole congregation of idolaters.

Put aside this curtain, and you see the golden calf of modern idolatry. It is not like other idols, made out of stocks or stone, but it has an ear so sensitive that it can hear the whispers on Wall street and Third street and State street, and the footfalls in the Bank of England, and the flutter of a Frenchman's heart on the Bourse. It has an eye so keen that it can see the rust on the farm of Michigan wheat, and the insect in the Maryland peach orchard, and the trampled grain under the hoof of the Russian war charger.

ITS GORGEOUS TEMPLE.

It is so mighty that it swings any way it will the world's shipping. It has its foot on all the merchantmen and the steamers. It started the American civil war and under God stopped it, and it decided the Turko-Russian contest. One broker in September, 1869, in New York, shouted, "One hundred and sixty for a million!" and the whole continent shivered. This golden calf of the text has its right foot in New York, its left front foot in Chicago, its right back foot in Charleston, its left back foot in New Orleans, and when it shakes itself it shakes the world. Oh, this is a mighty god—the golden calf of the world's worship!

But every god must have its temple, and this golden calf of the text is no exception. Its temple is vaster than St. Paul's of the English, and St. Peter's of the Italians, and the Alhambra of the Spaniards, and the Parthenon of the Greeks, and the Taj Mahal of the Hindoos, and all the other cathedrals put together. Its pillars are grooved and fluted with gold, and its ribbed arches are hovering gold, and its chandeliers are descending gold, and its floors are tessellated gold, and its vaults are crowded heaps of gold, and its spires and domes are soaring gold, and its organ pipes are resounding gold, and its pedals are tramping gold, and its stops pulled out are flashing gold, while [illegible] at the head of the temple, as the presiding deity, are the hoofs and shoulders and eyes and ears and nostrils of the calf of gold.

Further, every god must have not only its temple, but its altar of sacrifice, and this golden calf of the text is no exception. Its altar is not made out of stone as other altars, but out of counting room desks and fireproof safes, and it is a broad, a long, a high altar. The victims sacrificed on it are innumerable. What does this god care about the groans and struggles of the victims before it? With cold, metallic eye it looks on and yet lets them suffer. Oh, heaven and earth, what an altar, what a sacrifice of body, mind and soul! The physical health of a great multitude is flung on this sacrificial altar. They cannot sleep, and they take chloral and morphine and intoxicants.

Some of them struggle in a nightmare of stocks, and at one o'clock in the morning suddenly rise up shouting, "A thousand shares of railroad stock—one hundred and eight and a half; take it!" until the whole family is affrighted, and the speculators fall back on their pillows and sleep until they are awakened again by a "corner" or a sudden "rise" in something else. Their nerves gone, their digestion gone, their brain gone, they die. The clergyman comes in and reads the funeral service, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Mistake. They did not "die in the Lord;" the golden calf kicked them!

ITS DREADFUL SACRIFICE.

The trouble is when men sacrifice themselves on this altar suggested in the text they not only sacrifice themselves, but they sacrifice their families. If a man by an ill course is determined to go to perdition I suppose you will have to let him go; but he puts his wife and children in an equipage that is the amazement of the avenues, and the driver lashes the horses into two whirlwinds, and the spokes flash in the sun, and the golden headgear of the harness gleams, until Black Calamity takes the bits of the horses and stops them, and shouts to the luxurious occupants of the equipage, "Get out!" They get out. They get down. That husband and father flung his family so hard they never got up again. There was the mark on them for life—the mark of a split hoof—the death dealing hoof of the golden calf.

Solomon offered in one sacrifice on one occasion twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep; but that was a tame sacrifice compared with the multitude of men who are sacrificing themselves on this altar of the golden calf, and sacrificing their families with them. The soldiers of General Havelock in India walked literally ankle deep in the blood of the "house of massacre," where two hundred women and children had been slain by the Sepoys; but the blood around about this altar of the golden calf flows up to the knee, flows to the girdle, flows to the shoulder, flows to the lip. Great God of heaven and earth, have mercy! The golden calf has none.

