

Helps for Young Christians.

No. 7

SAMSON:

HIS STRENGTH

OR

POWER FOR SERVICE

BY

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OR

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SAMSON: His Strength.

“Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth.”—Judges 16-5.

“Tell me, I pray thee, wherein Thy great strength lieth.”—Judges 16-6.

“Not by might, nor by power (strength), but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts.”—Zech. 4-6.

The Children of Israel were brought out of Egypt (a power greater than they were) by the might of Jehovah and brought to a land already possessed by nations mightier than themselves. Duet. 4, 37/38.

David, a mere stripling, a youth unused to war, with a simple sling and five smooth stones, in simple faith in God for his strength, goes forth, nothing doubting, to slay Goliath of Gath, and with one of the five stones lays low the one who for days had been defying the armies of Israel. 1 Sam. 17, 45/47.

Elijah in solitary grandeur, standing on Mount Carmel confronting four hundred priests of Baal at considerable danger to himself, gives them every opportunity to prove their God to be true, and soddening his own sacrifice with water he gains a mighty triumph in the Lord's name, and in spite of his arduous day's test, girds himself and runs the whole way to Jezreel in front of Ahab's chariot.

The three Hebrew youths, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego placed in a position of responsibility by Nebuchadnezzar, in loyalty and obedience

to God's word and in face of overwhelming odds, regarded not the king's voice and refused to do his bidding, when in his rage and fury he commanded that they should be brought and cast into the burning fiery furnace. Dan. 3, 16/18.

Daniel, too, with all the presidents and princes against him, and a decree signed which even the king himself could not alter, prays "as he did afore time," and came out, in spite of tremendous planning and plotting, more than conqueror. Dan. 6, 22.

Zerrubabel, the leader of the captives who returned from Babylon, and governor of Judah undertook the gigantic task of building the Lord's House amidst opposition from friend and foe, the apathy of the people, and discouragements on every hand, received the Word of the Lord which said,

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerrubabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. Zech. 4, 6/7.

Samson could rend a lion as he would a kid, could catch three hundred foxes (let my reader try to catch one), could slay a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, could lift the gates of a city, take them to the top of a hill and laugh at his enemies, and by mighty strength pull down the pillars of the house and finally at his death slay thousands.

All these were delivered from enemies *stronger and mightier than themselves*, and performed deeds and were given victories entirely above and beyond what human strength could possibly have achieved, faith linking them to the mighty power

and boundless resources of God.

A WORD TO OURSELVES.

We, too, have been delivered from foes mightier than ourselves for we have been delivered from the power of darkness, from the power of death and hell, from the curse of a broken law, from the bondage of sin, from the god of this age who hitherto had blinded our eyes, from the wrath of God, from the guilt and penalty of our sin, and from judgment to come. We, too, have not only been brought out of these things, but brought, like the children of Israel, into a sphere of blessing, for we are,

“Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Eph. 1, 3.

Not only have we been delivered from the power of darkness, but we have been translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. We have been, “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” we have been made, “new creatures in Christ,” we have received, “the adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” All this and more is ours through a power outside of ourselves,

“For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Rom. 5, 6.

“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5, 8.

“When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” Rom. 5, 10.

Grace has wrought a wondrous victory and brought us deliverance we could never have effected for ourselves, and brought us into blessings our own efforts could never have obtained. (See Eph. 2, 4/7.

We have a pathway to tread, a service to render,

difficulties to meet, foes to overcome and temptations to resist ; all these things we cannot possibly do in our own strength.

The believer is exhorted to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and the apostle Paul reminds us of the greatness, might and power of the enemy, whom we meet in the fight of faith—

“ For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Eph. 6, 12.

Moreover, in the matter of service too, great things are expected from us, great things are possible to us. One reference to our Lord’s own Word will suffice to show the greatness of the task.

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto my Father.” John 14, 12.

God’s purpose for us is that we should bear fruit. “ The branch cannot bear fruit of itself.” Our Lord said, “ Without me ye can do nothing.” Verily we need a power beyond our own natural resources, and just as there was a power to deliver us, so we shall presently see that there is a power to strengthen us, to enable us to obtain victories, to achieve exploits and to walk with steadfast step pleasing to the Lord, bearing fruit to the praise of His grace. Let us then consider some of the lessons the record of Samson has to teach us.

WAS SAMSON REALLY STRONG ?

Samson was not a strong man normally. For the secret of his wonderful feats we have to search further than his physical body. His strength puzzled the Philistines to a great degree and they

were prepared to go to considerable expense and pains to find out his secret. Had his strength been solely in his body it would easily have been seen.

