

GIDEON

By John Wright Follette

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PREFACE

In a relaxed and informal atmosphere of a small Retreat Group, John Wright Follette opened to them the story of Gideon. The year was 1958 and the place was Desert Hot Springs, California. Christian friends, owners of a motel, reserved their facilities at this time for his use. In such a setting he could say: "I want to talk to you." By this he meant he wanted to talk from his heart, and only as Truth had been personalized in his own life first, would he share it. "I am letting you know what I have experienced so that when you have to go through it, you will know what to do."

He taught that God had placed teachers in the Church. They were chosen and illuminated in the field of spiritual reality and their ministry was to bring from that field the knowledge, the truth, the revelation — all that would feed the Body; instruct it; and give it its growth. They were a gift to the Church from God Himself. John Wright Follette was just such a gift to the Church.

It was in the simple prosaic forms of everyday life that he sought and found Truth. In the story of Gideon he discovered Truth in this simple prosaic form. As an illuminated teacher this Truth is unfolded and the deeper meanings revealed — the flail, the ax, and the trumpet take on new meaning and our hearts receive encouragement as we see this man, Gideon, transformed under the power of God's spoken Word.

A minimum of editing has been done so that this spoken and Spirit inspired message would not be lost in a written form.

Join him now as you enter into this remarkable story of Gideon — the man who 'if'd' God.

S.M.S. & C.S.

GIDEON

I am having rather an interesting time in the Old Testament just now dealing with the characters found in there. They always interest me and they always minister to me. The Word says that all these things happened to them as ensamples for everyone of us. Everything in that Old Testament is all typical. It's all full of types and lessons, and it is said, it all happened to them in the Old Testament for an example — 'ensample', it's an old English word. It really is an example for us that we may be admonished by them, so that when I read these Old Testament characters, I feel I haven't struck fire with the thing unless I've been admonished in some way by what their dramatic movings meant. It isn't always just the things that they've said, but the things that they were doing — their conduct, their conversations, their actions — the whole mood is suggestive. And as I read it, I always feel, to stay open and God will minister to me in this because this is an example. It's a picture; it's a drama, and if our hearts are open we will be helped and admonished by them.

I'm reading in Judges just now and my character is Gideon. How many of you like Gideon? I think he is really quite a remarkable man and he has always been interesting to me. I have some Scripture verses here that have helped me and I want to share them with you.

Now you remember in Judges — the history of it — that these poor people, these children of Israel, they vibrate, you know, just back and forth. What is it? They are first in freedom and then they displease the Lord and get into idolatry and are wayward and God has to pull them back again and reinstate them and bless them. Then they go just so long and then they go back again. How many of you know that vibration? And in the meantime they will have a ruler, a judge, somebody to rule over them.

Now here in the story we are having now, (I'm starting with Judges 6:1) this is the fourth apostasy, the fourth time that they have failed God. God had blessed them, given them a lovely vision of things and all those wonderful promises. The promises are wonderful. And then they go just about so long, just like humanity, just like a human being, and then they get under some power and become captive and are lost in it.

Judges 6:1. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and the Lord delivered them into the hands of Midian seven years."

Naturally that's the consequence — cause and effect; sin and judgment; disobedience and your turning away! It all comes just in a natural order.

Verse two: "And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel; and because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made themselves the dens which are in the mountains, and caves and strongholds. And so it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them. And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished."

Oh, that ought to be underlined! Why? Because of the Amalekites! Well what did the children of Israel do?

Verse seven: ". . . and the children of Israel CRIED unto the Lord."

Isn't that just true to type? Just exactly true to type.

Now to see how dreadful this seems to anyone who has read their history. You see, they have no business being driven up in that mountain, living in caves and holes and strongholds back in there. That is not their dwelling place. That isn't God's plan for them, is it? No. God never said, "Now children of

Israel, I'm going to take you out and I want you to make holes in the mountains and dens and caves to live in." He didn't do that. Can you see all of this working and trying to have protection and trying to care for themselves is all uncalled for? God didn't arrange that for them at all. God has made ample provision for them.

Now a little later you will find that the very first picture we have of Gideon is that he is there by the winepress thrashing out a little wheat for something to eat to sustain him. **That** wasn't God's original thought either. Now how far back do we have to go to find that original thought? Well, we have to go back to the original picture of Adam which we find in the Garden of Eden. Now when God created the garden and placed Adam and Eve in this wonderful place, it says, He made all those trees and fruits and everything else, **He made all of that.** Always remember they are the creation of God, His workmanship, and, therefore, naturally He is under obligation to look after them, to take care of them because they are His business. He can't make those children (Adam and Eve) and say now look after yourselves. He can't do that and be God. And He didn't. He didn't do any such a thing at all. HE places them there. HE'S going to use them. They are there for HIS glory and the one thing that He asks of them is, that they should stay surrendered to Him in their will while He could cause them to function out here in this field, and then God would be glorified and they would be developed. There's never a word in the beginning at all about them laboring and struggling for livelihood. For it says He made all these things for Adam and gave them to him. Even to the cattle, He gave them to Adam. Now that means that God is responsible. God is responsible for the wellbeing of those creatures. He has made them and He takes that responsibility upon Himself too. He's glad to be responsible for them and He says,

"Now I've created you, I want you over here to

glorify Me and to do My will. You have a body you can live in. You have all those natural requirements about you because you are constructed with needs that are basically in you. But now I've made all the ample provision for that. Here are your trees, here is the fruit, here is everything for you. Now I give you that **freely**. All you have to do is partake of it. It doesn't have to be a burden to you at all. **It's here freely given**. All I want you to do is to move in the thought and purpose that I have for you. **Glorify Me. Do My will**. Enter into this fellowship, and although you are limited — you have to live under the law of nature here — I've made all the provision in the world for it."

How many can see that? All the provision in the world has been made. They don't have to be bothered with it at all. That was not to be in their mind or thought. That's all **freely given** to them because He is the Author.

Now when you first find any disturbance about their eating and their wherewithal, it's after sin and disobedience. You don't find it before. Not before, not before, not before, no, no, no. It is not until **after** sin and disobedience have come in. And it is after sin and disobedience have come that they are thrown, as it were, into a new setup because He says, "For your sake, because of your disobedience — not the disobedience of nature, not the disobedience of anything out here — **your** disobedience has reflected on the earth and I judge the earth for man's sake. For **your** sake the earth is cursed!" He says it plainly too. That's why, as I've said before, in the presence of all of those things that are blurred now, I feel like I should apologize for it. These wild animals that you see in the zoo pacing, God never made animals like that in the beginning. No, no, no, no — not that one animal should live on another. I was reading today in the Scriptures that this food was for animals too — **not flesh food!** And in the Millennial reign what does it say? It says the

ox and lion shall eat what? Grass. There will be no ferocious blood taking. That doesn't belong in God's economy at all. Animals were not made that way. They were made to partake of the food that belonged to them and there was no animosity, no disagreeableness at all between any of them because he (Adam) was to rule over them.

