

Lesson VIII.

ISAIAH'S MESSAGE TO JUDAH · November 20, 1904

Isaiah 1: 1-9, 16-20. Study vs. 1-20. Commit to memory vs. 18-20. Read Isaiah ch. 5.

GOLDEN TEXT—Cease to do evil; learn to do well.—Isaiah 1: 16, 17.

1 The vision of Isai'ah the son of A'moz, which he saw concerning Ju'dah and Jeru'salem in the days of Uzzi'ah, Jo'tham, A'haz, and Hez'ek'iah, kings of Ju'dah.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Is'rael doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Is'rael unto anger, and they are gone away backward.

5 Why should ye be estricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Revised Version—1 deal corruptly; 2 despised; 3 will; 4 still stricken, that ye revolt; 5 festering; 6 oil; 7 omit unto anger; 8 estranged and gone backward; 9 booth.

7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zi'on is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sod'om, and we should have been like unto Gomor'rah.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

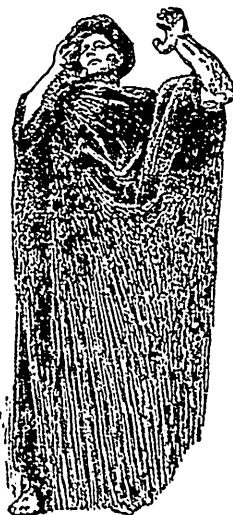
18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—A time of some great invasion of Judah by a foreign foe (vs. 7-9), either the Syrians allied with the Northern Kingdom, Israel, 735 B.C. (2 Kgs. 16: 5), or the Assyrians under Sennacherib, 701 B.C. (1 Kgs. 18: 17); Jerusalem, where Isaiah chiefly prophesied.



Isaiah

From Painting by Sargent in
Public Library, Boston

Connection—Isaiah, called of God to be a prophet (ch. 6), prophesied in Judah during the reigns of four kings, v. 1. The date is later than that of our last Lesson by more than one hundred years.

I. A DIVINE AC-CUSATION.—1. The vision; this term includes all Isaiah's prophetic utterances, collected in the book bearing his name. The prophets were called "seers" (1 Sam. 9: 9), and hence his message was called "vision," (something seen.) Of Isaiah; the most famous of the prophets among the Hebrew people in the eighth century, B.C. The

son of Amoz; different from the prophet Amos. Concerning Judah (the southern kingdom) and Jerusalem (its capital); concerning these first, but because he, like the rest of God's prophets, saw the heart of the matter, the great underlying truth, he speaks to all times as well. In the days, etc. See

Connection. It was a period of more than forty years.

2, 3. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. The prophet has heard the Lord's word in secret. Now he will speak it out so that the whole world may hear. The Lord hath spoken. A prophet means a spokesman of God. Nourished and brought up children. How tenderly and wisely God had dealt with His children, Israel, giving them a great place among the nations! They have rebelled; by their (1) idolatry; (2) immorality; (3) rejection of God's prophets. Against me; in spite of His love and care. The ox... the ass... Israel... my people. The stupidest animals on the farm know their owner and master, but God's people do not see (know) and will not stop to think (consider), that to Him they belong, and that Him they should serve.

II. A DIVINE THREATENING.—4. The prophet now speaks, giving a sad picture of the sinful people and the doom that awaits them. Seed of evildoers; an evil-doing race. Corrupters; holding false beliefs and living wicked lives. Forsaken the Lord; by offering merely formal worship, not of the heart. Despised (Rev. Ver.); by disobeying His commands. The Holy One of Israel; Himself holy, and the sanctifier of His people. Gone away backward; deliberately turned their back on God.

5-9. Why, etc.? What folly to bring down still heavier punishment by continuing in sin! Like a body full of disease and wounds, the whole nation from the lowest (the sole of the foot) to the highest (the head) is full of sin, vs. 5, 6. For their sin, the land is being laid waste by their foreign foe, v. 7. (See Time and Place.) If they go on thus, soon the daughter of Zion (the city of Jerusalem) shall stand solitary in a desolate country, like a frail booth in a vineyard (Rev. Ver.), to be used only for a few weeks while the fruit was ripening, as a shelter for the night watchers, or a lodge for the same purpose in a cucumber field. The city would be