

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE NOTED DIVINE'S SUNDAY DISCOURSE.

Subject: "Gideon's Battle With the Midianites."

TEXT: "And the three companions blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp, and all the host ran and cried and fled."—Judges vii., 20, 21.

That is the strangest battle ever fought. God had told Gideon to go down and thrash the Midianites, but his army is too large, for the glory must be given to God and not to man. And so proclamation is made that all those of the troops who are cowardly and want to go home may go, and 22,000 of them scampered away, leaving only 10,000 men. But God says the army is too large yet, and so he orders these 10,000 remaining to march down through a stream and command Gideon to notice in what manner these men drink of the water as they pass through it.

Well, the 10,000 men marched down in the stream, and the most of them come down on all fours and plunge their mouths like a horse or an ox into the water and drink, but there are 300 men who, instead of stooping, just dip the palm of their hands in the water and bring it to their lips, "lapping it as a dog lappeth." Those 300, lank, rapid, enthusiastic men are chosen for the campaign. They are each to take a trumpet in the right hand, and a pitcher in the left hand, and a lamp inside the pitcher, and then at a given signal they are to blow the trumpets, and throw down the pitchers, and hold up the lamps. So it was done.

It is night. I see a great host of Midianites sound asleep in the valley of Jezreel. Gideon comes up with his 300 picked men, and when everything is ready the signal is given and they blow the trumpets, and they throw down the pitchers, and hold up the lamps, and the great host of Midianites, waking out of a sound sleep, take the crash of the creakery and the glare of the lamps for the coming on of an overwhelming foe, and they run and cut themselves to pieces and horribly perish.

The lessons of this subject are very spirited and impressive. This seemingly valueless lump of quartz has the pure gold in it. The smallest dewdrop on the meadow at night has a star sleeping in its bosom, and the most insignificant passage of Scripture has in it a shining truth. God's mint coins no small change.

I learn in the first place from this subject the lawfulness of Christian strategem. You know very well that the greatest victories ever gained by Washington or Napoleon were gained through the fact that they came when and in a way they were not expected—sometimes falling back to draw out the foe, sometimes breaking out from ambush, sometimes crossing a river on unheard of rafts, all the time keeping the opposing forces in wonderment as to what would be done next.

You all know what strategy is in military affairs. Now I think it is high time we had this art sanctified and spiritualized. In the church, when we are about to make a Christian assault, we send word to the opposing force when we expect to come, how many troops we have, and how many rounds of shot, and whether we will come with artillery, infantry or cavalry, and of course we are defeated. There are thousands of men who might be surprised into the kingdom of God. We need more tact and ingenuity in Christian work. It is in spiritual affairs as in military, that success depends on attacking that part of the enemy which is not armed and entrenched.

For instance, here is a man all armed on the doctrine of election. All his troops of argument and prejudice are at that particular state. You may batter away at that side of the castle for fifty years, and you will not take it, but just when you trumpet to the besiegers of the heart's affections, and in five minutes you capture him. I never knew a man to be saved through a brilliant argument. You cannot hook men into the kingdom of God by the horns of a dilemma. There is no grace in syllogisms. Here is a man armed on the subject of perseverance of the saints. He does not believe in it. Attack him at that point, and he will persevere to the very last in not believing it. Here is a man armed on the subject of baptism. He believes in sprinkling or immersion. All your discussion of ecclesiastical hydropathy will not change him. I remember when I was a boy that with other boys I went into the river on a summer day to bathe, and we used to dash water on each other, but never got any result except that our eyes were blinded, and all this splashing of water between Baptists and Pedobaptists never results in anything but the blurring of the spiritual eyesight. In other words, you can never capture a man's soul at the point at which he is especially entrenched. But there is in every man's heart a bolt that can be easily shoved. A little child four years old may touch that bolt, and it will spring back, and the door will swing open, and Christ will come in.

