

When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men:) that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; (for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house: Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.

If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the Lord toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name: then hear thou in heaven their prayer, and their supplication, and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them: for they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron: that thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God." 1 Kings viii, 22-53.

Then he arose and blessed the congregation. A sacrifice followed consisting of twenty-two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep.

For seven days the dedication lasted. On the eighth day the king dismissed the people, and they went home rejoicing

over "all the goodness the Lord had done for David, His servant, and for Israel, His people."

The further history of this magnificent edifice is all the more saddening, when contrasted with the glorious dedication and acceptance of the Lord. For thirty-four years only did the temple retain its original splendor. At that time, only five years after the death of Solomon, it was plundered by an invading foe.

The first cause that led to this profanation and to total destruction later, is plainly traceable in the history, and may be briefly stated for the instruction it conveys. Solomon was unquestionably a man possessing superior wisdom. Yet, this could not keep him from erring, as soon as he relied on his own prudence alone. The wisest man that ever lived was as much dependent on the Lord, as the man of ordinary intelligence. Among the foolish things that Solomon did was to enter into marital relations with foreign princesses. These exercised their influence over him, causing him to build altars to their deities in Canaan, introducing idolatry in the vicinity of the temple. Rehoboam, his son and successor, grew up in this duplicity of religion, witnessing on the one hand the worship of Jehovah and the other the worship of Baal. His mother was a beautiful Ammonitess, a race cursed by Jehovah on account of their sins.

As soon as he was crowned, his character became plainly visible. He wanted to serve both the Lord and Baal, and the nation followed his example. The condition of the people five years after Solomon's death, brought about through the king marrying foreign women, who had no sympathy for the Jewish religion, is thus described:

"And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed above all that their fathers had done. For they also built them high places and images and groves, on every hill, and under every green tree. And there were also Sodomites in the land, and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel." (1 Kings xiv, 22-24.)

For this cause the anger of the Lord was kindled, and he prepared a chastisement. An Egyptian ruler, Shishak, invaded the country and plundered the temple and carried away much of its treasure. God did not care for the building with its gold and silver, when His people were apostatizing from Him.

Had Israel at this time repented, all would again have become well, but they did not repent. The worship of God was more and more neglected, and sacred things were no longer held sacred. The sons of a certain woman named Athalia, on one occasion deliberately broke or otherwise damaged the ornaments of the walls and the expensive vessels. (2 Chron. xxiv, 7.) Later on the king, Ahaz, entered into an alliance with the Assyrian monarch against Syria and the ten tribes, on which occasion he sacrilegiously took whatever gold and silver he found in the temple and sent it as a present to the heathen ruler. He further took the brazen altar in the inner court and sent it to Damascus to be used for idolatrous purposes, and the great baptismal font he pulled to pieces.

Once in a while a good king arose in Jerusalem who endeavored to effect a reformation and repair the temple, but

the people were far gone in sin. The first foolishness of Solomon, in deviating from the word of the Lord in the matter of his domestic relations, developed into disastrous results to the nation.

During the reign of Jehojachin Nebuchadnezzar robbed the temple of all valuables he could find and carried them away into Babylon, and the following year, he set fire to it, thus executing the judgment of the Lord on a rebellious people. They had rejected Him. He now rejected them. There was no longer any need of a temple.

The Temple of Zerubbabel.

The captivity of the Jews lasted 70 years. During this time Jerusalem was laid waste and the magnificent temple of Solomon was a mass of ruins. The wealthy and influential of the people were captives in a foreign land, while those who remained in Palestine mingled with the Gentiles and suffered oppression.

Through a proclamation by the Persian Emperor Cyrus in the year 536 B.C. the captives were permitted to return home, and many availed themselves of the opportunity. The king also restored to the returning Jews the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple, and which amounted to five thousand four hundred in all, consisting of various utensils of gold and silver (Ezra i, 10.)

A company of forty and two thousand three hundred and three score left Babylon for Canaan, including some who claimed to be descendants of the ten tribes, but who could not prove this by their genealogies, the records being lost, wherefore it was decided to take them along, but not to confer on any of them the holy Priesthood, until a prophet should arise to decide their claim, authoritatively, by urn and thuminiin (Ezra ii, 59-63). This first company was led by Zerubbabel. Another company led by Ezra arrived several years later.

As soon as Zerubbabel arrived in Jerusalem he commenced to restore the temple. Assisted by Jeshua and other pious men, he first erected the altar of burnt offering and commenced offering sacrifices to Jehovah. Then they brought cedar from Lebanon and employed a force of laborers to begin the work of building. The new foundation was laid in the second year after their return with imposing ceremonies, with music and song. Many of the people shouted for joy on this occasion, while the aged veterans who had seen the temple of Solomon could not restrain their tears (Ezra iii, 12, 13).

The work now went on, though frequently interrupted. As soon as the rest of the inhabitants of Canaan saw that the returned Jews reared the sacred structure they offered to join them in the work. On being refused—because they had forfeited their standing by intermixing with their idolatrous neighbors, both religiously and socially—they endeavored to put all manner of obstacles in the way of the temple builders. They employed lawyers who brought complaints against them before the king (Ezra iv, 4-24), charging them with rebellion. As a result King Artaxerxes commanded the work to be discontinued, because, as he states in his royal proclamation, although there was no proof of rebellious intentions at present,