

The Philistines gave Dagon the praise, and at some set festival in the idol temple they called for their unfortunate enemy to become the object of their sport, probably decked out in mock pomp. It was a savage triumph.

Some little time had elapsed, for his hair had grown again. Samson had remembered his sins and turned to God.

III. Samson's Death.

Ver. 26-31. *Suffer me to feel, &c.* How mildly he speaks! Probably he knew where he was, and having been there in other days, remembered that on two great pillars the whole edifice rested: *On the roof.* Probably some amphitheatre with galleries, holding three thousand.

Samson's prayer—*remember me*—the dying Sule's prayer. *At once avenged for my two eyes.* Doubtless Samson had higher motives. We are apt to forget that he is classed among the worthies who died in faith, Heb. xi. 32-39. *Let me die.* Life was joyless. God granted the prayer, and wiped away the dishonour Dagon's worshippers had cast on Him and his cause.

So great was the consternation at the general destruction of all the leaders of the Philistines among the ruins of the temple, that Samson's relatives were permitted to give his body a public funeral. He seems to have had no successor to judge Israel for many years. The exploits of Samson form the basis of all the fables about Hercules.

APPLICATION.

1. *Sincere obedience to Christ is the secret of the Christian's strength.* Obedience was the secret of Samson's bodily strength (see chap. xiii. 7)—of Adam's spiritual strength ere he fell, Isa. xl. 31; Job xvii. 9. Beware of little sins.

2. *Those who offend God to please you will offend you to please themselves.* Delilah did this. For this reason David rejected the services of Ishbosheth's murderer, 2 Sam. iv. 10.

3. *Those who self-confidently enter into temptation will be left to fall.* God wearied at last of Samson's presumption. Sin will blind their minds, and they will become fools, Prov. xxviii. 26; xii. 15. Peter.

4. *When God leaves a man, he is undone.* He becomes like Samson—weak, foolish—a slave to divers lusts and passions—the sport and prisoner of his spiritual enemies. So Saul, 1 Sam. xvi. 14; 2 Pet. ii. 19; John viii. 84-84.

5. *God will be glorified* When God's name is dishonoured, he will appear, to his enemies' confusion, and his friends' joy. See Belshazzar's feast—Herod's fate, Acts xii. 20; —Sennacherib, Isa. xxxvii. 23.

SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. Flee fornication. Samson's sad case illustrates Prov. v. and vi.
2. Use your body for God. How soon it will fade! Jer. ix. 23.
3. How easy and dangerous to abuse the unfortunate!—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

ALL IN BLOOM.

'T was spring, six thousand years ago;
The frost wind had not come,
Nor winter with its cloudy gloom,
And silent shroud-like snow;
Nor summer with its fever-glow.
Young life, first life, was budding everywhere,
And health breathed through the sweet im-
mulate air.
Earth, with its virgin soil
Unscourged by human avarice and toil,
Untainted by the rankness of a tomb,
Was all in bloom.

But spring, time's spotless spring,
Like peace and hope, took wing,
Went upward with its fair array,
Leaving a faded mantle to this earth
Instead of the gay raiment of its birth.
It was and is not, since the gladsome day
When it alighted from above
On vale, and field, and grove,
Earth has not known its love.

Dear spring of ours, which, with the year,
Comes up in April joy and cheer,
Child of the past, preserving still
Some features of an ancient sire,
Which time, and change, and ill,
Which winter's frost and summer's fire,
Have not been able to destroy;
Faint echo of a long lost song,
Faint relic of an earlier joy;—
Wish all thy light and smiles,
The soft and sunny wiles,
What art thou to that spring,
Earth's first and freshest, when the magic light
Of this world's birthday threw its glances bright
Over creation's splendour,—that old spring
With balm and beauty on the wing,
And earth all fresh and blossoming?

But spring, earth's primal season, reappears;
These long six thousand years
Of storm are ending, and the doom
Of this creation is not sealed;
The curse shall be repeal'd;
The day of glory stands reveal'd;
Departs the gloom,
Descends the life of a more vernal clime,
Beyond the blights of time;
A thousand vales rejoice,
A thousand hills lift up the voice;
Old ocean smiles again
In golden glory clad,
And sings a happier strain,—
The key note of the holy reign.
The tranquil sky is glad;
And earth once more,
From shore to happy shore,
Is all in bloom.