So now, **after sin and disobedience**, that's the first that you find God saying anything about **earning their bread by the sweat of their face**. Keep that word "sweat" in mind, I want to refer to it another time. How?

"By the sweat of your face — in other words — you toil now, and it will be by the ingenuity of your wits, if you want anything to eat. You don't like My plan and My economy. Don't you like My economic way of living? I've given you all of this freely. You can have all of this **freely**. Just go and partake of it. It will sustain you. All I want of you is your attention to My will and glorify Me and I make all the ample provision for you, for your well-being here. But now, since you have not liked My will, My purpose, My design of living, and you have chosen to do it your way, by doing that, you have upset the whole economic problem here in life and in nature and that shall become a resisting thing to you. Instead of going out naturally and gathering it, **it will resist you.**"

How many see your resistance comes from that scene — that disobedience? That thing will resist you.

"Now," He says, "all life will be like that too. It will all reflect just the same. This isn't My thought." He says, "I don't want that but if you don't like this economic plan and you choose your will, then you shall have to earn. Up to this time it's been a gift I freely give to you. I give it to you as your food, that's a gift, gift, gift."

How many of you see, earning is something else? Now He says,

"You will have to earn your livelihood and the openings of the secrets in life and nature. All this great world in which I put you, you will now have to seek that out with the resistance of nature and with what you have — wisdom that's clouded; now, take the world, but you will have to earn by the sweat of your face."

We have this electric light here and it's taken six thousand years getting this little electric light bulb going! Do you think man made electricity? No! Electricity was there in the Garden of Eden, long ago. All this atomic business, it's always been here in the earth. Man didn't make it. He discovers some of these things and goes to work abusing the use of it. But he didn't make it. It was all here. All those things were there for Adam, and nature was an open book for him. And Adam was made to reign and rule, to replenish and possess the earth and to have dominion; for this was God's command to him. Could God say that to an ignoramus? No, He couldn't. He said that because He knew that in man, **potentially, were all the gifts that really would do that very thing. **He was made to do that.** Can you see that? And so He says here in the Scriptures,**

"I've made all these for you and I've constructed you in such a fashion that if you will live as you ought to, as I want you to live, this thing will move normally and naturally. And you will find in you all the gifts and powers and everything that is needed to have dominion and authority over this whole creation. And I've given it to you. Now possess it."

He couldn't say that unless there were in them some potential gift which, released in the will of God, would do it. Do you see it? Do you see how it works?

Alright, now He says,

"Concerning your livelihood you'll have to earn by the sweat of your face. Hitherto it's been a gift. Now you have to earn it!"

That's very different. **Now you're on an entirely different level. You have stepped off of the level of the grace of God and His provision in the giving. You've stepped out on another level now where everything has to be EARNED.** How many get "struggle" coming in now? You want some apples? Fight all the kind of bugs now with all the sprays you can find and everything else, that you earn a few apples. **That was NOT God's idea** — now you earn it. How many know the farmers earn it? They struggle and fight with nature.

He said,

"Cursed be the earth for your sake. You got it, now fight with it. You wouldn't live with Me, you wouldn't live My fashion. Now take up with what YOU want."

It's a good lesson to me of what comes from self-will. **Self-will is the biggest sin in the world. It's the root sin in the world.** People think this is sin and that's sin. Those are off-shoots of your root sin. And your root sin is self-will over against the will of God. And just as soon as you indulge in a self-thing, you'll pay the price for it. It will flare back and you'll have something to work with and fight with. And so He says, "Now earn it."

Well now, if Israel will be obedient and live with God, God will take care of her too. But you've got to come in under His covenant and under His relationship, and you can have it. And so when he comes to Israel He says,

"Now you're My people, I'm going to take care of you. You walk with Me and I will do this and I will not do that."

How many remember all those covenants — covenants and covenants? Walk with Me thus and that will not happen. Walk with me thus. Well they start walking, and then the first thing you know, this old self-will gets moving in them and the temptation of this idolatry about them — a field for them to push

out in, all contrary to God. And He says, "Every time you do that you will be brought into judgment."

And this is the fourth time God has put this group into captivity — the fourth picture here in the sixth chapter of Judges. It is the picture of Israel surrounded by the enemy and now they are calling out to God. Here they are calling out to God, and He in the past has told them to get in a position where it's possible for Him to meet them. He can't meet them there, He can meet them here. So when I was reading that, my mind went back to this story of Adam.

Now we'll read a little bit more. I want to pick up this idea of what's going on. We've got the **need** now. Now the **need** is on, and we find that in the first six verses the terrible background of their failure, and the Midianites and Amalekites and the rest edging up to their land. They are in their own land. But this enemy comes in and pushes off and pushes them and pushes them and pushes them to make a conquest. That's like the devil does in life. If he can get just a little hold, he gets a little more and a little more. But you see it's such a subtle slow thing that people don't know what the end of that thing is going to be. They don't know how far, and the first thing you know, why they are over on the edge there; that's nothing, that's nothing, they are only down here on the edge! Well no, that won't last too long and by and by they will be right at your threshold! They will come right on closer and closer until you'll find — well it was alright? No! It was all wrong! It was all wrong! So they cry unto the Lord and the Lord of course is merciful.

Verse eight: "And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, that the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, who said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel..."

It's very foolish to be claiming promises and calling on God and everything. Here is the same teaching I had the other day, you'll see that the prophet begins to rehearse all God's wonderful doings. The prophet

doesn't come down and say,

"You miserable creatures, what are you doing hidden up in these holes? What are you doing back in the mountains? Don't you know that's your land? God has given it to you. And here you are cowering back in the dust?"

He didn't say that because they are too well acquainted with the fact themselves. They just know where they are. They don't need somebody coming in and pounding on them.

Verses eight and nine: "The Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, who said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land...Now you've cancelled the whole thing. I had this all planned; got it all arranged and there is not full obedience."

Full obedience is the thing that counts, not half-way little obedience that will keep you out of hell. No, it isn't that, it's full obedience.

Alright, verse ten: "And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed My voice."

Now that's the prophet calling.

Verse eleven: "And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash, the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon."

Where is Gideon? Oh, he is threshing wheat by the winepress to HIDE it from the Midianites! Isn't that a victorious looking picture for a man to be? What a victorious looking thing he must have been, hiding away from the Midianites! Scared to death to get his living! How many of you know he is thrashing out his living? I want you to get that. What is he getting? His living! How many of you see the point? Do you see he is earning it? How many see he has to thrash to get it in the face of his enemy, and the

enemy eating up all that really belonged to him, and he pushed off in the corner?

