

of corruption" (2 Kings 23. 13). The Vulgate has "mount of offense."

**8. And so he did for all his strange wives.** Doubtless many of these worshiped the same god or goddess; thus it is not necessary to suppose that he erected a sanctuary for every one of the seven hundred women in his harem. Though high places to Ashtoreth, Molech, and Chemosh are the only ones mentioned, it is reasonable to think that there were others besides these. It has been suggested that these high places were designed not only for Solomon's wives, but for their servants, and the foreign merchants who frequented the great Hebrew metropolis for commercial purposes.

**9. The Lord was angry with Solomon.** God is a jealous God, and cannot accept divided worship. **Turned away from the Lord God of Israel.** It is very unfortunate that the original word "Jehovah" has been rendered "Lord" in this clause, for it is as much of a proper noun as Milcom or Chemosh. In short it is always a mistake to translate the word. The reader, however, may easily know when the Hebrew has "Jehovah," for then Lord is always printed in small capitals, as here. **Which had appeared unto him twice.** Once at Gibeon and once at Jerusalem. (See 3. 5, and 9. 2.) The enormity of Solomon's sin and the wickedness of his apostasy appear when we consider that Jehovah himself had appeared to him, not once, but twice. How inexpressibly sad it is to think that he who had reached the pinnacle of fame, had been so prosperous and successful in all his undertakings, and who had not only been the favorite of men, but had also enjoyed such intimate communion with God, should so utterly turn away; there is not the shadow of a reason for supposing that Solomon ever repented and returned to God. Those who appeal to Ecclesiastes in proof of his conversion toward the end of his reign have studied that wonderful book to little or no purpose, for they have utterly failed to grasp its meaning and object. To quote Farrar once more, Ecclesiastes "does not contain a single expression of shame or repentance." It has nothing against idolatry.

**11. The Lord said unto Solomon.** Not in a vision; he was too far gone for this mode of communication, but probably through one of the prophets (verse 29). **Thy servant.** Do not fail to read the last part of this chapter (verses 26-40).

**12. In thy days I will not do it.** As God works often by natural means, it required time for the evil to develop. Let us not forget that the evil as well as the good which we do, lives after us, and in due time the seed sown will bear fruit.

I know of no more fitting words with which to close the study of Solomon's life than, "Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

## Thoughts for Young People.

### Lessons from the Time of Solomon's Sin.

**1. Solomon did not sin in "hard times."** There was "rest on every side," "eating, drinking, and making merry;" "neither adversary nor evil occurred." This most terrible example of apostasy is furnished by a prince who luxuriated in peace and prosperity; from which fact we learn that comfort is not always best for us. We are to rejoice in tribulation also.

**2. Solomon did not sin in passion.** No terrible rush of temptation, no sudden guilty love, as when Samson met Delilah, or David saw Bathsheba. Turn to Matt. 4. 3, and read how Jesus, after fasting forty days and forty nights, hungered, and how he was tempted; then turn to 1 Kings 4. 22, 23, and read what Solomon's provision for one day was. It was not need that tempted Solomon. Turn back to Matt. 4 and think how the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them must have dazzled the eyes of the young Nazarene who had not where to lay his head; and then read 1 Kings 4. 21, 24, and notice how supreme was Solomon's dominion. Most of the temptations which beset our Lord would not have been temptations to Solomon at all; but there is one devil that is always at every man's elbow—he who tempts by spiritual pride; by him Solomon fell.

**3. Solomon did not sin through ignorance.** At least, he was old enough to have known better. Just when the oak of his wisdom was ripe, folly, like a parasite, grew up about it and sucked forth its vitality. Remember the story of the castle of Edinburgh, which was sealed on its "inaccessible" side. Many a strong city, many a strong man, has fallen by neglecting to fortify his strongest side. It was the meek Moses who was excluded from the promised land for presumption; it was the patient Job who sinned by impatience; it was the brave Peter that fell through cowardice. Self-confidence is always dangerous; and many a man, after preaching to others, has himself become a castaway. Knowledge, of itself, will not save.

**4. Solomon sinned in the midst of luxury.** "When thou hast eaten and art full beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, his commandments, his judgments, and his statutes." Happy are those who have neither poverty nor riches. We may all join in the Litany of the Prayer Book of the Church of England and say, "In all time of our wealth . . . good Lord, deliver us."

**5. Solomon sinned after repeated warnings.** "He that being often reproved hardeneth his heart shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Warnings had come down to Solomon from the time of Moses, others from his father David, others from God in special dream and vision. He himself had repeatedly and emphatically warned others. And yet he sinned. Let us beware.