

The New Park Street Pulpit.

SAMSON CONQUERED.

A Sermon

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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"And she said, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house."—Judges xvi. 20, 21.

SAMSON is, in many respects, one of the most remarkable men whose history is recorded in the pages of inspiration. He enjoyed a singular privilege only accorded to one other person in the Old Testament. His birth was foretold to his parents by an angel. Isaac was promised to Abraham and Sarah by angels whom they entertained unawares; but save Isaac, Samson was the only one whose birth was foretold by an angelic messenger before the opening of the gospel dispensation. Before his birth he was dedicated to God, and set apart as a Nazarite. Now, a Nazarite was a person who was entirely consecrated to God, and in token of his consecration he drank no wine; and allowed his hair to grow, untouched by the razor. Samson, you may therefore understand, was entirely consecrated to God, and when any saw him, they would say, "That man is God's man, a Nazarite, set apart." God endowed Samson with supernatural strength, a strength which never could have been the result of mere thews and sinews. It was not the fashioning of Samson's body that made him strong; it was not the arm, or the fist with which he smote the Philistines; it was a miracle that dwelt within him, a continued going forth of the omnipotence of God, which made him mightier than thousands of his enemies. Samson appears very early to have discovered in himself this great strength, for "the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan." He judged Israel for thirty years, and gloriously did he deliver them. What a noble being he must have been! See him, when he steps into the vineyard for a moment from his parents. A lion that has been crouching there springs upon him, but he meets him all unarmed, receives him upon his brawny arms and rends him like a kid. See him afterwards, when his countrymen have bound him and taken him down from the top of the rock, and delivered him up to the thousands of the Philistines. He has scarcely come near them, when, without a weapon, with his own foot, he begins to spurn them; and seeing there the jaw-bone of an ass, he takes that ignoble weapon, and sweeps away the men that had helmets about their heads and were girded with greaves of brass. Nor did his vigour fail him in his later life, for he died in the very prime of his days. One of his greatest exploits was performed at this very season. He is entrapped in the city of Gaza. He remains there till midnight; so confident is he in his strength that he is in no hurry to depart, and instead of assailing the guard, and making them draw the bolts, he wrenches up the two posts, and takes away the gate, bar and all, and, carries his mighty burden for miles to the top of a hill that is before Hebron. Every way it must have been a great thing to see this man, especially if one had him for a friend. Had one been his foe, the more distant the sight the better, for none could escape from him but those who fled; but to have him for a friend and to stand with him in the day of battle, was to feel that you had an army in a

single man, and had in one frame that which would strike thousands with terror. Samson, however, though he had great physical strength, had but little mental force, and even less spiritual power. His whole life is a scene of miracles and follies. He had but little grace, and was easily overcome by temptation. He is enticed and led astray. Often corrected; still he sins again. At last he falls into the hands of Delilah. She is bribed with an enormous sum, and she endeavours to get from him the secret of his strength. He foolishly toys with the danger, and plays with his own destruction. At last goaded by her importunity, he lets out the secret which he ought to have confided to no one but himself. The secret of his strength lay in his locks. Not that his hair made him strong; but that his hair was the symbol of his consecration, and was the pledge of God's favour to him. While his hair was untouched he was a consecrated man; as soon as that was cut away, he was no longer perfectly consecrated, and then his strength departed from him. His hair is cut away; the locks that covered him once are taken from him, and there he stands a shaveling, weak as other men. Now the Philistines begin to oppress him, and his eyes are burned out with hot iron. How are the mighty fallen! How are the great ones taken in the net! Samson, the great hero of Israel, is seen with a shuffling gait walking towards Gaza. A shuffling gait, I said, because he had just received blindness, which was a new thing to him, therefore, he had not as yet learned to walk as well as those who, having been blind for years, at last learn to set their feet firmly upon the earth. With his feet bound together with brazen fetters—an unusual mode of binding a prisoner, but adopted in this case because Samson was supposed to be still so strong, that any other kind of fetter would have been insufficient—you see him walking along in the midst of a small escort towards Gaza. And now he comes to the very city out of which he had walked in all his pride with the gates and bolts upon his shoulders; and the little children come out, the lower orders of the people come round about him, and point at him—"Samson, the great hero, hath fallen! let us make sport of him!" What a spectacle! The hot sun is beating upon his bare head, which had once been protected by those luxuriant locks. Look at the escort who guard him, a mere handful of men, how they would have fled before him in his brighter days; but now a child might overcome him. They take him to a place where an ass is grinding at the mill, and Samson must do the same ignoble work. Why, he must be the sport and jest of every passer by, and of every fool who shall step in to see this great wonder—the destroyer of the Philistines made to toil at the mill. Ah, what a fall was there, my brethren! We might indeed stand and weep over poor blind Samson. That he should have lost his eyes was terrible; that he should have lost his strength was worse; but that he should have lost the favour of God for awhile; that he should become the sport of God's enemies, was the worst of all. Over this indeed we might weep.

