









## TO STEPHEN WILLISHER.

I dedicate this result of my editorial labours to you, because you were dear to our friend who is dead, and are almost the only person now alive, save myself, who knew him at the time these papers were written. A word of explanation is necessary with regard to the picture at the beginning of the book. You will remember that Rutherford had in his possession a seal, which originally belonged to some early ancestor. It was engraved with a device to illustrate a sentence from Lilly. The meaning given to the sentence was not exactly Livy's, but still it may very well be a little extended, and there is no doubt that the Roman would not have objected. This seal, as you know, was much valued by Rutherford, and was curiously connected with certain events in his life which happened when Miriam was at school. Nevertheless, it cannot anywhere be found. It has been described, however, to Mr. Walter Crane, and he has reproduced it with singular accuracy. It struck me, that although it has no direct relation with anything in the volume, it might be independently interesting, especially considering the part the motto played in Rutherford's history.

R. S.



# CONTENTS

GIDEON

SAMUEL

SAUL

MIRIAM'S SCHOOLING

MICHAEL TREVANION



## GIDEON.

*The story which Jotham told his children on the day before his death concerning the achievements of his father Gideon – His comments and those of Time thereon.*

I am an old man, and I desire before I die to tell you more fully the achievements of your grandfather. Strange that this day much that I had forgotten comes back to me clearly.

During his youth the children of the East possessed the land for seven years because we had done evil. We were driven to lodge in the caves of the mountains, so terrible was the oppression. If we sowed corn, the harvest was not ours, for the enemy came over Jordan with the Midianites and the Amalekites and left nothing for us, taking away all our cattle and beasts of burden. We cried unto God, and He sent a prophet to us, who told us that our trouble came upon us because of our sins, but otherwise he did nothing to help us. One day your grandfather was threshing wheat, not near the threshing-floor, for the Midianites watched the threshing-floors to see if any corn was brought there, but close to the wine-press. It was at Ophrah in Manasseh, the home of his father. While he threshed, thinking upon all his troubles and the troubles of his country, not knowing if he could hide enough corn to save himself and his household from hunger and death, the angel of the Lord descended and sat under the oak. He may have been there for some time before my father was aware of him, for my father was busy with his threshing, and his heart was sore. At last he turned and saw the angel bright and terrible, and before he could speak the angel said to him, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." My father, as I have said, was threshing by the wine-press, on his guard even there lest he should be robbed or slain, and it seemed strange to him that the angel should say the Lord was with him. So strange did it seem, that even before he fell down to worship, he turned and asked the seraph why, if the Lord was with him, all this mischief

had befallen them, and where were all the miracles which the Lord wrought to save His people from the land of Egypt. For there had been neither sign nor wonder for many years—nothing to show that the Lord cared for us more than He did for the heathen. My father had thought much over all the deeds which the Lord had done for Israel; he had thought over the passage of the sea when Israel could not find any way open before them, and the very waves which were to overwhelm them rose like a wall and became their safeguard. But he himself had seen nothing of this kind, and he almost doubted if the tales were true, and if times had not always been as they were then, all events happening alike to all, and hardly believing that God had ever appeared to man.

The angel did not answer him, but looked him in the face, and said, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" My grandfather, Joash, was one of the poorest men of his tribe, and as for my father, nobody had ever thought anything of him, nor had he thought anything of himself. *He*, a solitary labourer, unknown, with no friends, no arms; he to do what the princes could not do! he to lead these frightened slaves against soldiers who were as the sand for numbers! It was not to be believed, and yet—there sat the angel. It was broad noon; in the shade of the oak his light was like that of the sun. It was not a dream of the night, and he could not be mistaken. Nay, the angel's voice was more sharp and clear than the voice in which we speak to one another—a voice like the command of a king who must not be disobeyed. Yet he comforted my father. "Surely I will be with thee," he added, "and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." If the Lord was to be with him, my father need not have hesitated, but in truth he did not care for the duty which was thrust upon him. He would have been glad to do anything for his country which was within his power, but he did not feel equal to the task of leading it against its oppressors, nor did he covet it. He would rather have endured in silence and died unknown than take such a weight upon his shoulders, for he was not one of those who desire power for power's sake. The apparition, too, was so sudden. The angel was there with his divine face looking steadily at him, with eyes so piercing that no secret in the inmost soul could remain hidden from them, and the man upon whom they were turned could not even

