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TALMAGE'S SERMON.

A TALK ON GIDEON'S ARMY AND GOD'S WAY.

Lawfulness of Christian Strategem—Useless Lumber in Lebanon Mountains—Gideon's Depleted Army and the Lesson of His Wonderful Victory.

A Strange Battle.

In his sermon last Sunday Rev. Dr. Talmage discussed a subject which is of special interest to Sunday school teachers and scholars at the present time, being Gideon's battle with the Midianites near Mount Gilboa. The text chosen was Judges vii, 20, 21: "And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps 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."

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 commands Gideon to notice in what manner these men drink of the water as they pass through it. If they get down on all fours and drink, then they are to be pronounced lazy and incompetent for the campaign, but if, in passing through the stream, they scoop up the water in the palm of their hand and drink and pass on, they are to be the men selected for the battle.

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, dip the palm of their hands in the water and bring it to their lips, "lapping it as a dog lappeth." Those 300 brisk, rapid, enthusiastic men are chosen for the campaign.

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 unboarded 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 in attacking that part of the castle which is not armed and entrenched.

The Power of Christian Strategem.
For instance, here is a man all armed on the doctrine of election, all his troops of argument and prejudice are at that particular gate. You may batter away at that side of the castle for fifty years, and you will not take it, but just wheel your troops to the side gate 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 4 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 1,000, 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.

Useless Cowards and Drones.
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, if 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. How 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 Gideons who went off congratulated themselves. They said: "We got rid of all that fighting, did we not? 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 pitchers 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, unarmed, 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 the Best.
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 statue, 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, and 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. 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 glancing in their large round eyes. But that is not God's way. It seems as if man must be cut and 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, aid the natural force of gravitation in taking him down. His life is a Bull Run defeat. Instead of 32,000 advantages, he has only 1,000. 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 Motto of Frank Josef.
A German author, who is collecting autographs for an album for girls, and already has valuable contributions by the Emperors William I. and Frederick, has obtained the following motto from the Emperor Francis Josef, who is not known to have given such autographs before. It is written in a clear, bold hand, and runs thus: "Take your duties seriously, and require the same of others, but be lenient toward the failings of your neighbor—Franz Josef."

The Grapevine and the Gardener.
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 grapevine 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 Jesus stand in the door of heaven and beckon the nations up to light, or we would have had angels flying around the earth proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. Why is it that the chains stay on when God could knock them off? Why do thrones of despotism stand when God could 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 glaustrousness of ruin.

O thou father of all iniquity! If thou canst hear my voice above the crackling of the flames, drive on thy projects, dispatch the emissaries, build thy temples and forge thy chains, but know that thy fall from heaven was not greater than thy final overthrow shall be when thou shalt be driven down into the fiery den, and for every lie thou hast framed upon earth thou shalt have an additional bell of fury poured into thine anguish by the vengeance of our God, and all heaven shall shout at the overthrow as from the ransomed earth the song breaks through the skies: "Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Hallelujah! for the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ! God's way in the composition of the Bible, God's way in the redemption of the world, God's way in everything—different from man's way, but the best.

God the Great Ally.
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 spearman!

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 fear 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 satin the pallor of the white-checked 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 sit on that marble step. 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 strutted the hall, and dissipation filled her cup, and all seemed safe as the Midianites in the valley of Jezreel. God came. Calamity smote the money market. The partridge left its eggs unguarded. Crash went all the porcelain pitchers! Ruin, rout, dismay and woe in the valley of Jezreel!

Surrender ere it is Too Late.
Alas 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 which hath never been blown shall speak the roll call of the dead, and the earth, having 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.

WHAT WOMEN WEAR.

STYLES FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO LOOK PRETTY.

Prevailing Modes Are So Varied There Is No Reason for a Woman's Being Badly Sued—Big Sleeves Have Not Yet Been Retired.

Fashions for Fall.

