

the Lord appeared to him and eventually commissioned him to be the deliverer of His people. Secondly, because he appears to have been familiar with the history of God's people, and the mighty miracles He had wrought for their deliverance in the past. It is true that the scriptures say that "an Angel of the Lord appeared unto him," but this same Angel is called the Lord—in the Hebrew, Jehovah, and not Adoni. This name, Jehovah, is never applied to any created intelligence, but is the incommunicable name of the Almighty. This, then, without doubt, was "The Angel of the Covenant," the Eternal Word, the Lord of Angels and of Glory. This was He that wrestled with Jacob, that appeared unto Moses, conversed with Joshua as a man talketh with a man. But then Gideon appears to have been a *secret worshipper*. His father was an idolator, a worshipper of Baal, and we have no reason to suppose that previous to this time Gideon had taken any very public stand on the Lord's side. He had faith, but his faith was very weak, and so he threshed wheat in secret that he might hide it from the Midjanites.

II. "And so it was because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night"—Jud: 6.27: Here was an advance, his faith had increased, but it was still weak. The Lord had commanded him to overthrow the altar of Baal which his father had builded, to cut down the sacred grove which surrounded it, and to build an altar and offer sacrifice to the one living and true God. The man-fearing spirit still haunted him, and so, for fear of his father's house and his neighbors he did it in the night. Nevertheless it was a bold step, a decisive step, a declaration of war against idolatry and all its iniquities. He did it too, in the presence of his servants, and assisted by them. It was as though he had said "as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

In the morning there was a great excitement in the city, and a general enquiring "who hath done this?" And when it was told them that Gideon the son of Joash had done this thing" they demanded of the father that he surrender his son to be put to death. But the old man was not disposed to grant their request. Perhaps he had been led of late to contrast their poverty and humiliating condition as idolators, with what they were as a people when the Lord was their God, and when there was no strange god among them. I fancy that when he was told in the morning that the Pa.