

two years' siege, and at last setting the city on fire. Alas! for the desolation of Zion! The beloved city, the perfection of beauty, was laid in ashes, the magnificent temple of Solomon, after being pillaged of its golden vessels and treasures, burned to the ground, and the inhabitants at large given up to indiscriminate slaughter. With unparalleled cruelty they slew Zedekiah's sons before his eyes, and then put his eyes out, and binding king, princes, and nobles, and all the chief men of the nation, with their wives and families, they carried them captive in chains to Babylon.

Did the Jews give any occasion for this terrible judgment? They did—they treated with contempt God's messengers, and forsook their national Church—a lesson to us *not to forsake our Church*. Often before this had they been punished by surrounding nations. Often had their holy prophets warned them of the approaching calamity while the veil of futurity drawn aside exhibited to their view their countrymen weeping by the banks of Babel's streams, with their harps suspended on its willows. But the Jews, like some in our Church, turned a deaf ear to warning. And now the long-threatened judgment came upon them at last in a seventy years' captivity as foretold by Jeremiah—their national calamities involving the righteous with the wicked for among the captives taken at different times, we find Daniel and the holy children, and with many other pious men, Ezekiel, the prophet of the captivity.

What a scene of national distress now presented itself on the banks of that strange river, the mighty Euphrates, as well as throughout the whole extent of Judah's land—their king, his eyes put out, princes, officers, warriors, craftsmen, musicians, men and women-singers and children, all manacled as slaves, and at the mercy of their haughty conquerors. Behold the Daughter of Zion, bound by her enemies, as a poor captive, sitting sad and disconsolate by those dark and hostile waters, mingling her tears with their flood! Behold her children faint and broken-hearted, with hope herself denied them, for with the dreadful prospect of seventy years' captivity and slavery before them, they are certain they shall see Zion no more. Was this all? Their worst trial was the dread of being forced to renounce their religion. For not content with the temporal injuries they had inflicted on them, their tyrannical captors, by commanding them to sing in mockery their sacred songs, gave them to understand that they would interfere also with their religion if they thought proper. And, though it is not stated, we have reason to believe that their idolatrous masters also threatened them with penalties, setting before them the horrors of the lions' den, and of the blazing furnace if they refused to comply with the rites and customs of Babylon. Were not the Jewish captives included among "all people, nations and languages" commanded, under pain of a death