

II. A MAN OF ENERGY.

Rose up early. v. 1.

"Blew the trumpets." Chap. 7. 19.

"Earnestly contend for the faith." Jude 3

III. A MAN OF COURAGE.

Pitched beside the well. v. 1.

"Thou mighty man of valor." Judg. 6. 12.

"Speak boldly....ought to speak." Eph. 6. 20.

IV. A MAN OF COMMUNION WITH GOD.

The Lord said unto Gideon. v. 2.

"Built an altar....unto God." Judg. 6. 24.

"Our fellowship....with the Father." 1 John 1. 3.

V. A MAN OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

Bring them down....he brought. v. 4. 5.

"Keep his commandments." Eccl. 12. 13.

"Prepared his heart....to do." Ezra 7. 10.

VI. A MAN OF FAITH IN GOD.

He sent....every man unto his tent. v. 8.

"The sword of the Lord." v. 20.

"Time would fail....of Gideon." Heb. 11. 32.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

God's Chosen Warriors.

1. God chooses for his warriors those who are humble, willing to give God all the glory. The true soldier seeks to be a machine to carry out his commander's plans. v. 2.

2. God seeks for his warriors fearless men, however powerful may be their foes. Let us be strong and bold in the Lord. v. 3.

3. God's chosen warriors must be single-hearted, not divided between his work and their own ease. vs. 5, 6.

4. God's warriors must be loyal, with no lurking taint of idolatry in their hearts. vs. 5, 6.

5. God's warriors must be trusting, having confidence in God, even in the face of seeming impossibilities. v. 7.

6. God's warriors must be submissive, obedient to orders, and ready to follow their leader's will.

English Teacher's Notes.

SOME three hundred years ago England was threatened by a naval force the like of which, in size and grandeur, had never yet been seen. So impossible did it seem that such a force could be other than victorious that it was called before the contest began the "Invincible Armada." Here is an example of might. But the Armada which represented the might of Spain was met by a fleet of English ships, small indeed and insignificant compared with the stately vessels of the enemy, but manned by expert seamen and brave warriors who successfully harassed and kept in check the hostile forces. Here is an example of power. Yet the discomfiture of the Armada would have been incomplete but for winds and storms which wreaked their fury upon it; and England and her queen gave the glory to God for their deliverance.

The words "might" and "power," though used somewhat indiscriminately throughout the Authorized Version of the Old Testament, express in our Golden Text two distinct ideas such as I have indicated above. "Might," *chayil*, refers to something outward and visible, and is sometimes rendered "army." "Power," *koach*, is used in a more

spiritual or immaterial sense. When the angel of the Lord bids Gideon "Go in this thy might" (Judg. 4. 14), the word used is "*koach*," or "power." A man who is rich and noble may have the material "might" without "power," while one who is poor and obscure and utterly without such "might" may be full of "power."

When Gideon's army took the field against Midian it was out of the question that they should trust in their "might." The Midianite host being a hundred and thirty-five thousand strong (see chap. 8. 10), while Gideon's men amounted only to thirty-two thousand, they were in the proportion of one to four, or rather less. And in fact so glaring was their disadvantage in this respect that more than two thirds of them were "fearful and afraid." The presence of these trembling ones would have been a hindrance, and when they were dismissed, and the army thus reduced to ten thousand men, there was no loss of "power." The feeble element had been eliminated from their ranks, but the strong remained. And this compact though small army of ten thousand brave and determined men were as much a hindrance to the fulfillment of God's purposes as the larger one had been. Not only the fearful, but they also who were confident in their own strength, must be got rid of. And not until the band of warriors was by the command of God reduced to three hundred (a number which rendered the idea of victory by human means utterly hopeless and absurd) was the way open for the distinct promise: "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you." It is not necessary to see any special meaning in the different manner in which the people drank. It is enough that God chose that way of deciding, so that Israel should not "vaunt themselves,....saying, Mine own hand hath saved me," but acknowledge, like England's queen long centuries after, that their deliverance was the Lord's doing.

There are two particular temptations which are apt to beset those who have enlisted in the service of Christ. One is the temptation to fear and despondency. "I have no might," says one; "I stand so alone; I cannot hold out against my companions; they would not listen to my testimony;" or, "I am nobody; I am poor; I cannot do much for Christ." But the word of the Lord says: "Not by might." Then what need to deplore its absence? The other temptation, to confidence in self, is more specious: "I shall not be led away by others; I am going to make a good fight; I shall stand firm." But the word says also: "Not by power." Want of "might" is no hindrance to a true soldier of Christ; confidence in his own "power" is a decided hindrance. It is by the "Spirit of the Lord" that the victory is to be won.

The Lesson Council.

Question 22. Upon what ground has Gideon been called "the greatest of the judges."

Gideon's greatness is to be measured by his splendid achievements and his personal character. He secured practically, though not permanently, the abolition of