

5. Why should ye be stricken? From this verse to the ninth the evil results of sin upon the nation are shown. The Rev. Ver. reads this clause, "Why will ye still be stricken, that ye revolt more and more?" That is, why do ye revolt from God more and more, while ye are so scourged for your disobedience? **The whole head is sick.** The nation is spoken of as an individual, just as we say "the body politic;" and all through its members are the ravages wrought by sin. The nation is made up of individuals who show its traits and share in its trials.

6. There is no soundness in it. Every class of people were corrupt in the prophet's day, and the exceptions were so few that in this brief summary they are not noticed. Afterward, in chapter 6, 13, he begins to observe "the loily seed," the true hope of Israel. **Putrefying sores.** Rev. Ver. "festering sores." **Not been closed.** The evil results of sin are apparent to all, and there is no attempt to conceal them. (4) *So now, ev'ry drunkard and debauchee bears on his face the brand of his shame.*

7. Your country is desolate. We have records of several invasions in Judah during the reigns of Uzziah and Amaziah, and the Assyrian monuments hint at more. There is no doubt that the lowlands and the foot-hills were the scene of almost constant raids of Egyptians, Philistines, Syrians, and Moabites, and were marched over by countless hosts. **Cities are burned.** Ancient wars were far more destructive than modern; cities were attacked without warning, the old were ruthlessly slaughtered, the young were carried away as slaves, and all property that could not be removed was burned.

8. The daughter of Zion. This refers to Jerusalem, which stood alone in the desolation, as yet untaken, an incidental proof that this book was written before the captivity. **Is left as a cottage** (Rev. Ver. a booth) **in a vineyard.** The capital stood forth amid the waste, looking like one of those temporary buildings put up in the vineyard or the garden during the gathering season, and then left in loneliness. **As a besieged city.** The ruins all around it made it appear like a city surrounded with hostile camps.

9. Except the Lord of hosts. The prophet would have his people know that though the destruction came through enemies, it was wrought under the Lord's will, and for his purpose of discipline; and also that throughout God was caring for his own true Israel by preserving a part of the people. **A very small remnant.** This was the "holy seed," the faithful few who were to keep the torch of true religion burning, and in time become the restorers of Israel. **We should have been as Sodom.** Sodom and Gomorrah, the guilty cities of the plain, probably located just north of the Dead Sea, destroyed utterly for their sins. Gen. 19. Like them in sin was Jerusalem, and but for God's mercy and "the remnant" it would have been like them in its fate. (5) *Let us make sure that we belong to this remnant of grace.*

10. Hear the word of the Lord. Thus far has been the declaration of woe, now comes the exhortation. **Ye rulers of Sodom.** Jerusalem is compared to Sodom, because pride, fleshly lusts, and cruelty were its sins. Ezek. 16, 49. The prophet will now show them that they were guilty, though the forms of religion were observed among them.

11. To what purpose. They might declare themselves dutiful toward God, because the daily sacrifice was offered in the temple, and the regular holy-days

were observed. Just so now, many consider ours a Christian country because it has many churches, who in the services of religion are rendered. **The multitude of your sacrifices.** There was a daily offering twice in the temple, and special sacrifices on various occasions of the monthly and yearly festivals. **Burnt offerings.** These were sacrifices entirely burned upon the altar, expressive of entire consecration to God. These Jews offered the sacrifice, but failed to give what it represented, *themselves*, an offering of far more consequence. **I delight not in the blood.** The mere offering was not what God desired; but he did desire the hearts of the worshippers, and these they failed to give. (6) *God seeks still the service of the heart rather than of the lips in his house.*

12. When ye come to appear. They came into his courts, but to worship with reverence, it was **to tread them**, or, as the Rev. Ver. reads, "to trample" them. They had no more consciousness of the sacredness of the place, and no more spirit of prayer, than the beasts which they led over the marble floor.

13. Bring no more vain oblations. The "oblation" is the meat-offering (Rev. Ver., meal-offering), a sacrifice of vegetable food, expressing thanksgiving to God. It was vain, because given in a heartless, perfunctory manner. **Incense is an abomination.** That is, such as they laid on the altar, without true prayer. **The new moons.** The Israelite month began with each new moon, and its first day was kept with religious service. **The calling of assemblies.** The solemnities at which the people were called to meet, as the feast of tabernacles and of Pentecost. **I cannot away with.** The Rev. Ver. changes this to "I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting." In other words, "Iniquitous lives and solemn services, I cannot endure them together!" (7) *Our Sundays and our Mondays must be kept in harmony, if God is to accept either of them.* We cannot cheat on one day and come before God on another, and find favor with the Most High.

14, 15. Appointed feasts. The set times for worship, whether on Sabbath, the opening of the month, or through the year. **My soul hateth.** God is displeased with the outward form when there is no heart-worship. **When ye spread forth your hands.** The Jews in their public worship prayed either standing or kneeling upright, with their hands held upward and the palms extended. **Your hands are full of blood.** This was the reason why God would not hear them pray, because he saw on their hands the blood of their crimes. So Lady Macbeth in dreams saw her white hands blood-red.

16, 17. Wash you. These two verses state the duties for Israel and Judah; how they can make their prayers availing and their sacrifices acceptable; by a true repentance, a repentance not of emotion, but of action, turning from sin to righteousness. **Seek judgment.** That is, do justice, not only to self, but to others.

18. Come, now. The last verse of the lesson presents God's gracious promise of forgiveness and cleansing. **Let us reason together.** Let us meet and confer together. God will declare what he is willing to do. **Though your sins be as scarlet.** He had just spoken of their hands as full of blood; but red as they are, they can be cleansed. **White as snow.** What are they? But God's can take away guilt and transform a sinner into a saint? **As wool.** White wool, pure after washing, is here referred to.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The sinful nation. Isa. 1, 1-18.
Tu. