

But how should Gideon be assured of this? The Lord would accept of his offering; and so little did Gideon apprehend His ways, that the seal of his acceptance was regarded by him as the knell of his death; for he said, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face." And the Lord answered him, "Peace be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die." And Gideon built an altar there. His soul is awakened for his work. There is struggle for establishment, and the Lord condescends to his weakness, and submits to be proved, that His servant might trust Him, (verses 36 to 40). He has evidence of His favour, and starts on his career. What wretched confusion was around! What prospect of remedy! How hopeless, to reason, the task! Yet faith shrinks not at impossibilities, for they exist not before Him with whom we have to do. Omnipotence sees hills as the plains, and water in the flinty rock. Now Gideon had got hold of a great principle—the Lord with His people in chastening them, and therefore His hand in deliverance. Being *His*, they were sure of the *former*, and equally safe for the latter. Looking at troubles amongst saints apart from the Lord's hand in permitting them, the eye discerns no remedy; the heart is overwhelmed with consternation. Fear enters: and that which in communion would have been the precursor of blessings, becomes to unbelief the har-binger of defeat. But, blessed be God! it is not so, the name of the Lord invoked, the two or three assembled together in that name, the Holy Ghost re-