

criticism of ourselves. Let us set our own house in heavenly order, that we may more easily and efficiently dispense the light of Truth to men. Then shall we feel always the spirit of Whittier's beautiful lines;

And now beside the silent sea  
I wait the muffled oar,  
Assured no harm can come to me  
On ocean or on shore.  
I know not where his islands lift  
Their fringed palms in air,  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care.

*Veri Spiritus.*

(A. T. BUSWELL, Sec.)

**SELF-DECEPTION.**—You picture to yourself the beauty of bravery and steadfastness. You let your imagination wander in delight over the memory of martyrs who have died for Truth. And, then, some little, wretched, disagreeable duty comes, which is your martyrdom, the lamp for your oil; and if you will not do it, how your oil is spilt! How flat and thin and unilluminated your sentiment about the martyrs runs out over your self-indulgent life!—*Phillips Brooks.*

We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done.—*Longfellow.*

If the symbol were perfect to our understanding it would disappear as symbol, and be mortality swallowed up of Life or Reality.

“Freedom is in the exact ratio of obedience.”

## International Bible Lessons.

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Dec. 9, 1888.

Gideon's Army.—Judg. vii. 1-8.

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

After forty years of peace new enemies appeared to the conquering Israelites. The wild hordes of the desert swept over their lands and took possession of them. A grievous famine ensued. The miserable Israelites prayed for succor. They had known the power of prayer in delivering them from their enemies before and are constrained to appeal earnestly for the help of their God now. They are not a heathen or false-God people. In times of need they call upon the invisible but all-powerful God for help. Their enemies doubtless believe in numbers and strong battalions and look to arms of flesh in days of battle.

Three hundred God fearing men are chosen to fight 135,000 materialists. Just about that proportion in our time. The children of faith are few. They who call on God in times of trouble are many. But they who do not look to God at all far outnumber the believing and half-believing put together. Think of the rough, cruel hearts of the proud princes of foreign realms with their remorseless companions in sin on this side of the water! When they want satisfaction where do they turn? To strong drinks, gambling, money transactions, and—worse than all these. Do they heed the bitter crying of the outraged hearts that love them? Do they care when little children moan beneath their tortures? Do you not see that they will never turn

to God to answer their cravings till the sordid things to which they have turned have given them back the reward of such service? Do you know what the gold and silver with the solid earth from whence they came must do to these material, sensual-thoughted children of earth? They must melt with fervent heat and terrify their believers tils in the horror of a darkness greater than that into which they plunged their helpless victims in times past, these hardened wretches are compelled to ask help from the only source that can render it.

"The meek shall inherit the earth." They are the strength of multitudes concentrated.

John Wesley said that if he had three hundred believing Christians he could shake the gates of hell and establish the cause of God on earth. Only three hundred out of ten thousand Israelites signalled vigilance and faith while quenching their thirst at Harod. They were all that were necessary to put the wild wicked hordes to flight. Who could be afraid with God on his side if only six or three friends stood by him in a time of trouble? Gideon, the Son of Joash, is chosen to lead them on to victory. He is chosen because he also has a habit, like Moses and Joshua of listening at the gates of silence to hear the word of the Lord concerning ways and means.

Remember that these stories would not be treasured by the civilized world if they were not lessons of true service for all generations. Every word every action, every description, is saved to encourage, warn, bless our hearts in these days. Out of all the children of earth the Israelites had the truest conceptions of the Deity. They who served have been watched and set into history. When they faltered in faith they met with disaster. When

they leaned hard and trusted heartily they won brilliant victories.

Now the world's belief is, that "God is on the side of the strongest battalions." The world's belief is that if the army is weak its stronger foe will conquer it. But the true belief is that God is on the side of those that trust Him utterly. How inexplicable Divine dealings are to the unbelieving. Think of any general of modern times insisting that he had a command in his soul to take 300 men to fight 135,000, for the sake of proving the power of God to defend those who believed in Him! But the world's unbelief and materialism, which are the savage hordes of to-day, are to be completely routed by the few spiritually minded believers now silently proclaiming that Spirit is the only Substance and has the only right of way.

