

The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon

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“The sword of the Lord and of Gideon” – Judges 7:20.

The history of Israel under the Judges is composed of a series of epitomes of the whole. In each epitome there are four stages – Israel sinned – Their enemies prevailed against them – They turned and cried unto the Lord – The Lord sends them deliverance, and they again have rest.

To prove His people the Lord left remnants of the old nations in the land of Canaan. They remained there that Israel might be more mindful of their dependence on the grace and power of their God. “Slay them not, lest my people forget,” He said in arranging His providence as to this. Israel were thus tested as to whether they would refrain from unlawful fellowship with the nations that knew Him not. If there was no command to go among the nations to teach them, there certainly was a command forbidding them to go among them to learn their ways. God’s design in those days of old was to keep His chosen people peculiar among all besides in their nearness and faithfulness to Himself. His design may be differently represented by those who would ascribe to Him a universal fatherhood, and who are averse to think that the riches of His goodness are under the control of His sovereign will. But though God often rebukes them for learning lessons from the heathen, He did not command them to go forth as missionaries among them, and I know not where to look for His rebukes of Israel for neglecting to enlighten them. The whole course of His dispensation then was one continued display of His sovereignty, and of the difference resulting from “His purpose, according to election,” being carried into effect in behalf of “a peculiar people.”

Israel’s declensions resulted, during the greater part of their history, from their failing to keep aloof both from the fellowship and from the idols of the heathen; and as it was in other days, so was it in the days of the Judges; and then, as at other times, the Lord did not fail to chasten them for their backsliding. The King of Mesopotamia first oppressed them, then the King of Moab; and thereafter the King of Canaan was their oppressor, from whom, through Barak and Deborah, the Lord delivered His people. But again they turned aside from the ways of the Lord, and the Lord allowed the Midianites to oppress them, till their condition became most pitiable. In “dens, and caves, and strongholds” the people of Israel then found their only homes within their own land. When they sowed their fields they were not allowed to reap them, for “the Midianites and Amalekites came up,” and “encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth,” “and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.” The people of Israel could

then only timidly peep out of their hiding-places to look on their land covered and laid waste by “the tents,” and “cattle,” and “camels” of their enemies. “Israel was greatly impoverished,” and only then “Israel cried unto the Lord.”

This is still realised in the experience of the Lord’s people. They become proud – elated because of the very greatness of the Lord’s goodness to them – they think they can be independent of the Lord; sin obtains the advantage, they forsake the Lord, becoming formal in their worship, and unwatchful in their daily life; idols are taken back into the Lord’s place; He is provoked to anger; He leaves them under the power of the sin that drew them away from Him, and they lie bewitched and torpid under its spell. But He leaves them not always so. He chastens them, and chastens them sorely, for the soreness is required in order to express His holy displeasure because of their sin, as well as His desire to do them good. “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble.” He brings them to a sense of the evil which they have brought upon themselves. How like their souls then are to the wasted land of Israel. What desolation has spread over their state of feeling! How hidden what is of God within them! Where are the hope, and zeal, and penitence, and joys of other days? All is a waste, and from the sway of the sin that has caused this, they have no power to deliver themselves. And the guilt of their backsliding is brought home to their conscience, as the fruit of it is felt by their heart. But the Lord quickens them to call on Him, and then and thus He turns them to Himself, and then begins to “turn” their “captivity” “as the streams in the south.”

The Lord began to answer Israel’s cry by sending a prophet to them to rebuke them for their sin in turning away from Him to the gods of the Amorites. This is His way of bringing back His people when they forsake Him. “Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.” In no other way would it become Him, or be good to them, to restore peace to them. There must be the confession and the forsaking of sin ere they taste again of His mercy.

