

and cared for, yet careless and unthinking; corrected, yet not cured. And notice the name by which this people is addressed—"Ye rulers of Sodom . . . ye people of Gomorrah"—that was the only name worthy of them!

A "nation" has a grand and important, and rather a distant sound—what a chasm there seems between one obscure person and a nation! Yet it must be borne in mind that a nation is made up of individuals; it is composed of men and women, boys and girls. What they are, that the nation will be.

There are many young people, and old too, who are religious, paying right and proper attention to outward ordinances. They are taught; they have Bibles in their hands, and texts on their lips. Yet it might be said of them: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib," but they forget their Creator and Preserver, their Lord and their Redeemer. Perhaps they have even received correction, but are not healed. Yet for all there is the invitation, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, yet shall they be as white as snow." If this is neglected, what remains but judgment?

### Bible Reading Lesson Analysis.

BY JOHN WILLIAMSON, M.D., D.D.

#### The Sinful Nation. Isa. 1. 1-18.

1. "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." That is, repent, which is to stop sinning and to start personal righteousness. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him." Isa. 55. 7; 2 Chron. 6. 26; Job 11. 14; Psa. 34. 14; 2 Tim. 2. 19.

2. "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amos," ver. 1. A divine mode of prophetic inspiration. "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side," etc. Ezek. 1. 10; Joel 2. 28; Gen. 12. 7; Num. 24. 4; 2 Cor. 12. 1.

3. "Isaiah the son of Amos," ver. 1. Appropriately called "the evangelical prophet," because he so wonderfully set forth the whole scheme of atoning mercy in our beloved Messiah. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities," etc. Isa. 53. 5; 7. 14-16; 9. 6, 7; 11. 1-10; 49; 53; 60; 61. 1-3.

4. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth," ver. 2. When the Creator speaks the universe of the created should listen. "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." Deut. 32. 1; Psa. 50. 4; Isa. 44. 6; Hab. 2. 20; 1 Sam. 3. 9.

5. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me," ver. 2. Of all sins that of ingratitude is most common, and basest. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." Rom. 1. 21; Psa. 38. 20; 109. 5; Eccl. 9. 15; Deut. 32. 18.

6. "My people," ver. 3. The children of Israel, the seed of Abraham, were God's chosen and peculiar people. "And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." Gen. 17. 6; Deut. 7. 6; 29. 12, 13; Judges 2. 1; Exod. 6. 4.

7. "A people laden with iniquity," ver. 4. A history

of the iniquity of Israel. "But to Israel he saith, All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Rom. 10. 21; Deut. 1. 43; 9. 16; 2 Kings 17. 9; Psa. 78. 8.

8. "The Holy One of Israel," ver. 4. Holiness, or wholeness, a perfect nature, is one of God's essential characteristics. "For the Lord our God is holy." Psa. 99. 9; Isa. 5. 16; 57. 15; Exod. 15. 11; John 17. 11.

9. "Why should ye be stricken any more," ver. 5. Why court any more punishment? "For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts." Isa. 9. 13; Jer. 36. 31; Amos 3. 2; Hosea 4. 6-9; 12. 2; Neh. 9. 26, 27.

10. "There is no soundness in it," ver. 6. The sinfulness was universal, corrupting every member of the Hebrew people, from the least to the greatest. "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb; yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound." Hos. 5. 13; Jer. 8. 22; Isa. 59. 3; Prov. 30. 12; Amos 5. 12.

11. "They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment," ver. 6. A truthful picture of the effect of confirmed sinning upon the individual human soul. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Jas. 1. 15; Rom. 6. 21, 23; 2 Pet. 2. 14; Gal. 5. 19-21; Ezek. 16. 52.

12. "Your country is desolate," ver. 7. An outline of retributive providence suffered by Israel for her sins. "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar. . . . A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young." Deut. 28. 49-52; 2 Chron. 28. 5-8, 18-21; Deut. 31. 16, 17; Ezek. 16. 27, 57.

13. "The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard," ver. 8. Jerusalem, the "holy city," remained, though besieged, a solitary survivor, amid almost universal desolation. "And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were a garden; he hath destroyed his palaces of the assembly." Lam. 2. 6; Neh. 9. 26, 27; Jer. 4. 17; Lam. 1. 8; Dan. 9. 7.

14. "The Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant," ver. 9. It was not possible for God's covenant with this people to utterly fail. "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22. 18; 12. 3; Num. 24. 9; Jer. 31. 33; Acts 3. 25.

15. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom," ver. 10. How were Sodom and Gomorrah like in wickedness Israel had come to resemble. "And the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Gen. 13. 13; 18. 20; 19. 24; Isa. 13. 19; Matt. 10. 15.

16. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" ver. 11. Not the letter, but the spirit, of the divinely appointed sacrifices were pleasing to God. "For the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psa. 51. 17; Isa. 66. 2; Mic. 6. 8; Heb. 11. 4; 13. 15.

17. "Wash you, make you clean," ver. 16. "Do your part to make yourselves right—I ask no more." "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. 33. 11; 2 Sam. 14. 14; Lam. 3. 33; Jer. 4. 14; Jas. 4. 8.

18. "Learn to do well," ver. 17. To stop sinning is not enough, active righteousness must at once be entered upon. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. 14. 17; Isa. 59. 17; Eph. 6. 14, 17; Psa. 40. 9; Zeph. 2. 3.