THE present styles are so varied and there are so few imperative rules that apply generally that the reason for a woman's being badly suited must lie in her lack of judgment or taste. It is decidedly an advance on the custom of the past to bring it about that any sort of a figure can be suited and almost any taste gratified, and the next logical step will be to widen woman's choice a little further, so that a rule can be enforced that will forbid a woman from wearing anything that is not becoming to her. At present she has her own way in colors. There may be as many in one costume as she likes, only they must blend, "belong together," and the general effect must be one of elegance and harmony. As to materials, the favored choices are smooth cloth, combined with velvet, brocade or satin for dressy occasions; crepon with satin and lace, or all by itself, for house and dress; rough cloth for street and tallor-made gowns; silk, satin, brocade, velvet, poplin, etc., for formal use. Dame Fashion

plain, only the corselet belt showing as in front. Skirts slashed in fan shape all around, fronts, sides and back, the slashes filled with frills of lace or showing flat panels of color and material contrasting to the rest of the dress, will be worn, and a very good way it will be to give "spring" to the skirt that needs a little. But it is not primarily a device of making over, but, on the contrary, appears on the most elaborate new dresses. One of these is shown in the next picture, a stunning reception dress of ash-gray silk sat with maize. Its wide skirt has cascades of laurel-green velvet, topped with bands of steel and spangle embroidery, placed at regular intervals at the sides and front, and the blouse waist has a fancy yoke, alike in back and front, of spangled guipure, with two velvet cascades at the sides. The cuffs are entirely of spangled lace, bands of the same ornament the puffs, and the belt and collar are of the velvet.

The manner in which a rich effect is obtained by brilliant colors without the use of lace is well shown by the fourth sketch, which presents a reception dress of green cloth combined with bright Scotch plaid. The latter appears on the lower part of the skirt and above this comes fine embroidery in bright scarlet silk. The jacket bodice has vest and sleeves of the plaid, and the remainder, including body, basque, yoke and sailor collar, is of the cloth embroidered with the scarlet silk. Scarlet silk is used for the lining. In no department of women's dressing are the recent changes of style more welcome than in negliges or boudoir gowns, for they bring many lovely outfits. The adjectives that apply to the dress in the final picture would properly be superlatives, surely, and the pity is that the wearer of such a dress should not be permitted to more widely display its beauties. Made of rose pink silk with a full gathered front of deep ivory satin shirred several times in the waist, it has a yoke of ivory guipure with points resting on the sleeves in back and front, and is finished with folded silk draped with a paste buckle. Back and sides are fitted, skirt and silk sleeves are very full, and full cascades of lace border the edges of the silk where it joins the front panel. Copyright, 1905.

The standard weight of an English silk hat is 4 ounces.

BEAUTY TO BE VIEWED BY FEW.

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below the waist line, where the front panel is, of course, narrow, and the tabs at their tips almost meet. Then there are three other sets of tabs, distributed further down, all carefully "buttoned." Covered wood and pearl buttons are much used, and gold ones are the correct choice when gilt appears in the other trimmings. So these are gold buttons that adorn the fronts of the next pictured bodice, because ecru galloon spangled with gold is used for trimming. Tobacco-brown cloth is the material, the skirt being garnished with two bands of the galloon and lined with ecru silk. The fitted bodice has a wide corselet belt and a deep yoke, the latter in front only, of cream guipure spangled with gold, the corselet being edged at the top and bottom with pale blue and gold brocaded satin ribbon, which is also used for the bows at the waist, sleeves and collar. The back is



ANOTHER COMBINATION OF BRIGHT SHADES.

plaid. The latter appears on the lower part of the skirt and above this comes fine embroidery in bright scarlet silk. The jacket bodice has vest and sleeves of the plaid, and the remainder, including body, basque, yoke and sailor collar, is of the cloth embroidered with the scarlet silk. Scarlet silk is used for the lining. In no department of women's dressing are the recent changes of style more welcome than in negliges or boudoir gowns, for they bring many lovely outfits. The adjectives that apply to the dress in the final picture would properly be superlatives, surely, and the pity is that the wearer of such a dress should not be permitted to more widely display its beauties. Made of rose pink silk with a full gathered front of deep ivory satin shirred several times in the waist, it has a yoke of ivory guipure with points resting on the sleeves in back and front, and is finished with folded silk draped with a paste buckle. Back and sides are fitted, skirt and silk sleeves are very full, and full cascades of lace border the edges of the silk where it joins the front panel. Copyright, 1905.