Still the degrading worship goes on, and the devotees kneel and kiss the dust, and count their golden beads, and cross themselves with the blood of their own sacrifice. The music rolls on under the arches; it is made of clinking silver and clinking gold and the rattling specie of the banks and brokers' shops and the voices of all the exchanges. The soprano of the worship is carried by the timid voices of men who have just begun to speculate, while the deep bass rolls out from those who for ten years of iniquity have been doubly damned. Chorus of voices rejoicing over what they have made! Chorus of voices wailing over what they have lost!

This temple of which I speak stands open day and night, and there is the glittering god with his four feet on broken hearts, and there is the smoking altar of sacrifice, new victims every moment on it, and there are the kneeling devotees, and the doxology of the worship rolls on, while death stands with moldy and skeleton arm beating time for the chorus—"More! more! more!"

THE CRAZE FOR GOLD.

Some people are very much surprised at the actions of folk on the Stock exchange. Indeed it is a scene sometimes that paralyzes description and is beyond the imagination of any one who has never looked in. What snapping of finger and thumb and wild gesticulation, and raving like hyenas, and stamping like buffaloes, and swaying to and fro, and running one upon another, and deafening uproar, until the president of the exchange strikes with his mallet four or five times, crying, "Order! order!" and the astonished spectator goes out into the fresh air feeling that he has escaped from pandemonium. What does it all mean? I will tell you what it means. The devotees of every heathen temple cut themselves to pieces and yell and gyrate. This vociferation and gyration of the Stock exchange is all appropriate. This is the worship of the golden calf.

But my text suggests that this worship must be broken up, as the behavior of Moses in my text indicated. There are those who say that this golden calf spoken of in my text was hollow and merely plated with gold; otherwise, they say, Moses could not have carried it. I do not know that; but somehow, perhaps by the assistance of his friends, he takes up this golden calf, which is an open insult to God and man, and throws it into the fire, and it is melted, and then it comes out and is cooled off, and by some chemical appliance or by an old fashioned file it is pulverized, and it is thrown into the brook, and as a punishment the people are compelled to drink the nauseating stuff.

THE ROOT OF EVIL TO BE ROOTED OUT.

So, my hearers, you may depend upon it that God will burn and he will grind to pieces the golden calf of modern idolatry, and he will compel the people in their agony to drink it. If not before, it will be so on the last day. I know not where the fire will begin, whether at the Battery or Central park, whether at Brooklyn bridge or at Bushwick, whether at Shoreditch, London, or West End, but it will be a very hot blaze. All the government securities of the United States and Great Britain will curl up in the first blast. All the money safes and depositing vaults will melt under the first touch. The sea will burn like tinder, and the shipping will be abandoned forever. The melted gold in the broker's window will burst through the melted window glass and into the street, but the flying population will not stop to scoop it up.

The cry of "Fire!" from the mountain will be answered by the cry of "Fire!" in the plain. The conflagration will burn out from the continent toward the sea, and then burn in from the sea toward the land. New York and London, with one cut of the red scythe of destruction, will go down. Twenty-five thousand miles of conflagration! The earth will wrap itself round and round in shroud of flame and lie down to perish. What then will become of your golden calf? Who then so poor as to worship it? Melted or between the upper and the nether millstone of falling mountains ground to powder. Dagon down. Moloch down. Juggernaut down. Golden calf down.

But, my friends, every day is a day of judgment, and God is all the time grinding to pieces the golden calf. Merchants of Brooklyn and New York and London, what is the characteristic of this time in which we live? "Bad," you say. "Professional men, what is the characteristic of the times in which we live? "Bad," you say. Though I should be in a minority of one, I venture the opinion that these are the best times we have had, for the reason that God is teaching the world, as never before, that old fashioned honesty is the only thing that will stand. We have learned as never before that forgeries will not pay; that the spending of fifty thousand dollars on country seats and a palatial city residence, when there are only thirty thousand dollars income, will not pay; that the appropriation of trust funds to our own private speculation will not pay.

