

REFRESHMENT BETWEEN THE BATTLES**F.B. Meyer:****"Four kings with five." -- Genesis 14:9.**

The strife recorded in Genesis 14 was no mere border foray. It was an expedition for chastisement and conquest. Chedorlaomer was the Attila, the Napoleon of his age. His capital city, Susa, lay across the desert, beyond the Tigris, in Elam. Years before Abraham had entered Canaan as a peaceful emigrant, this dreaded conqueror had swept southwards, subduing the towns which lay in the Jordan Valley, and thus possessing himself of the master-key to the road between Damascus and Memphis. When Lot took up his residence towards Sodom, the cities of the plain were paying tribute to this mighty monarch.

At last the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Admah and Zeboiim, became weary of the Elamite yoke and rebelled, and Chedorlaomer was compelled to undertake a second expedition to chastise their revolt and regain his power. Combining his own forces with those of three vassal and friendly rulers in the Euphrates Valley, which lay in his way, he swept across the desert, and fell upon the wild tribes that harbored in the mountains of Bashan and Moab. His plan was evidently to ravage the whole country contiguous to those Jordan towns before actually investing them.

At last the allied forces concentrated in the neighborhood of Sodom, where they encountered fierce resistance. Encouraged by the pitchy nature of the soil, in which horsemen and chariots would move with difficulty, the townsfolk risked an engagement in the open. In spite, however, of the bitumen pits, the day went against the effeminate and dissolute men of the plain, in whose case, as in many others, social corruption proved itself the harbinger of political overthrow. The defeat of the troops was followed by the capture and sack of those wealthy towns; and all who could not escape were manacled as slaves, and carried off in the train of the victorious army.

Sated at length with their success, their attention engrossed by their rich booty and their vast host of captives, the foreign host began slowly to return along the Jordan Valley on its homeward march. "And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." Then one of the survivors of that fatal day climbed the hills, and made for Abraham's encampment, which he may have known in earlier days, when, as one of Lot's many servants, he lived there. "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants... and divided himself against them" (14:14-15).

(1) HERE IS THE UNSELFISH AND SUCCESSFUL INTERPOSITION OF A SEPARATED MAN, ON THE BEHALF OF OTHERS

Hidden in the configuration of the country, and confederate with his friends, Abraham had watched the movements of the devastators from afar. "But they had not come nigh him; only with his eyes had he beheld and seen the reward of the wicked" (Psalm 41:8). Common prudence would have urged him not to embroil himself. "Be thankful that you have escaped, and do not meddle further in the business; lest you make these mighty kings your foes."

But true separation never argues thus. Granted that the separated one is set apart for God, yet he is set apart that he may react more efficiently on the great world over which God yearns, and towards which He has entertained great purposes of mercy, in the election of the few. Genuine separation -- an unattachedness to the things of time and sense, because of an ardent devotion to the unseen and eternal -- is the result of faith, which always works by love; and this love tenderly yearns for those who are entangled in the meshes of worldliness and sin. Faith makes us independent, but not indifferent. It is enough for it to hear that its brother is taken captive; and it will arm instantly to go in pursuit.

Ah, brothers and sisters, have there never come to you the tidings that your brothers are taken captive? How, then, is it that you have not started off long ago for their deliverance? Is this separation genuine, which stands unconcernedly by while there is such need for immediate and unselfish action?

But Abraham's interposition was as **SUCCESSFUL** as it was unselfish and prompt. The force with which he set out was a very slender one; but his raw recruits moved quickly, and thus in four or five days they overtook the self-reliant and encumbered host amid the hills where the Jordan takes its rise. Adopting the tactics of a night attack, he fell suddenly on the unsuspecting host, and chased them in headlong panic, as far as the ancient city of Damascus. "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people" (14:16).