think without being sure that his thought was known. Yet my father doubted, and this dread of the task imposed on him increased his doubt. Yes; he doubted an order given him at midday by a messenger sitting in front of him flaming with heavenly colour. It might after all be a delusion. He prayed, therefore, for a sign, and then as he prayed he thought he might be smitten for his presumption. But the angel was tender to his misgivings, and said he would wait for the offering which was to test his authority. My father went into the house and brought out a kid and unleavened bread, and presented it. The angel directed him to put the flesh and the cake on the rock and pour out the broth. He did so, and the angel then rose, and stretching out the staff that was in his hand, touched the flesh and cakes. No sooner had he touched them than—wonder of wonders!—a fire leapt up out of the rock; they were consumed before his eyes, and the angel had departed. A great terror overcame my father, for it had always been said that it was impossible for man to look upon a Spirit from the Lord and live. He was left alone, too, with the message, but without the Comforter, and he cried unto God in despair, not knowing what to do. As he cried, a word was spoken in his ear soft and sweet, like the voice of the aspen by the brook; soft and sweet, and yet so sure: "Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die." Then he rose and built an altar, to mark the sacred spot where God had talked with him and he had received his divine commission. There it is to this day in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. As you pass it, remember that where those stones now stand the Most High conversed with him whose blood is in your veins.

As yet Gideon was without any direct orders, but that night he heard again the same soft, sweet voice, and it commanded him to build another altar upon the highest point of Ophrah, to throw down Baal's altar, and upon the altar to the Holy One to sacrifice the second of the bullocks belonging to Joash, the bullock of seven years old, burning it with the wood of the great idol. The angel under the oak was before my father's eyes, the soft, sweet voice, telling him he should not die, was in his ears; but not even the Lord God can conquer our fears, and although my father was a brave man and saved Israel, no man ever had worse sinkings of heart than he. It was as if he had more courage and more fear than his fellows. He did what the Lord said unto him, but he was afraid to do it by day, for not

only was his tribe against him, but his father's house also. He took ten of his servants, and when the city awoke one morning the altar of Baal was cast down, the altar to the Lord God stood on the hill, and there lay on it the half-burnt logs of the image of Baal. Our nation has never believed in Baal as it has believed in the Lord God. How should it believe in Baal? Baal has done nothing for it, but the Lord God brought us from Egypt through the desert, and was the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. Nevertheless, when the altar of Baal was cast down and the idol was destroyed the people demanded the death of Gideon, and you know that at this day, though Baal is a false god, and in their hearts they confess it, they would murder us if we said anything against him: they went therefore to Joash and told him to bring forth his son that they might slay him. These, my children, were not the Midianites nor the Amalekites, but our own nation. At the very time when the heathen were upon us we turned from the Lord to Baal, and sought to destroy the man who could have rescued us. Thus we have ever done, and we are surely a race accursed. But Joash secretly contemned Baal, although until now he had not ventured to say anything against him. It made him bold to see how his son and his servants had overthrown the altar and burnt the idol which lay there charred and unresisting. He stood up before the altar, and facing the mob which howled at him; asked them why they should take upon themselves to plead for Baal: "If he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar." The charred logs never stirred; there was no sound in the sky; Joash was not struck dead; Baal was proved to be nothing. That was a sight to see that morning: the ashes smouldering in the sunlight, the raging crowd, Gideon and his fellows behind Joash, and Joash calling on Baal to avenge himself if he was a god as his worshippers pretended. Ah, if that had been Jehovah's altar! When Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, fire came down from the Lord and devoured them. When Miriam spoke against His servant she became a leper; and when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram blasphemed, they were swallowed up in the pit. But Baal could not move a breath of heaven on his behalf. What kind of a god is he? A god who cannot punish those who insult him is but a word.

As for Gideon, he grew in strength. Nothing happened to him because he had thus dared Baal. He went about his work daily; no judgment fell on him, and nobody dared to meddle with him.

