

them, refusing even to give them bread. There was thus, in the midst of the people of God, an entire city, bearing the name of Israel, which had renounced all corporate responsibility with those who bore testimony for Jehovah. They said, "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?" They had confidence in the enemy, and would not compromise themselves by taking part with Israel. There are many in the present day who bear the name of Christ, and yet seek the friendship of and alliance with the world; who, through fear of compromising themselves, make common cause with our enemies, increasing the difficulties of the way for believers, and hindering them from being overcomers. It need not surprise us that a righteous indignation does not stop us in the way to chastise this spirit. Our hearts, like Gideon's, should be wholly in the conflict. The man of God kept on his way; the infamous conduct of Penuel no more arrests him than that of Succoth. Everything in its time for God's witness. Satan seeks to bring in confusion as to this, so as to make obstacles for us. Zebah and Zalmunna must not be allowed to escape; the judgment of the rebellious cities will be executed later. On his return, the man of God exercised discipline in the assembly of Israel, and "cut off the wicked," for God would be dishonoured were evil tolerated in the assembly.

I am not sure that I have sufficiently noticed, in