

## HOW STRONG IS THE CHRISTIAN?

ANSWER: AS STRONG AS HIS GOD.

You may remember the little boy who, with his father, heard a sermon on "The Devil." After service the lad asked his father, "Papa, how big is the Devil? Bigger'n me?" "Yes, my son, much bigger than you." Then a pause. "Papa, is he bigger'n you?" "Yes, son, much bigger than I." Again a pause. "Papa, is he bigger than Jesus?" "No, son, Jesus is much stronger than the Devil." "Then I'm not afraid of 'im." This little fellow voiced the teaching of God's word and the theology of every trusting soul.

We see Samson, whom God had delegated and empowered to defend Israel against their oppressors. There was never a time that he failed, until "the Lord departed from him." His first recorded adventure suggests the Devil, "who goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

The shepherd king, David, had a like adventure with a lion, but was "delivered" out of the paw of the lion and the bear. Therefore, argued the young shepherd, God will deliver this giant into my hand, for he has defied the God of the armies of Israel.

The ease with which the victories were won is also a scriptural teaching. Samson "rent" the lion as it had been a kid. The green withs and the new rope, where with treacherous hands bound him, were broken as if they had been burned threads. Recounting all his victories, we see in them the element of unlimited strength.

When David returned with the head of Goliath in one hand and his great sword in the other he still had four shots left of the "five smooth stones."

If I had a Bible with a mouth that could speak, it would say to me just now, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Next, it would say, "Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph through Christ." Then a word for our little boy, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

Is. 40, contains the philosophy of Christian strength. Many words are used to illustrate and make clear the omnipotent power of God, and His wisdom. The application is made by showing God's method of imparting His power to them who "wait upon Him."

This chapter is also a prophecy, fulfilled at Pentecost as is seen by reading on to ch. 41: 1. The real key or secret to power, then, is to have the indwelling Pentecostal Spirit.

We read of both Samson and David, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon them," at these special times of need. The Pentecostal "anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but the same anointing teacheth you all things..."

Following the teaching of this Spirit, leads the Christian straight to the written word, which is "the sword of the Spirit." The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but weapons we must have, for the Holy Spirit causes us to triumph through Christ, by means of His power plus these weapons.

Notice Christ wielding the sword of the Spirit when meeting the roaring lion "in the wilderness." Our defeats, if we have any, come, not because the Lion is strong, but because we lay our armour down.

Peter sank for lack of the shield of faith, whereas Christ had power not only to walk on the waves but could rescue the sinking Peter. Had Peter been with Christ during the early

part of that night in prayer, I presume he would have come off more than conqueror. "All prayer," is an important piece of the Spirit's armour. A modern example of faith, George Muller, urged others to follow his teaching and read a portion of the word, the first thing every day. This was to be done thoughtfully and mingled with prayer, as the Spirit might dictate.

Any Christian can thus go on with God and enjoy a victorious and useful life, even though they may be denied the privileges of public worship. The last Highway brings word of the revival at Westchester, which greatly rejoices our hearts. The report reads that there was no Sunday School or Church Service for months. If called upon, I think I could make a shrewd guess. I judge that during these months there was one or more of God's little ones, who did not cease from yielding "the fruit of the Spirit." This one or more continued instant in prayer that God would send the right man and would revive his work. Then, when Brother Miles Trafton was led to start services, God was on hand to answer those prayers of His faithful few.

Beloved, let us honour God by our faith and keep on the armour that the Spirit may not only cause us to "stand", but come off more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

H. C. S.

## MINISTERIAL INDEPENDENCE.

One of the "sensitive points of congregational life is the precise relationship between the minister who is called to serve, and the people with whom and for whom he serves.

It would require much space to treat the matter fully, so that will not be undertaken at this time. But one or two angels that are familiar may be mentioned.

In a certain church it had been customary to make many little donations to the minister in charge. There is usually no objection to this on the part of anybody. But in this particular case these donations had come to be regarded as an important part of the income. The arrangement had been made embarrassing to the minister, often because his income would be in proportion to his popularity, and unconsciously he was made to feel that he must not by any means fail to merit and elicit donations.

Finally a man was called who had the notion that a church should make it possible for its minister to live in reasonable comfort by paying him a living salary regularly. Business men on the board saw the point, and the suggested change was made. This particular preacher made it clear that all kindnesses were appreciated, but that the people must not feel that he was expecting cabbages and dressed chickens as a regular thing. Then one good sister said: "You know, I don't like the independence of our new minister. I like to have a minister we can give things to, you know."

And when the minister heard that he chuckled. He had scored for himself and for his successors. Never again would a minister in that church be made to feel himself a mendicant, depending for his daily bread on food sent in by the neighbors.

In a certain church it had become customary for the disgruntled to withdraw in a huff when things seemed to go wrong. Such withdrawal was always occasion for

talk. The news that so and so had "had it out" with the preacher because he had not smiled at her little boy on the street, and "had gone to the Methodists," would pass round from lip to lip, and elect saints would get gray round the gills believing the ark was about to topple over.

Into this church a new preacher of another type came. He was considerate of all, and kind to all. But in due time the usual friction came, and a disgruntled brother called him up to call him down. After a sentence or two the preacher said: "Look here, brother, you can't bawl me out; I'm the minister of the church. If there's anything you don't like, take it up with the elders; if you want a letter, call on the clerk. Now, don't think I'm unkind, but I don't like a wrangle; I haven't got the time for these petty things, and if I had the time I haven't a taste for them."

There was a long pause, then a gasp, then a feeble "Oh, well, then, never mind," and the receiver went up. That went the rounds, too, and the preacher had the respect of his people ever after.

Now with just that said, some overconfident young preacher is apt to make the mistake of trying the same thing just to show his authority. And if he does he will fall so hard his teeth will be knocked loose. It takes judgment, self-control and a heart of kindness to be able to handle matters like that in that way.

Nevertheless, let ministers be free and as independent as the spirit and word of the gospel would have them. Many a man gets tramped in the ground because his people understand him to be a poor worm of the dust.—Christian Standard.

## WORK AND PRAY.

I heard a story the other day of an old ferryman, who had painted on one of his oars the word "Pray" and "Work." A gentleman was one day being rowed by this fisherman across the ferry, when he noticed the words, and, out of curiosity, asked what they meant. The old man did not answer, but, laying down one of his oars, began to pull very hard with the oar on which was painted "Work." You can guess what happened! The boat made no progress at all, but began to turn round and round! Presently the oar "Work" was laid down, and the oar "Pray" taken up and used; but with the ferryman picked up both oars, and, with a few long hard pulls brought the boat to the shore. "Do you see now," he asked the gentleman "why I have painted those words on my oars?—Sel.

"cheerfulness is always a profitable investment. Some one has well said: "Of all the virtues, cheerfulness is the most profitable. It makes the person who exercises it happy, and renders him acceptable to all he meets. While other virtues delay the day of recompense, cheerfulness pays down." We are told that the president, Dr. Marshall Hall frequently prescribed "cheerfulness" for his patients, saying that it was better than anything he could get at the druggists. "Mirth is God's medicine," says a wise writer, "and everybody ought to bathe in it." Cheer up! Get your mind off your troubles, think about the bright things in life, there are many of them."—H. & L.