

3. There are some gleams of hope in Samson's career, for it shows that it is never too late for the backslider to return and be saved. "There is time for a victory before sunset!" said Napoleon at three o'clock in the afternoon at Marengo.

4. Even from the erring and the sinful God hears prayer when it is sincere and repentant.

5. A man should hold his life of less value than God's cause, and should be willing to die if he can save others. Samson gave up his life for vengeance on his enemies; our Saviour gave up his life to bring salvation to his enemies.

English Teacher's Notes.

In the early part of the year one of the fine steamships that ply between England and America lay helpless on the mighty Atlantic, tossed by the waves, drifting with the currents, and in imminent danger of making a fearful end. For some days the passengers had to be put on an allowance of food, and passed a time of much suspense. This deplorable situation was not brought about by any want of capability in the captain or the crew; it was simply owing to the circumstance that the vessel had lost her propeller. The helmsman might point the helm in the right direction, but there was nothing to answer to it and send the vessel forward.

Our Golden Text reminds us that similar disasters occur in the story of human life. There are "great men," men of ability, men of rank among their fellows, and men, it may be, on whose course the welfare and safety of many are depending, who for want of a propeller nearly make shipwreck, not only of themselves, but of others. "Great men are not always wise."

The story for our lesson to-day strikingly illustrates this. We can hardly discover the last scenes of Samson's life from those that had gone before, and indeed our Golden Text distinctly leads us to examine the connection between them. How came the Israelite hero, the champion of his people, the terror of the Philistines, in the wretched and degraded condition in which we find him—blind, fettered, doing the work of the lowest slave, and sent for to "make sport" at his captors' festival? It was for want of a propeller. He was a great man: great in power and great in achievement; great as to his destination from his birth; great as to his position of "judge" in Israel; great in his aim to free his people from the Philistine yoke; great above all in the being made, by the power of the Spirit, God's instrument for the deliverance of Israel. But when we find him drawn hither and thither by caprice and passion we see that he lacked the moving principle which should have impelled him steadily onward. And what was this? It is that to which reference is made in our Golden Text—that heavenly wisdom whose beginning is the fear of the Lord. This would have kept him constantly pursuing the work to which God had called him, in spite of all the winds of circumstance or the currents of earthly temptations.

The real helplessness of Samson did not begin when the Philistines made him captive. Had he been "strong in the Lord" he never would have entered the valley of Sorek, nor "opened all his heart" to Delilah. Had he not been drifting away from the path God had marked out for him the last fatal confession would never have been made.

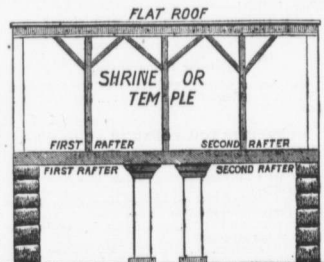
The vessel I have spoken of above, after drifting some days, was rescued by another ship sent out by the company in search of her. She was taken in tow by this vessel, brought safely to port, fitted with a new propeller, and is now plowing the waves as before. God does not take less pains with his willful, erring creatures. Samson's hair, the sign of his consecration to God and the pledge of his divinely given strength, began to grow again in the prison; a token that God had not forgotten him. And in the hour of his deepest humiliation we find that his heart had been drawn to God in repentance and faith, so that he was able to call upon him in sure trust that the answer would be given, and that in sacrificing his own life he should be enabled to effect a last great deliverance for Israel. Samson died a conqueror. The "cords of love" and of mercy wherewith Jehovah had drawn him had brought him back into the place of victory.

The lesson for the class is two fold: 1. See that you have a propeller on the sea of life; abilities, advantages of position, etc., are not all that is needed. Without heavenly wisdom you are in constant danger. See that you get it. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." James 1. 5. 2. But if you have consciously erred from the right way, and are driven hither and thither, remember the "cords of love" (Hos. 11. 4) are outstretched toward you. Let them draw you back into a place of safety and of victory.

The Lesson Council.

Question 24. What was the probable form of the Philistine temple?

There is but little said about this building, save that it had two massive pillars which supported the roof, and



yet were so close together that one man could at once embrace both. Hence it is difficult to describe the building, but from the analogy of other buildings of the present day we may suppose that the two