In science we admit that all these past transactions are processes of that realm of unreality called mortal mind. We admit, too, that its only lesson is to teach mortality to name itself nothingness, and own Spirit as the All. But we remember also that science teaches us to name their lessons—point their morals and obey their directions before proving their meanings. Science teaches us that while we are unbelieving or cruel or hard, we are still in mortality's clutches and must seem to suffer all that mortality believes in till we know the Truth and go out. The important lesson of Gideon's masterful campaign is, that not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit all earthly things and material beliefs are to be proved nothingness and utterly driven from the country which the trusting scientists inherit.

Can you describe the country of the true scientist? There is no pain known there at all. There is no crying there. There is no hunger or cold or

weakness or weariness. They are set free from all these things.

There are many just entering into this country. They are in the material world but not of it. They begin to be vested with powers they had not before dreamed of. They can easily forget and ignore the transactions of the world around them. Paul's prophecy seems to be fulfilling to them already for they are "caught up" out of the way and reach of the hard things that used to hurt so cruelly. Reader, if your way is hard, set out upon this way. All that Gideon knew you may know. All that he could do you may do. All the safety promised to those who would set their feet into *this way* we are claiming and daily proving. "Enter the path."

Dec. 16, 1888.

Samson.—Judg. xvi, 21-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The greatly honored among men have not always been wise.

Gideon was the fifth judge of Israel. His whole name was significant of the character of his mission to the world. "One who cuts down, and challenges idolatry." The "bramble king" was sixth, and Samson the thirteenth judge of the people whose history has been chosen to point a moral and spiritual lesson for people in these times.

Samson's life and character suggested much. How wonderful the history of his birth. An angel talked with his mother and father and promised the beautiful child to them. He was to be a Nazarite from birth, which means that he was to abstain from strong drinks of all kinds and never to shave his hair. The only Nazarites mentioned in Scripture are Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist. The Nazarites were consecrated to the service of

God. So Samson was consecrated by his parents long before his birth to The Good.

His strength was miraculous. His opportunities for serving The Good were many, and it was predicted that he should deliver the Israelites from the troublesome Philistines. Great strength in certain directions is almost always accompanied by great weakness in other directions. Almost always great intellect is associated with physical weakness and excellent statesmanship suggests fleshly appetites. High church dignitaries have a weakness for money gains, and the loftiest minds have condescended to the passions of the sensual and degraded.

Too long have we excused folly in the great, forgetting that their strength was intended to master their weakness before they could be really accounted great in God's sight. If Daniel Webster committed the follies he is historied to have committed, he is as accountable for his sins as the simplest child of earth who never knew the praise of man.

"Fleshly lusts war against the Spirit." Thy cause the Lord to depart if we do not master them and we shall surely be shorn of the glory of the powers with which we have been vested.

Samson's case is a marked illustration of this law. He looked to a treacherous temptress instead of a steadfast heart for his good and thus was betrayed into weakness. He had his eyes put out by the cruel Philistines whose temptations he had yielded to. So spiritual sight or judgment faculty hides from the sensual or those who yield to their ruling passion.

In his prison house he repented and prayed in deep anguish to his God.

He had always been a humorous and jolly tempered

man. His whole career is marked by his humorousness and jesting speeches. He propounds riddles, and puns to keep people laughing. His most cruel and valiant actions are done with a smile on his face and a jest in his mouth. So the Philistines call for blind Samson to sing and dance at their great festival to Dagon the fish-god they worshiped. Can the repentant Samson's prayer have sincerity enough in it to make him willing to lose his life for his people Israel? With his prayers his shorn strength returns. They let him rest between the pillars of the massive hall where the lords, ladies, captains, councillors, priests, "their choice nobility and flower" were gathered. He asks the privilege of a blind man to be let to rest for a little. He takes hold of the pillars with those prayer-strengthened arms.

*"And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein."* Six thousand of the rulers and nobility of the hateful Philistines were crushed in the hall of the great god Dagon by Samson, the penitent.

You who have yielded to your ruling passion down on your knees, for your judgment is passing swiftly into the silence by the smoke of your consuming temptation. As the king of the Philistines put out Samson's eyes so is your greatest error putting out your fair sight of the good. Yield not to the Philistines—temper, ambition, pride, sex-passion. Deny vehemently. Do not wait to suffer seeming death because of long yielding before you destroy personal errors. The Easterners teach that we must die to get rid of the ruling passions. Science teaches that the kingdom of God is to come upon earth.