Soon afterwards the Midianites and Amalekites, who had withdrawn for a while, overspread the land again, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. Gideon having suffered nothing for his insult to Baal, had become bolder. Moreover, his tribe, the Abiezrites, had seen that he had suffered nothing. Thus it came to pass that when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him; and he blew a trumpet, all Abiezer followed him. Not only so; he sent messengers through Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they came up to meet him, the very people who a few months before would have stoned him. They thronged after him, and now professed themselves believers in Jehovah. They were not hypocrites. They really believed now, after a fashion, that Baal could not help them. Their fault was that they believed one thing one day and another thing the next. That has always been the fault of the people. Your grandfather did not despise them for their instability. So far as they were not stable to Baal it was good, and he pitied them as they flocked to his standard, hoping that he could deliver them. He blew the trumpet, and at the simple blast of that trumpet in each village and town the nation seemed to rise as one man, such strength was there in its tones. These men had been idolaters, and it might have been thought that to turn them all would have taken years of persuasion; but no, at the simple sound of the trumpet the religion of Baal vanished.

Gideon was now at the head of a great host; he had been favoured with visions from the Most High; the angel of the Lord had appeared to him; he had burnt the image; and yet now, when the army was round him, fear fell upon him again, and he doubted if he could save Israel, or if God would keep His promise. So it always was with him, as I have already said. He therefore prayed for another sign, and the Lord did not rebuke him, as a man would have done if his promise had been mistrusted. Gideon's test was strange; he did not pray that he might see the angel again, for the thoughts that came into his mind were always strange, not like those of other men, and were unaccountable even to himself. That night the fleece of wool on the ground was wet and the earth was dry. He prayed yet again, and still God was tender to him, for He knows the weak-

ness of the creatures He has made. This time the fleece was dry and the earth was wet, and Gideon thereupon rose up early with all the host, and moved towards the host of Midian, till he came in sight of them as they lay in the valley by the hill of Moreh.

But the Lord would not have so many to do His work, and most of them were afraid and useless. He therefore commanded Gideon to send away all who were frightened, and ten thousand only were left. These ten thousand were still too many, for most of them were impatient, not able to restrain themselves, and likely to fail, either through fear or foolhardiness, in the stratagem the Lord designed. He therefore commanded Gideon, when they were all thirsty, to bring them down to the water. Nine thousand seven hundred were in such a hurry to reach it that they dropped on their knees to drink, but three hundred were collected and patient, and were content to lift their hands to their mouths. The three hundred were kept and the rest sent home. That night God, the ever merciful, had promised Gideon to deliver the Midianites into His servant's hands, and had confirmed His promise by miracle, but nevertheless He directed Gideon to go down to the camp, so that he might hear a man's dream and its interpretation, and be further strengthened in his faith. Gideon went down and listened at a tent door; and when the dream was told, how a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent and smote it that it fell, all fear departed, and he rose up and went back to the three hundred, and cried to them, "Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

Forthwith he divided his three hundred into three bands, and each man took an empty pitcher and placed a torch inside it. In the dead of the night they marched to the camp, this little three hundred, and placed themselves round it. Then Gideon broke his pitcher and showed his torch, and all the others did likewise, and shouted, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon."

The host cried and fled, for a terror from the Lord descended on them, and turned their own swords against them. When they were defeated all Israel went out after them, and there was great slaughter, and Oreb

and

Zeeb, two princes of Midian, were slain.

As soon as the victory was achieved, and while he was yet in pursuit, the men of Ephraim turned upon him and abused him because he had not taken them with him to fight the battle against the Midianites, but never had they lifted a finger to save themselves before Gideon appeared. When, however, he had caught and destroyed Zebah and Zalmunna, the two Midianitish kings, and had chastised Succoth and beaten down the tower of Penuel, Israel came to him and asked him to rule over them, but he would not. He cared not to be king. He remembered with what difficulty he had believed the angel and the promise, the sickly faintness which had overcome him on that night before the Midianitish overthrow. Whatever he had done had not been his doing, but the Lord's; and how did he know that the Lord's help would continue? The thought of being king, and of having a set office, perhaps without the Lord's assistance, was too much for him. He was right in his refusal. He was one of those men who can do much if left to themselves, and if they are supported by the Most High, but who shrink and tremble when something is expected from them. "The Lord shall be your King," he said. He trusted that God would speak to the nation as He had spoken to him, and without any leader would guide them aright. That is not the Lord's way. But though Gideon would not be king, he desired some honour, and he asked that he might have the ear-rings of the Midianites who had fallen. Therewith he made an image, a thing forbidden. It stood in his house, a record of what the Lord had done for him; and yet this very record became a snare, and Israel fell to worshipping it, and Jehovah was displaced by the testimony of His own love for us.