The tests Samson suggested to Delilah were foolish, it was ridiculous to try to bind him with green withs, or weaving the locks of his head with a web and fasten with a pin, as though that would dissipate a strength which could kill a lion and lift the gates of a city and carry them to the top of a hill ! All this tends to show that there was in Samson's great strength that which, to the outsider, was baffling and mysterious.

A careful study of the Word of God, however, reveals at once to the spiritually minded and spiritually enlightened, that Samson's strength was not his own, but that of another who was operating in and through him. Also a study of the conditions of Samson's life reveals to us, at least in measure, the conditions under which we too can be endued with the same power as was the source of Samson's strength, enabling us to overcome temptations, fight the fight of faith, remove difficulties from our pathway as Samson removed the lion from his, and so escape the power of the enemy and achieve great things for God, yea, to perform some of the greater things that our blessed Lord spake of when he said, " Greater works than these shall ye do " (see John 14, 12).

SAMSON'S BIRTH.

Firstly Samson owed his birth not to the ordinary course of nature, but to a special intervention of God ; you will do well to read the 13th Chap. of Judges for an account of this, and one has to come to the conclusion that Samson's birth, like Isaac's, was due to the miraculous intervention

of God himself, and against all the accepted laws of nature. Thus it is in this age, every Christian, (who is a Christian indeed), has been born twice, born of earthly parents, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, a sharer of Adam's guilt and partaker of his sinful nature ; but he has also had a second birth being born from above, born of the Spirit.

“ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” John 3, 5/7.

“ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1, 13.

“ Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” James 1, 18.

These three Scriptures clearly state that our path as children of God is due to the intervention of God and not to our physical birth in a nominal Christian family, which happened to live in a nominal Christian country—we are, “ children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Gal. 3, 26. Samson, being a child by Divine promise and intervention, we are not surprised to find it recorded of him,

“ And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.” Judges 13, 25.

It was at such times as these, that Samson was strong and able to perform amazing feats to the bewilderment, dismay and defeat of his enemies.

THE BELIEVER'S POWER.

Every CHILD OF GOD is born of the Spirit, as we have already seen by the Scriptures previously quoted on this page. Every born-again individual is “ sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,

unto the praise of His glory." Eph. 1, 13/14. We are sealed by the Father as His own, and the seal is the Holy Ghost. Every sealed believer is also indwelt by the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor. 6, 19, you will find the apostle asks the question,

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

The Holy Ghost is in the believer in this age in a sense in which He never was in the Old Testament saints. He came on them and moved them at times only, but now He indwells the believer. The Holy Spirit is a definite and distinct Person equal with the Father and the Son, is the gift of the Father, was prayed for by the Son and sent by Him from the Father. Note in John 14, 26, the Lord says of the Spirit, "*Whom the Father will send in my name,*" but in John 15, 26, he says, "*Whom I will send,*" both are equally true.

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14, 16/17.

In the light of these wondrous things, we might well ask ourselves, how is it that the power of this One dwelling in each child of God is not more manifest in our lives, and in the work of God generally; and with sadness of heart, we must confess that the conditions under which the Holy Spirit can work in and through us are oftentimes sadly lacking.

Samson is an illustration of this, for at one period of his life just when he needed strength greater than his own, he was as other men, powerless in the presence of his enemies who were stronger than he, because he had been asleep on Delilah's lap.

When she called to him, ' the Philistines are upon thee,' it was too late, the Philistines took him, put out his eyes, and bound him with fetters of brass and he had to endure prison bars and we read of him that he wist not his strength was departed from him. (See Jud. 16, 1/21). He shook himself as at other times, but he was just an ordinary man.

The laps of Delilah's are numerous to-day—worldly pleasure, material advancement, love of ease. The world, the flesh and the devil are still in possession of numerous opiates which act much in the same way as Delilah. How sad, and yet how often has the same story been repeated in the lives of those who enjoy greater privileges and have greater responsibilities. The writer would question his own heart, and ask his readers to question theirs, how is it with us? Has our strength gone and we wist not? Have we awakened out of our sleep to find that the enemy is waiting to complete his victory? But perhaps you ask " in what lay the *secret of Samson's strength* ? " and the answer is in his long hair, or to be more correct that of which his hair was a symbol. Samson was a separated one and his unshorn hair was a confession of this. He was a carefully guarded Nazarite from before his birth. Judges 13. His mother having to keep at least part of the Nazarite's vow. Verse 4.

THE NAZARITE'S VOW.