I hope some of us can see what God is saying to some of us. This is history dear, the history of people's lives back of it. That's just the way it goes. That's exactly the way it goes. And the more we surrender to it the farther back we get and here was the winepress that should have been what? Luscious with the wine and grapes and the harvest that should have come . . . and there is the winepress! Such a suggestive thing — how it is functioning! What irony! What awful irony there is in it! Where does he go? He goes right in the presence of the winepress which should have been gushing with the refreshment of wine, the sustaining thing. And in the presence of the thing that would do that, he puts down a little handful of wheat for his life's sake and takes **the flail.**



Millstone and winepress taken at Capernaum.



THE FLAIL



How many know what a flail is? Some of you don't know. Well I was born in the country and we've had a flail more than once on the farm. You have a long strong pole, usually a hickory. It's very strong. It's about but not quite as long as that door. There is a little hole in it and on one end a sort of a club comes out, and that's made of hickory too — round like that. And that has a hole here and then you have a leather thong. You have this flailing thing tied on to this long handle with a leather thong, you see, like that. And that leather can give; it doesn't wear out as a rope would or a string. How many know a leather thing will last and last and last? Now how many see the liberty there is by having that loose? It isn't tied fast to this. It is loose so it's workable on that little buckle of leather, the leather thong. You put your wheat down on the floor and then you raise your pole up and how many see this thing is flopping around on it and you learn to do what? Beat like that and this cudgel thing beats the grain and all the grain flies out. Plung, plung, plung. You don't go plunk, plunk, plunk! That won't do it. That's like churning. Churn churn — you couldn't churn that way, you get too agitated. You have to have a rhythm in it. When two do it there is a regular rhythm in it. I've seen Dad and Dave, our workman, do it more than once. They would stand quite a piece apart, Dave standing here and Dad would stand there each with a flail. Ker-plung, ker-plung, one answering the other and these flails would bound back and forth on the grain until, oh my, the grain would dance out of those husks and it would not break them at all, they just danced out. Then they picked it up and let the wind blow through it. How many see you had the lovely, lovely grain?

So we usually had a regular thrashing day when a man would come to thrash. But there was always a

good heap of this for the chickens. Father would always say that we'll have to flail out for the chickens. Of course I've flailed too and you take a heap of it and there's a regular rhythm to it. This part is so loose, you see, on that leather thong and you can swing the handle up this way and how many can see that old flail come plop? It takes a good strong piece of hickory. You don't want to get near the thing, you'd get your head knocked right off, you know, put your eye out. So young ones always kept away. Swing, swing away. Now that's what Gideon was doing. How many see he was working? He was earning it by the sweat of his face, because sometimes it got pretty warm and he would sweat. So here get that idea. What is he handling? A flail!

Now the first picture we have of Gideon at all is where he is handling a flail and the flail becomes the symbol. **It's the suggestion of the earning of his food by the sweat of his face.** He's gone back now to exactly what God prophesied, He said that is what you will have to do. He is now earning his life, the livelihood, by the flailing, in order to get his bread. Well this is what people in the world are doing today to get what belongs to them. They have an awful time getting what legitimately belongs to them. And it's true in the life of the Christian. **It isn't too pleasing to God for us to take the burden of our living.** Now as consecrated Christians, consecrated spirits — get your location right — Christians who are dedicated to God, seeking to do His will, how many of you know the **burden** of our wherewithal should be lifted, because He is taking us back again to His original purpose. Man was made for the glory of God and God will give him his wherewithal. That will automatically come because you are in a divine arrangement, obedient to a law of spiritual adjustment in the thing that God wanted. **If Christians would come back to do exactly what Jesus was telling those disciples, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," you would lay the flail down.**

He says you'll lay it down. You still earn but I mean the burden of it — the burden of your livelihood will be taken care of because you have found another law. What is it? Obedience to God — living and moving in His plan and in His purpose.

"Why," He says, "all these things will be added to you. I have made provision for that. You don't have to have your accent on the flail! NO." He says, "Seek first your restoration, your coming back to what I want. You come back to My original purpose and if you dare to do that it will work for you just as it did for Adam."

Absolutely! I've tried it for fifty years and I haven't found it to fall down on me yet. I've found that. I know that just as well as I know I have hands. It's a restoration to God's original design and purpose for man. He is making a new man and we are going to partake of so many of the elements that God had in His plan for Adam. We'll partake of it.

He says,

"First, seek that adjustment in Me and all these things shall be added to you as with Adam. Seek to do My will Adam, and I will take care of your wherewithal. I have it all planned for you. That need not be your burden."

Now Gideon here is the picture of the one who has not yet discovered that, and **fear** is upon him. He was AFRAID of the Midianites. He was AFRAID of losing. What is fear? A disorganizing thing. Love never does that. The love that is surrendered, how many know it dissipates the fear? It will dissipate it. Here we find Gideon using this flail to thrash out what belongs to him.

Well, I was thinking, God doesn't like this idea of **laboring** and the **sweat** and all of that in his concern. I read in the Scriptures today and thought, well that hooks on to where we are today. It's in Ezekiel.

Let me read you something. This is where they are having the temple, and God is bringing this priesthood back into line for the priests to serve and minister to Him. The priests now are coming back into God's thought, into God's plan and now they are in God's order.

Ezekiel 44:17, 18: "Now it shall come to pass that when they enter at the gates of the inner court they shall be clothed with linen garments and no wool shall come upon them while they minister in the gates of the inner court and within."

Now you will find out why.

"They shall have linen turbans (the head gear) upon their heads and shall have linen breeches upon their loins. They shall not gird themselves with anything that causeth sweat."

I never heard of such a thing! How many of you see it? It hooks in, ties right in with it. They shall not wear in their service in the things of God anything that will what? Cause sweat. It is not by the sweat of your face. Isn't that a strange thing? But the Lord brought it to me. I said, "Lord, I see something in there." He doesn't want anything wrought out in anything of the natural, you see. How many know there is an awful lot of sweating going on — an awful lot of sweating, but that is not pleasing to Him. He says,

"I don't want anything that causes the friction of sweat."

People are proud now. They say, "I sweat that thing through for the Lord." I want to say, "What a horrible thing! He said not to."

How many get that?

He says, "Don't allow that."

You see that wool, that animal thing, it's taboo. Do you get it — the wool — the animal thing? "No," He says, "the friction; not sweat; not a thing that would cause sweat."

Linen. How many see the linen is of the flax? It's from an entirely different realm from that of the wool; an entirely different realm. You

follow this idea of linen and the wool and it's just a wonderful thing. It is so full of truth. It just goes like this when you read it — you say,

“Oh I see that sweat from the Garden of Eden, forbidden sweat, sweat.”

Well it comes popping up all along the line and He doesn't want it even in our religious movings. He said He wanted **nothing that would produce it**. I can see more and more, God is not in just a terrific lot of this business that is passing as religious service — the energy — **it's the sweat of flesh and He isn't in that**. So, when I was reading, I said, “Lord, what next will You be getting at?” But it's all in there.