Your grandfather is now dead. Abimelech reigns in his place, and has slain all the children of Gideon save myself. Israel has returned to Baal; its strength has departed; before long we shall be subdued under the Philistines. Excepting in our own house, there are none that have not gone a-whoring after Baal; the memory of the battle by the hill Moreh is clean forgotten; and soon the memory of my father will also disappear, and it will be as if he had never lived. To

think that the vision of the angel in Ophrah and the night in the valley of Jezreel should end in nothing!

\*\*\*\*\*

That night Jotham died.

*Fourteen Hundred Tears Later.*

"The time would fail me to tell of Gideon, . . . who through faith . . . out of weakness was made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." — *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

*Three Thousand Years Later.*

"The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon,' answered Balfour as he parried and returned the blow." — *Old Mortality*.

## SAMUEL.

*Samuel immediately before his death spoke thus at Bamah: –*

I am now old, and before many days are past I shall be gathered to my fathers. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord: Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith, and I will restore it you. How could it be that I could be other than that which I have been, seeing that from my childhood upwards I have been the chosen of the Lord, the instrument to do His bidding?

There are none of you who remember the evil days of Eli. Many times before then your fathers went astray after false gods, but when Eli was high priest the Tabernacle itself was profaned by his sons, the sons of Belial; for they robbed the people of their meat which they brought for the sacrifice, so that men abhorred the offering, and they lay with loose women at the door of the Tabernacle, after the manner of those who worship the gods of the heathen. To turn aside from the Lord and serve these gods is wickedness, but to serve them in the presence of the Ark, and to defile the sanctuary itself, was an abomination worse than any in Ashdod or Gaza. The Lord might assuredly have left Israel to the Philistines, but He desired that there should be a people preserved to do honour to His name, and He called me, called me even as a child, and to Him have I been dedicate. What I have said and done has not been mine but His, and if any have any fault to find, they must find it with Him and not with me.

My father, Elkanah, was one of the faithful in Israel, and he went up yearly to Shiloh; my mother, Hannah, was his beloved wife, though it was Peninnah who had given him children. I was born in answer to a prayer which my mother prayed in bitterness of soul, and she vowed that if she should have a man child he should be the Lord's all the days of his life; no razor should come upon his head,

neither should he drink strong drink. My mother redeemed her vow, and I was taken to Shiloh, and there I ministered before the Lord. I lived in the midst of the iniquity which was wrought by the sons of Eli; but although a youth, the vow which my mother had made for me protected me. The Lord had then withdrawn Himself from Israel, and no word had been spoken to us by Him for years, save a message from a prophet who prophesied the fall of Eli and his house. Still I served, although He gave no sign of His presence, for my mother visited me continually, and she kept me strong and pure. One night, when I had lain down to sleep, I suddenly heard a voice, which I took to be the voice of Eli, and it called me by name. This it did thrice, and each time I went to Eli and asked him what he wished with me, but he had not called. When the voice had come again and again, I answered, "Speak; for Thy servant heareth," and then for the first time was I bidden to execute a command from the Lord; and I, Samuel, a boy, was ordered to tell Eli, the high priest from the Lord, whose minister he was, that a deed was about to be done which should make tingle the ears of every one who heard it, and that for the iniquity of his sons, and because he did not restrain them, no sacrifice should avail to protect him from judgment. Such was the message given to me; to me, Samuel the child, and thus was I honoured even then. I had never heard the voice before that night, and I lay awake till the morning, fearing to tell Eli what had been said to me, and I went out and opened the doors. But Eli sent for me, and when he saw me he perceived that the Lord had been with me, and he directed me to hide nothing from him of what had been said to me. I told him the vision every whit, and from that day forth I have been at the Lord's bidding, and have interpreted His will to Israel.

