

Gideon was the chosen captain of the Lord's host, and a deliverer of Israel from their oppressors. He was called to contend with numberless adversaries encompassing him on every side. His small army, originally only a few thousands, was reduced to a very insignificant and apparently contemptible force, by the express command of God, who ordered three hundred men, and no more, to be selected; and designed by these three hundred to save Israel from the Midianitish host. Every step in this contest reminds us of the chosen band of twelve Apostles, whom our Saviour ordained to overcome the world. Gideon's attack was made, and proved successful. The vast host, surprised and confounded, fled, and in their panic trampled each other down, and were followed by Gideon and his three hundred men, "FAINT, YET PURSUING."

Experience in real religion is only wanting to apply the touches of this picture to ourselves. It is indeed very possible for persons to go through the world for many years without any sufficient apprehension of the number and malice of their spiritual foes. In a few, but a very few instances, this may arise from innocence of the guilt of the world, inexperience of its snares, and from having been brought up in pious and enviable retirement. But too often it arises from heedlessness and self-deception. A man who mingles in civil, military, or political life, or who engages in trade, must be very ignorant of himself and of all that is going on around him, not to see how many and various are the temptations that beset him; and how difficult it is to preserve an upright, honest course, neither allured by profit, nor turned aside by fear. The love of the world and the fear of the world present themselves to us in a thousand shapes, and the contest is carried on every day. Some are allured by the lust of