I think that the finest of all the fine arts is the art of doing good, and yet this art is the least cultured. We have in the kingdom of God to-day enough troops to conquer the whole earth for Christ if we only had skillful maneuvering. I would rather have the 300 lamps and pitchers of Christian strategem than 100,000 drawn swords of literary and ecclesiastical combat.

I learn from this subject also that a small part of the army of God will have to do all the hard fighting. Gideon's army was originally composed of 32,000 men, but they went off until there were only 10,000 left, and that was subtracted from until there were only 300. It is the same in all ages of the Christian church. A few men have to do the hard fighting. Take a membership of 1000, and you generally find that fifty people do the work. Take a membership of 500, and you generally find that ten people do the work. There are scores of churches where two or three people do the work.

We mourn that there is so much useless lumber in the mountains of Lebanon. I think of the 10,000,000 membership of the Christian church to-day in 5,000,000 of the names were off the books the church would be stronger. You know that the more cowards and drones there are in any army the weaker it is. I would rather have the 300 picked men of Gideon than the 32,000 unskilled host. The many Christians there are standing in the way of all progress! I think it is the duty of the church of God to ride over them, and the quicker it does it the quicker it does its duty.

Do not worry, O Christian, if you have to do more than your share of the work. You had better thank God that He has called you to be one of the picked men rather than to belong to the host of stragglers. Would not you rather be one of the 300 that fight than the 22,000 that run? I suppose those cowardly Gideonites who went off congratulated themselves. They said: "We got rid of all that fighting, did not we? How lucky we have been! That battle costs us nothing at all." But they got none of the spoils of the victory. After the battle the 300 men went down and took the wealth of the Midianites, and out of the cups and platters of their enemies they feasted. And the time will come, my dear brethren, when the hosts of darkness will be routed, and Christ will say to His troops: "Well done, my brave men. Go up and take the spoils. Be more than conquerors forever." And in that day all deserters will be shot.

Again, I learn from this subject that God's way is different from man's, but is always the best way. If we had the planning of that battle, we would have taken those 32,000 men that originally belonged to the army, and we would have drilled them and marched them up and down by the day and week and month, and we would have had

them equipped with swords or spears, according to the way of arming in those times, and then we would have marched them down in solid column upon the foe. But that is not the way. God depletes the army, and takes away all their weapons, and gives them a lamp and a pitcher, and a trumpet, and tells them to go down and drive out the Midianites. I suppose some wiseacres were there who said: "That is not military tactics. The idea of 300 men unarmored conquering such a great host of Midianites!" It was the best way. What sword, spear or cannon ever accomplished such a victory as the lamp, pitcher and trumpet?

God's way is different from man's way, but it is always best. Take, for instance, the composition of the Bible. If we had had the writing of the Bible, we would have said: "Let one man write it. If you have twenty or thirty men to write a poem, or make a statute, or write a history, or make an argument, there will be flaws and contradictions." But God says: "Let not one man do it but forty men shall do it." And they did, differing enough to show there had been no collusion between them, but not contradicting each other on any important point, while they all wrote from their own standpoint and temperament, so that the matter of fact man has his Moses, the romantic nature his Ezekiel, the epigrammatic his Solomon, the warrior his Joshua, the sailor his Jonah, the loving his John, the logician his Paul. Instead of this Bible, which now I can lift in my hand—instead of the Bible the child can carry to Sunday-school, instead of the little Bible the sailor can put in his jacket when he goes to sea—if it had been left to men to write it would have been a thousand volumes, judging from the amount of ecclesiastical controversy which has arisen. God's way is different from man's, but it is best, infinitely best.

