

2. To do *no good* is sufficient to condemn you. The tree had no fruit, Matt. xxv. 25.

3. It is always the time to do good, ver. 16.

4. Beware how you despise the old, the poor, the deformed. Children often do so.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

February 28th, 1864.

## AN ANGEL SENDS GIDEON.

JUDGES XI. 1-24.

*Verses 1.* The children of Israel had had rest for forty years. Nothing that occurred during that time is recorded. The time of temporal prosperity is passed over in silence and the story of another distress, and another deliverance is given. It teaches the often told lesson that where there is sin, there will be suffering. The Israelites had executed vengeance on the Midianites, just before the death of Moses, and had almost extirpated them, but the remnant increased and acquired power.

*Verses 2-6.* The distress to which they were driven is here recorded. The Midianites became their chief oppressor, for seven years they were obliged to resort to the dens and caves of the earth. Their houses were destroyed, their crops were devoured, and their cattle were carried away, till they became greatly impoverished. It is emphatically stated that the Midianites came up "like grasshoppers for multitude"—an image which conveys a lively idea of both their countless numbers and their cruel ravages.

*Verses 7-10.* The children of Israel having been afflicted on account of their transgression cried unto the Lord in their trouble, but before delivering them from their trouble he sent a prophet to call them to repentance.—The message which the prophet carried was very plain and convincing, and was probably delivered throughout the land. It doubtless had considerable effect, as it prepared the way for their deliverance.

*Verses 11-24.* The individual God raised up to be the deliverer of his people was Gideon. Gideon's father was still alive, but he was passed by and this honour put upon the son, for the father kept up in his own family the worship of Baal (ver. 25), which

we may suppose Gideon testified against.—The Angel who gave him the commission was evidently the son of God himself. "*Thou mighty man of Valour,*" ver. 12. It may be that Gideon was meditating on the miserable state of Israel, and conceiving bold designs against their invaders, which however he saw no possibility of accomplishing. To these conceptions the words of the Angel may refer. "*That thou talkest,*" &c.; ver. 17. Gideon seems to have desired some assurance that the person, now speaking was He, who at the bush commissioned Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt. JEHOVAH-shalom, means the Lord send peace. Gideon does not seem to have intended this altar for sacrifices, but for a monument of the Lord's appearance.

*Learn 1.*—That the tendency of our fallen nature to apostatize from God is so strong, that no means can of themselves prevent its effect. In all cases when divine grace is withheld man as naturally does evil as the stone falls to the ground. This is seen in the conduct of the children of Israel, not only in this portion of scripture, but in preceding and succeeding chapters.

2. That misery invariably follows sin, till it is repented of and forsaken.

3. That if a sinner, or a backsliding saint returns to the Lord, the Lord will return to him, and will have mercy upon him.

4. That if the Lord's people call upon Him in the day of their trouble, He will deliver them.

March 6th, 1864.

## THE DROPSY HEALED.

Read *Luke xiv. 1-14.*

I. *Christ cures the dropsy,* ver. 1-6.

The kindness of the Pharisees seems to have been merely a pretence to ensnare Jesus, ver. 1. The rooms of Eastern houses are often open for the sake of coolness. Probably this man was in the court of the house—brought there, perhaps, by the Pharisees designedly. Christ asked the question asked him, Matt. xii. 10, and answered it Himself, as he answered it there; the Jews were bound to help even the ox or ass of an enemy, Ex. xxiii. 5.

II. *Christ gives a lesson to the guests,* ver. 7-11.