

# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson IX.—Fourth Quarter, For Dec. 1, 1907.

## THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Text of the Lesson, Judg. xvi, 21-31. Memory Verses, 28-30—Golden Text, Eph. vi, 10—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

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One of God's chosen men, a Nazirite and the strongest of men physically, brought to a prison house, grinding corn, and afterward brought to a public gathering of many thousands to make sport for them as they worshiped their god, made blind physically by his spiritually blinded enemies, this is truly a sad sight. Yet it is written for our benefit that we may not thus bring reproach upon our God nor grieve His Holy Spirit. As we saw last week and in previous lessons and as the whole Bible teaches, God is seeking for men who will walk continuously with Him, follow Him fully and in whom He can be magnified.

In Heb. xi, 32, we find Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephtha mentioned with David and Samuel as men of faith, and in the long list of worthies in that chapter the distinguishing feature of each is faith in God. Even in Samson's dying hour we find him in verse 28 of our lesson praying the prayer of faith and receiving an immediate answer. We must glance at the whole story of Samson (chapters xiii to xvi inclusive), and in chapter xiii we note the visit of the Lord to Manoah and his wife, the same one who appeared to Gideon and Joshua, who talked face to face with Moses, appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins in Eden, whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity (Mic. v, 2, margin). He is called in the present story an angel twelve times, a man five times and God once (verse 22). When Manoah asked for His name He said, "It is wonderful" (xiii, 18, margin), making us think of Isa. ix, 6, 7. As He ascended in the flame of Manoah's sacrifice it is said that He did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on (xiii, 10). It was even so at the exodus, the dividing of the Red sea and the Jordan, the overthrow of Jericho, and long afterward in the days of His sojourn upon earth when in the presence of the disciples He wrought so many miracles. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

In chapters xiv and xv the power of God is seen in Samson in his slaying a lion, in his killing 1,000 men with the jawbone of an ass, in his carrying off the city gates and walking away with the weaver's beam fastened to his locks, etc. God's care of him is seen in His bringing water from the dry bone for him when he was thirsty and in other ways. He could not have been a great man physically, else people would not have wondered wherein his great strength lay, but he was a Nazirite (xiii, 5), for an explanation of which see Num. vi, but he was a Nazirite whose separation had been defiled and his days lost (Num. vi, 12). One part of the chastening for this was to shave the head, and this his enemies did for him.

In verse 22 of our lesson we read that the hair of his head began to grow again, and in this we see his Naziriteship returning in a measure. But, oh, the lost days and the dishonor to God! And here we must touch upon something most practical and searching, briefly hinted at in last week's temperance lesson. At the judgment went of Christ all that has been of self in our lives will be seen to be only wood, hay and stubble, fit to be burned to our loss. A true child of God cannot be lost, but his life or part of it may be lost. All Samson's wandering from God by contact with sinful people was lost time, and, not only so, it was God dishonoring time. All the years that Israel was in the hands of her enemies, overcame by them because of her sin, during the days of these judges was time not counted by God, and this explains one of the seeming discrepancies of Scripture. In I Kings, vi, 1, we read that from the exodus to the fourth year of Solomon was 480 years, while in Acts xiii, 18-22, it is easily seen to be 573 years (40+450+40+40+3), a discrepancy of ninety-three years. How interesting it is that we find just these years lost by Israel as a nation while oppressed by their enemies! The record of the years of their oppressions is in III, 8, 14; IV, 3; VI, 1; XIII, 1, and the figures are 8+15+20+7+40=80, which, subtracted from 573, gives 493, making perfect agreement in the two accounts. There is another oppression of eighteen years mentioned in Judg. x, 8, but it was only partial and confined to the east of Jordan. May the Lord deliver us from all Delilahs and from wasting or missing His time or talents or opportunities!

