

CHAPTER 16

Samson's name (we have observed before) signifies a little sun (solparvus); we have seen this sun rising very bright, and his morning ray strong and clear; and, nothing appearing to the contrary, we take it for granted that the middle of the day was proportionably illustrious, while he judged Israel twenty years; but the melancholy story of this chapter gives us such an account of his evening as did not commend his day. This little sun set under a cloud, and yet, just in the setting, darted forth one such strong and glorious beam as made him even then a type of Christ, conquering by death. Here is,

I. Samson greatly endangered by his familiarity with one harlot, and hardly escaping (v. 1-3).

II. Samson quite ruined by his familiarity with another harlot, Delilah. Observe,

1. How he was betrayed to her by his own lusts (v. 4).
2. How he was betrayed by her to his sworn enemies, the Philistines, who,
 - (1.) By her means got it out of him at last where his great strength lay (v. 5-17).
 - (2.) Then robbed him of his strength, by taking from his head the crown of his separation (v. 18-20).
 - (3.) Then seized him, blinded him, imprisoned him, abused him, and, at a solemn festival, made a show of him (v. 21-25). But, lastly, he avenged himself of them by pulling down the theatre upon their heads, and so dying with them (v. 26-31).

<0710> JUDGES 16:1-3

SAMSON'S ESCAPE FROM GAZA

Here is,

1. Samson's sin, v. 1. His taking a Philistine to wife, in the beginning of his time, was in some degree excusable, but to join himself to a harlot that he accidentally saw among them was such a profanation of his honour as an

Israelite, as a Nazarite, that we cannot but blush to read it. *Tell it not in Gath.* This vile impurity makes the graceful visage of this Nazarite *blacker than a coal*, ^{<3017>}Lamentations 4:7, 8. We find not that Samson had any business in Gaza; if he went thither in quest of a harlot it would make one willing to hope that, as bad as things were otherwise, there were no prostitutes among the daughters of Israel. Some think he went thither to observe what posture the Philistines were in, that he might get some advantages against them; if so, he forgot his business, neglected that, and so fell into this snare. His sin began in his eye, with which he should have made a covenant; he saw there one in the *attire of a harlot*, and the lust which conceived brought forth sin: he *went in unto her*.

2. Samson's danger. Notice was sent to the magistrates of Gaza, perhaps by the treacherous harlot herself, that Samson was in the town, v. 2. Probably he came in a disguise, or in the dusk of the evening, and went into an inn or public-house, which happened to be kept by this harlot. The gates of the city were hereupon shut, guards set, all kept quiet, that Samson might suspect no danger. Now they thought they had him in a prison, and doubted not but to be the death of him the next morning. O that all those who indulge their sensual appetites in drunkenness, uncleanness, or any fleshly lusts, would see themselves thus surrounded, waylaid, and marked for ruin, by their spiritual enemies! The faster they sleep, and the more secure they are, the greater is their danger.

3. Samson's escape, v. 3. He rose at midnight, perhaps roused by a dream, in slumberings upon the bed (^{<3315>}Job 33:15), by his guardian angel, or rather by the checks of his own conscience. He arose with a penitent abhorrence (we hope) of the sin he was now committing, and of himself because of it, and with a pious resolution not to return to it, — rose under an apprehension of the danger he was in, that he was as one that slept upon the top of a mast, — rose with such thoughts as these: “Is this a bed fit for a Nazarite to sleep in? Shall a temple of the living God be thus polluted? Can I be safe under this guilt?” It was bad that he lay down without such checks; but it would have been worse if he had lain still under them. He makes immediately towards the gate of the city, probably finds the guards asleep, else he would have made them sleep their last, stays not to break open the gates, but plucks up the posts, takes them, gates and bar and all, all very large and strong and a vast weight, yet he carries them on his back several miles, *up to the top of a hill*, in disdain of their attempt to secure him with gates and bars, designing thus to render himself more formidable

to the Philistines and more acceptable to his people, thus to give a proof of the great strength God had given him and a type of Christ's victory over death and the grave. He not only rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and so came forth himself, but carried away the gates of the grave, bar and all, and so left it, ever after, an open prison to all that are his; it shall not, it cannot, always detain them. *O death! where is thy sting?* Where are thy gates? Thanks be to him that not only gained a victory for himself, but giveth us the victory!