Now it says,

“And there came an angel of the Lord, and the angel found him threshing wheat by the winepress to hide from the Midianites.”

FEAR — poor, poor child.

“And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said unto him . . . the Lord is after thee, you scoundrel, you fear, you scarecat!”

How many of you have heard in a lot of meetings where they do that and shame a poor person that is already scared to death? I often think of them. I've been in meetings where they thought they would arouse some faith in the people. The poor minister would get up there railing about their unbelief, and where is your faith? And of course they all knew they didn't have any, and that is why they had come to the meeting to try to get in touch with God. And the minister would say,

“Where is your faith? Shame upon us, God's people and such a lack of faith as today, brother! If we had faith we would have something **doing!**”

Of course the people all get feeling something like this — the general result is they are very still! It scares everything out of them and there they sit, “Oh Lord” — with this deep conviction on them? There wasn't any conviction! They all had paralysis! Do you know

people can't tell conviction from paralysis? They were paralyzed! What little faith they had when they came in there had been blown all to pieces. There they sat paralyzed like that — "Oh Lord, Oh Lord" — and the minister saying, a great conviction is on them, a mighty message! They are still, under the power of that? When no, they were paralyzed under the power of it! What little faith they had he had blown it all out. Oh my, such a funny way they do, I don't understand them.

No, no, he (the angel of the Lord) didn't come and say anything like that to Gideon at all. It's amazing what he did say, isn't it, to this man that's scared and afraid? Well, I'm glad God can see when nobody else can. "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Who could put it any stronger than that? Such a looking, 'mighty man of valor', scared to death with a flail in his hand! "Mighty man of valor." Well, that's because God has faith. It's like the Lord looking at Peter, isn't it? Yes, I often think, He looks at a person, He looks right through them, then He looks past them over where they are coming out. Do you see three degrees of looking? He looks at them and says, "I don't think there is much use to you. I don't see there's anything possible in you. No, you don't have the right disposition."

No, He didn't do that. He looks at them, He looks through them, and He looks past them. That's the way He did with Peter. He did that with James and John. Wasn't it, "Sons of Boanerges" He called them, "Sons of Thunder"? Well, that was something too, wasn't it? That's a terrible name, you know — power — that terrific "Sons of Thunder"! "I want you now, you come with Me." Well now, let me help you with that. He called them the "Sons of Thunder", not because they are going to thunder so much, although they did. Remember **He gave them power** and they went out and they thundered quite a while for Him having their services. He had given them thunder and this very one who was the 'Son of Thunder' came back and told

the Lord how **he** had thundered. Remember he did? Remember John did? He's the "Son of Thunder". So he'd gone out to demonstrate thunder. He went out and thundered in those villages to those people. Now he meant well. He meant well **BUT** he didn't know **who** he was! So he goes down into the villages there and **he thunders!** He is a "Son of Thunder"! Well, let me tell you something. **It was John's thundering!** He thundered! And when he came back he said to the Lord,

"Lord, do You want me to thunder a little for You? Those people don't even respect You. Want **me** to pull down some fire and consume them? I got the thunder, Lord!"

Why the Lord says,

"Oh no, you haven't any power! Well, you don't love Me enough to do that?"

No!

He said,

"You don't know **WHO** you are, dear. You don't know what spirit you are in at all. You don't know what your spirit is; you haven't the slightest idea. Now I'm not condemning you because you don't have love. You love Me enough to pull fire right out of heaven for Me and I'm not thanking you. You've got tremendous love for Me but your devotion is in a wrong pattern and I'm not rebuking or condemning you because you haven't any power, I'm the very One Who gave this power of thunder — but there is something back of it. You don't know your spirit."

Well now, do you remember how God allowed that for a long time? Then when the Lord wanted to really do something with John He put him over on the Isle of Patmos and shut him up — that beautiful 'thunder' who went in the villages and had big camp meetings and everything and won them, oh tremendous meetings the Lord said,

"You've thundered enough dear, it's time to quit now."

He shuts him right up and puts him on an island out there on the sea. Now what is the remedy today? Get chain-prayer and mass-prayer groups going for his deliverance, for this mighty instrument of God, whom the devil has conquered, and is now seeking to destroy him! **How many know they don't know the Lord from the devil!** And so they all band together to pray that John shall be delivered from this Isle of Patmos. Now listen! All the king's horses and all the king's men will never get him home again. I've heard people pray about things. It wouldn't be nice of me to do it, but I was right about it, and I would go over and touch them and say,

"Now don't pray that any more. God isn't interested in it."

"Why Brother Follette!"

"No," I say, "don't Brother me so tenderly. God isn't in that thing at all. He's not within a million miles of it and here you are praying and fasting and pounding on the chair and claiming promises and trying to get a hold of God to make Him come down and perform." I said, "He isn't in this at all. Now let's pray about something else."

It would prove out to be right. Can you see how silly it would have been for them to all lay hold of God now to get him off the Isle of Patmos? How many see what a ridiculous thing it would be? **God had put him there!** Well, if God has put him on the Isle of Patmos, how many know WHO is going to get him off? **God** will have to get him off — He's put him on. Now God will have to get him off.

So God has delivered him of thunder — John has to be reduced until all the thunder is knocked right out of him and all cleared off of him. That was an awful operation to take the thunder out of that man. He thundered so wonderfully! Everybody just stood before him and wondered;

"We've never heard such thundering in our lives. No, he's an instrument of God. Why he can thun-

der most terrifically!"

And by and by you know, the Lord takes the thunder out of him — they last just so long, just so long, and either the Lord takes them home, or a train runs over them or something. It's really true. That's true as you live. And here John sits. Isn't it wonderful he is now exhausted. Now when he is exhausted, that is the time when the Lord can meet him. So the Lord says,

"I guess the thunder is 'pert near' gone. I guess it may be another month or two."

It is like when you grow plants. By and by one day the Lord looked down and He says, "I think he is about ready." So He goes down and He says,

"John."

"Oh," John thinks, "that sounds like the Lord. I heard Him years ago."

"John, John."

"Lord, I hardly dare to turn around, but I think, is it really the Lord?"

John turned and behold it was the Lord! Now what is God doing? The Lord has him now ready to put HIS thunder in him and He gives him this tremendous Revelation. And in that Revelation do you see there's an awful lot of thunder goes on, or didn't you notice it? Every element that we have in nature is used in there: thunder, lightning, hail, snow, rain — every element in its most intensified confusion! And all goes vibrating through this instrument. Do you get it or don't you? How many of you can see a difference between John's thunder and capacity for thunder? Ah, now you've got it. What was it the Lord was after in that man? **He wanted his capacity for thunder, not his thunder. He wanted John's capacity for it.** So He says,

"After I have dealt with you properly, your capacity will still remain there, but it is all cleansed out, dried and ready. Now let ME pour all this thunder into you."