But if He raised a prophet to rebuke their sin, He raised a Gideon to be their deliverer from oppression. While the son of Joash was threshing “wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites,” “the angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said unto him, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.” It seemed strange to Gideon that he should be thus addressed. It seemed strange to him that he should be told that the Lord was with him, for there was in the present condition of the country much that made it very unlikely to him that the Lord’s presence could be enjoyed. “If the Lord be with us,” he asks, “why then is all this befallen us?” And it seemed to him strange also that he should be called a “mighty man of valour,” and that the Lord should say to him “Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from

the hand of the Midianites.” To this word of command his reply was – “Oh, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”

Because of his felt weakness before the great work of saving Israel from the hand of the Midianites, he asks a sign from the Lord, and it is given. As a memorial of the Lord’s wondrous grace towards him he builds an altar and offers sacrifice thereon. But the Lord’s altar could not be restored without the altar of Baal being cast down. This was signified by the Lord’s requiring him to “offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove” which marked the high places of Baal’s worshippers. This roused against him the ire of the men of his own city and nothing would satisfy them but that his father should deliver him up to them in order that they might slay him. Joash most wisely answered those who demanded the life of his son. Let Baal settle his quarrel with my son; I call him Jerubaal, thus marking him out as the person with whom Baal has to contend. “Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.”

But Gideon does not seem to have been afraid of Baal’s wrath nor of the ire of the idolaters whose grove he had destroyed, for there was something more formidable before him. “All the Midianites and the Amalekites, and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.” Towards these he had to look, for their destruction was the work which the Lord had given him to do. It was well for him, when he beheld their countless hosts, and observed their grand array,” that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon.” Inspired with fresh courage, “he blew a trumpet” and gathered Israel “after him.” But before going to meet the great army the Midianites he asks for two signs from the Lord. It is easy for men who fight their battles on their bed to find fault with Gideon for asking any sign seeing that the Lord had promised to be with him. Ought he not to be content with the Lord’s word as a ground of hope? they ask. It is not difficult for men who are conscious of no opposition to their carnal faith to rear it up to the pitch of assurance, and having no Midianites to meet, they can, without the quiver of a nerve, mouth big words of confidence, and regard with contempt those who are always afraid. But let us not be hasty to blame Gideon for asking what the Lord was pleased to grant him.

At last “Jerubaal, who is Gideon,” has an army of thirty-two thousand to follow him to do battle with the Midianites. But “the Lord said unto Gideon, the people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, mine own hand hath saved me.” The soldiers are then tested. The cowards who were afraid were sent back to their hiding-places, and then the laggards, and of the two-and-thirty thousand only three hundred are left. Then, and not till then, are they weak enough for the Lord to give them the

victory. That little band then moved, each one with victuals and a trumpet in his hand, towards the great host of Midian. Still another sign, unasked, the Lord gave to Gideon when he brought his weakness quite beside the strength of Midian, as the huge host “lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand of the seaside for multitude.” Dividing his little army into three companies, “he put a trumpet in every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.” He put no sword into their hand, for the swords of the Midianites sufficed for their own destruction. A trumpet to be blown and a pitcher to be broken was all the armour given to, and all the fighting required of Israel. This surely was the “foolishness” of warfare. It is a most fitting emblem of “the foolishness of preaching,” which is mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan. The trumpet is blown, and the “earthen vessel” no longer hides the light of the gospel – the power of God is displayed, and sinners are “turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”

The battle-cry of Gideon’s little band, as they moved towards the camp of the Midianites, was “the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Another version of the cry is proposed – “For the Lord and for Gideon.” But in so far as the teaching of the cry is concerned, it matters not which version we adopt. If their battle was for the Lord, it was His to equip them and to give them the victory; if it was for Gideon, then it was his to lead and to direct them. Gideon was chosen to be deliverer of Israel, and he must have the place which the Lord assigned to him. O, believer, what a grand battle-cry thine is, as thou goest forth to do battle with thy spiritual foes, for Jehovah, and for His Christ, whom He hath appointed the Saviour of Israel. Let there be no coward quiver in the voice that utters this cry, however many and mighty the enemies may be.

There must be a battle-cry and a destroying weapon of some kind, and in some hand, for there is to be a conflict, and a deadly one, with an army that is countless.

