

church spire this typified the effort of humanity to get as near as possible to heaven and God. But, sad to say, it was often typical also of things and thoughts less noble. **Chemosh, the abomination of Moab.** Although Chemosh is usually put down as the god of war, it is possible that Chemosh, Baal, Molech, and Ashtoreth were originally different names for one great god, worshiped under different attributes and with various rites in different countries, until at last they came to be regarded as different gods. "Ashtarehemosh" is mentioned on the Moabite stone; and we know that Ashtar was the masculine form of Astarte; so that, like the others, Chemosh was probably worshiped, in part at least, with sensual practices. **The hill that is before Jerusalem.** The Mount of Olives, one peak of which has been for centuries popularly known as the Mount of Scandal or the Mount of Offense, from a legend that it was the site of an idolatrous temple. **Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.** Probably this is to be regarded as a duplication of "Milecom the abomination of the Ammonites."

8. Likewise did he for all his strange wives. There would have been trouble in that household if he had not. And to offend three or four hundred wives at once Solomon did not dare. **Burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.** Solomon built the altars; his wives worshipped. "No hill about Jerusalem was free from a chapel of devils."—Hall.

9. The Lord was angry with Solomon. (4) *God's indignation at sin is in proportion to the advantages and opportunities for virtue given to the sinner* (Amos 3. 2; Luke 10. 12-15). **The Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.** (See 1 Kings 3. 5; 9. 2.)

10. And had commanded him concerning this thing (1 Kings 9. 6). That he should

not go after other gods, to any degree, or to please anybody. **He kept not that which the Lord commanded.** As a steward, he was unfaithful to his trust.

11. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon. Whether by a third vision or by a prophet, we know not. **Thou hast not kept my covenant.** But Solomon's wisdom and fame, his wealth and splendor, every loyal subject, every shekel of gold, was an evidence that God had kept his covenant. **I will surely rend.** "Despite thy great power and magnificence, thy fortifications and munitions of war."—*Dr. Hammond.* **Will give it to thy servant.** Thine employee. After all, this vast treasure which had made Jerusalem an immense treasure-box had been gathered together for a servant, a hireling. (See Eccles. 2. 18.)

12. Notwithstanding. Here comes a merciful limitation of the punishment. It should not be inflicted until after Solomon's death. (See 1 Kings 21. 29; 2 Kings 22. 20.) **For David thy father's sake.** God had made a covenant with David also (2 Sam. 7. 13), and David had been faithful on his side.

13. Howbeit. Here is a second merciful limitation. **One tribe to thy son.**

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

If God had not taken part of the kingdom away from Rehoboam there is reason to believe that he would have been less faithful, and that the whole nation would have sunk deep into idolatry. But if, on the other hand, he had not reserved one tribe for Rehoboam, Jerusalem would have ceased to be the religious capital, and that would have brought more ill consequences than we can well outline.

CRITICAL NOTES.

BY PROFESSOR W. W. DAVIES, D.D.

There is no sadder chapter in the annals of history than the last one in the life of Solomon. It is therefore not strange that the chronicler passes it over in utter silence. How different were his last days from those of his royal father, whom Farrar compares to an April morning, which, if temporarily beclouded, still constantly showed the clear shining after the rain! "The story of Solomon," says the same author, "is the story of one whose heart was perverted and his will enervated by luxury and pride."

Verse 4. When Solomon was old. Assuming that Solomon became king when twenty, and knowing that he reigned forty years (verse 42), he could not have been much over sixty when he died. It is not possible to say how old he was at

the time spoken of here, but it was probably within five or ten years of his death. No attention should be given to the conjecture of Josephus, who says that his reign lasted eighty years. **His wives.** That his reign the preceding verse he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. The number is very large, but not without parallel in both ancient and modern history. It is said that even in this century the Turkish sultan had no fewer than one thousand three hundred women in his harem. (See Lange's Commentary, *in loc.*) It is possible, however, that the text is corrupt, as it often is in the case of numbers. **Turned away his heart.** At first sight it is a mystery how such a wise and devoted man could so utterly fall into apostasy; how he, who could offer the dedicatory prayer,