Now, why have I narrated this story? Why should I direct your attention to Samson? For this reason. *Every child of God is a consecrated man.* His consecration is not typified by any outward symbol; we are not commanded to let our hair grow for ever, nor to abstain from meats or drinks. The Christian is a consecrated man, but his consecration is unseen by his fellows, except in the outward deeds which are the result thereof.

And now I want to speak to you, my dear friends, as consecrated men, as Nazarites, and I think I shall find a lesson for you in the history of Samson. My first point shall be *the strength of the consecrated*, for they are strong men; secondly, *the secret of their strength*; thirdly, *the danger to which they are exposed*; and fourthly, *the disgrace which will come upon them if they fall into this danger*.

I. First, THE STRENGTH OF THE CONSECRATED MAN. Do you know that the strongest man in all the world is a consecrated man? Even though he may consecrate himself to a wrong object, yet if it be a thorough consecration, he will have strength—strength for evil, it may be, but still strength. In the old Roman wars with Pyrrhus, you remember an ancient story of self-devotion. There was an oracle which said that victory would attend that army whose leader should give himself up to death. Decius the Roman Consul, knowing this, rushed into the thickest of the battle, that his army might overcome by his dying. The prodigies of valour which he performed are proofs of the power of consecration. The Romans at that time seemed to be every man a hero, because every man was a consecrated man. They went to battle with this thought—"I will conquer or die; the name of Rome is written on my heart; for my country I am prepared to live,

or for that to shed my blood." And no enemies could ever stand against them. If a Roman fell there were no wounds in his back, but all in his breast. His face, even in cold death, was like the face of a lion, and when looked upon it was of terrible aspect. They were men consecrated to their country; they were ambitious to make the name of Rome the noblest word in human language; and consequently the Roman became a giant. And to this day let a man get a purpose within him, I care not what his purpose is, and let his whole soul be absorbed by it, and what will he not do? You that are "everything by turns and nothing long," that have nothing to live for, soulless carcasses that walk this earth and waste its air, what can you do? Why nothing. But the man who knows what he is at, and has his mark, speeds to it "Like an arrow from a bow shot by an archer strong." Nought can turn him aside from his design. How much more is this true if I limit the description to that which is peculiar to the Christian—consecration to God! Oh! what strength that man has who is dedicated to God! Is there such an one here? I know there is. I know that there be many who have consecrated themselves to the Lord God of Israel in the secret of their chamber; and who can say in their hearts,

"Tis done; the great transaction's done
I am my Lord's, and he is mine.
He drew me, and I followed on,
Glad to obey the voice divine."

Now, the man that can say that, and is thoroughly consecrated to God; be he who he may or what he may, he is a strong man, and will work marvels.

