

of the new Book of Praise.)

**Special Scripture Reading**—Ps. 47. (To be read responsively or in concert by the whole School.)

**Lantern Slide**—For Lesson, B. 551, Gideon and the three hundred. (Slides are obtained from PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATIONS, Church and Gerrard Sts., Toronto).

## THE LESSON EXPLAINED

**Time and Place**—During the period of the Judges; Mount Gilboa and the Valley of Jezreel.

### I. Gideon's Army Sifted, 1-8.

V. 1. *Jerubbaal*; that is "Baal Strives." For the way in which Gideon received the name see ch. 6:31, 32. Baal (the name, used generally, may signify "possessor" or "controller"), in this passage, refers to Jehovah. In later times, when it had become an offence to use this title for Jehovah, Jerubbaal was changed to Jerubbesheth, that is, "the Disgrace Shall Strive." The life of Gideon would henceforth be a standing witness to Baal's helplessness. *Pitched*; encamped. *Well of Harod*; now generally identified with 'Ain Jalud, at the foot of Mount Gilboa, a spring close to Mount Gilboa, from which a stream flows into the Jordan. It is the only supply of living water in the neighborhood. *Hill of Moreh*; about 4 miles to the north on the other side of the Valley of Jezreel, the hill Jebel ed-Duhy, now popularly called Little Hermon.

V. 2. *The Lord said unto Gideon*. In what way this revelation was made we are not told. *People . . . too many*; while they thought themselves far too few to cope with the 135,000 (see ch. 8:10) of their enemies. *Lest Israel vaunt themselves*; boast of the victory as though it had been due merely to their own efforts. *Saying, Mine own hand*, etc. Compare Deut. 8:17; 9:4, 5; Ps. 115:1; Isa. 10:13. The victories of Israel depended upon the power of God.

V. 3. *Whosoever is fearful and afraid*. Compare Deut. 20:8. *Depart early*. The Hebrew word denotes birdlike motion. Here it means to go by a roundabout route, as men in fear would naturally do. They would sneak to safety. *Returned . . . twenty and two thousand*. It says little for Israel's warlike spirit at this time, that so many of Gideon's army were cowards.

Vs. 4, 5. *People . . . yet too many*. Only the very best men must be kept for the battle. *Down unto the water*; the stream which flowed

out of the well or spring of Harod. *Try them*; put them to the test, as the refiner tests silver or gold. *Every one that lapped . . . set by himself*. This company took water up from the stream in their hands and licked it as a dog laps. *Every one that boweth down*, etc. These bent down on their knees and drank directly from the stream.

Vs. 6-8. *By the three hundred . . . that lapped will I save you*. The reason for choosing those who "lapped" may have been that their choosing this way of drinking showed that they were cautious and watchful, not putting themselves in a defenceless posture while the enemy was near, or that they possessed the power of being satisfied with little water,—a valuable quality in a hot, dry country. *Victuals* (provisions) . . . and . . . *trumpets*. There would be plenty of these left behind by the soldiers who went home. The "trumpets" were curved horns of a cow or ram.

Vs. 9-15 tell of Gideon's secret night visit to the camp of the Midianites, where he hears enough to make him certain of the success of a sudden attack.

### II. Gideon's Army Equipped, 16-18.

Vs. 16-18. *Three companies*; so as to come upon the enemy from as many sides and thus make them believe themselves to be surrounded. *Trumpet*. See on v. 8. *Empty pitchers*; the earthenware jars used in Palestine for carrying water. *Lamps*; that is, torches, made of resinous wood. *Within the pitchers*; in order to conceal them until the right moment. This mode of concealing the light of a lamp is still practised in Egypt. *Look on me*; literally, "see from me," take pattern from me. *For the Lord and for Gideon* (Rev. Ver.). This was to be Israel's battle cry.

### III. Gideon's Army Victorious, 19-21.

Vs. 19, 20. *Beginning of the middle watch*. The night beginning at 6 p.m. was divided into three watches of four hours each. Thus the middle watch would begin about