We had a great national tumor in the shape of fictitious prosperity. We called it national enlargement. Instead of calling it enlargement we might better have called it a swelling. It has been a tumor, and God is cutting it out—has cut it out—and the nation will get well and will come back to the principles of our fathers and grandfathers when twice three made six instead of sixty, and when the apples at the bottom of the barrel were just as good as the apples on the top of the barrel, and a silk handkerchief was not half cotton, and a man who wore a five dollar coat paid for was more honored than a man who wore a fifty dollar coat not paid for.

THE RAGE FOR SPECULATION.

The golden calf of our day, like the one of the text, is very apt to be made out of borrowed gold. These Israelites of the text borrowed the earrings of the Egyptians and then melted them into a god. That is the way the golden calf is made nowadays. A great many housekeepers, not paying for the articles they get, borrow of the grocer, and the baker, and the butcher, and the dry goods seller. Then the retailer borrows of the wholesale dealer. Then the wholesale dealer borrows of the capitalist, and we borrow and borrow and borrow until the community is divided into two classes—those who borrow and those who are borrowed of. And after awhile the capitalist wants his money and he rushes upon the wholesale dealer, and the wholesale dealer wants his money and he rushes upon the retailer, and the retailer wants his money and he rushes upon the consumer, and we all go down together.

There is many a man in this day who rides in a carriage and owes the blacksmith for the tire, and the wheelwright for the wheel, and the trimmer for the curtain, and the driver for unpaid wages, and the harness maker for the bridle, and the furrier for the robe, while from the tip of the carriage tongue clear back to the tip of the shawl fluttering out of the back of the vehicle everything is paid for by notes that have been three times renewed.

PULVERIZING CALF AND WORSHIPERS.

It is this temptation to borrow and borrow and borrow that keeps the people everlastingly praying to the golden calf for help, and just at the minute they expect the help the golden calf treads on them. The judgments of God, like Moses in the text, will rush in and break up this worship; and I say, let the work go on until every man shall learn to speak truth with his neighbor, and those who make engagements shall feel themselves bound to keep them, and when a man who will not repent of his business iniquity, but goes on wishing to satiate his cannibal appetite by devouring widows' houses, shall by the law of the land be compelled to exchange his mansion for Sing Sing. Let the golden calf perish!

But, my friends, if we have made this world our god, when we come to die, we will see our idol demolished. How much of this world are you going to take with you into the next? Will you have two pockets—one in each side of your shroud? Will you cushion your coffin with bonds and mortgages and certificates of stock? Ah, no! The ferryboat that crosses this Jordan takes no baggage—nothing heavier than a spirit. You may perhaps take five hundred dollars with you two or three miles, in the shape of funeral trappings, to Greenwood, but you will have to leave them there.

It would not be safe for you to lie down there with a gold watch or a diamond ring. It would be a temptation to the pillagers. Ah, my friends, if we have made this world our god, when we die we will see our idol ground to pieces by our pillow, and we will have to drink it in bitter regrets for the wasted opportunities of a lifetime. Soon we will be gone. Oh, this is a fleeting world; it is a dying world! A man who had worshiped it all his days, in his dying moment described himself when he said, "Fool! fool! fool!"

THE NEVER FADING TREASURE.

I want you to change temples, and to give up the worship of this unsatisfying and cruel god for the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the gold that will never crumble. Here are securities that will never fail. Here are banks that will never break. Here is an altar on which there has been one sacrifice once for all. Here is a God who will comfort you when you are in trouble, and soothe you when you are sick, and save you when you die.

When your parents have breathed their last, and the old, wrinkled and trembling hands can no more be put upon your head for a blessing, he will be to you father and mother both, giving you the defense of the one and the comfort of the other; and when your children go away from you, the sweet darlings, you will not kiss them goodby forever. He only wants to hold them for you a little while. He will give them back to you again, and he will have them all waiting for you at the gates of eternal welcome.

Oh, what a God he is! He will allow you to come so close this morning that you can put your arms around his neck, while he in response will put his arms around your neck, and all the windows of heaven will be hoisted to let the redeemed look out and see the spectacle of a rejoicing father and a returned prodigal locked in glorious embrace. Quit worshiping the golden calf, and bow this day before him in whose presence we must all appear when the world has turned to ashes and the scorched parchment of the sky shall be rolled together like an historic scroll.

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