Need I tell you of the wonders that have been done by consecrated men? You have read the stories of olden times, when our religion was hunted like a partridge on the mountains. Did you never hear how consecrated men and women endured unheard-of pangs and agonies? Have you not read how they were cast to the lions, how they were sawn in sunder, how they languished in prisons, or met with the swifter death of the sword? Have you not heard how they wandered about in sheeps' skins and goats' skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy? Have you not heard how they defied tyrants to their face, how, when they were threatened, they dared most boldly to laugh at all the threats of the foe—how at the stake they clapped their hands in the fire, and sang psalms of triumph when men, worse than fiends, were jeering at their miseries? How was this? What made women stronger than men, and men stronger than angels? Why this,—they were consecrated to God. They felt that every pang which rent their heart was giving glory to God, that all the pains they endured in their bodies were but the marks of the Lord Jesus, whereby they were proven to be wholly dedicated unto him. Nor in this alone has the power of the consecrated ones been proved. Have you never heard how the sanctified ones have done wonders? Read the stories of those who counted not their lives dear unto them, that they might honour their Lord and Master by preaching his Word, by telling forth the gospel in foreign lands. Have you not heard how men have left their kindred and their friends, and all that life held dear—have crossed the stormy sea, and have gone into the lands of the heathen, where men were devouring one another? Have you not known how they have put their foot upon that country, and have seen the ship that conveyed them there fading away in the distance, and yet without a fear have dwelt amongst the wild savages of the woods, have walked into the midst of them, and told them the simple story of the God that loved and died for man? You must know how those men have conquered, how those, who seemed to be fiercer than lions, have crouched before them, have listened to their words, and have been converted by the majesty of the gospel which they preached. What made these men heroes? What enabled them to rend themselves away from all their kith and kin, and banish themselves into the land of the stranger? It was because they were consecrated, thoroughly consecrated to the Lord Jesus Christ. What is there in the world which the consecrated man cannot do? Tempt him; offer him gold and silver; carry him to the mountain top, and show him all the kingdoms of the world, and tell him he shall have all these if he will bow down and worship the god of this world. What saith the consecrated man? "Get thee behind me, Satan; I have more than all this which thou dost offer me; this world is mine, and worlds to come; I despise the temptation; I will not bow before thee." Let men threaten a consecrated man, what does he say? "I fear God, and,

therefore, I cannot fear you; if it be right in your sight to obey man rather than God, judge ye; but, as for me, I will serve none but God." You may, perhaps, have seen in your life a consecrated man. Is he a public character? What cannot he do? He preaches the gospel, and at once a thousand enemies assail him; they attack him on every side; some for this thing, and some for that; his very virtues are distorted into vices, and his slightest faults are magnified into the greatest crimes. He has scarce a friend; the very ministers of the gospel shun him; he is reckoned to be so strange that every one must avoid him. What does he do? Within the chamber of his own heart he holds conference with his God, and asks himself this question—am I right? Conscience gives the verdict,—yes, and the Spirit bears witness with his spirit that conscience is impartial. "Then," says he, "come fair, come foul, if I am right,—neither to the right hand nor to the left will I turn." Perhaps he feels in secret what he will not express in public. He feels the pang of desertion, obloquy, and rebuke; he cries—

"If on my face, for thy dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be,
I'll hail reproach, and welcome shame,
If thou'lt remember me."