~~(1710)~~ JUDGES 16:4-17

DELILAH'S TREACHERY

The burnt child dreads the fire; yet Samson, that has more than the strength of a man, in this comes short of the wisdom of a child; for, though he had been more than once brought into the highest degree of mischief and danger by the love of women and lusting after them, yet he would not take warning, but is here again taken in the same snare, and this third time pays for all. Solomon seems to refer especially to this story of Samson when, in his caution against uncleanness, he gives this account of a whorish woman (~~(3102)~~ Proverbs 7:26), that *she hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her*; and (~~(3163)~~ Proverbs 6:26) that *the adulteress will hunt for the precious life*. This bad woman, that brought Samson to ruin, is here named *Delilah*, an infamous name, and fitly used to express the person, or thing, that by flattery or falsehood brings mischief and destruction on those to whom kindness is pretended. See here,

I. The affection Samson had for Delilah: he loved her, v. 4. Some think she was his wife, but then he would have had her home to his own house; others that he courted her to make her his wife; but there is too much reason to suspect that it was a sinful affection he had for her, and that he lived in uncleanness with her. Whether she was an Israelite or a Philistine is not certain. If an Israelite, which is scarcely probable, yet she had the heart of a Philistine.

II. The interest which the lords of the Philistines made with her to betray Samson, v. 5.

1. That which they told her they designed was to humble him, or afflict him; they would promise not to do him any hurt, only they would disable him not to do them any. And so much conscience it should seem they made of this promise that even then, when he lay ever so much at their mercy, they would not kill him, no, not when the razor that cut his hair might sooner and more easily have cut his throat.

2. That which they desired, in order hereunto, was to know where his great strength lay, and by what means he might be bound. Perhaps they imagined he had some spell or charm which he carried about with him, by the force of which he did these great things, and doubted not but that, if they could get this from him, he would be manageable; and therefore, having had reason enough formerly to know which was his blind side, hoped to find out his riddle a second time by ploughing with his heifer. They engaged Delilah to get it out of him, telling her what a kindness it would be to them, and perhaps assuring her it should not be improved to any real mischief, either to him or her.

3. For this they bid high, promised to give her each of them 1100 pieces of silver, 5500 in all. So many shekels amounted to above 1000*l.* sterling; with this she was hired to betray one she pretended to love. See what horrid wickedness the love of money is the root of. Our blessed Saviour was thus betrayed by one whom he called *friend*, and with a kiss too, for filthy lucre. No marvel if those who are unchaste, as Delilah, be unjust; such as lose their honesty in one instance will in another.

III. The arts by which he put her off from time to time, and kept his own counsel a great while. She asked him *where his great strength lay*, and whether it were possible for him to be bound and afflicted (v. 6), pretending that she only desired he would satisfy her curiosity in that one thing, and that she thought it was impossible he should be bound otherwise than by her charms.

1. When she urged him very much, he told her,

(1.) That he might be bound with *seven green withs*, v. 7. The experiment was tried (v. 8), but it would not do: he *broke the withs* as easily as a *thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire*, v. 9.

(2.) When she still continued her importunity (v. 10) he told her that with two new ropes he might be so cramped and hampered that he might be as

easily dealt with as any other man, v. 11. This experiment was tried too, but it failed: the *new ropes* broke from off his arm *like a thread*, v. 12.

(3.) When she still pressed him to communicate the secret, and upbraided him with it as an unkindness that he had bantered her so long, he then told her that the weaving of the seven locks of his head would make a great alteration in him, v. 13. This came nearer the matter than any thing he had yet said, but it would not do: his strength appeared to be very much in his hair, when, upon the trial of this, purely by the strength of his hair, he carried away the *pin of the beam* and *the web*.

2. In the making of all these experiments, it is hard to say whether there appears more of Samson's weakness or Delilah's wickedness.

(1.) Could any thing be more wicked than her restless and unreasonable importunity with him to discover a secret which she knew would endanger his life if ever it were lodged any where but in his own breast? What could be more base and disingenuous, more false and treacherous, than to lay his head in her lap, as one whom she loved, and at the same time to design the betraying of him to those by whom he was mortally hated?

(2.) Could any thing be more weak than for him to continue a parley with one who, he so plainly saw, was aiming to do him a mischief, — that he should lend an ear so long to such an impudent request, that she might know how to do him a mischief, — that when he perceived liars in wait for him in the chamber, and that they were ready to apprehend him if they had been able, he did not immediately quit the chamber, with a resolution never to come into it any more, — nay, that he should again lay his head in that lap out of which he had been so often roused with that alarm, *The Philistines are upon thee, Samson?* One can hardly imagine a man so perfectly besotted, and void of all consideration, as Samson now was; but whoredom is one of those things that *take away the heart*. It is hard to say what Samson meant in suffering her to try so often whether she could weaken and afflict him; some think he did not certainly know himself where his strength lay, but, it should seem, he did know, for, when he told her that which would disable him indeed, it is said, *He told her all his heart*. It seems, he designed to banter her, and to try if he could turn it off with a jest, and to baffle the *liars in wait*, and make fools of them; but it was very unwise in him that he did not quit the field as soon as ever he perceived that he was not able to keep the ground.

