

UNITED THEY STAND.

REV. DR. TALMAGE'S UNITY SERMON
FROM CURIOUS TEXT.

SERMON INSPIRING LESSON.

Message to Churches and Religious Communities That Have Been Torn By Dissension or Weakened By Discord—Spiritual Victories For Christians Acting As a Harmonious Unit—Gideon's Unique Victory.

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1904, by William Baily, of Toronto, at the Dept. of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Los Angeles, Cal., Jan. 31.—To the churches and religious communities that have been torn by dissension or weakened by discord and defection this sermon conveys a powerful and inspiring lesson, showing how even a small company of Christians, acting as a harmonious unit, may win great spiritual victories. The text is Judges vii, 6, "And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men."

No securitist is the army's recruiting officer. In most cases, whether in peace or war, the problem which must be solved by the war department is not "How can we reject our volunteers?" but "How can we persuade or compel men to enlist in the ranks?" During America's great civil war all healthy men in the south between the ages of eighteen and sixty were forced to shoulder a musket if unwilling to go as volunteers, while in the north, after the volunteers had ceased to respond to Lincoln's repeated calls for troops the "draft" officers went everywhere.

story of Gideon's campaign is unique in history. Here was a general about to march against a powerful invader, well armed and equipped, whom he must meet with a raw and undisciplined force, actually reducing by a capricious test the number of his followers. Under God's command he dispensed with nine-tenths of his men. When General Gideon raised his standard to repel the invasion of the Midianites and Amalekites, 32,000 volunteers answered the call to arms. But God said to Gideon, better quality than quantity. Better a few loyal and devoted men to repel the invasion than a great host made up of disgruntled and fault-finding, indifferent recruits. Gideon, as directed by God, cut down the numbers of that Israelitish army. He cut them down and down and down and down until there were left only three hundred men—only three small companies to follow their intrepid leader. But they won the victory. So it may be in the great conflict between good and evil in this world. Consecrated, loyal, earnest men are needed in the struggle for righteousness.

The church should be a harmonious, organized army. The loyalty with which one soldier holds to another in the national army decides to a great extent the aggregate strength of that army. When going into battle it is just as important for a soldier to know that he is standing shoulder to shoulder with friends as to realize that he is standing face to face with attacking foes. Civil war veterans have told me that the affection which bound the men of each company together was like bands of unbreakable steel. If a soldier cut foraging sound food hidden away in a bag, or if he found a deserted pile of blankets or an extra pile of dry wood to be cut into kindling, the first persons he thought of were those of his company. There the members shared each other's joys. They sympathized with each other in their sorrows. So, my friends, the members of each separate Christian church ought to be linked together by gospel love. They should try to shield each other and pray for each other and care for each other and help each other. They should never before the world expose each other's weaknesses any more than a wife should be willing to publish before a cynical neighborhood the weaknesses and shortcomings of her husband. Church members, in other words, should be kindly affectioned to one another, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.

"The church a harmonious gospel company? Oh, no," says one. "That ideal is not always a possibility. I know it is not possible for me to live in sympathy and love with all the members of my church. Some of them have been too mean and have done me too many injustices. I can truly say I do not want to harm them, but I certainly desire that they should leave me entirely alone. I certainly intend to leave them entirely alone. I do not wish to keep them out of heaven, but I do not wish some of them to sit beside me in a celestial mansion or by any common earthly fireside made of brick and stone." My friend, by such an answer you are proving the Holy Spirit's power inefficacious. You are demonstrating that you are unwilling to become one of Gideon's band and live in faithful harmony with the chosen three hundred. God is willing to give you grace enough to love all your fellow church members if you will only ask for that grace. Has not the sure testimony been given, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me?"

You are now about to decide your whole eternal destiny. You are to decide it not by how you profess to love God, but by how you are willing to love your fellow church members. Are you ready, here and now, as Christian soldiers to "be kindly affectioned to one another, with brotherly love in honor preferring one another?" Do not tell me that it is impossible for you to live in Christian sympathy with those who belong to your same church family. By the grace of God it is possible. And if you are not willing to let that divine love have full control of your life, then instead of staying in a church and disputing and finding fault continually with the other members it is far better for you to leave that church and go back to the world and thereby play the gospel coward, as did the 22,000 men who deserted Gideon's standard at the first opportunity the Hebrew commander gave them to skulk home.

The church should be a harmoniously organized army. It is not only possible thereby to hurl a solid front against the Satanic foe, but also by preponderance of numbers, concentrated in one move, to make, as the Bible says, a little one "become a thousand and a small one a strong nation." Concentration in military parlance means not only conquest, but generally the complete mystification and disorganization of an opposing foe.

