

idolatry in Israel (Judg. 8. 33), and so completely exterminated the dreaded Midianitish army from the land that only 15,000 out of 120,000 escaped alive. It is not surprising, therefore, that Israel in gratitude proposed his coronation. He was probably, like Saul, a man with a noble presence and princely look (Judg. 8. 18), whose very face was radiant from his frequent interviews with God. He was great in generalship, full of inventiveness, strategy, and tact. Recall the device of the dew on the fleece, the harmless weapons of trumpets and pitchers by which he won a great victory, and his "soft answer" by which the wrath of the jealous Ephraimites was turned away, and which passed into a proverb, Judg. 8. 1-3, with Prov. 15. 1. He was decisive in judgment, cautious in execution, humane in conquest, without arrogance (Judg. 8. 3,) and having no unholy ambition. In him was the humility of Moses, the bravery of Joshua, the grace of David, and the loyalty of Daniel, a solitary and kingly spirit, living ahead of his age, who might have been the first monarch of the Hebrew state.—*Henry Spillmeyer, D.D.*

Because in his character he displayed the great qualities of bravery, wariness, resolution and magnanimity. His zeal for God was evinced in his destruction of the idolatrous shrine of Baal at Ophrah. So great was the gratitude of his country that he was offered the kingly dignity, which though refused in words was actually sustained by him through life and seized by a son of his after his death.—*J. E. Hanauer, Jerusalem.*

**23.** Was the test of the three hundred significant of their character, or was it accidental?

It was a test of qualification for service selected by the Lord, and an unconscious exhibition of personal character. These men did not prostrate themselves as men often leisurely do when drinking from a forest spring or stream. They bent over, not even getting on their knees; they made from the curved palms of their hands a hollow cup, and quickly satisfied their thirst. This showed them to be men of judicious impulse, eager for conflict, and fitted for hasty expeditions, and the emergencies of war.—*Henry Spillmeyer, D.D.*

It was an illustration of the great truth that men's real character is best known by noticing their conduct in unguarded moments. Those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth without adopting a position which in case of a sudden attack would have placed them at the mercy of their assailants, proved that they possessed the qualities of caution and of self-restraint.—*J. E. Hanauer, Jerusalem.*

### Cambridge Notes.

Judg. 7. 1-8.

The character of Gideon is drawn with more detail than that of any judge until Samuel. His indomitable courage is entirely the offspring of faith. Heb. 11. 32. Witness his slowness to stir a finger until he can be quite certain of his divine mission. We note his keen feeling of the national degradation (6. 13), his humility (6. 15), his wise self-restraint in the "soft answer" of 8. 2, 3, and his freedom from self-seeking in the renunciation of the crown (8. 23). And if superstition and polygamy mar his later life, we must not blame him too severely for not being in all points before his age. **VER. 1. Jerubbaal.** Ewald remarks that as Baal ("lord") was not originally narrowed to describe a heathen god, Gideon's name may have meant "God's warrior." The suggestion is unnecessary, and not convincing, though the cunning speech of Joash (6. 32) would gain in humor by being a new application of his

son's name, according to the Hebrew fondness for playing on names. The sarcasm of Gideon's father recalls that of Elijah, 1 Kings 18. 27. *Gideon* means "smiter," not unlike Martel and Maccabee. *Early.* Apparently in the morning following the night of chap. 6. 40. Once assured, he lost no time. *Harod.* "Trembling," a name either given or newly applied from the event of verse 3. It is probably the spring at the foot of Gilboa, *Ain Jalud. Midian.* The wild Bedouin tribe among whom, in the Sinaitic peninsula, Moses had lived so long, and who had done so much harm to Israel in the time of Balaam. *Moreh.* Probably little Hermon, but the only known Moreh is near Shechem. Gen. 12. 6. *Valley of Jezreel* or Esdraelon, scene of so many famous battles, the defeat and death of Saul and of Josiah, as well as the triumphs of Barak and Gideon. The Israelites always preferred to fight in the hills, and one of the features of the present victory was its being won in a plain. **VER. 2. Too many.** Though the Midianites were four times as numerous! Chap. 8. 10. **Comp. Deut. 8. 17. VER. 3. Whosoever.** This is a combination of the usual watchword of Israel (Deut. 20. 8) with that peculiar to the eastern Mannassites round Mount Gilead, which had apparently spread over the whole tribe. (This is better than to alter Gilead into Gilboa.) The precaution was adopted before the battle of Leuctra by Epaminondas, a hero singularly like Gideon in character, and also by Judas Maccabeus. 1 Macc. 3. 5, 6. *Depart.* A contemptuous word, "slink away." **VER. 4. Water of Harod. Try.** The word used for refining gold. **VER. 5. Lappeth.** A characteristic Oriental mode of drinking, in which the rapid motion of the hand imitates the jerking action of a dog's tongue. This attitude was indicative of self-control and consciousness of the enemy's nearness. **VER. 6. Three hundred.** The number of the Spartans at Thermopylae. **VER. 7. All.** That is, the 9,700. **VER. 8. The people.** The marginal reading is better. The three hundred took the trumpets and the pitchers of provisions brought by the whole host. *Sent.* Many of them doubtless joined in the pursuit and plunder.

### Berean Methods.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Let the teacher carefully read Judg. 3-5, as preparatory to the lesson; induce the scholars also to read it before the session of the school, and call for the names of the first five oppressors and deliverers of the Israelites. Then read Judg. 6-8, containing the story of Gideon; and notice especially the traits of character which are shown in his acts. Draw map of the region here referred to: Mounts Tabor, Moreh, Gilboa, plain of Esdraelon, river Jordan, etc. Show on the map the relative positions of the two armies. The test by the spring, and how it showed character. Notice how small an act will be a true revealer of character. There are two lines of teaching running through this lesson. One is, "God's chosen leader" (Gideon), (Note Analytical and Biblical Outline). The other is: "God's chosen warriors." The private soldiers are not less important than the general. See here what sort of men God chooses for his work. (Note the Thoughts for Young People.) When Cromwell had disciplined his Ironsides, he led them out, and caused an alarm of battle to be sounded. He noticed some who hesitated and showed fear. There was no enemy, but the test had shown who were not fit for war. These he sent home, retaining their horses and arms to be given to men who were better qualified for his needs.