So it is in regard to the Christian's life. If we had had the planning of a Christian's life, we would have said: "Let him have eighty years of sunshine, a fine house to live in. Let his surroundings all be agreeable. Let him have sound health. Let no chill shiver through his limbs, no pain ache his brow or trouble shadow his soul." I enjoy the prosperity of others so much I would let every man have as much money as he wants and roses for his children's cheeks and fountains of gladness gushing in their large round eyes. But that is not God's way. It seems as if man must be cut, hit and pounded just in proportion as he is useful. His child falls from a third-story window and has its life dashed out. His most confident investment tumbles him into bankruptcy. His friends, on whom he depended, and the natural force of gravitation in taking him down. His life is a Bull Run defeat. Instead of 32,000 advantages he has only 10,000. Aye, only 300—aye, none at all. How many good people there are at their wits' end about their livelihood, about their reputation? But they will find out it is the best way after awhile. God will show them that He depletes their advantages just for the same reason He depleted the army of Gideon—that they may be induced to throw themselves on His mercy.

A grapevine says in the early spring: "How glad I am to get through the winter! I shall have no more trouble now. Summer weather will come, and the garden will be very beautiful." But the gardener comes and cuts the vine here and there with his knife. The twigs begin to fall, and the grapevine cries out: "Murder! What are you cutting me for?" "Ah," says the gardener, "I don't mean to kill you. If I did not do this, you would be the laughing stock of all the other vines before the season is over." Months go on, and one day the gardener comes under the trellis, where great clusters of grapes hang, and the grape vine says: "Thank you, sir. You could not have done anything so kind as to have cut me with that knife." "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." No pruning, no grapes; no grinding mill, no flour; no battle, no victory; no cross, no crown.

So God's way, in the redemption of the world, is different from ours. If we had our way, we would have had the angels up to light, or we would have had the nations exterminated, or we would have had the unsaved saved, or the work of Christ, saving the unsaved, done in a twinkling. Why is it that the Christians on whom that God has chosen to work, when they would so easily demolish them? It is His way in order that all generations may co-operate and that all men may know they cannot do the work themselves. Just in proportion as these pyramids of sin go up in height will they come down in ghostliness of ruin.

I learn from this subject that the overthrow of God's enemies will be sudden and terrific. There is the army of the Midianites down in the valley of Jezreel. I suppose their mighty men are dreaming of victory. Mount Gilboa never stood sentinel for so large a host. The spears and the shields of the Midianites gleam in the moonlight and glance on the eye of the Israelites, who hover like a battle of eagles, ready to swoop from the cliff. Sleep on, O army of the Midianites! With the night to hide them and the mountain to guard them and strong arms to defend them, let no slumbering foe-man dream of disaster. Peace to the captains and the spearmen.

Crash go the pitchers! Up flare the lamps! To the mountains! Fly, fly! Troop running against troop, thousands trampling upon thousands. Hark to the scream and groan of the routed foe, with the Lord God Almighty after them! How sudden the onset! How wild the consternation! How utter the defeat! I do not care so much what is against me if God is not. You want a better sword or carbine than I have ever seen to go out and fight against the Lord Omnipotent. Give me God for my ally, and you may have all the battlements and battalions.

I saw the defrauder in his splendid house. It seemed as if he had conquered God as he stood amid the blaze of chandeliers and pier mirrors. In the diamonds of the wardrobe I saw the tears of the widows whom he had robbed and in the snowy satins the pallor of the white cheeked orphans whom he had wronged. The blood of the oppressed flowed in the deep crimson of the imported chair. The music trembled with the sorrow of unrequited toil. But the wave of mirth dashed higher on reefs of coral and pearl. The days and the nights went merrily. No sick child dared pull that silver doorbell. No beggar dared sit on that marble step. No voice of prayer floated amid that tapestry. No shadow of a judgment day darkened that fresco. No tear of human sympathy dropped upon that upholstery. Pomp scratched the hall, and dissipation filled her cup, and all seemed safe as the Midianites in the valley of Jezreel. But God came. Calamity smote the money market. The partridge left its eggs unhatched. Crash went all the porcelain pitchers! Ruin, rout, dismay and woe in the valley of Jezreel!