As for himself in public, none can tell that he careth for any of these things; for he can say with Paul—"None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me that I may win Christ and finish my course with joy." What cannot a consecrated man do? I do believe if he had the whole world against him, he would prove more than a match for them all. He would say—"Heaps upon heaps, with the jaw-bone of an ass, have I slain my thousand men." I care not how violent may be his foe; nor how great may be the advantage which that foe may get on him: though the lion may have crouched for the spring, and may be leaping upon him, yet will he rend him as a kid, for he is more than a conqueror through him that loved him. He is alone such, who is wholly consecrated unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But," says some one, "can we be consecrated to Christ? I thought that was for ministers only." Oh, no, my brethren; all God's children must be consecrated men. What are you? Are you engaged in business? If you are what you profess to be, your business must be consecrated to God. Perhaps you have no family whatever, and you are engaged in trade, and are saving some considerable sum a-year; let me tell you the example of a man thoroughly consecrated to God. There lives in Bristol, (name unknown), a man whose income is large; and what does he do with it? He labours in business continually that this income may come to him, but of it, every farthing every year is expended in the Lord's cause except that which he requires for the necessities of life. He makes his necessities as few as possible, that he may have the more to give away. He is God's man in his business. I do not exhort you to do the same. You may be in a different position; but a man who has a family, and is in business, should be able to say—"Now, I make so much from my business; my family must be provided for—but I seek not to amass riches. I will make money for God and I will spend it in his cause. Did I not say, when I joined the church—

"All that I am, and all I have,
Shall be for ever thine;
Whate'er my duty bids me give,
My cheerful hands resign."

And if I said it, I meant it." I do not understand some Christian people who sing that hymn, and then pinch, screw, and nip anything when it comes to God's cause. If I sing that, I mean it. I would not sing it unless I did. If I join the church, I understand that I give myself and all that I have up to that church; I would not make a lying profession; I would not make an avowal of a consecration which I did not mean. If I have said, "I am Christ's;" by his grace I will be Christ's. Brethren, you in business may be as much consecrated to Christ as the minister in his pulpit; you may make your ordinary transactions in life a solemn service of God. Many a man has disgraced a cassock, and many another has consecrated a smock-frock; many a man has defiled his pulpit cushions, and many another has made a cobbler's lapstone holiness unto the Lord. Happy the man who is consecrated unto the Lord; where'er he is, he is a consecrated man, and he shall do wonders

It has often been remarked that in this age we are all little men. A hundred years ago, or more, if we had gone through the churches, we might have readily found a number of ministers of great note. But now we are all little men, the drivelling sons of nobodies; our names shall never be remembered, for we do nothing to deserve it. There is scarce a man alive now upon this earth; there are plenty to be found who call themselves men, but they are the husks of men, the life has gone from them, the precious kernel seems to have departed. The littleness of Christians of this age results from the littleness of their consecration to Christ. The age of John Owen was the day of great preachers; but let me tell you, that that was the age of great consecration. Those great preachers whose names we remember, were men who counted nothing their own: they were driven out from their benefices, because they could not conform to the Established Church, and they gave up all they had willingly to the Lord. They were hunted from place to place; the disgraceful five-mile act would not permit them to come within five miles of any market town; they wandered here and there to preach the gospel to a few poor sheep, being fully given up to their Lord. Those were foul times; but they promised they would walk the road fair or foul, and they did walk it knee deep in mud; and they would have walked it if it had been knee deep in blood too. They became great men; and if we were, as they were, wholly given up to God—if we could say of ourselves, “From the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, there is not a drop of blood that is not wholly God’s; all my time, all my talents, everything I have is God’s”—if we could say that, we should be strong like Samson, for the *consecrated must be strong*.