It was by the successful concentration of forces against his enemies and by the lightning rapidity of his movements that Napoleon Bonaparte won his great victories. During all the military career of the "Little Corsican" his armies were outnumbered by those of his opponents. But one day we find the brilliant military genius attacking one wing of the Austrian army. The next day we find him attacking another wing of the Austrian army. One day he is falling upon the defenseless Italian fields by boldly scaling the Alps. Another day we see him concentrating his artillery fires upon a separated part of the German army. Napoleon with his forces would have been wiped off the face of the earth ten years before he met his fate at Waterloo had he attempted to battle his enemies in bulk. He beat Austria and Italy and Germany and Spain by defeating his foes by detail—piecemeal. He did it by the power of military concentration. This was the way Frederick the Great carried on his wars of many years. This was the way Washington and Nathaniel Greene won their victories. So, my friends, as Gideon marshaled his three hundred, the church soldiers should be a united band. They must be able to hurl all their spiritual strength against the Satanic foe in one place and at one time.

How can this great forward movement of a single church against sin be concentrated and conserved? First, by all the church members every seven days answering church roll at the mid-week prayer meeting. Wednesday night prayer meetings are even more important than the Lord's day worship. It is by the commingling of prayers that the spiritual forces of a church become inflamed with the holy zeal and all conquering gospel enthusiasm. It is to that roll call that the members of the church must give diligent heed. Concentrated church membership at the mid-week prayer meeting is of overwhelming importance. I know of what I speak. During my life I have observed the ways of two kinds of

churches. In the one I have seen a mighty gospel conquest going on month in and month out. Why? The people attended the mid-week prayer meeting. In the other kind of church spiritual results were never assured. Why? The people, no matter how the pastor begged and pleaded, failed to attend the mid-week prayer meeting. A church with a full prayer meeting means a spiritually conquering church. A church with an empty prayer meeting means a spiritually dead church.

The concerted forward movement of a church, in the next place, must be manifested in the united voices of its members lifted in songs of praise and in its gospel energy. Oh, yes, the very best voices trained by our musical colleges are never too good to be allowed to sing in the church choir. But the church members have no more right, in this gospel movement, to let the choir do all the singing than the pew has to expect the pulpit to do all the praying. Methodist preachers have sung as many immortal souls into glory as Methodist pulpits have won by preaching. "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!" In every service let the old fashioned hymns be given out and let all the people sing. Yea, shout forth your gospel battle songs like the sound of many waters! Concentration of the church forces in prayer meeting means spiritual conquest. Christ's Concentration of the songs of praise in one great congregational chorus means also spiritual conquest for Christ.

The concerted strength of the church, in the next place, should make that church a unit in its belief, in the authority of God's revealed word and also in its protest against sin, wherever found. When the three hundred Gideonites went forth to battle, their most effective weapons were a light lamp concealed within a pitcher and a trumpet in the right hand. The lamp lighted, can be used as the symbol of gospel faith, as revealed in God's word. The trumpet can be used as the symbol of the voice of a Christian church protesting against a world steeped in sin. Plenty of room in every Christian church for all repentant sinners saved by Christ's blood, but no room for any man who will not accept the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ and who will not protest against sin, wherever found. The Christian church must be a unit in its Calvary belief, and it must be a unit in its protest against sin.

As in every other army, the Christian army must have a countersign. When I belonged to the United States army, during the Spanish-American war, there were certain times I could not pass in or out of the camp without giving the countersign. So we find that all the Christian churches have a countersign. That countersign is one word of five letters, and that one word is Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! Jesus, who is our Saviour; Jesus, who lived and died and rose again to redeem the world and to save his people from their sins.

The church army must be a harmonious army and show a brave front. There is sure to be to a more or less extent cowardice lurking in the hearts of us all. If one Christian soldier is allowed, using a common phrase, to show the "white feather," he will be very apt to demoralize all the ranks. "What!" you say. "Every man to a more or less extent a coward?" Yes, my friend. We all have a cowardly streak within us. We must therefore be very careful how we let a faint hearted Christian soldier influence us to turn and run.

If you do not believe that all men may become outward cowards, read the memoirs of one of our greatest generals, than whom no braver man ever lived. Yet he tells us that when he went into battle the first time he trembled like an aspen leaf shaken in the wind. He was so scared that he would have turned and fled but for the fact that he was afraid his regiment would run away with him. Then, much to his surprise, when he came to where the enemy had been encamped he found that they had been even more frightened than himself. During the previous night, without striking a blow, the enemy had turned and fled. Yes, there is a cowardly streak in all of us. Therefore, Christian soldiers, do not go publishing around your sins, do not criticize your minister in public, because you may start others criticizing him. Do not talk about your anxieties lest the church audiences should not keep us. Do not exaggerate the results of your foolish imaginations. Do not, in other words, give free rein to your gospel cowardice. If you do you may unkenel and unleash the cowardly disposition in all. If you ever wish to be a blessing as a church member, sound forth the inspiring words of hope. God knows there are enough and too many who are always ready to sit around in the dark church corners and croak the miserable, whining, grating words of despair.