Remark I. It is not the sword of Gideon alone. What would it avail if it were? Think of the hosts opposed to him. Why the flanking company of one of the many divisions of the great Midianitish army would find it easy, if no other sword than Gideon’s opposed them, utterly and speedily to destroy both him and his followers. Even if he had with him all that first gathered around his standard, and were these all valiant men, what would they be against such an army as that which was opposed to them? Gideon knew this right well. He was no mad enthusiast. He did not, he could not, reckon on victory being by his sword. How could he when he looked on his three hundred men, with their trumpets and pitchers, and then surveyed the ground covered by the hosts of Midian. There they were, a countless multitude, fully equipped for battle, conscious of their might, flushed with conquest, and bent on the utter destruction of Israel. In such circumstances he would not bid his followers

to raise the cry, "The sword, of Gideon," as they went to meet the enemy.

And yet, feeble though he was, he must not hold back his sword in fear. His conscious weakness must not make him a coward. His heart must not sink as he comes in his feebleness near to the foe. He can do nothing, and yet he must aim at all being done. A few swordsmen from the Midianite camp would soon lay him and his followers low, and yet he must enter on a conflict with the whole formidable forces before him. He must not make his weakness an excuse for sloth. He must not be like the laggards, any more than like the cowards who had ceased to follow him to the fight. And yet if ever there was "a lion in the way," there was one now before Gideon. But he was no sluggard. He trusted in the Lord, and had no slavish fear. He was zealous for the glory of the Lord and for the good of Israel, and would not lag behind when he was entitled to do battle for Jehovah and His people, and when he had a promise of victory through help from heaven.

Remark II. It was not the sword of the Lord alone. It was first the sword of the Lord, but it was next that of Gideon. There was no need of Gideon's sword – the Sword of the Lord would by itself suffice. True, one word of power from the Lord's mouth could in a moment dispose of all the hosts of Midian. Why then, it may be asked, was Gideon's sword there at all? Because, according to the divine arrangement for discomfiting the foes of His people, the Lord reserved a place for the weakness of a Gideon, as well as for His own power. The weakness must be there that the power might be made perfect therein.

It was a great honour to Gideon that his sword is allowed a place in the conflict. This honour the Lord puts on human nature in connection with the dispensations of his grace. It is a meet following up of the alliance of the human and the divine in the work of redemption. In the person of Emmanuel, the Redeemer, the divine and human natures were together. The work was so done by Him that all He did was done by Him as a divine person in human nature. This is the grand feature of the work of redemption. And in the work of application there is also an alliance of the divine and human. Those who are called to serve Him are "fellow-workers with God." This honour have all His servants.

It was a great benefit to Gideon, as it is to all who are represented by him, to have a place along with the Lord in conflict with the enemies of God and of His people. It was thus that Gideon learned to be truly humble. He never without this had known how very feeble he himself was, and how true it is that there is nothing "too hard for the Lord." And in the measure in which he was weak in his own consciousness, had he an opportunity of knowing how faithful, how wise, and how gracious the Lord was in His way of putting forth His power. These are useful lessons; and they are learned just in the measure in which, aiming at the attainment of what the Lord has promised, one feels his own utter inability to reach it, and leans trustingly on the

Lord for “help in time of need.”

This was the way utterly to confound the foe. All that they could see was the weakness of Gideon as opposed to their great power. The more disposed they were to despise his weakness the more humiliating was it to be defeated by him. To be utterly routed before a man who had but three hundred followers, armed only with trumpets and pitchers, was a most mortifying defeat. Long were these Israelites under the heel of their sore oppression, and now before a mere handful of them they are utterly discomfited. Is not this like the shame and confusion which Satan has to endure when a sinner once his slave and victim attains to be more than a conqueror over him?

But the battle-cry was “the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” This was the battle-cry of Gideon’s little army, this should be the battle-cry of the Church of Christ in every age and place, and of each individual soldier of Jesus Christ. In this cry there are –