II. Now, in the second place, **THE SECRET OF THEIR STRENGTH**. What makes the consecrated man strong? Ah! beloved; there is no strength in man of himself. Samson without his God was but a poor fool indeed. The secret of Samson’s strength was this—as long as he was consecrated he should be strong; so long as he was thoroughly devoted to his God, and had no object but to serve God, (and that was to be indicated by the growing of his hair) so long, and no longer, would God be with him to help him. And now you see, dear friends, that if you have any strength to serve God, the secret of your strength lies in the same place. What strength have you save in God? Ah! I have heard some men talk as if the strength of free will, of human nature, was sufficient to carry men to heaven. Free will has carried many souls to hell, but never a soul to heaven yet. No strength of nature can suffice to serve the Lord aright. No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost. No man can come to Christ except the Father that hath sent Christ doth draw him. If, then, the first act of Christian life is beyond all human strength, how much more are those higher steps far beyond any one of us? Do we not utter a certain truth when we say in the words of Scripture, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.” I think every one who has a really quickened soul will sooner or later be made to feel this. Ay! I question whether a man can be converted a day without finding out his own weakness. It is but a little space before the child finds that he can stand alone so long as God his Father takes him by the arms and teaches him to go, but that if his Father’s hand be taken away he has no power to stand, but down he falls at once. See Samson without his God, going out against a thousand men. Would they not laugh at him? and with scarcely time to express his terror, he would flee, or be rent in pieces. Imagine him without his God, locked up in Gaza, the gates fast closed. He goes out into the streets to escape; but how can he clear a passage? He is caught like a wild bull in a net; he may go round and round the walls, but where shall be his deliverance? Without his God he is but as other men. The secret of his strength lies in his consecration, and in the strength which is its result. Remember, then, the secret of your strength. Never think that you have any power of your own; rely wholly upon the God of Israel; and remember that the channel through which that strength must come to you must be your entire consecration to God.

III. In the third place, **What is THE PECULIAR DANGER OF A CONSECRATED MAN?** His danger is that his locks may be shorn, that is to say, that his consecration may be broken. As long as he is consecrated he is strong; break that, he is weak as water. Now there are a thousand razors with which the devil can shave off the locks of a consecrated man without his knowing it. Samson is sound asleep; so clever is the barber that he even lulls him to sleep as his fingers move across the pate, the fool’s pate, which he is making bare. The devil is cleverer far than even

the skilful barber; he can shave the believer's locks while he scarcely knows it. Shall I tell you with what razors he can accomplish this work? Sometimes he takes the sharp razor of *pride*, and when the Christian falls asleep and is not vigilant, he comes with it and begins to run his fingers upon the Christian's locks, and says, "What a fine fellow you are! What wonders you have done! Didn't you rend that lion finely? Wasn't it a great feat to smite those Philistines hip and thigh? Ah! you will be talked-of as long as time endures for carrying those gates of Gaza away. You need not be afraid of anybody." And so on goes the razor, lock after lock falling off, and Samson knows it not. He is just thinking within himself, "How brave am I! How great am I!" Thus works the razor of pride—cut, cut, cut away—and he wakes up to find himself bald, and all his strength gone. Have you never had that razor upon your head? I confess I have on mine. Have you never, after you have been able to endure afflictions, heard a voice saying to you, "How patient you were!" After you have cast aside some temptation, and have been able to keep to the unswerving course of integrity, has not Satan said to you, "That is a fine thing you have done; that was bravely done." And all the while you little knew that it was the cunning hand of the evil one taking away your locks with the sharp razor of pride. For mark, pride is a breach of our consecration. As soon as I begin to get proud of what I do, or what I am, what am I proud of? Why, there is in that pride the act of taking away from God his glory. For I promised that God should have all the glory, and is not that part of my consecration? and I am taking it to myself. I have broken my consecration; my locks are gone, and I become weak. Mark this, Christian—God will never give thee strength to glorify thyself with. God will give thee a crown, but not to put on thine own head. As sure as ever a Christian begins to write his feats, and his triumphs upon his own escutcheon, and take to himself the glory, God will lay him level with the dust.

Another razor he also uses is *self-sufficiency*. "Ah," saith the devil as he is shaving away your locks, "You have done a very great deal. You see they bound you with green withes, and you snapped them in sunder, they merely smelt the fire and they burst. Then they took new ropes to bind you; ah! you overcame even them; for you snapped the ropes in sunder as if they had been a thread. Then they weaved the seven locks of your head, but you walked away with loom and web too, beam and all. You can do anything, don't be afraid: you have strength enough to do anything; you can accomplish any feat you set your will upon." How softly the devil will do all that; how will he be rubbing the poll while the razor is moving softly along and the locks are dropping off, and he is treading them in the dust. "You have done all this, and you can do anything else." Every drop of grace distils from heaven. O my brethren, what have we that we have not received? Let us not imagine that we can create might wherewith to gird ourselves. "All my springs are in thee." The moment we begin to think that it is our own arm that has gotten us the victory, it will be all over with us—our locks of strength shall be taken away, and the glory shall depart from us. So, you see, self-sufficiency, as well as pride, may be the razor with which the enemy may shave away our strength.

