

## The Psychology of Failure

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*Ezekiel xvi, 49.*

The early part of this chapter is highly poetic. The writer speaks of Israel as a person, and traces her history. He takes us back to the time when she was a little unwashed, unclothed child, thrown out on the highway to die. That refers to those days when they were in Egypt—overwrought, unpitied slaves.

But God took his uncared for child, washed it, fed it, tended it, till ultimately it was full grown, and very beautiful. This refers to the days of maturity when the "little one became a thousand."

Then the author very beautifully says: "the time of love came." Israel was now full grown, and began to make alliances, but alas! now grief came. She allied herself with pagan people. She went still further; she took her beautiful jewels which God bestowed upon her, and made them into idols and worshipped them! All this actually occurred. God took Israel up from Egypt but she forgot Him.

Further on in this same chapter, we hear of Israel's relations—the mother and sisters. Sodom is a sister. Here we are taught the unity and solidarity of the race. All American, Canadian, British, German, Chinese—come from one blood. And, as brothers and sisters become separated through the exigencies of life, and are thereafter strange to each other, so the members of the human family, now widely scattered, forget, too often, that they have a common origin and should have common interests.

The prophet specifies Sodom and dwells upon her failure. We get a glimpse of Sodom in Genesis. It was situated in a well-watered place, and the waving fields that environed it, attracted money-loving Lot. Sodom was a wicked city. Lust and crime found a home in her streets, so that God's fire came down and destroyed the place. Sodom failed, then, but her failure was not unrelated. There was reason for it. That failure has a psychology. We read that Sodom enjoyed "fulness of bread." There the granaries were full and the white face of famine was unknown. Plenty made her home there, and the people should have been happy and thankful.

We have the names of the children of plenty—"Pride" and "Idleness," and "Selfishness." Pride is a very undesirable child, fond of show and extravagance. We can readily believe that Sodom was a vain place—and correspondingly superficial. Then Idleness—that big, soft-handed fellow, with the slouching gait, with not enough energy to get out of his own way—he was there. Sodom was, we