

sinned against earnest teachings. They had been taught against worshipping other gods.

There is deep in the heart a tendency to sin, and gradually there was a hardness of heart in refusing to recognize any impression from God. They were bold about their sin and reckless. They were at enmity with God and seemed to be unteachable. They were again forsaking God to worship idols.

God cannot in any case tolerate sin and be true to himself. God's nature is opposed to sin, and sin carries punishment with it. How could these people bear to be at war with God? He may not visit the sinner with instant destruction. Men may be permitted to go on in sin for a time; but when there is no repentance sooner or later He brings down the rod in chastisement and destruction. The Bible tells us that God came not to Adam till the evening, but He came; that the Flood was delayed 120 years yet at an appointed time it came. He waited 130 years for the Canaanites to repent and the sword of Joshua was commanded to work. Joseph's brethren thought their wicked deed was forgotten as year after year slipped away and no whisper was ever made of it. But years later an accusing voice was awakened and they received God's judgement upon them.

It had been less than 50 years since on this very plain of Jezreel Sisera's mighty army had been scattered as the chaff, but the old traditions of that victory have almost been forgotten. How could they forget God's dealing in their nation?

II. The Call of Gideon (Judges 6:11-24)

Far away on the border of Manasse was a young man. We take it that perhaps he was a young man who was a member of this the smallest clan. Joash was the head of this tribe. This man was beating out some wheat or corn in a secret winepress. He was hidden from the Midianites. What a way to live - in constant fear. And this was all because of their separation from the ways of God. He had to work in a quiet manner so as not to attract the enemy. He was beating this wheat out with a stick with the constant apprehension that some of this wild band might swoop down and take away his grain.

We understand that deep down in his heart he felt humiliated because he had to get off in the remote corner of his land to carry on this work. He was a man of mighty valour the Bible says, vigor and energy and resourcefulness. And for years he had lived under this strain while