Although I had never heard the Lord's voice before, and it came with no sign nor miracle, I did not doubt that it was His, for there was that in it which proclaimed Him. Nevertheless I wondered what His judgment would be, and in what manner it would come to pass. Soon afterwards the Israelites went out to battle against the Philistines in Aphek, and were smitten with great slaughter. Then the elders of Israel, thinking that the Ark of the covenant would save them, sent to Shiloh and brought it thence, and when it came into the camp they all shouted with a great shout, so that the earth

rang again. Fools to believe that the Ark was anything if the Living God was not with it! When He was with it, and the men of Bethshemesh did but look at it, they died; but without Him it is nothing. The Israelites were greatly heartened when the Ark came, and the Philistines were afraid, believing, idolaters as they were, that God must be in it. But the Israelites were defeated; thirty thousand of them fell; the very Ark was taken; Hophni and Phinehas were also slain. When Eli heard the news he fell backward and died, and his daughter-in-law, who was in travail, died also. Thus was the word delivered to me fulfilled suddenly in one day, and for the sins of the priests even the Ark whereon were the cherubim was permitted to depart to the Philistines and keep company with Dagon. After that day, when Eli died and I looked into the empty sanctuary, could I hesitate to believe and obey the Lord's word?

The Lord had no mind that the Philistines, who were His scourge for the Israelites, should vaunt themselves over Him, or should believe that of their own strength they had prevailed. Wonderful is He! He takes the wicked to punish His people, and the wicked are but tools in His hand, and He uses them for His own designs. The Ark came to Ashdod, and was put in the house of Dagon; but when the men of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark. They took Dagon and set him in his place again; and when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the Ark, and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold. Furthermore, the men of Ashdod were destroyed with a secret and dreadful disease. They thereupon determined to get rid of the Ark, and they sent it to Gath. When it came to Gath the pestilence fell upon the men of Gath also, and they sent it away to Ekron, and the pestilence fell also upon the men of Ekron. Then the wise men of the Philistines were called together, and they counselled that the Ark should be returned with a trespass-offering to Israel, and that it should be carried in a new cart by two milch kine on which there had come no yoke, and that their calves should be brought home from them. Then if the kine of their own accord took the cart to Bethshemesh, it would be known that it was the God of Israel who had plagued the land; but if they refused to go, then it might be chance which had done it. The Ark was

placed in the cart, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon the kine. Remembering their calves, they nevertheless went straight along the road to Bethshemesh, lowing as they went, and turning not aside to the right hand or to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh. The men of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the Ark, and rejoiced to see it, and the cart came into the field of Joshua the Bethshemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone, and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine as a burnt-offering. And the Levites took down the Ark, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of stone were, and put them on the great stone, and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offering and sacrifices. When the Philistines had seen all these things, and when they knew that the plague in their land was stayed, did they acknowledge the Lord God? How should they, seeing that they were not His elect?

The children of Israel continually turned aside to the lewd gods of the heathen, and at times it seemed as if the whole earth would be given up to the abominations of the Canaanites. The Lord had brought us out of Egypt, and through the desert. He had appeared to us on Sinai, and had given us His commandments, by which alone we could live. He had revealed unto us that we should be pure, and separate ourselves from the filth around us. He had roused up Moses, and Joshua, and the Judges, all of whom strove to preserve and ever build higher and stronger the wall which was to protect us, so that the sacred Law and the service of the one God might continue. Israel was but a handful in the midst of Philistines and Amalekites, nations which worshipped Baal with fornication and all kinds of uncleanness, and Israel was ever at the point of mingling with them. Then it would have been forgotten as they will be forgotten; but if it will only abide in the Law, as given in thunder and lightning in the wilderness, it will be great, when, except for their struggles with Israel, the recollection of Amalekite and Philistine shall have perished.

I often was alone amidst a people which had well nigh all gone astray, but I remembered the voice which I heard in the Temple when I was a child. I sought the Most High day and night, and He came very close to me, and it became clearer and clearer to me that