IV. The disclosure he at last made of this great secret; and, if the disclosure proved fatal to him, he must thank himself, who had not power to keep his own counsel from one that manifestly sought his ruin. *Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird*, but in Samson's sight is the net spread, and yet he is taken in it. If he had not been blind before the Philistines put out his eyes, he might have seen himself betrayed. Delilah signifies a *consumer*; she was so to him. Observe,

1. How she teased him, telling him she would not believe he loved her, unless he would gratify her in this matter (v. 15): *How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?* That is, “when thou canst not trust me with the counsels of thy heart?” Passionate lovers cannot bear to have their love called in question; they would do any thing rather than their sincerity should be suspected. Here therefore Delilah had this fond fool (excuse me that I call him so) at an advantage. This expostulation is indeed grounded upon a great truth, that those only have our love, not that have our good words or our good wishes, but that have our hearts. That is love without dissimulation; but it is falsehood and flattery in the highest degree to say we love those with whom our hearts are not. How can we say we love either our brother, whom we have seen, or God, whom we have not seen, if our hearts be not with him? She continued many days vexatious to him with her importunity, so that he had no pleasure of his life with her (v. 16); why then did he not leave her? It was because he was captivated to her by the power of love, falsely so called, but truly lust. This bewitched and perfectly intoxicated him, and by the force of it see,

2. How she conquered him (v. 17): He *told her all his heart*. God left him to himself to do this foolish thing, to punish him for indulging himself in the lusts of uncleanness. The angel that foretold his birth said nothing of his great strength, but only that he should be a Nazarite, and particularly that *no razor should come upon his head*, ^{<0713>}Judges 13:5. His consecration to God was to be his strength, for he was to be *strengthened according to the glorious power of that Spirit which wrought in him mightily*, that his strength, by promise, not by nature, might be a type and figure of the spiritual strength of believers, ^{<5011>}Colossians 1:11, 29. Therefore the badge of his consecration was the pledge of his strength; if he lose the former, he knows he forfeits the latter. “If I be shaven, I shall no longer be a Nazarite, and then my strength will be lost.” The making of his bodily strength to depend so much on his hair, which could have no natural influence upon it either one way or other, teaches us to magnify divine institutions, and to

expect God's grace, and the continuance of it, only the use of those means of grace wherein he has appointed us to attend upon him, the word, sacraments, and prayer. In these earthen vessels is this treasure.

~~OTIS~~ JUDGES 16:18-21

SAMSON BETRAYED

We have here the fatal consequences of Samson's folly in betraying his own strength; he soon paid dearly for it. *A whore is a deep ditch; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.* In that pit Samson sinks. Observe,

1. What care Delilah took to make sure of the money for herself. She now perceived, by the manner of his speaking, that he had *told her all his heart*, and the lords of the Philistines that hired her to do this base thing are sent for; but they must be sure to bring *the money in their hands*, v. 18. The wages of unrighteousness are accordingly produced, unknown to Samson. It would have grieved one's heart to have seen one of the bravest men then in the world sold and bought, as a *sheep for the slaughter*; how does this instance sully all the glory of man, and forbid the strong man ever to boast of his strength!
2. What course she took to deliver him up to them according to the bargain. Many in the world would, for the hundredth part of what was here given Delilah, sell those that they pretend the greatest respect for. *Trust not in a friend then, put no confidence in a guide.* See what a treacherous method she took (v. 19): She *made him sleep upon her knees*. Josephus says, She gave him some intoxicating liquor, which laid him to sleep. What opiates she might steal into his cup we know not, but we cannot suppose that he knowingly drank wine or strong drink, for that would have been a forfeiture of his Nazariteship as much as the cutting off of his hair. She pretended the greatest kindness even when she designed the greatest mischief, which yet she could not have compassed if she had not made him sleep. See the fatal consequences of security. Satan ruins men by rocking them asleep, flattering them into a good opinion of their own safety, and so bringing them to mind nothing and fear nothing, and then he robs them of their strength and honour and leads them captive at his will. When we sleep our spiritual enemies do not. When he was asleep she had a person ready to cut off his hair, which he did so silently and so quickly that it did not

awake him, but plainly afflicted him; even in his sleep, his spirit manifestly sunk upon it. I think we may suppose that if this ill turn had been done to him in his sleep by some spiteful body, without his being himself accessory to it, as he was here, it would not have had this strange effect upon him; but it was his own wickedness that corrected him. It was his iniquity, else it would not have been so much his infelicity.

