

*"Three Million Southern Baptists Raising 75
Million for the Master"*

FACING A
WORTHY TASK
IN A
WORTHY WAY

By REV. J. B. GAMBRELL, D.D.



The Baptist 75 Million Campaign

"Millions for the Master"

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Facing a Worthy Task in a Worthy Way

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THE Atlanta meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention was epochal. It far transcended any former meeting measured by any rule known to men. It was representative of the wide territory. All the estates of the Baptist people were represented—farmers, merchants, bankers, teachers, preachers, lawyers, and women with men—more than 4,000 strong, not weak. It was truly an inspiring assembly, fulfilling to a remarkable degree Paul's ideal of efficiency—having "one spirit, one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel."

DIVINE LEADERSHIP—THE PRIMARY CONDITION

GOD was with us. God went before us and with us preparing the way for what happened. Who can doubt it in the face of the facts? We had passed through disquieting times. Conditions had been unusual. There were many cross-currents and a heavy fog enveloped the public mind. Many things tended to divide us. But the great Convention, representing to an unusual degree the sentiments and convictions of the nearly 3,000,000 Southern Baptists, emerged from the tumult united as never before in its history—united in spirit and sound principles and on a program large, sane and commanding.

Happily, we may fairly regard the unionizing propaganda, with its almost endless implications and complications, finally disposed of and the way cleared for the united

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action of our people for those things that make for progress. I am not sanguine that the New York group will cease their efforts to entangle our affairs with their visionary schemes; but the prospects are that our people will not be much disturbed by them. This happy result will be made doubly sure, as we press on and out to make effective our own worthy plans.

As things are now with us, we stand a vast army, united, fairly organized, purposeful, strong, with resources practically without limit, facing a task of commanding largeness and importance—\$75,000,000 for our general work for five years. These things may be said about it: It is needed, every dollar of it. It is not more than we can give and ought to give. To raise it will greaten and enlarge the Baptist people to an unthinkable degree. And we can raise it. It is not too much for Southern Baptists to give for the conquest of the world during the next five years. But the task is to be faced seriously.

PRAYER—OUR CHIEF DUTY AND RESOURCE

BEFORE all else, there should be prayer and supplication throughout all the land in the churches, in the homes, in groups, where the few meet for prayer, in the secret places where individuals steal away to commune with God. On this vital matter I cannot express what I feel—what I know. But prayer, real prayer, must go before and prepare the way for all real success in Christian effort. We know little of the ways of God if we do not know this. The Scriptures teach it and Christian experience through the ages confirms it. I venture to relate an experience. A few years back, our schools in Texas were in a deplorable condition. Our Board faced the grave situation. We were driven to God. With strong crying we be-

sought the Father of mercies to intervene in His own way for our help and we threw ourselves on Him with a faith that gripped. It was a memorable hour, an hour of self-effacement and of a reconsecration to the Highest. Pastor Truett and myself were asked to raise \$250,000 cash in sixty days. A call to prayer was sent out and we went afield. A marvelous situation presented itself. Crowds greeted us in all kinds of weather. I saw the people assembled and before a song was sung or a word said silently moved their lips in prayer, while tears flowed down their faces. God had visited them in their homes and in their rounds of every-day duties. Of course they gave. The sixty days went by and \$265,000 was turned in. We all ought to know by this time that there is needed always a divine preparation for giving just as for preaching or any other religious exercise. Giving is a grace, a holy act of devotion to Him who gave Himself for us.

The 3,000,000 Baptists of the South should be called to prayer first of all. Prayer is our first and greatest resource. If we get to God with this matter in humble, believing prayer, no difficulties will count. We aim to raise the \$75,000,000, but there is something more and better than that large sum; it is the deepening of spirituality, the broadening of vision, the renewed consecration, the enlargement of the heart necessary to get it. The task before us first calls us to get ready to succeed by self-conquest and by a new alliance with all the spiritual forces of Him who has all power and has promised to be with us. It is deep in my soul that there should go with this move a great revival, with the calling out of large reinforcements under God for all the wasting fields of earth. What I am trying to say is, that we are going into a great enterprise which ought to be conducted in a pro-

foundly religious way. We are going to need God at every step. We shall need the Holy Spirit to go before us, with us, and to care for our efforts after they are made. And, bless God's holy name, He has promised us His Spirit. Let us believe Him.

CO-OPERATION—OUR PRIVILEGE AND STRENGTH

THIS noble task calls for coöperation on the largest scale. This time we must find our people. We must go after them where they are. Some will not give much. Some cannot, but they are needed. We want them. Many will give in money like the Widow of Scripture reputation gave. The enterprise is so commanding and so appealing that it can hardly fail to be unifying in its efforts. People will feel the compelling power of an appeal so gracious that many heretofore unenlisted will fall into line for progress. Every one of us should be glad of this new opportunity to enlist our people. Nothing like it has come to us before.

The Convention set the task, but very properly laid out the plans for achieving the task in broad outlines, leaving the matter to a committee with full liberty to act. The Convention never laid on a like number of men a burden more responsible and weighty. But it is the burden of all of us, and we must get under it, or prove ourselves slackers in the noblest war the souls of men can ever know. Right now, at the outset, each one of us should settle it in the depths of the soul: "I will do my best and I will coöperate with the committee to the limit." Naturally many men will be of many minds about many things; but as to the importance of united effort in achieving the worthy object set before us, we should be of one mind. To win

we must go with the committee. This is common sense.

This worthy and commanding program gives us a new opportunity to demonstrate how readily and efficiently a great spiritual democracy can mobilize for the accomplishment of a big thing. It is my belief that the freedom of the Baptists is more efficient and quick-acting than the overhead control of any other people. We have a fine chance to prove it now, and when we do, the mouths of many vain talkers will be stopped. What I am saying is that we can boil the pot from the bottom quicker and stronger than anybody else can boil it from the top, and boil it longer.

INDOCTRINATION—OUR OPPORTUNITY AND POWER

THE challenging task before us affords an opportunity to indoctrinate our people and incidentally others on the great trunk-lines of Baptist progress; the things that have made America great, the things we are to preach the world over. God calls us to it. Nobody will preach these truths if Baptists fail—absolute religious liberty for all, Jew and Gentile alike, a converted church membership, self-determination in all religious matters for all individuals and churches without any overhead meddling or management, the supreme sovereignty of Jesus in all matters of the soul, the Bible the law of His reign, and so on. The whole world needs to be called afresh to consider these structural principals of Christ's reign. It is especially urgent that they be preached in those lands where Romanism, Lutheranism and other state church religions have so long enthralled mankind. This \$75,000,000 is to be used to propagate the full gospel wherever men live and grope in darkness.

Happily, we go afield untrammeled and unembarrassed by any entangling alliances in the raising of the money or in the use of it. There are no side issues and nothing we need to sidestep. Therefore we can all pull together, a long, strong pull, straight ahead. This should greatly help us.

Our condition is good, better than ever before. We are united on all the large things of the Kingdom. Recent achievements hearten us. The temper of the denomination is excellent. God has poured into our laps large wealth. We are ready now to go forward in an unprecedented way. God inspire us and use us according to His own Holy Will!

