

*Shamgar.*

(iii. 31.)

Shamgar, the son of Anath, who followed Ehud, gained a signal victory over the Philistines : he also delivered Israel. Ehud's sword was mighty, though short. Shamgar wrought deliverance by the means of a weapon which seemed wholly unsuited to such a work ; a contemptible instrument, to all appearance only suitable for goading brute creatures. Without wishing to press unduly here a typical meaning—a tendency to do which in teaching is dangerous in more ways than one—I would like to compare the ox-goad of Shamgar with the short sword of Ehud. We have one weapon, the Word of God ; it may be presented in different aspects, but it is the only one that the man of faith makes use of in the warfare. To the intellectual and unbelieving world it is like an ox-goad, fit, at the best, only for women, children and uneducated persons ; full of fiction and contradictions ; yet it is this instrument, despised by men, that God uses to gain the victory. In making use of it, faith finds a weapon where the world only sees folly, for the weakness of God is stronger than men. Doubtless, it is written for the unlearned and suited to their needs and to their walk ; but this very ox-goad can kill six hundred Philistines.

Let us, then, make use of the Word with which God has entrusted us, always remembering that faith only can make it effectual, and that, too, when the soul has found therein for itself communion with God, the knowledge of Christ, and, therewith blessing, joy and strength.