And He just poured a revelation into him and that

revelation has been thundering for two thousand years. And every time you read the Book of Revelation you feel the vibration and reverberation of the thunder of God in there; it's powerful! Well, that all went through John. Why?

He said,

"I wanted you in the beginning because you were a 'Son of Thunder.' I didn't call you because I wanted your thunder, dear. I wanted your capacity for thunder."

How many get the drift in there? Yes. Now that's like this: "Mighty man of valor." He can say that because the angel of the Lord could see that.

Now another thing. The reaction of that stirs Gideon so that it brings him down to his place of humility and self-distrust until he says,

"Mighty man of valor! You don't know WHO You are talking about! I'm least there is in the house!"

And he goes right down to the ground. It's a good place for him, you see. Well sometimes that will do it. To come and say, "You miserable unbelieving thing," he would have gone down the wrong way. Now he goes down under the impact of the revelation of what that angel should dare to say to him — He says, "Mighty man of valor." Don't you know the Lord says daring things about everyone of us? Did you ever read of some of them? What does He say about us? Don't you know He says we are all saved and sanctified and justified and He says we are all glorified! And He says we are seated together with Him up in the heavens. Isn't that what He says? Well, do we feel like it? No! We feel like, "I don't know if I got saved right." Oh yes, "Mighty man of valor!" How many of you **dare to believe it?** Well, if God says it, you got to believe it. **God says it!** Now our prayer is,

"Lord, work that out; You dare to say it, now work it out. You say it; now dare to work it out. Give me faith and the courage and the strength to embrace it. You said a 'mighty man of valor,' then

let me be that 'mighty man of valor' that You said. 'In me dwelleth no good thing,' but I know through You, You can prove it."

Now look at his reaction, very normal, and there is something I like about him. Do you know what I like about Gideon and all that seems like weakness in him? **His self-distrust.** I'm so glad he was conscious of his limitation like Philip was. He was conscious of his limitation and he said,

"Oh is that so, 'mighty man of valor,' well Lord, I hardly would have believed it but where's the gun? I'll go to the war right off the bat!"

Well, he didn't do that at all. I'm glad of his reaction because I think it shows some ground work of humility and self-distrust that God could work on. Do you get it? There is a place for self-distrust and he has it. "Thou mighty man of valor."

Verse thirteen: "And Gideon said unto Him, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where are all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites . . ." "Where is all that You promised? Do you see what an awful condition we are in? You've delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

Do you see what the first word is that he uses? "IF." The first time I read this, I thought . . . this man's name should have been **Gideon If — Gideon If**, because he **if'd** the Lord all along.

"If it be so, do it this way. And if it really is this way, do it the other way. NOW if it is really . . . if, if, if. IF it is really so, do it that way."

He does nothing but 'if' the Lord all the way along. So I call him 'Gideon If,' for his nickname. 'Gideon If.' That's the way I call him.

And the Lord looked upon him and said, "I will now explain it to you!?" How many of you know He ignored the whole thing? The Lord never answered

him at all. He lets him pour that out.

"Now Lord if these things are so and if You are God and You say these mighty things that I'm a mighty man of valor, where . . .? How come all those promises that You have given us, and You know Lord . . ."

How many know the Lord doesn't listen to half of it at all? Never answered him! The Lord never even answered him! He just turned around and said,

"GO in this thy might — now forget it — GO in this thy might."

So he had to go without being answered. Did you ever have to go without knowing why? That's good for us. "Go on!"

"Well, why?"

"There's no 'why' about it dear, go on!"

"Well, Lord I'll die!"

"No you won't, you'll live!"

Here Gideon got the same thing.

"I'll die, I've seen the Lord. I've talked to God, I'll die!"

"No you won't. Get up! You're going down there and fight a battle for Us!"

Remember Gideon said the same thing? "I'll die, I've seen the Lord."

"Oh no, you're beginning to live, brother. Just pick up, just pick up now."

Verse fourteen: "And the Lord looked at him and said, go in this thy might and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have not I sent thee?"

Here comes this old teaching again. How many see Gideon didn't dare to venture in himself?

"Have not I sent thee?"

How many know the devil and hell are all let loose? What has Gideon for his answer? "The Lord has sent me, He said so."

Do you get it? In the New Testament we have the same thing.

"This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased."

Jesus wrapped that word about Him and He goes through a whole temptation. Now it says here:

"I have sent thee, mighty man of valor." "Now go — not because you feel like it; not because you know how or why, but you take that word of security and you wrap that all about you and you can go. Now you go in this My Word. I have sent thee. Now let that suffice thee."

"But it's so hard. Oh so hard!"

Now look at poor Gideon after the angel had said that God is sending him. He doesn't yet rise up and say, "Thank the Lord, at last the sun is going to shine on me! Send me! I'll get a place in life yet," . . . spotlight on him!

Instead, we find him saying:

Verse fifteen: "And he said unto him, O my Lord, where-with shall I save Israel? Behold, my father is poor in Manasseh, and I am least in my father's house."

That's good distrust. I'm glad he said it, I really am. Because now when he is reduced to this place, the Lord will have some material to work on.

Verse sixteen: "And the Lord said unto him, surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

And Gideon said unto Him, "If"!

He's got to 'if' the Lord a little bit more; just a little you know.

Verses seventeen and eighteen: "And he said unto him, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not from here, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again."

Isn't He accommodating? I admire the patience of the Lord because He's been patient with me. I look back and I say,

"Oh my Lord, how did you stand it? How did you take up with it?"

But you know He just stands there patient. Haven't

you ever done that? Look back and say,

“Lord, my God, how were You ever so patient?
... such a mess! ... such a condition! ... such
a thing!”

**But He just stands, because that’s the way He is —
patient. And He says,**

“I’ll wait for you. Now go and get a little gift.
Would you like to give a gift? Does it move you
to such place that you would like to show your
thanks and your interest in it? I’ll wait for you. Now
go, go and get it.”

**Oh dear, remember how we scratched around for gifts
that we thought would please Him. Of course we all
did. But He waited.**

*Verse nineteen: “And Gideon went in, and made ready
a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour. The flesh
he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought
it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.”*

**Remember? How many of you can look back at times
when we would do that — going to prepare something
that we thought would please the Lord?:**

“Now I will please the dear Lord.”

He says, “I am patient, go and get it.”

**O dear, this is so real to me. I think it is all
so wonderful and yet it is so real. It is just
like this life is.**

*Verses twenty and twenty-one: “And the angel of
God said unto him. Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes,
and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And
he did so. Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end
of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and
the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock,
and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then
the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.”*

**He has been pleased to accept it. Now get Gideon’s
reaction.**

*Verse twenty-two: “And when Gideon perceived that
he was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord
God! For I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.”*

Verse twenty-three: "And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die."