Dec. 23, 1888.

Ruth's Choice.—Ruth i. 16-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God,"

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous." Perhaps no Scripture Lesson illustrates the truth that there is a God overruling all our affairs for our very best good and His own glory, more surely than the story of Ruth, the Moabitess.

She had formerly worshiped the god Chemosh with her heathen parents, but she had married an Israelite whose God was Jehovah. She became a follower of Jehovah in her heart and determined to go with her Israelitish mother-in-law to Bethlehem. Poverty lies in doing this. Her home, friend-ship, money, ordinary comforts, must be left in the land of her dead husband. Still she chooses to go among the poverty stricken worshipers of the true God. The story is romantic to read, but must have been far from romantic in experience.

Do you know any in our time, who, having once cast their lot with the Christian Scientists, have gone back into their own old ways again, or secretly worshiped with the scientists, refusing to be identified with them? They are Orpah's. Do you know any who have left everything they loved best in life to cast in their lot with this people who are not yet accounted as in the right concerning what and where God is? Do you see how ugly is their journey from Moab to Bethlehem? That is, do you see how hard it is for them to bear the hard journey with the poor and clinging worshipers among whom they have cast their lot? They are Ruths. They are the righteous upon whom the eyes of the good Lord are cast to bring into honor and blessing as faithful Ruth was brought. From the desirable land of our kindred to the house of David is

the sure walk of those who trust the true God.

Do not think: says this lesson, that because the day is dark and miserable now that your God does not know. You are to be honored through these afflictions. As the miserable iron bits are melted and moulded into stately columns so your character needs melting to be strong and worth while. The Redeemer was born of Ruth the afflicted and faithful Moabitess. He must come of tried and true ancestry. So your future work must be sprung from tried and true quality.

*Dec. 30, 1888.*

Temperance Lesson.—Num. vi. 1-4.

The closing lesson of the year, chosen by the International Com. is upon the temperance question, and the Nazaritish vow is brought up as signifying that higher state of mind to which partial abstinence from fleshly appetites may lead the sincere.

Some have attempted to explain that the Lord Jesus Christ was a Nazarite, or at any rate that the Nazarite was a type of Jesus. But this cannot be established in any way because none of the rigid and abstemious Nazaritish habits were practiced, or enjoined by him. The Nazarite must not drink wine or touch the dead. Jesus of Nazareth turned water into wine, drank it, and gave to others to drink. He also touched dead bodies (so-called.)

But the Nazarites were good and true men and meant to serve God truly and faithfully in their peculiar fashion. They were an emphasis to the teachings of the early Israelites against the use of strong drink and its kindred vices. Whoever sets himself apart from the temptations of earthly life in our day in order that he may be an example to his weak brethren is a modern Nazarite. As the strongest thoughts against vice and sensuality come

to the quickest fruitage in cleaner lives and purer tastes we may thank the strictly abstaining for all the moral status of society. The indifferent and half-hearted or partially temperate cannot be credited with the growing sentiment against tobacco, alcohol, and other equally vicious temptations to wrong living. If people urge that Jesus, our best teacher, drank wine, we must teach them the difference between the partaking of wine by the spiritually minded, with a heart alive to the spiritual significance of even the coarsest thing, so that everything serves a spiritual purpose, and the partaking of wine for the purpose of gratifying a sensual and unspirited body craving an appetizing drink.

The true Christian Scientist finds his body growing farther and farther from sense gratifications, and more and more keenly alive to the delightfulness of true living, so that that which was formerly a sign of misery and a prophecy of poverty comes into a divine meaning to him.

The materially minded are being reached by the intense thoughts of the totally abstaining. And they all together shall be saved from fear of evil happenings in the sweet safety of the Christ understood.

One says: "One would say, that as soon as men had the first hint that every sensible object,—animal, rock, river, air,—nay, space and time, subsists not for itself, nor finally to a material end, but as a picture—language to tell another story of beings and duties, other science would be put by, and a science of such grand pressage would absorb all faculties."

"Calumny is only the noise of madmen."

*Diogenes, B. C. 412.*