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Blue and White Table Linen.
Blue and white is the fashionable china for the table this season, and one of the latest ideas in table decoration is to have dollies, table mats, centerpieces and tray cloths embroidered in a shade to match the blue of the china. This is done in the old-fashioned marking cotton, which will not fade, and when combined with white wash silk, gives a very unique effect.

This blue and white craze in the table appointments decrees that the entire set of dollies, table mats, etc., must be carried out in the same design, the edges to be worked in scallops in blue, instead of being hemstitched. All the outlining in the pattern is done in blue, and inside of this it is filled in with French knots and fancy stitches of the white silk. Entire sets stamped with the same design may be purchased at any of the larger fancy stores, or, if one has any talent with the pencil, very unique and original designs may be adapted for this purpose.

Surprise Desserts.
Surprise desserts are always in demand. They give the correct finishing touch to a little dinner. Here is a receipt which, if followed, will delight one's guests and also reflect credit upon the hostess: Select six firm, good-sized bananas and remove the pulp, being careful to split open the banana so that the skin will be as perfect as possible. Beat the pulp to a cream, measure it and add half the quantity of sliced peaches, one tablespoonful of lemon juice, three tablespoonfuls of confectioner's sugar and one tablespoonful of cherry wine. Mix this well together and be very careful not to have the pulp too liquid. Then fill the banana skins and stand them on ice. Before serving tie each banana with ribbon.

Ammonia in the Summer Time.
Ammonia, always useful to the housekeeper, has especial advantage in the summer time by its power of removing lemon stains. A housekeeper who has learned this simple household fact by experience, suggests that a little pamphlet be prepared to instruct all housekeepers in the different methods of removing spots and stains. Many simple means are not widely known. For removing the stains of strawberries and other fruits from damask hot water is often sufficient. Deep stains may be removed by a solution of chloride of lime. White stains from hot dishes upon a polished table are removed by rubbing the spot with spirits of camphor.

Bacon and Liver Stew.
Pour boiling water over a beef or calf liver, let stand one-half hour, then cut the liver with deep gashes, insert thin slices of bacon in these cuts and fasten in with toothpicks. Have three or four slices of bacon in the pot over a hot fire frying with an onion cut fine; when fried to a crisp put the liver in, cover tightly, let cook about ten minutes, turning often, then dredge well with flour, pour boiling water over till the liver is covered, put on the top of the stove where it will cook slowly. Cook three hours; a nice brown gravy will be done with the liver.—Womankind.

Blackberry Cordial.
Blackberry cordial is an invaluable home-made drink for hot-weather disorders of the stomach. To make it, squeeze blackberries enough to make a quart of juice, add to it a pound of loaf sugar and let it dissolve, heating it slowly. Add to it one teaspoonful of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg. Roll all together twenty minutes. On removing from the fire add a wineglass of brandy. Put in bottles while hot and seal. Use a teaspoonful for a glass of iced water.

Stringbeans for Winter Use.
String the beans and cut them up in as thin pieces as possible. In the bottom of a stone crock put a thick layer of salt, then a layer of beans, till the crock is full, taking care that the top is covered with salt. Put the cover on, keep in a cool, dark place. I filled a three-gallon crock last fall and kept it in the cellar all winter. I used the last only a few weeks ago, and they were just as good as fresh beans.

Apple Charlotte.
Rub the bottom and sides of the pudding dish well with butter, slice stale bread thin and line the dish with it. Peel tart apples, cut in small pieces enough to nearly fill the pan, scattering bits of butter and sugar well through it. Soak slices of bread enough to cover the apples, put a plate over to keep the bread close to the apples. Bake in a quick oven.—Womankind.

Tarts.
When pies are to be made, it is a good plan to make more crust than needed for present use, and bake it up in shells for tarts. Bake in the gem pans. These shells will keep quite a while in a close tin box, and are handy for emergency to heat a moment in the oven, then fill with some nice jam or jelly. They make a pretty addition to the tea table.—Womankind.