Because of Samson's sin see the Philistines rejoicing in their idol Dagon and worshipping it. That is the devil, for all idol worship is of the devil (I Cor. x, 20). When children of God conform to this world they give great occasion to the enemy to blaspheme.

How humiliating to see such a one as Samson making sport for the Philistines, yet there are today professing Christians so blinded that they think it all right to make sport for or amuse the world's people and, in fact, often do it to obtain money for what they call the Lord's work! If we are true Nazirites we will desire that God may be glorified in us, whether by life or death (Phil. i, 20), but we will also seek to keep ourselves unspotted from the world (Jas. i, 27).

## A Singular Duel.

(Original.)

Some years ago when I was in New Orleans in order to kill time I dropped into a fencing academy opposite the hotel where I stopped. I am fond of all the arts of self defense and would sit by the hour during the afternoon and evening watching the fencing master give instruction. At the end of each lesson he would send his pupil's foil spinning high in the air, thus intimating that the lesson was finished. One evening, while in his academy, as I was about leaving he asked me if I would like to see a spirited contest with the foils between two experts. When I said I would he told me to be on hand at 7 in the morning, giving as a reason for the early hour that the contestants did not care to fence before a crowd. When I entered the hall a little before the hour appointed I saw the principals emerge from a dressing room attired in fencing costume and each wearing a wire mask. The fencing master turned to me and said:

"In contests between strong men sometimes the button will be broken off one of the foils. I wish you to look at these weapons that you may be a witness that they are in good condition at the start."

I examined the foils and found them perfect. He handed them to the principals, and the contest began. I confess I was disappointed. Neither seemed to take much interest in the struggle, and it was an indifferent performance. I wondered why I had been invited to witness it. Meanwhile the fencing master went to another part of the room, where suddenly he dropped something which made a clatter, and I turned my eyes in his direction. When I turned them back to the fencers I saw that they had suspended the contest. One of them was standing in position; the other was just stepping into position. Somehow I got the idea that they had both stepped away from their places.

When the fencing recommenced each man threw himself into his work as if his life depended upon his efforts. Each was supremely careful of his guard and each watchful for some opening through which he might pierce his adversary. It was not long before I saw blood oozing from the sword arm of one of the fencers. I looked at the fencing master, supposing he would call a halt. Certainly, as he had feared, a button had been broken off a foil. He could not but see the blood, but he paid no attention to it. Presently more blood spurted, this time from the shoulder of the other fencer, and the two were bleeding profusely.

Whatever had been the intent at the beginning, I was sure that now the men were fighting for their lives. They were both skilled with the foil, and the exhibition, as promised, had become one of great brilliancy. Presently he who was wounded in the shoulder received another wound in the side. This time the fencing master started to interfere, but the wounded man waved him away, and the fighting went on.

I concentrated my vision to discover the condition of the foils. Had both buttons been broken? Impossible! There was some trickery, some method of making the weapons effective. Then I remembered the noise made by the fencing master just before the change had come in the character of the contest, and it suddenly dawned upon me that that movement was a device to draw my attention while the foils were changed. While they were crossed and for a moment at rest I could see that there was no button on either, but a sharp point. It looked as if the affair were a veritable duel.

I now began to notice the personnel of the contestants. They both appeared to be gentlemen. One was tall and slender, with fair hair and eyes; the other short and thick and very dark, the latter evidently ten years older than the former. But the short man was the better fencer, besides being wiry, and he was evidently firing the other out. I was looking for him at any moment to finish his adversary when suddenly the door flew open and a young woman, evidently a lady of high degree, rushed in and up to the fencers, where she stood glaring at the short brunette, then turning a reproachful glance on his younger adversary.

"Paul," she gasped, "you're a fool! And as for you, Mr. Le Gro, there is no reason whatever for you to have any contest with any man about me. You thought you had outwitted me and the police in bringing your victim to a fencing academy. M. Renard," to the fencing master, "I am astonished that under cover of teaching your art you should permit your place to be used for murder! Yes, murder! This man Le Gro, I am told, was formerly one of the best fencers in Paris. Should I reveal this outrage you would be obliged to leave the city. Gentlemen, give me your weapons."