There is yet another, and a more palpable danger still. When a consecrated man begins to *change his purpose in life and live for himself*—that razor shaves clean indeed. There is a minister; when he first began his ministry he could say, "God is my witness I have but one object, that I may free my skirts from the blood of every one of my hearers, that I may preach the gospel faithfully and honour my Master." In a little time, tempted by Satan, he changes his tone and talks like this, "I must keep my congregation up. If I preach such hard doctrine, they won't come. Did not one of the newspapers criticise me, and did not some of my people go away from me because of it? I must mind what I am at. I must keep this thing going. I must look out a little sharper, and prune my speech down. I must adopt a little gentler style, or preach a new-fashioned doctrine; for I must keep my popularity up. What is to become of me if I go down? People will say, 'Up like a rocket, down like the stick;' and then shall all my enemies laugh." Ah, when once a man begins to care so much as a snap of the finger about the world, it is all over with him. If he can go to his pulpit, and say, "I have got a message to deliver; and whether they will hear or whether they will not hear, I will deliver it as God puts it into my mouth; I will not change the dot of an i, or the cross of a t for the biggest man that lives, or to bring in the mightiest

congregation that ever sat at minister's feet"—that man is mighty. He does not let human judgments move him, and he will move the world. But let him turn aside, and think about his congregation, and how that shall be kept up; ah Samson! how are thy locks shorn? What canst thou do now? That false Delilah has destroyed thee—thine eyes are put out, thy comfort is taken away, and thy future ministry shall be like the grinding of an ass around the continually revolving mill; thou shalt have no rest or peace ever afterwards. Or let him turn aside another way. Suppose he should say, "I must get preferment, or wealth, I must look well to myself, I must see my nest feathered, that must be the object of my life." I am not now speaking of the ministry merely, but of all the consecrated; and as sure as ever we begin to make *self* the primary object of our existence our locks are shorn. "Now," says the Lord, "I gave that man strength, but not to use it for himself. Then I put him into a high position, but not that he might clothe himself about with glory; I put him there that he might look to my cause, to my interests; and if he does not do that first, down he shall go." You remember Queen Esther: she is exalted from being a simple humble maiden, to become the wife of the great monarch—Ahasuerus. Well, Haman gets a decree against her nation, that it shall be destroyed. Poor Mordecai comes to Esther, and says, "You must go in to the king and speak to him." "Well," says she, "but if I do I shall die." "Ah," says he, "If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther was not made Queen Esther that she might make herself glorious, but that she might be in a position to save the Jews; and now if she prefers herself before her country then it is all over with her—Vashti's fate shall be as nothing compared with her destruction.

And so, if you live in this world, and God prospers you, you get perhaps into some position, and you say, "Here I am; I will look out for myself; I have been serving the church before, but now I will look to myself a little." "Come, come," says human nature; "you must look after your family," (which means, you must look after yourself). Very well, do it sir, as your main object, and you are a ruined man. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these shall be added to you." If you keep your eye single, your whole body shall be full of light. Though you seemed as if you had shut out half the light by having that single eye, yet your body shall be full of light. But begin to have two masters, and two objects to serve, and you shall serve neither; you shall neither prosper for this world, nor for that which is to come. Oh, Christian, above all things take care of thy consecration. Ever feel that thou art wholly given up to God, and to God alone.