1. The union of majesty and meanness. Divine majesty is here, for the Lord is here, and human meanness is here, for Gideon is here. If divine majesty is here, there must be the meanness to veil its glory. Only through the little company of men, with their trumpets and their pitchers, is Jehovah to show forth the glory of His power. And the greater the meanness the more transparent is the veil to the eye of faith. It cannot hide from that keen eye the omnipotence of God as active in the destruction of the foes of Israel. A hidden God discomfits the Midianites, but all true believers behold the glory of His power and reverence the infinite greatness of His majesty, as they consider the victory won in the valley of Jezreel. And if divine majesty be here there must be the meanness in order to an opportunity of shewing what divine condescension is. For it is by His dealing with the lowly that Jehovah can shew His condescension. He associates feeble Gideon with Himself, that He may shew what tender care He can take of him; and thus instead of Gideon’s fellowship with Him being to His dishonour it is to the praise of His glory. And if the meanness be here it requires the majesty. Gideon cannot dispense with the Lord. And in the circumstances in which he is placed he cannot be at rest without realising the majesty of the Most High. He requires Him in His infinite greatness; and it is only when he looks on the hosts of Midian in the light of Jehovah’s glory that his heart ceases to be afraid of the conflict. The more the divine majesty makes him conscious of his meanness the easier is it for him to hope that the oppressors of Israel shall be utterly destroyed.

2. This is the union of strength and weakness. The strength there must be, for without it there can be no victory – great strength – divine strength. This is not away, for the Lord is with Gideon, and goes down with him to the valley of Jezreel. “The sword of the Lord” is going to smite the host of Midian. He has pledged Himself

to this. This is enough. He is pledged to exercise His Almighty strength. Will He then not go down to the valley of Jezreel? Will He go down alone? He will go, but He will not go alone. He brings weak Gideon with Him. Of what use can he be? What can he and his little band do? They can be weakness, and that is all they are asked to contribute to the victory which is to be won. Let them give themselves in their weakness to the Lord. True, they are nothing in the great work to be done – God is all. But He must have them so to work by them that “His strength” shall be “made perfect in” their “weakness.” It is a fine sight which is before our eyes as we see the Omnipotent Jehovah, with Gideon as His fellow-worker, going down to the hosts of Midian – Omnipotence and impotence – a worm in the hand of Jacob’s God.

3. This is the union of grace and unworthiness. Yes, there is grace to chosen Israel to be expressed in judgment inflicted on their oppressors. And there is unworthiness, for as surely as unworthiness cannot dispense with grace, grace cannot dispense with unworthiness. It becomes “the God of all grace” to have sinful Gideon with Him when He is working out deliverance for guilty Israel. Thus alone can He show forth the riches of His grace. And this surely furnishes Him with an occasion of doing so. And unworthy Gideon cannot face the foe apart from the grace of God. Let not his sinfulness cause him to shrink back from the work to which the Lord has called him. Let him rather be a willing debtor to His grace for all He needs to make him a good soldier, and to secure to him victory as the result of the conflict. The more he is a debtor to divine grace, the more fitted for his place as a fellow-worker with God, and the more willing he is to be nothing in the relation in which he stands to the Lord, the stronger will he be found to be in the day of battle.

4. This is the union of the invisible and the visible. The majesty, the might, the grace are all invisible. The eye, that sees “things unseen” to all other eyes on earth, alone can discern them. All from which came the victory, and the power by which it was achieved, were unseen. By those who saw not these what could be expected but defeat for Gideon and his tiny army. He was visible, and so were his three hundred followers, and their trumpets, and their pitchers – these and no more. But the visible weakness was connected with the invisible might, though unseen by all who were faithless. If Gideon had been unbelieving, what he saw of weakness would have melted his heart with utter cowardice. But “He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible,” and He, with His majesty, power, and grace was as present to his mind through faith, as were his own meanness, weakness, and unworthiness. How worldlings, who cannot rise above grovelling amidst things seen, would mock his hope of victory through the wonder-working power of the God of Israel! But they could not despise him when the victory over the Midianites was complete.

Application.

