

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., MARCH 15TH, 1952

No. 292

Beware of Lapse

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(In connection with this article read Judges 13-16).

When one puts one's head in the lap of the world, one should expect a trimming, especially if previously one has had several close shaves. The Bible tells us that Samson, by placing his head in the lap of Delilah, lost his seven curly locks, but it also makes it plain that he lost more than that. His lapse, indicated by his choice of laps, was the cause of the loss of much else.

Lapse and loss are synonymous. Lapse, according to Webster, is a slip; a slight error, but then—a gliding, slipping, or gradual falling from a higher to a lower state—a falling into ruin—a fall or apostasy. Samson's, Israel's and the church's history have been similar, for theirs have been histories of lapse and relapse, and with every lapse its concomitant loss—loss of freedom, financial loss, spiritual loss.

No one lapses on the instant; we probably should say that few lapse suddenly. Samson's loss was gradual, until he was actually playing knowingly with fire. Three times previous to his "Waterloo," he gave Delilah false information concerning the source of his great strength, and each time she demonstrated her treacherous purpose in attempting to find out his secret. Samson, perhaps, could be excused for toying with her once (and this is debatable), but the second and third times gave evidence that he was playing a dangerous game confident of his ability to cope with danger.

Paul, recognizing the human tendency of overrating one's capacity for dealing with peril, said: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I. Cor. 10:12). Samson was playing a game more dangerous than "Russian roulette," for he was saying, "I can play with fire (of hell) and not get burned." Many others have played the game. Many are playing it today. "Oh! I can take it or leave it. I can quit any time I wish." But Samson's lapse was complete when he went to sleep in the lap of the world (Delilah's), and his losses were many. I should like to point out several of his losses, which are not restricted to Samson but to every man who places his head in the world's lap.

I. His First Loss was God's Spirit

"And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him" (Judges 16:20).

God is a sensitive Spirit. "My Spirit will not always strive with man." Do you suppose that

God is less sensitive to rudeness than we are? A person whom I am visiting does not have to yawn in my face twice to let me know he is bored with my presence. I never wait for the second yawn. Paul said in Ephesians 4:30, "Grieve not the Spirit . . ." for you like Samson, and like Saul, from whom it was said, ". . . the Spirit of the Lord departed" (I. Sam. 16:14) and like others, will suffer the loss of God's Spirit, and how serious is that loss.

II. His Second Loss was His Strength

When Samson awoke out of his sleep after he had lost his locks, we read that he said, "I will go out as at other times before. (Judges 16:20). But he soon discovered that his

NO TIME FOR GOD

No time for God? . . .
What fools we are, to clutter up
Our lives with common things,
And leave outside heart's gate
The Lord of Life, and Life itself—
Our God

No time for God? . . .
As soon to say no time
To eat, or sleep, or love, or die.
Take time for God,
Or you shall dwarf your soul;
And when the angel, Death,
Comes knocking at your door,
A poor, misshapen thing you'll be
To step into eternity!

Some day you'll lay aside
This mortal self, and make your way
To worlds unknown;
And when you meet Him face to face
Will He—should He—
Have time for you?

—The Pentecostal Herald

strength was gone, and the Philistines discovered it, also, for "the Philistines took him."

But this is not so strange, for when one reads the story of Samson, one immediately perceives that the source of his strength was the Spirit of God. The record tells us in Judges 13:25 that ". . . the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times . . ." in the 14th chapter and 19th verse we learn that ". . . the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, . . . and he slew thirty men." In 15:14, 15 ". . . The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, . . . and he slew a thousand men." But when God left, his strength left, also.

Jesus told His disciples in Luke 24:49 ". . . Behold I send the promise of the Father upon you: but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be

endued with power (strength) from on high." And he said in Acts 1:8, ". . . Ye shall receive power (strength) after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Recently a missionary speaker in a chapel service at C. E. I. pointed out that when Paul came to Ephesus he inquired of the Christians there (Acts 19:2) if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. When they confessed they did not know there was such a privilege, Paul laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. There were twelve of them. Acts 19:10 informs us that in the short space of two years these twelve men were instrumental in informing all Asia about the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is very evident that the gospel moves or is withheld in accordance with the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit. The gospel moves slowly today either because there are those who do not know of the strength available through the Holy Spirit, or because others having demonstrated through their spiritual lassitude, their tendency to be "at ease in Zion," their evident desire to sleep in the lap of the world, that they do not want the Spirit's presence, they have offended Him and He has departed from them leaving them weak and helpless and without strength. Oh, that we, like the early Christians, may be so endued with strength from on high, that we will be able to witness under the most unfavorable circumstances.

Do you feel that you have the STRENGTH OF THE SPIRIT of God abiding in your heart just now? Ask and it shall be given unto you," yes, STRENGTH sufficient for even these evil days.

III. His Third Loss Was His Sight

"The Philistines took him and put out his eyes" (Judges 16:21). But he had lost his "vision" before he lost his eyes, for the Scripture implies that there are those who have "eyes to see, but see not." Let's say, at least, that he must have been suffering from spiritual myopia (nearsightedness), for had he been looking to God, he never would have "seen" Delilah.

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in his wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely
dim
In the light of his glory and grace."

"Where there is no vision, the people perish

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