They were handed to her. She examined their points and threw them on the floor. Then, putting her arm through his whom she called Paul, she walked away with him.

I tried hard to elicit an explanation, but signally failed. The affair never leaked out.

My own inference was that an unsuccessful rival desired to take revenge upon a successful one. He had planned the affair to take place in a fencing academy partly to escape the police, but rather to make the affair appear as an ordinary trial of skill. Perhaps after he had killed his rival the story was to have been given out that the button on his foil had been broken off and an accident had resulted. I was to be called in to be a witness that they fenced with foils.

ELLSWORTH EMERSON.

## SCOTSMEN IN KILTS.

That is One Sight You Will Not See in Edinburgh.

A writer of the London Tatler has been in Edinburgh and reports as follows: There is one thing that always disappoints the visitor to Edinburgh, and that is a complete absence of kilts, or, rather, the absence of Scotsmen in kilts. If you meet a man wearing a kilt in the streets of the Queen City of the Forth it will be a grave mistake to suppose that he is the laird of Gormuck or some other equally famous highland chieftain. He is nothing of the sort. As a matter of fact, his name is Hodgkins, and he is employed during eleven months of the year licking up envelopes for a firm on the shady side of Lothbury avenue, London, E. C.

Another mistake which strangers are apt to make lies in supposing that the good people of Scotland talk Scotch. I shall never forget my surprise on the occasion of my first visit to Edinburgh, when a policeman at the corner of Frederic street, to whom I remarked pleasantly that it was "hraw, brient nicht the night, whatever," told me to push off and stop asking him conundrums. Scotsmen do not as a rule talk at all. They possess the gift of silence to a really remarkable degree. I know a gillie named Donald, who lives in Perthshire, in whose society I have sometimes spent whole days stalking the elusive stag without his ever vouchsafing a single remark of any kind. I remonstrated with him once, pointing out that such silence as his almost amounted to taciturnity. He promised to try and cultivate a certain measure of garrulity, and after we had walked across the heather for five hours, during which time I could see that his brain was working feverishly, he suddenly turned to me and exclaimed, "Yon's a fearful' earthquake they had in Jamaica!" after which striking effort he relapsed once more into his habitual attitude of respectful silence.

## "OLD GLORY."

The Way This Name For the Stars and Stripes Originated.

The term "Old Glory," used to designate the flag of our country, is a favorite, and the expression is a very happy one.

It is said by those who claim to be well informed that the name originated with William Driver, captain of the bark Charles Doggett. This statement appears in a history of the Driver family, and from this we find the following facts:

Driver was a successful deep sea sailor and was at the time making his vessel ready for a voyage to the southern Pacific. In 1831, just as the brig was about to set sail, a young man at the head of a party of the captain's friends saluted Driver on the deck of the Doggett and presented to him a handsome American flag 19 by 38 feet in size. The banner was done up in stops, and when it went aloft and was flung to the breeze Captain Driver, says the tradition, then and there named it "Old Glory." The flag was carried to the south seas and ever afterward treasured by its owner.

Driver removed to Nashville, Tenn., in 1837 and there died in 1886. Before the outbreak of hostilities between the north and south Old Glory flew daily from a window in the captain's Nashville house, but when the rumors of war became facts it was carefully secreted.

When the war broke out the precious flag was quilted into an innocent looking comforter and used on the captain's bed until Feb. 27, 1862, when the sixth Ohio marched into Nashville. Then the flag came out of its covering, and the captain presented it to the regiment to be hoisted over the capitol.

There it floated until it began to tear in ribbons, when it was taken down and a new one placed on the building. After the death of Captain Driver the first Old Glory was given to the Essex Institute at Salem, where it is still preserved and may be seen by the curious.—Kansas City Journal.

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