1. This is the battle-cry of every true Christian. He has right to reckon on the Lord’s

being on his side. He obtained that when first he came to Christ, for then he was “made the righteousness of God in Him,” and having been justified and adopted, the Lord promised to be his God and Father, to supply every want, to preserve him from every enemy, tenderly to bind up his wounds, and to bring him at last to the rest prepared for His Israel. Friend, you are sometimes afraid that you have no right to reckon on the Lord being on your side. You are afraid of this because of what you remember of unfaithfulness in the past, because of what you presently feel in the state of your heart, and because of how dark the providences are of which you have experience. But did it not look very like as if the Lord had forsaken Israel, when he allowed the Midianites to invade and lay waste their land? Did not even Gideon say to the angel, “Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” But even in this dark hour the Lord had not forsaken His people, for “the Lord looked upon” Gideon, and said, “go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?” True, the children of Israel were in a most dreadful plight, but why were they so? It was because of their own backsliding and not because of any lack of faithfulness or grace on the part of their God. He hid His face till He brought them to acknowledge their iniquity, and then the glory of His power shone forth in their deliverance. Friend, when you fear that the Lord is against you, come as a death-deserving sinner to Him in whom there is “redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins,” and laying your hand in faith on the head of the “Lamb slain” confess your sin to the Lord, and anew dedicate yourself to Him, and He will turn your captivity as streams in the south. And always remember that it is an enemy’s work to be keeping a poor sinner away from Christ, or to be trying to induce him to distrust Him by whatever difficulties his hope may be tried. O, trust in Christ at all times and in all circumstances, and follow Him, the New Testament Gideon, to any work, or trial, or conflict to which you may be called, assured that if you are with Him, the God of Israel shall be with you, and that you may reckon on His gracious help in every “time of need.” Take up, then, the battle-cry, and shout it in front of all you have to encounter.

1. Let this be your battle-cry in the conflict with the sin that dwelleth in you. Weaker in yourself, before the enemies within, you are, than was Gideon before the hosts of Midian. He might, at any rate, have slain a few Midianites before he was struck down, if he went to the battle without the presence of the Lord; but you cannot “mortify” any one sin except “through the spirit.” This you will feel whenever your desire rises against the power of sin within you. But remember that you have the Lord, with His riches of grace, and His omnipotence, and His wisdom, and His faithfulness to fall back upon. A right to victory is yours in Christ on the ground of

His accepted sacrifice, the Lord has promised His sanctifying grace, and He hath said that He will never leave nor forsake you. Seek grace to give you as much faith as shall keep you from fainting, and as much zeal as will keep you from sparing any sin, and you shall have your desire against all the Midianites who infest and oppress your soul.

2. Let this be your battle-cry in view of all that the world and the powers of darkness can do against you, because you are a follower of Christ. Your great anxiety should be to know the path of duty prescribed by the Lord. Let this be your care, and not what you may have to encounter while you walk in it. Be anxious to hear the Lord saying, "have not I sent thee?" and harbour no anxiety about what awaits you when you go to do His bidding. Know this and you may reckon on the Lord's being with you. But if He is with you, then be certain that you will find yourself, in yourself, utterly weak before work and conflict. It is the fruit of His presence that you be kept consciously and willingly dependent on Himself for all needed strength. Be careful to see more and more of the greatness of the work to which you are called, and do not neglect to measure the strength of the enemy you are required to subdue; but, as you do so, be leaning your weakness on the arm of the Lord. Let Him have His place of pre-eminence, give Him nothing but yourself and your weakness, be content to be nothing, and then, raising your battle-cry, go forth to meet all that awaits you. In the light of His glory, who is your Leader and Saviour, what puny hosts seem those who have risen against you, and what but victory over them can you expect, when "the sword of the Lord" is drawn to destroy them.

3. Let this be your battle-cry as you go down to meet the last enemy in the dark valley of death. You have to go, for "it is appointed to all men once to die." You have no alternative but to go down. In view of that last conflict, how often has your heart sunk within you, as you thought of being cut in twain, and of being ushered as a naked spirit into Eternity. How much there seemed to be between you and passing into the Father's house! All your past sins, as unforgiven, seemed marshalled against you, all the corruption within you seemed to be utterly unmortified, and in unbroken strength, and your heart melted with fear as you looked into the darkness before you. But, Friend, you then forgot that there was one who promised to befriend you, even unto death. You looked to yourself and not to Him, and hence your sinking of heart. You forgot that you were called to follow the New Testament Gideon, in whom you have a right to victory over death, who went for you through the suffering of an accursed death, that death might have no sting for you, that He went before you through it to His place within the veil, that by the power of His life He might save you "to the uttermost," and that His presence and sympathy can be yours, till at last He makes you more than a conqueror. And wonder not, Friend, that yours should be Gideon's experience, who became weaker and weaker the nearer he came to the foe. Thus may you expect to feel the nearer you come to your dying.

