

Sabbath School Lessons.

May 8th, 1864.

SAMSON'S MARRIAGE.

Read Judges xiv. 1-21.

I. Samson seeks a Wife.

Verses 1-4. Samson, now in manhood, chooses a wife from among the Philistines. They were descendants of the Canaanites. It was against the Jewish law to do so, Deut. vii. 3; and very unbecoming a patriot to unite himself with his country's enemies. He tells his parents, and seeks their countenance, though he would not yield to them when they sought to dissuade him from his purpose. *It was of the Lord*, seems to mean only that God determined to overrule it, and does not justify Samson.

II. Samson Kills the Lion.

Ver. 5-9. The lion met Samson while alone and unarmed, probably going with his parents to visit the woman he sought for his wife. *Vineyards* are often spread round the cities of the East. *A young lion*. Specially fierce and strong. *Rent him*. Strangled the lion by mere force of muscle. David had his shepherd's staff. *Told not his father or his mother*, nor any one else—his modesty was a victory over himself and the love of applause. The jackals and vultures would soon devour the lion's flesh, and the huge bones would form a hive for the bees that abound in that country.

III. The Riddle given.

Ver. 10-15. *A feast* at every marriage was the universal custom in the East. Samson's father, knowing that his son was to be Israel's deliverer, would feel sadly perplexed at all this. *Thirty companions*. "Children of the bride-chamber," Matt. ix. 15. *A riddle*. This was a common mode of entertaining a company, ver. 15. *On the seventh day*—to avoid confusion in the story, some think this was the seventh day of the week, not of the feast. The threat used shewed how barbarous the people were.

IV. The Riddle Discovered.

Ver. 16-20. Samson could not resist his wife's tears. Some who will not be forced can be persuaded to do wrong. His wife betrayed his confidence. She was a Philistine at heart, and Samson lost his wager. Perhaps Samson was too poor to pay his forfeit; he would not, however, deny his obligation; but, guided by the Spirit of God, he resolved to break off his connexion, and declare war with these treacherous friends. His new re-

latives understood him so, and his wife married another.

APPLICATION.

1. *Choose the good as your companions*. Samson suffered much for neglecting this; Rehoboam did so too, 1 Kings xii. 13; Ahab chose a bad wife for his companion, and Jezebel made him as bad as herself, Prov. i. 3-20; Psal. i. 1.

2. *Honour your parents as long as you live*. Some think whenever they are grown up, they are free from this duty. It is a mark they are neither wiser nor better, though older. None can repay their debts to their parents. Does the fifth commandment say, Honour them till you are eighteen or twenty-one? Samson evidently was dutiful, though he erred in not taking their advice—Solomon, 1 Kings ii. 19; Prov. i. 8; xxiii. 22; Christ and his mother.

3. *Strength and health of body come from God*. Samson's did, and so does yours. See that you use them aright for the purposes for which God gave them, Rom. xii. 1. You ought not to be proud of either.

4. *Be modest*. See that you deserve praise whether you get it or not, Eccl. ix. 15. Samson was content to be great, though his great feat was unknown. Seek the praise of God, Rom. ii. 7; Matt. xxv. 21. Think often of your sins, seldom of your excellencies.

5. *Never give or take a wage*. Such gaming always violates the golden rule, Luke vi. 31. It is a most improper way of losing or acquiring property: see its bad effects in Samson's wager.

6. *Never betray a trust*—of any kind—never tell a secret—stand by your promise at all costs, Psal. xv. 4. Those who betray a trust deserve never again to be trusted. So Samson left his wife, ver. 19.

7. *You may be a greater conqueror than Samson*. God's Spirit will enable you to conquer your heart and the devil, Prov. xvi. 32; Rom. xvi. 20. Samson failed sometimes in this.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

May 15th, 1864.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

Read Luke xvi. 19-31.

Connection—This parable seems to have been intended to enforce the truths, verses 13th and 15th, that none can serve God and mammon, and that what men highly esteem, is an abomination to God.

I. The Rich Man on Earth, ver. 19.

A certain rich man. Christ does not give his name. He spent much on his body.—*Purple* was the dress of princes. He *fasted*