

midst of the children of Israel, giving them instruction, guidance and blessing, through Moses and the divinely-ordained leaders who were associated with him.

In like manner, as we have noted already, when Joshua was ordained as Moses' successor, the Spirit's powers and endowments were transferred to him, to qualify him for the task of leading the children of Israel across the Jordan into the Promised Land. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thy hand upon him. . . . And Moses did as Jehovah commanded him; and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as Jehovah spake by Moses" (Num. 27:18-23). "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses" (Deut. 34:9).

2. The Spirit and the Judges

We come now to the biographies of those men who figured as the leaders of Israel in the period following the conquest of Canaan under Joshua's leadership. They are commonly designated the Judges. In reality they were *dictators*, especially chosen and specially qualified, who acted both as civil magistrates and as military leaders. The Spirit of God is mentioned frequently in connection with their varied activities. He is said to have "come upon" some of them to endow them with *wisdom*, i.e., with legal acumen, with statesmanship, and with power to enthuse the people; upon others, to endow them with extraordinary *physical strength*; and upon still others to qualify them for *military leadership*. In various ways the Spirit of God qualified these men for their *official* functions and duties, and through them He preserved His testimony throughout the "Dark Ages" of Israel's history.

[Judg. 3:9, 10]: And when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, Jehovah raised up a savior to the children of Israel, who saved them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and he judged Israel. [Judg. 6:34]: But the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet and Abiezer was gathered together after him [Judg 11:29]: Then the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon.

[Judg. 13:24, 25]: And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and Jehovah blessed him. And the Spirit of Jehovah began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Echaol. [Judg. 14:5, 6]: Then went Samson down, and his father and mother, to Timnah, and came to the vineyards of Timnah; and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid; and he had nothing in his hand; but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. [Judg. 14:19]: And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and smote thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave changes of raiment unto them that declared the riddle [Judg. 15:14, 15]: When he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him: and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his hands dropped from off his hands. And he found a fresh jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and smote a thousand men therewith. [These Scriptures are all descriptive of the activities of Samson who] judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years [Judg. 15:20], [and who, despite his moral weaknesses, wrought mightily for God's people in deeds of valor that made him a terror to his enemies].

Here we have an instance of the Spirit's having endowed a chosen leader with extraordinary physical strength, for the obvious reason that physical prowess was precisely what was needed in this particular emergency. Nor is there anything incredible, scientifically speaking, in this presentation. The phenomena of abnormal psychology confirm the fact that great physical strength is often induced under hypnotic suggestion, and under various aspects as well of what we commonly designate insanity. There seems to be some connection between the activities of the subconscious in man and the heightening of his physical powers. Just what this connection is, of course, we have not as yet ascertained, largely because of the modern tendency to belittle the science of psychical phenomena. We must not forget, however, that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of power. After all, the generation of physical power by psychical is a fact of human experience, whereas the generation of psychical power by physical definitely is not.

Commenting on these Scriptures, the late Ashley S. Johnson wrote as follows: "These exhibitions of the Spirit's power stand alone in the Old Testament, and it is apparent that they were for the sole purpose of imparting great strength and valor to God's chosen commanders who were to lead His chosen people to victory against their foes, and are thus entirely out of line with God's ordinary methods of moving

His people to right living. The Spirit came miraculously upon great warriors; the rank and file saw only the slain, the wounded, the vanishing foe. The Spirit came upon God's leaders, witnesses, prophets, priests; the people saw results, felt the rebuke, received the enlightenment through the spoken message."¹

This period of the Judges was one of sensualism and moral degeneracy. Yet the Judges themselves were at times men of the Spirit. Prof. George Smeaton says of them: "The Spirit of God, the Author of all those gifts which they received, intellectual as well as spiritual, kindled in them intrepid valor; for God was the King of the Theocracy, and it redounded to His glory to break the yoke of the oppressor, when the purposes of discipline were served. One hero after another, endowed with extraordinary courage, patriotism and zeal, was raised up by the Spirit of God to deliver Israel."²

The question might arise here in the minds of some, as to how we are to reconcile the fact of the Spirit's goodness and holiness with the presentation of the Spirit's operations that is given in the book of Judges. Can we believe that the Spirit endowed such man as Samson, for instance, with extraordinary physical powers just to be used for the purpose of slaying thousands of his enemies in cold blood? Must we think of the Spirit of God as a warrior gloating over the destruction of individuals and nations? To ask such questions as these is, in my opinion, to demonstrate a distorted conception of the Deity and His operations. The God I worship is a God of justice as well as a God of love. He rules in His moral universe. And there are times in the lives of individuals and of nations when it becomes necessary for God to resort to physical force to preserve His Divine Plan against human ambition, greed and lust; and to maintain His sovereignty in the realm of human will. History proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that there have been occasions in the past when the destruction of a whole nation, or at least of that nation's power, has become a moral necessity (Jer. 18:5-12). When God's people and God's Plan are challenged by evil men or by unscrupulous nations, then our God becomes indeed a God of battles. Shall we worship a God who stands by without

1. Ashley S. Johnson, *The Holy Spirit and the Human Mind*, 20.

2. George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 23.

so much as lifting a finger when His people are threatened by ungodly enemies and His plans appear to be thwarted by the minions of the Evil One? Others may worship such a God, but I do not. The God I worship, the God of the Bible, is a God who will do battle for His people in every moral crisis; whose Spirit is not only the Spirit of love and grace, but the Spirit of power as well; the God who endowed His chosen leaders in ancient times with extraordinary intellectual and physical powers to be exercised in the preservation of His chosen people from the evil designs of their idolatrous neighbors, who were themselves vessels fit only for destruction. There is nothing unnatural, nothing immoral, in the presentation of the Spirit and His operations that is given in the book of Judges. What our generation needs is to rid itself of some of its flabbiness of both thought and deed.

3. The Spirit and the Early Kings

In the days of Samuel, the first of the great prophets and regarded by some as the last of the Judges, conditions in Israel changed for the better. In 1 Samuel 3:1, we read: "And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision." In fact no frequent vision was needed. The people who had hitherto neglected God's law, disregarded His ordinances, prostituted the established forms of worship, and become enfeebled by sensualism and idolatry, were, under Samuel, transformed into a godfearing nation. Samuel was an effective reformer and leader. He led the nation into the paths of righteousness; frequent visions and operations of the Spirit were no longer necessary.

The time came, however, when the people, in order to emulate their worldly and more prosperous heathen neighbors, clamored for a king. Jehovah, foreseeing the disasters that would come upon them through a monarchy (*vide* 1 Sam. 8), finally though reluctantly yielded to their demand, in order that they might learn from actual experience. And when the people themselves had selected Saul, the son of Kish, as their first king, God authorized Samuel to anoint him, that is, formally set him apart to the office for which he had been chosen. Immediately upon his anointing, Saul was numbered