3. What little concern he himself was in at it, v. 20. He could not but miss his hair as soon as he awoke, and yet said, "*I will shake myself as at other times after sleep,*" or, "as at other times when the Philistines were upon me, to make my part good against them." Perhaps he thought to shake himself the more easily, and that his head would feel the lighter, now that his hair was cut, little thinking how much heavier the burden of guilt was than that of hair. He soon found in himself some change, we have reason to think so, and yet *wist not that the Lord had departed from him*: he did not consider that this was the reason of the change. Note, Many have lost the favourable presence of God and are not aware of it; they have provoked God to withdraw from them, but are not sensible of their loss, nor ever complain of it. Their souls languish and grow weak, their gifts wither, every thing goes cross with them; and yet they impute not this to the right cause: they are not aware that *God has departed from them*, nor are they in any care to reconcile themselves to him or to recover his favour. When God has departed we cannot do as at other times.

4. What improvement the Philistines soon made of their advantages against him, v. 21. The Philistines took him when God had departed from him. Those that have thrown themselves out of God's protection become an easy prey to their enemies. If we sleep in the lap of our lusts, we shall certainly wake in the hands of the Philistines. It is probable they had promised Delilah not to kill him, but they took an effectual course to disable him. The first thing they did, when they had him in their hands and found they could manage him, was to *put out his eyes*, by *applying fire to them*, says the Arabic version. They considered that his eyes would never come again, as perhaps his hair might, and that the strongest arms could do little without eyes to guide the, and therefore, if now they blind him, they for ever blind him. His eyes were the inlets of his sin: he saw the harlot at Gaza, and went in unto her (v. 1), and now his punishment began there. Now that the Philistines had blinded him he had time to remember how his own lust had blinded him. The best preservative of the eyes is to turn them away from beholding vanity. *They brought him down to Gaza*, that there he

might appear in weakness where he had lately given such proofs of his strength (v. 3), and be a jest to those to whom he had been a terror. They *bound him with fetters of brass* who had before been held in the cords of his own iniquity, and he did *grind in the prison*, work in their bridewell, either for their profit or his punishment, or for both. The devil does thus by sinners, *blinds the minds of those who believe not*, and so enslaves them, and secures them in his interests. Poor Samson, how hast thou fallen! How is thy honour laid in the dust! How has the glory and defence of Israel become the drudge and triumph of the Philistines! *The crown has fallen from his head; woe unto him, for he hath sinned*. Let all take warning by his fall carefully to preserve their purity, and to watch against all fleshly lusts; for all our glory has gone, and our defence departed from us, when the covenant of our separation to God, as spiritual Nazarites, is profaned.

<0762>JUDGES 16:22-31

SAMSON'S TRIUMPH IN DEATH

Though the last stage of Samson's life was inglorious, and one could wish there were a veil drawn over it, yet this account here given of his death may be allowed to lessen, though it does not quite roll away, the reproach of it; for there was honour in his death. No doubt he greatly repented of his sin, the dishonour he had by it done to God and his forfeiture of the honour God had put upon him; for that God was reconciled to him appears,

1. By the return of the sign of his Nazariteship (v. 22): *His hair began to grow again, as when he was shaven*, that is, to be as thick and as long as when it was cut off. It is probable that their general thanksgiving to Dagon was not long deferred, before which Samson's hair had thus grown, by which, and the particular notice taken of it, it seems to have been extraordinary, and designed for a special indication of the return of God's favour to him upon his repentance. For the growth of his hair was neither the cause nor the sign of the return of his strength further than as it was the badge of his consecration, and a token that God accepted him as a Nazarite again, after the interruption, without those ceremonies which were appointed for the restoration of a lapsed Nazarite, which he had not now the opportunity of performing, <0489> Numbers 6:9. It is strange that the Philistines in whose hands he was were not jealous of the growth of his hair

again, and did not cut it; but perhaps they were willing his great strength should return to him, that they might have so much the more work out of him, and now that he was blind they were in no fear of any hurt from him.

