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GOSPEL CAMPAIGN

Captain in the Army of Christ Lays Out His Plans.

TALMAGE AFTER SPENDING HOLIDAYS

The Winter's Campaign Against Sin—Splendid Equipment Temporarily and Materially For the Battle—The Enemies From Within Are More to Be Feared Than Those Without the Fold.

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

Los Angeles, Cal., Sept. 25.—At the close of the vacation season and the opening of a new period of activity in the churches this sermon comes as a call to arms to all who are eager for spiritual conquest. The text is Revelation iii., 8, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

The Japanese armies have been concentrating for weeks and months to acquire a commanding position at Port Arthur and have been seizing strategic points from which they could drive the Russian armies which were being sent to its relief. These strategic movements are planned in advance with the utmost care in selection of the ground so as to get the advantage of elevated positions from which to fire upon the enemy. The generals on both sides are aware that the conquest of the region depends in no small degree on the skill exercised in this important matter.

Months before an invading army moves for the subjugation of a country trained military minds study its natural features and intuitively settle upon the strategic points which it is essential to capture and to hold and the course which the various corps must take to co-operate in the general scheme. Thus coming campaigns or the military lines of summer operations are planned for the most part by the different commanders of invading armies while their armies are encamped in winter quarters. Therefore the question which at this season naturally forces itself upon the mind is this: "What is the gospel campaign ahead of the Christian church for the coming ten months?"

Let me sketch the line of campaign as a captain in the army of Christ. How am I to lead my people? Where am I to go?

Christ is our great commander, and as a captain under him I would here and now point out to you the mighty opportunities which are before us. I would sketch the line of campaign as a church as about to enter. And, furthermore, I not only want to show you how we are to fight, where we are to fight, but also to try to encourage you by reminding you of the great agencies of our time which are going to help us in this coming year's struggle.

The glorious twentieth century is opening wide its doors to let the church of the Lord Jesus Christ pass forth into God's conflict, aided by scientific and social facilities that no other age possessed, whereby each man can double and treble and quadruple the amount of work which his grandfather or his great-grandfather was able to do. It is saying to us: "Man, if the length of your life is to be estimated by the amount of work you shall be able to accomplish I will let you live longer than did Jacob, who died of old age at one hundred and forty-seven, or Noah, who lived to be nine hundred and fifty years, or Methuselah, who only lacked thirty years of being one thousand years old. I will let you live so long that what your ancestors accomplished in the course of their lives will seem to be as nothing to what you shall be able to accomplish." The twentieth century speaks thus not to one man, but to all.

This inventive age has literally doubled and quadrupled and almost infinitely multiplied the material producing power of man. Think of the facilities of communication! Supposing I wish to plead the cause of Christ with some friend clear across the American continent. I sit down and pen my appeal. In a few minutes it is in the postman's hands. A little later it is in the mail wagon on its way to the depot. Soon it is in the mail car going at lightning speed over the mountains and across the alkali deserts and across the rivers until it is dropped in the eastern home. It has taken only a few days for that message to reach its destination in the east, and in a few days longer an answer comes back to me that my appeal has been read and under God's blessing it has been made effectual to the salvation of a soul. Think how many times such an effort might be multiplied and how largely the facilities of communication might be utilized for the spread of the gospel! I can to-day send a letter from California to New York, 3,000 miles away, quicker than in the beginning of the last century my New Jersey ancestor could send a letter to his missionary son living among the Georgia pines. It used to take our ancestors sometimes hours to ride to the nearest church. Now the church of our Lord Jesus Christ is at almost every street corner and the religious papers are scattering their prints everywhere. Man to-day has quadrupled his opportunities of life because he can accomplish four times the amount of work which his ancestors were able to do in the same time.

You must see that all these increased advantages of man can be made to act and react mightily for good in the coming campaign of the church of Christ against sin. Matthew Simpson, the great Bishop of the Methodist Church, once delivered a lecture to show how God is preparing the way for the glory of his coming millennium in the inventions and the social movements of everyday life. The other day a book came into my hand entitled "The Romance of Invention." But no romance of inventions has ever been written which can fully depict the Christian romance of the uses to which these in-

ventions can be applied in the extension of Christ's kingdom as Bishop Simpson explained them. One item alone of that lecture comes to my mind. I speak it in my own language, and I recall it from a blurred memory. The Methodist orator wanted to show how every modern facility was appropriated and used in the late Civil war. The sewing machine had just been invented. It was employed to ensure the soldiers being properly clothed. The steam engine was utilized for carrying the armies quickly to the scene of conflict so that the carnage might sooner end. The modern improvements in arms were adopted, and so the terrible destruction of life in single combats by the old-fashioned axe and spear was avoided. And as man used modern inventions for carrying out his purposes, so might God use the terrible curse of slavery itself for the benefit of the colored race. The negro torn from his African home and sold as a slave might be Christianized in the land of his bondage and return as a missionary to carry the tidings of the gospel to his people still on the banks of the Congo.

I find the church of the Lord Jesus splendidly equipped materially and temporarily for this winter's campaign against sin. But, more than that, I find that there never a time when the great evangelical churches were so thoroughly in accord on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. In the pulpit and in the pew those doctrines are held firmly, intelligently and devoutly, and Christ as the Saviour of the world has the whole-hearted allegiance of his people. Before a general goes forth to invade the enemy's country it is very important for him to know that his own soldiers are loyal to his country's standards and are of one heart, one mind and one purpose. When a Christian goes forth into winter's campaign against sin it is just as important for his pastor to know that his people are of one thought and one mind in reference to the great cardinal doctrines of the church. A thousand enemies outside of the church's camp are not so dangerous as one as a traitor inside of the guarding sentinels' lines. A thousand blatant infidels attacking the church of Jesus Christ in infidel convention hall or by saloon counter are not so formidable as the so-called free-thinking liberal who is attacking the church of God as a member of that church or as an ordained minister of that church.

