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THE TRIUMPH OF GIDEON.

– OCT. 13. – JUDGES 7:13-23. –

Golden Text – "Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." – Psa. 27:3.

THE selection of Gideon's army was an illustration of the Lord's method in the selection of a "peculiar people" who shall share with him the honors of victory in the conquest of sin and all its defiling host. [R1876 : page 231]

At the sound of the trumpet thirty-two thousand were gathered together unto Gideon to fight against the hosts of Midian. (Verse 3.) But the Lord said to Gideon that there were too many, and that all were not of the kind desired. Then the Lord commanded Gideon to prove them. From the human standpoint the thirty-two thousand of Israel had no show of conquering the hundred and thirty-five thousand of their enemies (Judges 8:10); but from the standpoint of faith in God, who called them to this service, victory was certain, though none could foresee in what way it should be brought about.

The Lord had in mind a glorious victory, but it was to be achieved by his might and power alone. The honor due to the human instruments who were privileged to share in it was not to be in their skill and strength in battle, but in their faith in God and their zeal in obeying his orders, as an evidence of the strength of their confidence in God.

Accordingly, the first test of faith applied was permission for all the fearful to return home. This reduced the army to ten thousand. The next test was a test of zeal. When led down to the brook to drink, all but three hundred halted very leisurely and knelt down to drink, which required the loosening of their armor and unfastening of their swords. But three hundred did not stop to do this, but hastily scooped up a little water and lapped it from their hands. This zeal, inspired by a living faith in God, was just the element of character for which the Lord was

looking; and these three hundred "peculiar people," full of faith and active zeal, were the only ones acceptable to God and privileged to share the honors of delivering Israel from a mighty host of oppressors.

Just so the Lord Jehovah contemplates the conquest of the world for Christ (Zech. 14:3); and Christ, like Gideon, is called of God to lead a "little flock" of "called and faithful and chosen" ones (Rev. 17:14) forth to the conquest of the hosts of sin.

All that have been called during the entire Gospel age have been but a few in comparison with the opposing forces of the world. The call was first to a justifying faith in Christ. Then the privilege was offered to these to present themselves as living sacrifices to God (Rom. 12:1), and thus to go forward to the battle. But that was more than the weak faith of the multitudes could endure; and thousands therefore returned, shunning the hardships of the way, and faithless as to the Lord's ability to grant them the victory.

But still quite a multitude made the full consecration; and, buckling on the armor of God, they pressed forward. Of these the hardships of the way are continually thinning the ranks. Many grow weary in well-doing, and zeal abates, and love grows cold, and faith declines, and they fail to push on to the end. Beloved, let us not be of those who draw back, or of those who faint by the way; for glorious will be the victory of faith and zeal. Blessed is he that shall endure unto the end. Such shall indeed be "a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
