

6. Number of them that lapped. The act, small as it seemed, was an index of character. 1. It showed earnest men, who were single-hearted in their warfare, and would not pause to gratify love of ease. 2. It showed cautious men, who would not drop shield and spear, cast themselves on the earth, and expose themselves to sudden attack, but stood erect, alert, and ready for the enemy. 3. Perhaps also it showed religious men. Idolators were wont to worship prostrate on their faces; servants of God worshipped in a standing posture, and the momentary act showed who were loyal Israelites. 9. How small are the tokens which will serve as unerring tests of character!

7. By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you. Because with God the number of men was of far less consequence than their fitness for the work. 10. Men may value numbers, but not God. **Will I save you.** The salvation was to come from God, and not from men. **Let all the other people go.** Though they did not make the attack, they probably joined in the pursuit of the flying Midianites after the victory. 11. How their dismissal must have tried the faith of their leader and their comrades!

8. Took victuals....and trumpets. The sense of the original is that they took the victuals or food of all the army (meaning as much as they had need), and their trumpets also, so that each of the chosen three hundred had a trumpet. **Sent all the rest.** The words, "all the rest," are not in the text. He sent all Israel to their tents, that is, home, free from military duty. **Host of Midian was beneath.** The three hundred and their leader were on the steep sides of Mount Gilboa, and the Midianite camp was spread out on the plain at their feet. The attack was made at night, in three divisions, each from a different quarter. The Israelites carried lamps concealed in pitchers which they broke suddenly, showing lights all around the host. At the same time they raised a cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" A sudden terror seized the Midianites; they fled down the valley to the Jordan, where multitudes were slain in crossing. Several more victories were won in the pursuit, and the Midianite power was forever crushed. See the verses and chapter following the lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon. Judg. 7. 20.

OUTLINE.

1. The Many. v. 1-3.
2. The Few. v. 4-8.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Gideon's army. Judg. 7. 1-8.
 Tu. The Midianite oppression. Judg. 6. 1-10.
 W. The call of Gideon. Judg. 6. 11-24.
 Th. Gideon's fleece. Judg. 6. 25-40.
 F. Gideon's victory. Judg. 7. 16-25.
 S. Gideon's pursuit. Judg. 8. 4-21.
 S. Strength for the upright. Psa. 37. 23-40.

Time.—B. C. 1240.

Place.—The hill of Moreh, now known as Little Hermon, near Mount Tabar.

Connecting Links.—1. Mesopotamian oppression; Othniel the first judge. Judg. 3. 1-11, 2. Moabite oppression; Ehud the second judge. Judg. 3. 12-20. 3. Philistine oppression; Shamgar the third judge. Judg. 3. 31. 4. Canaanite oppression; Deborah the fourth judge. Judg. 4. 1-5. 31. 5. Midianite oppression; Gideon the fifth judge. Judg. 6. 1-40.

Explanations.—The Midianite oppression was the hardest of all which the Israelites had yet endured. See the account of it in chap. 6. 1-10. God called Gideon, a brave warrior, to set Israel free. Read his call and how it was received in chap. 6. 11-24. He began by breaking down the altar of Baal, and rearing in its place an altar to God, on which he offered sacrifice. Chap. 6. 25-27. See why Gideon was named *Jerubbaal*, (which means, "Let Baal plead"), in chap. 6. 28-32, and the story of Gideon's fleece in chap. 6. 36-40. He called upon the northern tribes to revolt, and a large army gathered round him near the well of Harod. But when they saw the vast host of the Midianites encamped on the side of the hill of Moreh, now called Little Hermon, they were afraid, and two-thirds of the army went to their homes. God wished to deliver Israel in a way to show that it was by His own power, and verse 5 shows the test by which He chose the men who were best fitted for His work. Gideon marched His army of *ten thousand men* down to the water, and all drank. Nearly all of them laid aside their weapons, knelt down by the brook and put their lips to the water, more eager for a drink than for the war. But *three hundred men* scarcely stopped, only caught up a handful of water in their hands while passing, thus showing themselves single-hearted in their warfare. With these three hundred Gideon made a night attack on the Midianites, and utterly destroyed their great army, so that Israel was set free from their oppressions.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 104, *Dominion Hymnal*.

We're marching to Canaan with banner and song,
 We're soldiers enlisted to fight against the wrong,
 But, lest in the conflict our strength should divide,

We ask, who among is on the Lord's side?

Oh, who is there among us, the true and the tried,
 Who'll stand by his colours—who's on the Lord's side?
 Who, who is there among us, the true and the tried,
 Who'll stand by his colours—who's on the Lord's side?

The sword may be tarnished, the armor be bright,
 For Satan appears as an angel of light;
 Yet darkly the bosom may treachery hide,
 While lips are professing, "I'm on the Lord's side."

No. 103, *Dominion Hymnal*.

Am I a soldier of the cross,
 A follower of the Lamb,
 And shall I fear to own his name,
 Or blush to speak his name?