

terror into the hearts of the Midianites, thus rudely roused from sleep. At the same instant the crash of three hundred breaking pitchers, and the blaze of three hundred torches multiplied indefinitely by frightened imagination, complete the panic, and the host of the invaders becomes a fugitive mob without drawing a sword. In the terse language of the sacred historian, they "ran, and cried, and fled."

No teacher who takes any pains can fail to make the three pictures thus meagrely sketched interesting. But then what is the application?

Not in this case, I think, the warfare of the individual Christian against his own sins. Rather the great battle going on in the world between Christ and antichrist, between the usurper and the rightful King of kings; the battle sung by Heber—

"The Son of God goes forth to war—
Who follows in his train?"

This is the warfare waging everywhere with sin and ignorance and misery. The warfare in which every faithful minister and missionary and teacher is engaged, and in which every Christian should bear his part.

Who are they that form Christ's army?

Some come not at all "to the help of the Lord against the mighty," like Issachar in the case before us, and like Reuben and others on a former occasion. (Chap. 5. 16, 17, 23.)

Some come forward with enthusiasm, but draw back at the first sight of the work to be done, like the twenty-two thousand.

Some remain in the army: they do not desert, but they show no burning zeal, no eager self-denial, and though they will share in the results of victory, it is not they whom Christ can place in the posts of honour and danger and responsibility.

Some, however, are ready to take up their cross and follow their great Leader. Is their number limited? *Not by God.* Had all the ten thousand been like the three hundred, there would have been no need of reduction, for even though so many, they would have given God the glory of the victory. No, we may all be among the "three hundred" if we will.

What are the weapons in this warfare? (1) The great trumpet—the free proclamation of Christ's salvation everywhere. (2) The torch of Divine truth—a light to lighten every man. (3) The *earthen vessel*: the human agency through which the truth is conveyed. "We

have this treasure," says St. Paul, "*in earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Cor. 4. 7.)

Observe Gideon's order to his little army, ver. 17—"Look on me, and do likewise." So must the Christian soldier "look unto Jesus," and "follow his steps." (Heb. 12. 2; 1 Pet. 2. 21.)

For Senior Scholars.

I.—THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. GREAT UNDERTAKINGS. Gen. 6. 14; Exod. 3. 10; 1 Kings 18. 24; Mark 16. 15.
2. HUMAN DISCOURAGEMENTS. Num. 21. 4; Deut. 1. 28; Matt. 24. 12; 2 Cor. 11. 27.
3. HUMAN FAILURES. Gen. 3. 6; 11. 8; John 5. 7; Acts 8. 30, 31; 1 Cor. 21.
4. THE DIVINE RESOURCES. Gen. 1. 1; 7. 21-23; Psa. 23. 3; 104. 9, 10; 147.
5. THE DIVINE RESOURCES. Heb. 12. 3; Gal. 6. 9; 2 Cor. 12. 9; 1 Pet. 4. 14; Rev. 2. 10.
6. EFFECTIVE FAITH. Heb. 11. 6; Matt. 8. 8-10; 15. 28; Luke 17. 6.
7. TO GOD THE GLORY. Jer. 9. 23, 24; Rom. 4. 2; 1 Cor. 1. 31; 2 Cor. 10. 17; 1 Cor. 15. 28.

2. SEED-THOUGHTS.

1. How was Gideon prepared for this great work?
2. Why did he rise early and pitch near the well?
3. Did the certainty of the result render human sagacity unnecessary?
4. Why was Gideon's army too large?
5. What harm could useless soldiers do?
6. Did the twenty-two thousand probably lack any thing but courage?
7. Why were most of the courageous ten thousand rejected?
8. What lesson is herein taught us about rubbish, or useless members in the Church?
9. If it is sound war strategy to recruit an army, why should God deplete his army?
10. Does it necessarily follow that those are not approved of God who are not called to every special service?
11. Was there any special soldierly quality in their manner of drinking?
12. Why were their weapons not the most warlike?

3. DOCTRINE.

"The chastening of the Lord." Rev. 3. 19; Deut. 8. 5; Job 5. 17; Psa. 94. 12; Heb. 12. 6; Psa. 119. 67.

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