Ans for those who fight against God! Only two sides. Man immortal, which side are you on? Woman immortal, which side are you on? Do you belong to the 300 that are going to win the day or to the great host of Midianites asleep in the valley, only to be roused up in consternation and ruin? Suddenly the golden bowl of life will be broken and the trumpet blown that will startle our soul into eternity. The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night and as the God armed Israelites upon the sleeping foe. Ha! Canst thou pluck up courage for the day when the trumpet wail hath never been blown shall speak the roll call of the dead, and the earth, dashing against a lost meteor, have its mountains scattered to the stars and oceans emptied in the air? Oh, then, what will become of you? What will become of me?

If those Midianites had only given up their swords the day before the disaster, all would have been well, and if you will now surrender the sins with which you have been fighting against God you will be safe. Oh, make peace with Him now, through Jesus Christ the Lord! With the clutch of a drowning man seize the cross. Oh, surrender! Surrender! Christ, with his hand on his pierced side, asks you to.

Sixty-four Paperless Counties. There are sixty-four counties in Texas in which no papers are published.

A Prayer for Rain.

The part of the Occident in which the settlement of Hawville is located had been afflicted with a long and severe drouth. After the ablest attempts of the rain-makers had brought no relief, a special prayer meeting was held at the Methodist church, and a united appeal for rain was made to Providence. When the service had been going on for some time Col. Handy Polk, an enterprising real estate agent, rose in his place, and with becoming humility began: "Our heavenly Father, we are assembled here today to call Thy attention to the fact that we need rain, and need it mighty bad! It ain't a case of merely wantin' it, but we've jest nacherly got to have it or go stone broke! Our business interests are prostrated and town lots are bein' offered for half the prices they would have brought six months ago, and goin' beggin' at that. Our crops are burnt up, and if we don't get relief soon half of the population will be forced to pull up stakes and go back East to their wives' people. And, in addition to the distress that a continuation of this yere drouth will bring to us, I beg to call Thy attention to the injury it will inflict upon Thy cause and kingdom in this locality. Already many of the faint hearted have back slidden, and it is only a question of time till sin and iniquity run rampant in our midst. Now I beg also to remind Thee that it is Col. Handy Polk, the well-known real estate, loan and insurance agent, who is humbly askin' the favor of Thee, and that Thou canst depend upon it that the case stands precisely as I have stated it. And I hope Thou wilt give my humble petition Thy keeful attention, and grant us before to-morrow night or by the day after to-morrow, at the very latest, the rain we so badly need." It is to be recorded that, within the space of twenty-four hours from that time, the rain began falling in torrents.—New York Tribune.

Tennessee's All-Negro Town.

There is an odd little town on Johnson Island, in the Mississippi river, just north of Memphis. It is a negro town and is owned by a negro planter. The island is eleven miles in area and is under the Tennessee statutes. The town is a taxing district and not incorporated. Judson is the name of the place, named after the white planter whose son is the mulatto owner of the island. The case in which the mortgagee won the rich property in contesting the will of the dead planter is well remembered, and the courts duly allowed him part of the inheritance, since he was the only living issue of Judson.

So far as known, Judson is the only negro town in America where there is not a white man. Elder Judson, a wealthy white man, allows no white man to come except on a visit. The town has 450 inhabitants and is well organized, since Judson is a highly educated and progressive man. He owns the land on the island and most of the inhabitants are his tenants. He has justice of the peace and has provided happy homes for the men who work for him and enjoy his bounty. The island is about eight miles in length and in a few places is not more than sixty yards wide. The land is usually rich and fine crops are produced every year. There are six stores in the place, with a few shops, two churches and a school.—Chicago Record.

Gone Astay.

Former Resident: "Well, everything in the old town seems the same. But what became of the Widow Smith's boys? They always seemed such bright lads."

Native (with a sigh): "They both turned out bad. John's bin sent to the reformatory an' Bill's learnin' the printin' trade."—Puck.

Nearly as Bad.

"Brother Wilgus," said the deacon, "there is a report current that you were run out of Plunkville by White Caps five years ago." "It was not quite that bad," said the minister, with a slight smile; "it was only a threatened donation party."—Indianapolis Journal.