There were three conditions the Nazarite had to observe, and fulfil. Firstly, he had to separate himself from wine and strong drink, not merely had he to abstain from the use of the fermented juice of the grape, but from every thing connected with the vine—grapes moist or dried, he could not eat anything thereof from the kernels to the

husk. Num. 6, 2/4. This sets forth typically for the believer, complete separation from the things of earth. Our Lord is spoken of in Isaiah 53, as a root out of a dry ground, that is, He drew nothing from earth which contributed to His strength or joy. A root is the primary part of a tree, without it the branches would wither and die for lack of sustenance. In like manner, we too, in our spiritual life need food to strengthen. It is part of the Holy Spirit's work to minister such, for He takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us, but we cannot feed on the joys of earth and the things of the Spirit at the same time. If like Samson, we would be strong, we must be separated from the world unto the Lord, *in the world but not of it.* John 17, 11/19.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6, 17/18.

The second condition of the Nazarite's vow was one concerned more with confession than separation. No razor was to come upon his head all the days of his vow. In Samson's case it was for life, i.e., he was to wear his hair long; this was an outward and visible sign of his Nazariteship, something all could see. If my readers will turn to the first Corinthian epistle, chap 11, verse 14 and 15, they will read

"Does not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."

In the long hair of the Nazarite, we see a symbol of subjection and humiliation. The Nazarite took an inferior place to that of his fellows, and from this all believers can learn that in order to be

strong, they too, must exhibit to those around those lowly graces of subjection and humiliation as the Apostle Paul puts it,

“ Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory ; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man : And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Phil. 2, 2/8.

This will constitute a testimony more striking and effective than the long hair of the Nazarite and will bring forth from those around a recognition as of old, “ These have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him,” moreover such a course of conduct has great promise of reward, for

“ He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”
Luke 14, 11.

Thirdly, the Nazarite was not to touch any dead body, not even for father or mother was he to defile himself. This scene here is one of death—death is stamped on everything ; it is under the condemnation of God and is reserved for judgment. We are to walk through this valley of the shadow of death as those who are not of it, (as indeed through grace every born again person is not) for our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for our Saviour. If we would be strong like Samson

THESE ARE THE CONDITIONS.—

We must be (1) *Separate as to our joys ;* we

cannot share the world's, and the world has no part or lot in ours. We must feed on vastly different food, our strength is from above, their's is but in effect for a moment, passing, transient, and carrying them to a lost eternity.

(2) *Separate as to our ambitions*, being only ambitious to be well-pleasing to Him ; letting go worldly advancement and seeking to serve the interests of others before our own.

(3) *Separate as to our conduct*, walking before God as those who are not their own, strangers and pilgrims, in a strange land, but homeward bound. Such a pathway will speedily mark us out as peculiar, we shall be misunderstood and very likely be the subject of ridicule. Our choice may be queried ; Samson's father and mother, not knowing that Samson had chosen a bride according to the Lord's will, did not understand his choice at all. We may even be regarded as dangerous and troublesome. Because of Samson's exploits against the Philistines, the men of Judah bound him and would have delivered him to his enemies and the enemies of the Lord, but He that was for him was stronger than all the men of Judah and we read,

' And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him ; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.'"
Judges 15, 14.

And so with us, if only we will be in subjection to the teaching and guiding of the Holy Spirit, letting Him constrain and restrain us, we too shall be more than conquerors. Such a pathway trodden will be the scene of wondrous achievements, for in it we shall perform the will of God, which, however commonplace the task may seem to us.

is the greatest thing any one can do. It is not that which glitters and is the most attractive to our eyes or spectacular in the eyes of our fellows, but to do the will of God is the greatest and best, and this will endure to the end.

To deflect from this path will mean failure—it was so in Samson's case, he shared God's secret with a woman of the world and it robbed Him of his strength when he most needed it. We can neither take the worldings into the secrets of God, nor allow them to share our labours for Christ, or contribute to the cost of the Lord's work, without bringing failure to ourselves and marring our service.

This pathway of separation means final victory although it may mean our all.—Samson accomplished more in his death than in all his life. He that loseth his life shall find it. It means honour and reward for the Word of God says,

“Them that honour Me, I will honour.”
and we also read,

“God will not long remain any man's debtor,”
and at the close of a life that has been filled with the Spirit and lived not in its own strength but empowered by the Spirit we shall be able, like Zerrubbabel, to bring forth the headstone to our work with shoutings, crying,

“Grace, grace unto it.” Zech. 4, 7.

It will have been,

“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts.”

May the writer and all his readers pray and not faint for,

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isa. 40, 31.

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