Some time ago before a famous New York club an ordained minister arose and delivered an explosive, heretical speech. This minister afterwards expelled from his church for his outrageous utterance. He denied that Jesus was divine except that "he was divine as we are divine." He denied that the inspiration of the Bible was any more infallible than was the inspiration of Shakespeare's works. After he had finished and the applause of those with his remarks had subsided Dr. Gotthell arose. Dr. Gotthell was a Jew and at that time was the leading Jewish rabbi of America. Amid death-like silence he said: "I know not how others may feel; but, though I am not a disciple of the gentile's Christ, I like not this talk of the pluralism of the church. The preceding speaker has attacked the church of my brother and had entertained doubts and suspicions similar to his I would have quietly slipped out of the church with which those doubts collided, keeping my lips tightly sealed. I do not think I could do such an injury to the church which gave me my ordination vows as when a member of that church I attacked openly." All honor, say E to the answer of Dr. Gotthell, the Jew! I believe that the most serious damage which can be inflicted upon the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is done not by his avowed enemies who are outside the church, but by traitorous foes within.

Now, for the most part, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ has been purged of those members who do not believe in the great cardinal doctrines of the Bible. It has been bold enough to say to such members, "If you do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, if you do not believe in the efficacy of his sacrifice, then you had better transfer your allegiance to some other church with whose creed you are in sympathy, for in this church the doctrines which you repudiate are regarded as the essence of Christianity." The greater part of the heretical teachers have accepted the advice, and, like the army of Gideon, the men who remain are fewer in number, but are of one heart and one mind. The church of Christ throughout the land enters upon the winter's campaign with unbroken front, all the stronger for the elimination of its half-hearted members.

But I take a step further in this mighty subject. We have a wonderful time in which we are to enter the coming campaign of Christ. This is the youngest of the centuries, but in it are gathered the ripe fruits of the past. The thought and experience of all the centuries that are gone have in these years come to fruition. It is the mighty movements and trials and struggles of past generations which have made the present time possible. From the triumphs and failures of the past, from the wisdom and the mistakes of our fore-

fathers, we have learned lessons which should make us masters in the art of soul winning and successful leaders in the assault on the in- trenchments of sin. This is the very best year of all years to start in a gospel campaign for Christ.

But take another step further in this momentous subject. We have another campaign blessing in addition to these two of which we have spoken. We have a church with 21 of its great leaders as well as thousands and tens of thousands of members moved to holy enthusiasm by knowledge of the strength of the Satanic enemies are strong also, so meet in combat. We know that is the church of Christ is strong the Satanic enemies are strong also, so strong that unless we go forth to this battle with a full endowment of the Holy Spirit to fight as we ought to fight for Christ, we shall fail ignominiously, as we deserve to fail. Outside of his own intrinsic strength nothing brings out the hidden power of a general more than the realization that his enemy is strong, and wily—an adversary whose power it would be folly to underestimate.

And what he must marshal his forces with all his skill and develop their fighting qualities to the highest efficiency. When Goliath saw the puny form of David, who was to give him battle, the Philistine giant laughed him to scorn. He sneeringly cried, "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with stones?" That contented little him the battle. Not so with David. His weapons were those with which he was familiar, and he employed the skill developed by long experience. He knew his enemy to be superior in might and cruel and relentless, and he nerved his strength for the unequal struggle. The church of Christ is made resolute by the knowledge that it is to meet a strong armed foe. We know we must fight hard to win. And we also know that unless like David, the shepherd boy, we go forth in unflinching faith in the divine reinforcement we shall fail in the battle. A stalwart foe always brings out the best that is in a worthy opponent.

To-day the church of God has no cowardly enemy. Like a hunter stalking the man eating monsters of India or Africa, the church is and must be continually on its guard. As it goes forth into the coming winter's campaign to do the best it can and with the help of the Holy Spirit to do all it can for Christ, the consciousness that its foe has almost unlimited prowess has made the church strong and confident.

But where is the gospel campaign of this church during the coming winter to be fought? We have talked about the time. We have spoken about the oneness of purpose and the divine strength in which we are to enter the conflict. We now speak of the geographical regions in which we are to fight. We must find our church's Plain of Esdras and its Marathon pass. America is to be the geographical plain of gospel maneuverings for the American church. It is the foremost nation in the world to-day, and its power and influence are rapidly growing. In every, in wealth, in enterprise, in taking the lead among the nations of the world. If it boldly takes its stand for Christ and declares that the principles of Christ are its guide and that he is its supreme ruler the effect on the world will be overwhelming. An enormous step will then have been taken toward the conquest of the whole world for him. America is the strategic point in the Christian campaign. Let every Christian church in this country realize that fact and unite to win this fair land for the Prince of Peace.

Oh, my friends, with such a glorious outlook for our coming gospel campaign, should not the church of Christ as a whole and our own individual churches go forth into this winter's campaign strong in God, strong in faith, strong in holy zeal? For the most part I have been talking about how God is going to bless the great American church as a whole. Will he bless our own individual churches to which we have given our allegiance as he will bless other churches? Yes, if we go into this gospel conflict as we ought to go. Are you and I willing by our own consecrated lives to let our church, our dear individual church, with its glorious past, take the position in the church army on the front

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