That's an awful reaction, isn't it? But He says,
"Now you don't need to be disturbed. You're not going to die. You have this great problem before you. I made this manifestation to let you know that what you are doing so far is in good order and I am pleased; I'm satisfied. I'll give you a little token. See what I'll do; I will accept it with this wonderful thing."

There was this flash of light and fire and He says,
"See, I accept it."

Verse twenty-four: "Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites."

Now do you notice there is always an altar built? Many times an altar is built, an altar is placed — that is good. I like for us to every once in a while erect an altar on an occasion of God doing something with us and for us. It's good to have that little — it's like a little token place that you can refer to; you go back and say,

"Lord there is the time You met me at this. There's the time when my consecration was brought in. There's the time when you filled me with Your Spirit and bore witness to so and so."

Those are all little altars that we erect. And of course with the children of Israel they were literally little altars that they made of stone as a testimony, as a token. So now Gideon has made an altar as a testimony.

"And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him..."

I want you to see the whole scene changes now. If this were a dramatic setting, in a play, I would have this as the second act. There are three acts in the play. Your first act, you see, is Gideon in the home-setting — the winepress — suggestive of the thing that is not functioning as it should to give him his refreshment. But here we find Gideon by the side of it and he is beating out, with a flail, his livelihood, because

he can't yet trust God! **These are all pictures in our experience, in our life.** So the first thing that we find him handling is a flail. But when he learns obedience, and begins to cooperate with God, in obedience, and moves under the impact of this: "Thou mighty man of valor", you don't find him handling a flail any more, and yet all of his food is taken care of. But you don't find him having any time or interest in any flail at all. Now watch, this next episode will be your next act, your next scene in the play.

Verses twenty-five and twenty-six: "And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the images that are by it; And build an altar unto the Lord thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the images which thou shalt cut down."

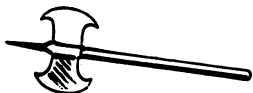
Now that's your provision, the wood of the images. We'll come to that in a minute.

Verse twenty-seven: "Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him: 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."

Now you might rather have obedience that is not too perfect than to have no obedience. He was afraid to do such a terrific thing as that in daylight! It would arouse the attention and terrible confusion and probably start a war of some kind. So instead of doing that, he still is obedient, so it says, "Because it was night and he feared." He went in the night and was obedient. Now do you notice the second thing he handles?

"Cut down the grove."

What is it? What do you cut with — a flail, a hook? No. What do you cut down a tree with? "Ax." O that's right, an ax!



THE AX



So the next thing you'll find this man handling is an ax. Now what is this ax? **This ax is the ax of obedience because it's going to be the instrument that shows his obedience to the wish and the will and the purpose of God.** God says here,

"You're a mighty man of valor, you're going to take the Midianites. You're going to be involved in all this great battle that's down in here. But, **before** you can venture in there, **before** I can make you a conqueror in these Midianite camps and bring to pass what I want; **before** you do that, there is something you will have to do. **Lay down your flail!** Get adjusted to Me as you should and **pick up an ax.**"

Now your ax is obedience to destroy these wrong things in the father's house and home and place. I'll show you in another place where God speaks of the father's house and his children — it's spoken of in Psalms the forty-fifth chapter — the Bridal Psalm. Do you know what it says concerning the Bride?

"Forget thy father's house and your people. Forget your father's house and your people."

The Bride has to come to a place where her father's house and people are negation. That's put aside if she goes on. Now when Eleazar came to get Rebecca, do you remember she has to make the choice herself? She has to voluntarily stand and say to the man actually, "I will go." Well if I go, then I am leaving something. You can't go from this place without you leave! You can't be in two places at once! And that bride, Rebecca, has to say, "I will go." And those were her words. It was a voluntary surrender to go. But when she did that, she left her father's home and her people and all that that pertained to — everything. There

was a definite cutting off. A definite detachment. Now you will find it in different places in the Bible — the household of God; — her own people. I think I've got three or four places in the Word of God and every time it refers to exactly this same thing.

In his (Gideon's) father's house, in his father's setup — it was the father who had made that. **The father had made the image!** It doesn't say Gideon did it. But you know he is under the influence and power of it because he belongs to the home that sustains it. He is a partaker in that home where that thing is indulged in — that idol stuff. And He says,

"Take an ax, (now ax will be your obedience) you will have to cut down that grove (images) and tear down that altar, though you didn't build it, but you are involved in it. It's an inheritance that you've had. It is something that has come to you because you are identified in this home and that's your father's."

Do you know what the father's house is? Your whole Adamic nature — that's your father's house. What are your people? All those who are subject to it. Your father's house is your Adamic nature that you are born in. Exactly. All right, what does He say?

"That has to be dealt with before I can handle you down here with the Midianites. You've got to deal with that thing. **You have to find out who you are, whence you are, why you are involved in this, I want you to deal with that. Now take the ax of obedience. Don't start talking to Me about, I didn't make the idol.**"

He didn't condemn him for making an idol. He didn't condemn him because it was there. He didn't condemn him about a thing, because He knows it is a part of the arrangement in which he is now found. But He says,

"That has to be dealt with. Now take your ax and destroy it."

We have to do that with our whole Adamic nature.

It has to be taken in hand — in obedience. Have you ever found that out yet? Yes, we find it out. **That's your Adamic setup that has to be judged and taken in hand.** Why? Because if we don't learn how to handle the ax of obedience **here**, we can't carry on **there**. It starts at home here. They are all anxious to get in the battle — in the fray, you know. It's exciting and wonderful to win a great conquest for the Lord. But my dear, the biggest enemy we have is right home here. That's the biggest enemy we have. If we can deal with him, very often the lesser ones come along alright. I've said it to the Lord many times after I've had a revelation of who I am and what — I've said,

"Lord, I fear **this thing** more than I do the devil!

I fear it (self) more than I do the devil."

It was so strong on me. I remember, oh it was years ago He was thrashing this stuff out in me and I knew that He wanted to make a conquest in me and the Holy Spirit was on me and I was surrendering to it. I remember I fell over on the bed, my face down like that on the bed. If I said it once, I don't know how many times I repeated in the Spirit (the Spirit was on me),

"Oh God, **triumph in me**; Oh God, **triumph in me**;

Oh God, **triumph in me**, Oh..."

I just laid there it seemed like to me, oh a long, long time. I never prayed anything more because it was the prayer of the Spirit: "Oh Lord, **triumph in me**" — not over there where I am fighting a battle **for** the Lord. That wasn't the point at all. And I knew there was a conquest to be made in my whole life and temperament and it would be God Who made that conquest. And I was yielding myself as a battlefield and I just spread out there. I couldn't get up because I was in the Spirit and I couldn't move and there I laid fairly paralyzed from my face down. And that's all that would pray out of me. "Oh God, **triumph in me**; Oh God, **triumph . . .**" I knew that HE was making

a conquest. Those things have to happen in us and we might just as well face it; we might just as well face it. **Our greatest difficulty is WHO WE ARE!** That's our greatest difficulty and we have to have these terrifically personal dealings and conquests and slayings and axings if we get anywhere. But nobody wants to preach it, you see, it's hard, but it's truth.

