

band and wife there should be no secrets reserved; for none living should come between them for a preferable claim for anything. They twain are one flesh. A man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife. It was therefore his clear duty to have first put his trust in his wife; but then have you no pity for the man who, in an evil hour, has committed himself to a marriage of that kind, which made that and almost every other moral duty a sort of downright moral impossibility. Had he married in the Lord, as the son of such a father, and still more of such a mother so intellectual and so devout might have been expected to do, how would he have trusted, and loved, and all but worshipped the woman with whom he was so united. Samson appears to have been a man of the intensest fondness, and ready to fight to the death for the just rights of everybody, because of his own innate and invincible adherence to truth and equity. But how could he trust such a woman as that? Her tears and incessant opportunities prevailed with him, and he disclosed to her the riddle. This he did, not because he loved her or trusted her, or saw and felt it to be his duty. For no other conceivable reason than because, like the importunate widow with the unjust judge in the parable, for seven days she lay sore upon him, teasing and tormenting him night and day, until at last she worked it out and wrung it from him. Such is a specimen of the evils of those marriages made on the strength of vain fancies or grosser passions which never last, in the making of which God and his glory are not in the least regarded; and his counsel, so far from being sought and waited for, is an object of suspicious dislike and hatred. Can you then suppose that God, after sending his Son for no other purpose than to interest you intensely about himself as one who is more to you than a father, and all your earthly kindred besides—can you think that he can take it well to

find himself, by professing Christians, so often as he is, in such matters, overlooked and left out altogether? Do not think to escape with such conduct, more especially if, at any former period, you have had any intelligent and confidential intercourse with God. God is loath to part with any of you to the devil; and it is impossible that he should ever consent to quit you unless you should yourselves provoke him to it; for he declares of all those of you who have ever truly known his name, and really believed in him, that he will visit your transgressions with the rod and your iniquities with stripes—that you shall be judged in the world now, that you may not be judged or condemned along with the world hereafter, and that the misery, distress, and peradventure the very death of this backslidden believer, who could not otherwise have been reclaimed, is but a picture and a prophecy of what must be fulfilled in you, if, after having tasted of the good gift of God and the power of the world to come, you turn thus wilfully away from him to fulfil any one of all the deceitful lusts, whether of the flesh or of the mind. The main ingredient of Samson's character had now quite ceased to be piety, but it still continued to be patriotism, and a sense of outraged and unvindicated justice that ever provoked him to retaliate, proportioning the outlet of it to the exact amount of injury done him; and even in his dying moments it gleams forth like the last, and therefore the very brightest, flash of an instantly expiring flame. "Strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God." The murder of Samson's wife by the Philistines was the occasion of a revival to his soul. On the rock Etam you find the son of such a mother thinking on his ways. Grace is not hereditary, yet all observation proves that mere intellectual and moral gifts very often are, and seem oftenest to come by the mother's side. How surpassing wonderful must each of these steps of Providence have appeared to him;