

in Christ's service. Speaking of his surrender, he said, "Here, Lord, is the ring containing all the keys of my heart. Up to this I have withheld one little key, but now give up this also. Take me, and break me, and make me." From that hour he was filled with a new power for service, and a new peace and joy. At some period we all have a testing time in our lives, when Christ asks us to surrender wholly to His will. Sometimes it is very hard, and we say, "Lord, anything but this. This is too hard for me." Ah, does He not know, who shed tears of blood before He could say, "Thy will, not mine, be done"?

With each one the test is a different one. To one it may be to witness for Christ in the home or among friends. To another it is the giving up of some worldly pleasure not in accordance with His divine will. To still another it may be the bearing of some burden of pain or sorrow sweetly for His dear sake, or the being laid aside when one would fain rush into the thick of the battle. "To do God's will is to do His work." And this is service.

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THE DERELICT.

I once passed a derelict in the Bay of Biscay. She bore signs of having been on fire; cable chains dangled from the hawsepipe, the masts were gone, the decks were green with marine grass, there was no life, only the cargo of logs gave forth a grinding groan. Where had the crew gone? Perhaps a passing ship picked them up; perhaps they took to the boat and were lost, so often have we to say "perhaps" in this life. We squared away at nightfall, and in our sleep dreamed of deserted ships.

The sinner is a derelict. Adrift, carried away by foul winds, moving towards a rockbound shore. The derelict was once a goodly ship, well formed, well manned, with a capable commander, but storm, or collision, or fire, made her as we found her. So man was once noble and happy, but he has drifted away from God and happiness. Every derelict grows worse and not better,

every gale shakes her frame and ultimately she will go to pieces. So the sinner grows in badness, deceiving and being deceived. Every derelict is a menace to navigation. Governments have been moved to send out suitable vessels to blow up and destroy these floating obstacles. The sinner is a menace. He is to be dreaded and avoided. "Go not in the way of evil men." Who does not pray, "gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with men of blood." Derelicts are sometimes taken in tow to get them out of harm's way, and because they are capable of being repaired, and because they have a valuable cargo. Powerful tugs and strong cables are despatched for the purpose, and they are often successful. Man is capable of being saved, he may be rescued, he has a valuable cargo—a soul beyond price. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The redemption of the soul is precious. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

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"SAMSON'S RIDDLE AND ITS LESSONS."

By the REV. W. J. ARMITAGE.

"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."—Judges xiv., 14.

The character of Samson, the sun-like or strong, the great national hero of Palestine, has a strange fascination to the human mind. The portrait of the ancient deliverer of Israel stands out in the Book of Judges in all its lights and shadows like a thing of life. He has been taken by some, as a type of his race and country. He was much more, for he might well be called a child of humanity, and his experience a moving picture of human life, illustrating the need of purity and self-control amidst the temptations of the world—the secret of spiritual strength in communion with God, the slavery of sinful habits, and, above all, the misery of sin and the beauty of holiness. His last end points to Christ's triumph through Jeath and His glorious victory over all spiritual foes.

Samson's whole life, from the cradle to the grave, was an acted prophecy. It was a divine riddle, which taught that the secret of

spiritual power lies in separation from evil lusts, and consecration to God—that when a man's heart is in the world and he relies upon the arm of flesh every foe will triumph over him, but that united to God by a living trust he will come forth victorious over sin and Satan and be more than conqueror.

The story is founded upon historical facts, and is not simply allegorical or fanciful, as if simply intended to teach certain lessons. It is true that it has a striking resemblance to the Greek legends of Hercules, but they belong to a later age, and were probably carried by the Phœnicians to Greece and Rome. The similarity between the leading features of the two lives is most remarkable, for Hercules, while he was endowed with great strength—submitted to a weak woman; he slew the Nemean lion; he was also led away into captivity, and death came to him through the wiles of his wife. But the legend of Hercules lacks the supernatural element, and has attached to it none of the great moral and spiritual lessons which cluster around the mighty champion of Israel.

Samson was a judge in Israel for twenty years. He was of the number of those leaders of the people around whom the national life centered; a commander in war, and exercising almost royal functions in administering justice in the land.

He was a Nazarite, one separated from birth, like Samuel and John the Baptist—for the service of God. He was under a threefold vow to abstain from wine or strong drink; not to cut his hair, which was the symbol of strength or manhood; and not to touch a corpse, even that of the nearest relative.

There is nothing in Scripture to show that while Samson had a giant's strength, he was of extraordinary bulk and stature. He was no son of Anak. It was not brute strength that he possessed which he could call into play at all times. His great power and strength were spiritual, depending upon the influence of the Spirit of God. The secret of his gigantic strength was in his hair, the seven locks of his head, the uncut hair, which was the symbol of his Nazarite vow, which separated him from the world, and