I was saying the other night, many people are trying to live here and make conquest and get somewhere in God when they've never had an ax in their hand yet. They have never had an ax in their hand, really, to hew down the idol — that's the devotion of the old flesh life, and the grove — that's the whole setting.

"Forget your house! Forget your father's house!"

That was a command to the Bride! What?

"Forget that whole thing. Step out of that, come out of that. Now live with Me. Move with Me. Move with Me."

And so He says,

"Take this ax."

Now the flail is the first thing. Next we will have an ax. I don't know, I guess I can make an ax (drawing on the board) doesn't look like it has a very sharp edge on it but how many of you get the idea? Now in this second episode you have a key to it. The ax! The ax of obedience to destroy the thing that God sees is going to be a snare and a hindrance to you. Don't start excusing it or telling God anything about it. He never said anything to him about it being his fault. He says,

"You have become ensnared in it. You are a part of it. I want you freed from this. I'm not condemning you."

God never condemns us for what we are. He only condemns us when we don't make our escape as we should. He doesn't come and say,

"Why do you have blue eyes or red eyes or green eyes?"

He doesn't say that because that's the law of inheritance.

"Why did you have that idol?"

"Well, Adam, my father built it."

"Why do you have all of this?"

"Because, Adam, my father made it, and I was born in that, and this is my home."

"Well," He says, "you'll have to tackle that; take care of it."

(So now after Gideon does this — we'll have to hurry along and see how it all turns out when he gets into this place of obedience.)

Verses twenty-six through twenty-eight: "And build an altar unto the Lord thy God upon this rock in the ordered place, and take the second bullock..."

Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had said unto him: and they cut it down.

And when the men of the city arose in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the images were cut down that were by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon, the son of Joash, hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die; because, he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the images that were by it."

Look at the surprise! God is with him, you see. God is with this obedience. You know He'll make the enemy perform for Him. He'll give you all kinds of people. God gets in there and takes this old Joash and causes him to see a thing or two.

Verse thirty-one: "And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him? He who will plead for him, let him be put to death while it is yet morning. If he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar."

Verse thirty-two: "Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar."

I want to tell you a little incidence just like this. You

know I was talking to you about these colored people this morning. When I was at Daisy's and John's, (missionaries in Africa) you know what they call a houseboy — a boy they bring in from the fields to train that he will help do the service in the home; he sets the table, washes dishes, cleans up the bedrooms and all like that. While I was at Daisy's they were breaking in a new boy and his name was Falah. One day I was talking to him and I said,

"Where were you born, Falah? How did you come down here?"

He could speak English. He'd had some schooling.

He said,

"You see, my father is a chief and I was next in line as a chief, and my father is a heathen of course. He is a Mohammedan."

But he said,

"I got converted; I got saved."

And he had gone down to the coast to the city.

And he said,

"I got saved — really saved — converted. And when I went home to tell my people about it, of course, there was no reception. And they have in those villages an idol, a house for the spirit to live in that governs the village. Sometimes it is a little house like that with a little gray roof. And in that house, at the edge of the village, that's where this spirit lives who governs this village — the god. My father was heathen and the people were heathen even though they were Mohammedan stock. They only do that for name. They are still heathen."

He said,

"We had a god made, a wooden god like that for our village. My father was chief and he had his god. So I talked to my father and he wouldn't listen. And I thought (this was zeal in him and he smiled) I would just get them all converted and I would go in and kill their god. So I took an ax (just exactly this thing) and I would cut that god

all to pieces! And there it lay, a lot of kindling wood. And when my father came out to look at it, of course he was terribly disturbed."

He didn't have the Lord like Joash did. So Falah said,
"My father had me arrested. They arrested me and took me down to the village and beat me. They beat me until I thought they would kill me."

They beat him and tormented him until he was all bloody, just a mess. But he said,

"I wouldn't give up, because I knew what I had was real. God was real to me."

So they thrashed him and he wouldn't give up. They let that heal up a little and then they put him in wooden stocks with irons on his feet and hands and set him in the sun. And there he sat for days and days. He was just given a little water to keep him alive.

He said,

"I went through that. And they wouldn't listen. When my father found there was no need of doing it, that I was possessed to holding to my God, he let me out."

So he said,

"I tried it again."

I don't know what he did, but he got them all in an uproar trying to make them believe in real God — that this god was no good god. This was the God.

He said,

"I still persisted in thinking I could bring them in."

So his father had him arrested again. They took him down to the police court and this judge did exactly what Joash did. The judge got up and he said, "What kind of a god did you have?"

Well, they had a wonderful god!

He said,

"And you let this boy come in and kill your god! What kind of a god have you, if this boy can come in and kill him and smash him up?"

Well then, they of course began to reason and the judge said,

“He is not to be convicted and there is no judgment and no punishment to be upon him. In the name of the law you have to let him go!”

This made me think of it all the while I was reading it. “Oh Falah, you just fit right in here.” And they let him go and he came down to the city and Daisy and John have him as a houseboy — lovely fellow.

And so this man (Joash) had the same reaction as that judge.

He puts it:

“Will ye plead for Baal, will ye save him? He that will plead for him let him be put to death while it is yet morning. If he be a god let him plead for himself because one hath cast down his altar...”

Verse thirty-three: *“Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together.”*

Now you’re going to have a regular time of it!

“And went over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel.”

Verse thirty-four: *“But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.”*

Verse thirty-five: *“And he sent his messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also was gathered after him; and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali, and they came up to meet them.”*

Verse thirty-six: *And Gideon said unto God, If...”*

Poor dear, with all this ‘if business’ — this is why I call him ‘Gideon If’.

“And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said...You’ve said it.”

(Well then, why not believe it? Not, let it be said so I’ll know something, for I know it already.)

“If YOU are going to do it just as YOU have said it...Behold I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if it be dew on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside it, then shall I know that Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou has said.”

Poor dear Lord, isn’t He patient!

Verse thirty-eight: *“And it was so; for he rose up early on the next day, and thrust the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once; let me make a trial I pray thee, but this once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.”*

Isn't that terrible? I think it's so terrific! Poor Gideon, I feel sorry for him. How many see this thing is his whole disposition being torn up and taken care of? God is pulling it out and dealing with it. These tempermental things that are in us He just pulls them out and deals with them, works with them. That's what he's doing with this man, pulling him all apart and letting him expose what he has.

Now this is another if you see.

Verse forty: *“And God did so that night; for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.”*

We really ought not to go on, it's late but I've marked it again in Judges 7:10.

“But if thou fear to go down.”

