

probably (as generally in the Bible), copper. He did grind: even yet, in the East, millstones are turned by hand, or at most by a donkey; no "machinery."

Ver. 22.—Hair of his head began to grow: we may believe that he, repenting and renewing his vows, began to get back his great bodily strength, as well as peace of mind and pardon from God.

Ver. 23.—A great sacrifice: they made the captivity of Samson an occasion of rejoicing and boasting. Unto Dagon, their God: an idol in the form of a fish, with a man's head and hands. See 1 Samuel 5, where Dagon fell down—head and hands broken off: and "only Dagon" left, *i. e.*, his fish-body left. Our God hath delivered: they falsely and wickedly claimed for Dagon a victory over Samson and over the God of Israel.

Ver. 24.—When the people saw him: at sight of their god they began shouting his praise. "The question was now no longer a matter between Samson and the Philistines, but between Dagon and Jehovah."—*Kitto*.

Ver. 25.—They said, call for Samson: to dance and play before them, and amuse them. And he made them sport: probably Samson, to disguise his intentions, *did* obey their heathen commands, and danced and amused them. Poor Samson! He need not have been there if he had strictly followed God.

Ver. 26.—The lad that held him: being sightless, he had to be led. Suffer me: let me lean against the pillars to rest.

Ver. 27.—Lords of the Philistines: we afterward read of "Kings" in their cities, and the "Lords," here would probably be their chiefs or feudal lords. Upon the roof: if the building had an open quadrangle or square, *there* we may suppose Samson was exhibited; the crowds occupying the roof would look down into the square.

Ver. 28.—Samson called unto the Lord: his heart had returned to God, and God returned to him. That I may be at once avenged: God had raised Samson up specially to chastise the Philistines; and it was in the line of his duty to be avenged on God's enemies and his. *We are called* for milder work, but let us see that we do it.

Ver. 29.—Took hold of the two middle pillars: Dr. Thomson ("The Land and the Book,") says idol temples were always built on hills, and that there are several steep hills on the site of Gaza. If Dagon's temple stood, as little doubt but it did, on one of those small steep hills, the loosening or displacing of one or two principal pillars, heavily laden as the roof was, would send one part of the building crashing against another, and the whole in a dreadful ruin to the foot of the hill.

Ver. 30.—Let me die with the Philistines: he knew he could not slay them and himself escape. His life was misery; his peace was made with God, and he had a divine voice within him that his prayer was heard, and that the time had come for him to strike a great blow against idolatry, and for Israel and Jehovah. Bowed himself with all his might: with his former supernatural strength; either drawing the pillars toward him, or pressing them from him, till they broke or were displaced. More than he slew in his life: often thus with the Christian; people think of his words and follow his advice, after he is gone, who neglected him in his life.

Ver. 31.—His brethren: his father was apparently not now living. Brought him up and buried him: we may suppose that there was great terror and confusion among the Philistines, and that they made no resistance to a party of the Danites who came to recover his dead body. He was buried in the family burial place of his father. Judged Israel twenty years: from Judges 13: 1-5, we learn that this Philistine oppression lasted forty years, and that Samson was born after it began. He was therefore inside of forty when he died, and must have begun to "judge Israel" very young.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. The life of Samson was one of *splendid opportunities*, but great imperfections.
2. Samson, sightless, grinding at the mill—and all because he fell away from God and duty—is a lesson for all ages.
3. Satan and Satan's agents must not think, when God's people are chastened for their sins, that *they* have triumphed over God (Ver. 24).
4. The great "demonstration" in favour of Dagon ended in death, and ruin, and disgrace.
5. God hears the prayer of the penitent. He heard Samson.
6. Many a one's chief work and influence is in his death; it may be necessary so, to keep down self-love.

STRONG MAN'S SAD DEATH.

PRIZE BIBLE QUESTIONS FOR AUGUST.

[For particulars of prizes, conditions, etc., etc., see the January number.]

22. Quote from the writings of Solomon two verses in one chapter which strikingly set forth the Omniscience of God.
23. Give two instances from the New Testament where friends were allowed to visit prisoners.
24. Name a companion of Paul baptized by him, sharing his labours and dangers, beloved also by another Apostle.

SWEETBRIER.

A branch of sweetbrier—Ah, my heart!
The tender tears unbidden start
To weary, world-worn eyes;
I kiss the faded, fragrant spray,
And memories of a bygone day
Before my vision rise.

How often my lost darling wore
The sweetbrier green! She loved it more
Than many-tinted bloom;
It often graced her maiden breast;
Now, planted where she lies at rest,
It beautifies her tomb.

My little love in days of old!
Youth's morning hour of rose and gold
Comes back to me to-night;
I see her in her girlish grace,
The sunny sweetness of her face,
Her childish robe of white.

I smell the sweetbrier in her hand,
I see the garden where we stand
On England's southern shore;
I hear the rippling streamlet fall,
I hear the laughter musical,
Now silenced evermore.

She was too frail for earth's employ,
Too calm and pure for human joy;
But, like the sweetbrier green,
The memory of her gentle life
Makes sweet the years of worldly strife
That lie our lives between.