2. By the use God made of him for the destruction of the enemies of his people, and that at a time when it would be most for the vindication of the honour of God, and not immediately for the defence and deliverance of Israel. Observe,

I. How insolently the Philistines affronted the God of Israel,

1. By the sacrifices they offered to Dagon, his rival. This Dagon they call their *god*, a god of their own making, represented by an image, the upper part of which was in the shape of a man, the lower part of a fish, purely the creature of fancy; yet it served them to set up in opposition to the true and living God. To this pretended deity they ascribe their success (v. 23, 24): *Our god has delivered Samson our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, into our hands.* So they dreamed, though he could do neither good nor evil. They knew Delilah had betrayed him, and they had paid her for doing it, yet they attribute it to their god, and are confirmed by it in their belief of his power to protect them. All people will thus walk in the name of their gods: they will give them the praise of their achievements; and shall not we pay this tribute to our God whose kingdom ruleth over all? Yet, considering what wicked arts they used to get Samson into their hands, it must be confessed it was only such a dunghill-deity as Dagon that was fit to be made a patron of the villany. Sacrifices were offered, and songs of praise sung, on the general thanksgiving day, for this victory obtained over one man; there were great expressions of joy, and all to the honour of Dagon. Much more reason have we to give the praise of all our successes to our God. *Thanks be to him who causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus!*

2. By the sport they made with Samson, God's champion, they reflected on God himself. When they were merry with wine, to make them more merry Samson must be fetched to make sport for them (v. 25, 27), that is, for them to make sport with. Having sacrificed to their god, and eaten and drunk upon the sacrifice, they rose up to play, according to the usage of idolaters (~~600~~ 1 Corinthians 10:7), and Samson must be the fool in the play. They made themselves and one another laugh to see how, being blind, he stumbled and blundered. It is likely they *smote this judge of Israel upon the*

cheek (³¹¹Micah 5:1), and said, *Prophesy who smote thee*. It was an instance of their barbarity to trample thus upon a man in misery, at the sight of whom awhile ago they would have trembled. It put Samson into the depth of misery, and as a sword in his bones were their reproaches, when they said, *Where is now thy God?* Nothing could be more grievous to so great a spirit; yet, being a penitent, his godly sorrow makes him patient, and he accepts the indignity as the punishment of his iniquity. How unrighteous soever the Philistines were, he could not but own that God was righteous. He had sported himself in his own deceivings and with his own deceivers, and justly are the Philistines let loose upon him to make sport with him. Uncleanliness is a sin that makes men vile, and exposes them to contempt. *A wound and dishonour shall he get whose heart is deceived by a woman, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.* Everlasting shame and contempt will be the portion of those that are blinded and bound by their own lusts. The devil that deceived them will insult over them.

II. How justly the God of Israel brought sudden destruction upon them by the hands of Samson. Thousands of the Philistines had got together, to attend their lords in the sacrifices and joys of this day, and to be the spectators of this comedy; but it proved to them a fatal tragedy, for they were all slain, and buried in the ruins of the house: whether it was a temple or a theatre, or whether it was some slight building run up for the purpose, is uncertain. Observe,

1. Who were destroyed: All the *lords of the Philistines* (v. 27), who had by bribes corrupted Delilah to betray Samson to them. Evil pursued those sinners. Many of the people likewise, to the number of 3000, and among them a great many women, one of whom, it is likely, was that harlot of Gaza mentioned, v. 1. Samson had been drawn into sin by the Philistine women, and now a great slaughter is made among them, as was by Moses's order among the women of Midian, because it was they that *caused the children of Israel to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor*, ³¹⁶Numbers 31:16.

2. When they were destroyed.

(1.) When they were merry, secure, and jovial, and far from apprehending themselves in any danger. When they saw Samson lay hold of the pillars, we may suppose, his doing so served them for a jest, and they made sport with that too: *What will this feeble Jew do?* How are sinners brought to

desolation in a moment! They are lifted up in pride and mirth, that their fall may be the more dreadful. Let us never envy the mirth of wicked people, but infer from this instance that their triumphing is short and their joy but for a moment.

(2.) It was when they were praising Dagon their god, and giving that honour to him which is due to God only, which is no less than treason against the King of kings, his crown and dignity. Justly therefore is the blood of these traitors mingled with their sacrifices. Belshazzar was cut off when he was praising his man-made gods, ²⁷⁸⁴Daniel 5:4.