This was God's 'fear'. This is the only time God says, “If you're so afraid, if you're so afraid, you've “if'd” Me several times so I'll “if” you once!”

This is the only ‘if’ the Lord has with him.

“But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Purah, thy servant, down to the host. And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host.”

Now this is a long story, but how many of you remember how it worked out? God says,

“Since you are weak I will humor it a little. IF you are afraid I'll humor it a little bit. IF you are afraid take this Purah and go down. Now you go down there and see what you will find.”

So they go down and of course you remember the story. They overhear the men talking in the tent.

**One of them said,
“I had a dream.”**

“Well my, what did you dream?”

“I dreamed a barley cake came whirling down the hill and came in and knocked the tent over and everything.”

And then the other one gives the interpretation of it. Why he said,

“That’s nothing but that Gideon!”

Here’s Gideon by the tent doing this: holding one hand to his ear.

“My, I’m the barley cake; I’m the barley cake; Lord thank You, I’m the barley cake.”

And so he goes on back. But the point that I am after — do you see that upon the strength of this obedience, — what was the **third thing that he holds in his hands? Do you remember? A trumpet!**



THE TRUMPET



Do you get it? How many see? **The hand is able to hold the trumpet of command now. This is command! This is authority! This is command! And he held a trumpet, and he blew a trumpet — that's all command; that's authority, that's power now that has been built up so that he can swing the whole host and in obedience to God do it by a miracle — do it by a miracle because he is in the way of God.** So this is the thing I am after.

How do you make a trumpet? (drawing on board again). I think it has an end something like that. This must be the mouth piece. It isn't very straight, it's been in the war!

But how many of you get your lesson? Will you see it?

A FLAIL!

THE AX!

THE TRUMPET!

But don't try to blow a trumpet if you haven't handled an ax and laid down your flail. Lay down your flail — that's your lack of faith — the flail — to know that God will take care of you. All the time Gideon is handling the ax and handling the trumpet, how many of you know he is not flailing anything because God has all that provision for him. But he can't move into this until — it's like a regular order, like a law that has to be followed step by step:

“Lay down your flail.” — That takes faith.

“Pick up your ax.” — That's obedience.

“Now sound your trumpet.” — That's your power to command.

In our story of Jesus the other night did you notice when the enemy came to Him with those three horrible onslaughts, it wasn't until the last one that Jesus

had **power** to command him? He commanded the enemy. He didn't command him in the first temptation. He didn't command him in the second, but by the third, how many see **the vigor, the strength, the power, and the authority had grown** until He could say, "Get thee hence." You don't do that in the beginning any more than this man blowing a trumpet. **It's all progressive. It's all an intricate sort of a system that goes on in the heart and life.** If some of you want to blow a trumpet dear, let me tell you, be sure you know the feel of an ax in your hand first, and don't keep holding on to that flail. Lay it down! That's the first thing you find Gideon holding onto — that flail! Lay it down! Get the feel of an ax. And when He wants to put a trumpet in your hand, that has a different feel — that's different.

A MEMORIAL

Now we can't go on, it's too late to open all the rest of it but how many remember how fascinating it was? I think it was such a wonderful way that the Lord could work that miracle. Now do you know how this story ends? Don't look at it now. How many know the very last thing that happens in the life of Gideon? What was it? Do you remember what he did which was alright? Yes, he made a memorial. Now get this because this is a good thing to remember. It says at the very end, after all this conquest and the battles are over and the kings are taken; the people are rejoicing in it; and as a memorial, it says, he made an ephod unto the Lord. An ephod was part of the dress worn by the priest and it was clasped at the shoulder. The High Priest wore an ephod. It was like a pocket in the front and a pocket at the back and clasped with precious stones — an ephod. There were times when not only the priest wore them but there were occasions when an ephod was permitted to be used by the layman, by ordinary people. Little Samuel had an ephod made when he was very small. You see it was suggestive. Gideon made this ephod as a memorial unto God. And so he took all those earrings, you remember, all this paraphernalia, and he made an ephod. Gideon made it unto God — a memorial — a sense of what victory we've had, and that became a point for their communion and for their sense of thanksgiving to God. It was started originally as something that was in God. God would bless it. Do you remember what it says at the end? "And it became a snare." And the people began to, instead of using it to the glory of God, they used it almost like an idol and diverted their worship from God to this ephod — a thing which was begun as a simple thing, legitimate thing, a good thing. **Why not have a memorial? Yes, but how many people can keep a thing**

where it belongs? Very few! It became. It became — not, it was. Gideon didn't make it a snare. No, no, no. Oh no, people never do; they never start making a snare. The thing degenerates into a snare until they become a captive to it and the first thing you know it will damn them all. And here it was a memorial — a very nice thing. Look at the things that people have had, we say, in God, — a memorial! It was alright, He blessed it — a beautiful thing. Well now, just you wait! How many of you think you have strength to keep that thing where it belongs in the Spirit? Too many times a thing that has started as a little spiritual helpful thing will degenerate on a lower level and lower until it is a snare, and the whole thing is nothing but a snare of the devil.

I always say to people,

“Be careful of your friendships — be careful of any of those things.”

“Why,” you say, “he’s a wonderful fellow! He belongs to the same church I do!”

Now that’s alright.

“She’s a wonderful woman!”

That’s alright too, BUT, a thing that can be alright can be all deadly wrong and become a snare. And that’s what it was and **it became** — not it was started as a snare. Oh no, it was all started sweet — a memorial. It **became** a snare! So I don’t blame Gideon. I’m only sorry that that shadow had to be cast over such a victorious life and then have that shadow cast over it. The very thing that he had instituted unto God had, by others (he didn’t do it), but others caused it to be dropped down until it says,

“It became a snare and they all went whoring after it.”

All the children of Israel were making it a substitute.

So I like Gideon. He’s been a lot of help to me. I’ve got some other things in there but we can’t take too long. I have some Scriptures in the New Testament that hook right in with all of this. How many of you

see it is a good field? I can't finish it but take that home for your homework. Take that story of Gideon and sit down sometime and read over Judges chapters six, seven and eight and see your analogies running around in there. And remember your **flail** and the **ax** and the **trumpet**. And remember that is what He is qualifying us for **NOW**. And also this: It doesn't mean it ceases, there are phases of our Christian experiences yet in which we are still laying down and picking up. This continues on all through life. It is a progression.

How many of you got anything more to think about? Do you kind of get a location in your own pattern of some of the things of the Lord's dealings?

Prayer:

Our loving Lord, we thank Thee for these simple little stories which are so full of spiritual suggestion and food for our thought and consideration and even for our encouragement, for our admonition. And so as we've been looking at Gideon and his wonderful life in Thee, the way that You handle him, it gives us courage, Lord. It gives us courage to move on with Thee and dare to believe what Thou art doing — that, He that hath begun the good work will finish it. We ask that You will bless it to our good for Jesus' sake. Amen.