IV. And now, lastly, there is THE CHRISTIAN'S DISGRACE. His locks are cut off. I have seen him, young as I am, and you with grey hairs upon your brows have seen him oftener than I; I have seen him in the ministry. He spake like an angel of God; many there were that regarded him, and did hang upon his lips; he seemed to be sound in doctrine and earnest in manner. I have seen him turn aside; it was but a little thing,—some slight deviation from the ancient orthodoxy of his fathers, some slight violation of the law of his church. I have seen him, till he has given up doctrine after doctrine, until, at last, the very place wherein he preached has become a bye-word and a proverb; and the man is pointed out by the grey-headed sire to his child as a man who is to be looked upon with suspicion; who, if he lectures, is to be heard with caution; and if he preaches, is not to be listened to at all. Have you not seen him? What disgrace was there! What a fall! The man who came out in the camps of Dan, and seemed to be moved by the Spirit of the Lord, has become the slave of error. He has gone into the very camps of the enemy, and there he is now, grinding in the mill for the Philistine, whom he ought to have been striking with his arm. Now there are two ways of accounting for this. Such a man is either a thorough hypocrite or a fallen believer. Sometimes, people say of persons who turn aside to sin, "There now; look, there is a Christian fallen,—a child of God fallen." It is something like the vulgar, when at night they see a bright light in the sky, and say, "Ah, there is a star fallen." It was not a star; the stars are all right. Take a telescope; they are every one there. The Great Bear has not lost a star out of its tail; and if you look, there is the belt of Orion all safe, and the dagger has not dropped out of it. What is it, then? We do not know exactly what it is. Perhaps it may be a few

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gases up there for a little while, that have burst, and that is all; or some wandering substance cast down,—and quite time that it should be. But the stars are all right. So, depend upon it, the children of God are always safe. Now these men who have turned aside and broken their consecration vow, are pointed at as a disgrace to themselves and dishonour to the church. And you who are members of Christ's church, you have seen men who stood in your ranks as firm soldiers of the cross, and you have noticed them go out, from us, "because they were not of us," or like poor Samson, you have seen them go to their graves with the eyes of their comfort put out, with the feet of their usefulness bound with brazen fetters, and with the strength of their arms entirely departed from them. Now, do any of you wish to be backsliders? Do you wish to betray the holy profession of your religion? My brethren, is there one among you who this day makes a profession of love to Christ, who desires to be an apostate? Is there one of you who desires like Samson to have his eyes put out, and to be made to grind in the mill? Would you, like David, commit a great sin, and go with broken bones to the grave? would you, like Lot, be drunken, and fall into lust? No, I know what you say, "Lord, let my path be like the eagle's flight; let me fly upwards to the sun, and never stay and never turn aside. Oh, give me grace that I may serve thee, like Caleb, with a perfect heart, and that from the beginning even to the end of my days, my course may be as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Ay, I know what is your desire. How, then, shall it be accomplished? Look well to your consecration; see that it is sincere; see that you mean it, and then look up to the Holy Spirit, after you have looked to your consecration, and beg of him to give you daily grace; for as day-by-day the manna fell, so must you receive daily food from on high. And, remember, it is not by any grace you have in you, but by the grace that is in Christ, and that must be given to you hour by hour, that you are to stand, and having done all, to be crowned at last as a faithful one, who has endured unto the end. I ask your prayers that I may be kept faithful to my Lord; and on the other hand, I will offer my earnest prayers, that you may serve him while he lends you breath, that when your voice is lost in death, you may throughout a never ending immortality, praise him in louder and sweeter strains.

And as for you that have not given yourselves to God, and are not consecrated to him, I can only speak to you as to Philistines, and warn you, that the day shall come when Israel shall be avenged upon the Philistines. You may be one day assembled upon the roof of your pleasures, enjoying yourselves in health and strength; but there is a Samson—called Death, who shall pull down the pillars of your tabernacle, and you must fall and be destroyed—and great shall be the ruin. May God give you grace that you may be consecrated to Christ; so that living or dying, you may rejoice in him, and may share with him the glory of his Father.

END OF VOLUME IV.