\$100 Reward, \$100.

The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dread disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is a purely natural remedy, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers, that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials. Address: F. J. CHERNEY & Co., Toledo, O. Sold by Druggists, 75¢.

An Atlanta Banker has Words of Advice for a Home Institution. Mr. Chas. E. Currier, of the Atlanta National Bank, is very careful with his words, not only in financing, but in his conversation generally. Like the rest of us, he is still sometimes but, unlike many of us, he knows how to get well. "I have used Tynor's Dyspepsia Remedy for attacks of acute indigestion, and have always found it to give instantaneous relief. I consider it a medicine of high merit." Price per bottle, 50 cents. For sale by all druggists.

FITZ stopped free by Dr. KLINE'S GREAT NERVE RESTORER. No fits after first day's use. Marvelous cures. Treatise and \$2.00 trial bottle free. Dr. Kline, 931 Arch St., Phila., Pa.

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Take Parker's Ginger Tonic. Hager with you. It will exceed your expectations in abating colds, and many ills and aches.

To Avoid constipation is to prolong life. Ripens Tablets are gentle, yet positive in their cure of constipation. One tablet gives relief.

I have found Pico's Cure for Consumption an unfailing medicine.—F. R. Lutz, 1365 Scott St., Covington, Ky., Oct. 1, 1894.

If afflicted with sore eyes use Dr. Isaac Thompson's Eye-water. Druggists sell at 25c per bottle.

High Prices for Rare Coins.

During the recent session of the fifth annual convention of the American Numismatic Association, at Washington, coins of almost priceless value were displayed. As viewed from a numismatic standpoint it is the condition of a coin which fixes its value. It is not the date, nor age, except in less than thirty instances, that is sought for at the big quoted premiums. Pierced, plugged, badly worn, scratched coins, or those on which the dates are illegible, have no particular value.

For gold there is but a limited numismatic demand, and the supply is greatly in excess of that demand. The double eagle of 1849 is worth about \$300. All gold dollars are at a premium and worth from \$1.20 to \$1.40 each. Those dated 1863, 1864 and 1865 command from \$2.50 to \$4 each, and those dated 1875 are worth \$6. The bulk of numismatic transactions are in silver coins. A dollar of 1804 is worth \$400, a half dollar of 1797 brings \$40, and a quarter of 1827 demands \$40. The dime of 1804 is the most valuable, being worth \$10, and the half dime of 1802 easily holds the record at \$63. A large copper cent of 1799 would bring \$25, and a half cent of 1796 is in demand at \$30.

A thin silver half dime of 1802 was bought by its present holder for \$63, and has sold for \$75.

Even Then.

Adam stood at the gate of Eden, looking out steadily at the new world. "Why don't you hurry up?" he shouted. "I can't for the life of me see why a woman never is ready in time. What the—serpent—is keeping you?" "I—I can't get these fig leaves pinned straight," was the reply of Eve in a voice that warned him to carry the discussion no further.

All Broke at Once.

"So you took your family to the sea-shore?" said the facetious man. "I did," was the melancholy reply. "Where there is such grandeur in the breaking of the waves—" "Yes." "And the breaking of the engagements—" "Yes, and of the \$20 bill."—Washington Star.

Highest of all in Leavening Power.—L:



Sorry Not to Oblige. People, the tailor, was a most accommodating gentleman, and was often invited to the houses of "the great." One day, staying with a certain nobleman, he was asked, one morning, by his host, what he thought of the party who had assembled at table the night before. "Why, very pleasant, indeed, your grace; but perhaps a little mixed." "Hang it all, Poole!" responded the jovial peer; "I couldn't have all tailors!"—Argonaut.

Had to Work.

Rural Raggies—It's no use, Tatts; I've got ter work. Tramping Tatters—Land o' labor, Roory, me boy! What's de matter wid yer? Are yer losin' yer intellec? Rural Raggies—No; but I swallered a yeast cake in mistake for a marsh mallow.—Judge.

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