(3.) It was when they were making sport with an Israelite, a Nazarite, and insulting over him, persecuting him whom God had smitten. Nothing fills the measure of the iniquity of any person or people faster than mocking and misusing the servants of God, yea, though it is by their own folly that they are brought low. Those know not what they do, nor whom they affront, that make sport with a good man.

3. How they were destroyed. Samson pulled the house down upon them, God no doubt putting it into his heart, as a public person, thus to avenge God's quarrel with them, Israel's, and his own.

(1.) He gained strength to do it by prayer, v. 28. That strength which he had lost by sin he, like a true penitent, recovers by prayer; as David, who, when he had provoked the Spirit of grace to withdraw, prayed (³⁵¹²Psalms 51:12), *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.* We may suppose that this was only a mental prayer, and that his voice was not heard (for it was made in a noisy clamorous crowd of Philistines); but, though his voice was not heard of men, yet his prayer was heard of God and graciously answered, and though he lived not to give an account himself of this his prayer, as Nehemiah did of his, yet God not only accepted it in heaven, but, by revealing it to the inspired penmen, provided for the registering of it in his church. He prayed to God to remember him and strengthen him this once, thereby owning that his strength for what he had already done he had from God, and begged it might be afforded to him once more, to give them a parting blow. That it was not from a principle of passion or personal revenge, but from a holy zeal for the glory of God and Israel, that he desired to do this, appears from God's accepting and answering the prayer. Samson died praying, so did our blessed Saviour; but Samson prayed for vengeance, Christ for forgiveness.

(2.) He gained opportunity to do it by leaning on the two pillars which were the chief supports of the building, and were, it seems, so near together that he could take hold of them both at one time, v. 26, 29. Having hold of them, he bore them down with all his might, crying aloud, *Let me die with the Philistines*, v. 30. *Animamque in vulnere ponit — While inflicting the wound he dies.* The vast concourse of people that were upon the roof looking down through it to see the sport, we may suppose, contributed to the fall of it. A weight so much greater than ever it was designed to carry might perhaps have sunk of itself, at least it made the fall more fatal to those within: and indeed few of either could escape being either stifled or crushed to death. This was done, not by any natural strength of Samson, but by the almighty power of God, and is not only marvellous, but miraculous, in our eyes. Now in this,

[1.] The Philistines were greatly mortified. All their lords and great men were killed, and abundance of their people, and this in the midst of their triumph; the temple of Dagon (as many think the house was) was pulled down, and Dagon buried in it. This would give a great check to the insolence of the survivors, and, if Israel had but had so much sense and spirit left them as to improve the advantages of this juncture, they might now have thrown off the Philistines' yoke.

[2.] Samson may very well be justified, and brought in not guilty of any sinful murder either of himself or the Philistines. He was a public person, a declared enemy to the Philistines, against whom he might therefore take all advantages. They were now in the most barbarous manner making war upon him; all present were aiding and abetting, and justly die with him. Nor was he *felo de se*, or a *self-murderer*, in it; for it was not his own life that he aimed at, though he had too much reason to be weary of it, but the lives of Israel's enemies, for the reaching of which he bravely resigned his own, *not counting it dear to him, so that he might finish his course with honour.*

[3.] God was very much glorified in pardoning Samson's great transgressions, of which this was an evidence. It has been said that the prince's giving a commission to one convicted amounts to a pardon. Yet, *though he was a God that forgave him, he took vengeance of his inventions* (^{498B}Psalm 99:8), and, by suffering his champion to die in fetters, warned all to take heed of those lusts which war against the soul. However, we have good reason to hope that though Samson died with the

Philistines he had not his everlasting portion with them. *The Lord knows those that are his.*

[4.] Christ was plainly typified. He pulled down the devil's kingdom, as Samson did Dagon's temple; and, when he died, he obtained the most glorious victory over the powers of darkness. Then when his arms were stretched out upon the cross, as Samson's to the two pillars, he gave a fatal shake to the gates of hell, and, *through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil* (~~scrip~~ Hebrews 2:14, 15), and herein exceeded Samson, that he not only died with the Philistines, but rose again to triumph over them.

Lastly, The story of Samson concludes, 1. With an account of his burial. His own relations, animated by the glories that attended his death, came and found out his body among the slain, brought it honourably to his own country, and buried it in the place of his fathers' sepulchres, the Philistines being in such a consternation that they durst not oppose it.

2. With the repetition of the account we had before of the continuance of his government: *He judged Israel twenty years;* and, if they had not been as mean and sneaking as he was brave and daring, he would have left them clear of the Philistines' yoke. They might have been easy, safe, and happy, if they would but have given God and their judges leave to make them so.