Lastly, I remark that a church membership should be a united and harmonious and compact army. One traitor in the camp can do infinitely more damage than five hundred enemies without.

It is of vast importance that the preservation of the sacred honor of the Christian church be entrusted to those who are truly her friends. Therefore, my fellow church members, never try to placate a church enemy by electing any man to a position of trust unless he be a prayerful man and unless deep down in his Christlike heart he fully realizes the solemnity of his trust. Never elect any man to a position in a church unless that man is first ready to put all bitterness out of his heart and to get down on his knees and earnestly and tenderly say: "O Lord, my God, teach me to love my fellow church members; Teach me to be an under shepherd to them, as thou art ready to guide me. Teach me, O Master, to say, 'I forgive,' as I would have thee say unto me, 'I forgive thee also, my child.'" No man in church life is fitted to be a leader of men until he himself is

first ready to be cleansed of sin, better a smaller church; better three hundred loyal Gideonites than thirty-two thousand men who are not ready to let Christ lead them as he would.

But I cannot close my study of this mighty theme of the church as a conquering army without citing you, my people, the object I have in view. First, I want to kindle to holy zeal the scores and hundreds and thousands of churches all over the land which have for years been torn and rent asunder with internal strife. Pastors are discouraged, people are discouraged. Christian communities are discouraged about them. "Oh," these people say, "we are only a little handful. We have dwindled down and down until there is hardly any membership left. What are we to do?" Why, ye discouraged churches, by the grace of God ye can do everything. God has been sifting your membership until the best are left. You are now a Gideon's band. United and welded together by trouble you can accomplish wonders. It was not by great numbers that Gideon won, but by the loyalty of a few.

My second purpose in this sermon is to show you that these conquerors over the Midianitish hosts were ordinary men. Who were they? We don't know. They were selected at random. Some came perhaps from wealthy homes; some came from the homes of poverty. They were all selected simply by the way they lapped up the water when they drank of the famous brook. So God is going to judge our availability to be among his chosen followers by the way we are ready to do, in his name, the little things of life. He will judge whether we are fitted for membership in the Gideonite band by the way we smile a good-morning; by the way we help upon the car a poor woman with her basket; by our willingness to sit by a humble sick-bed; by the way we lead in prayer in the house of trouble and by the way we forgive.

The third purpose: I would show that these three hundred immortal Gideonite conquerors were all volunteers. Christ's disciples must be volunteers, not conscripts. The Christian soldier of the church must be a volunteer. Will you enlist under Christ's banner? Will you go forth in the name of this church, a united band, to march against the Satanic hosts? Will you go forth a harmonious company of Christians, ready to battle in Christ's name? Will you not realize that all your past trials, whether in church or out of it, have been only a means used to fit you for ultimate gospel triumph?

EVERYDAY AILMENTS

Almost Invariably the Result of Poor Blood or Weak Nerves.

If your health is impaired in any way, however slight, this article should interest you. Ask any doctor and he will tell you that most of the ailments from which men and women of the present day suffer are due to weak, watery blood, or disorders of the nerve forces. In your case the trouble may only be making a start—showing itself in a tired feeling, a derangement of the digestion, perhaps an occasional headache or a feeling of nervousness. These symptoms are too often followed by a complete breakdown of the health. In such cases there is no medicine which will bring back health and strength as quickly as Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Thousands of weak and weary men and women owe their present good health and increased vitality to this medicine. These pills make new, rich, red blood and restore shattered nerves. This is the whole secret of the wonderful success of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Here is a bit of strong proof. Mrs. W. J. Clark, Sr., Boston, Ont., says:—"I suffered a great deal from a complication of troubles; rheumatism, liver trouble and pains about the heart all adding to my misery. A thorough use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cured me and now, at the age of fifty-two, all aches and pains have left me and I am enjoying the best of health." This is the verdict of all who give Dr. Williams' Pink Pills a trial. But you must get the genuine with the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People" on the wrapper around the box. If in doubt direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., and the pills will be mailed post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50.

Every person hears his own voice differently from other voices, including his own, in the phonograph, because when he speaks the sound is carried to the ear not only by the air, but also directly through the bones of the head, which changes its tone color.

Football is almost as popular in Burma as it is in the United States. The natives play the game unshod and kick and shoot goals with bare feet.

Leaver's Y-Z (Wise Head) Disinfectant Soap Powder is better than other powders, as it is both soap and disinfectant.

The excessively polite man is apt to develop into nuisance.

If your stomach is weak it should have help. Hood's Sarsaparilla gives strength to the stomach and cures dyspepsia and indigestion.

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A martyr is a man who lives up to his wife's expectation of him.

Most men overwork the personal pronoun I in ordinary conversation.



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