More and more will you be weaned from all self-confidence by all being removed that would interfere with simple dependence on the Lord. Like the ship which carried Paul, from which its cargo was cast into the sea, you will be self-emptied, as you never were before, as death is approached. And like that vessel, too, which broke up where the two seas met, you will have experience of dissolution when to you time and eternity meet, and your last experience may be to be cast on the further shore, clinging to some word of grace that warrants a sinner to hope for salvation through grace by Jesus Christ. But leave the mode of your dying, and all else that makes up the morrow which the Lord appointed for you, and crying, “the sword of the Lord and of Gideon,” go forward, leaning on the Lord, to the last struggle, and expecting the victory through Him who is “All in All.”

4. This is the battle-cry of the true Church of Christ. The Lord is her leader, the Lord is her strength. After Him, and leaning on Him, she goes forth to her work. She cannot but have battles to fight, for she cannot be following the Lord without having to endure persecution from the world. There are churches that provoke not the wrath of the enemy, and that, instead of contending with an opposing world, have all their battles within their own pales. But neither Satan, nor the world can sleep beside a faithful church, neither can she sleep while they are busy in persecution. Better, far better, to encounter the fierceness of the foe than to win exemption from suffering by yielding to his demands. But if she is bent on doing the Lord’s work in the Lord’s way she may reckon on the Lord being with her.

When this is truly a church’s battle-cry, she must be careful to trust only in the Lord. She must be impressed with the greatness of her work, and must wisely count the cost of opposition by the powers of darkness and by the world. Only when her heart is zealous for the glory of the Lord and for the good of souls, can she either realise the greatness of her work, or experience the mighty power that is at work against her. Only then can she truly feel her need of trusting in the Lord. But, however weak she may feel herself to be before her serving and her soldiering, let her lean on the Lord, and let her be given to importunate and believing prayer.

And she will, like Gideon, ask her people to follow her only to a work to which the Lord hath called her. She has no right to expect followers except in the ways of the Lord. But let her be fully persuaded that she is moving in the path of duty and then let her take up the battle-cry, and the Lord of hosts shall be with her.

But there are churches who profess to have this as their battle-cry, that are dishonest in their shout. They are not “for the Lord” therefore they care not for “the sword of the Lord.” Instead of aiming at doing what is the Lord’s will, they do according to their own pleasure. They pass measures which they dare not ask the Lord to bless. If the thing they propose be what they cannot justify, they proclaim the doing of it to be expedient for the sake of peace. And they expect that the sword

of the Lord will be on their side notwithstanding. But let it be remembered that the sword of the Lord was the sword of the Gideon who went because the Lord sent him to do a work which the Lord prescribed to him. Let no one, let no church, dare to say "the sword of the Lord and mine" if the path in which the individual or the church is moving is not one which the Lord prescribed.

It would be well if our own church remembered this. The time was when she seemed willing to do battle for the Lord of Hosts. But, alas, this zeal has waned, a faithful defence of the truth is not attempted, even when error is flaunted before her face, no care to keep pure the worship of God is evinced, and all the testimony which made her position distinctive is abandoned. One step of declension has led to another, till a depth has been reached that marks as almost unique the speed of her decline.

But notwithstanding of all this degeneracy there is still a claim to use the battle-cry of Gideon. To minds that are more ignorant of the power of godliness than moles are of astronomy, superficial movements called revivals appear as tokens of the Lord's presence, and these are cast as a veil over the many tokens there are of His departing from us. Thus, in departing from the Lord they venture to reckon on His countenance and aid. Leading churchmen will put themselves at the head of a band of Midianites to oppress the Lord's heritage, by introducing what to them is loathsome in the worship of God, and yet they claim a right to use the battle-cry of him, whom the Lord sent to deliver his people from the power, with which these choose to be allied.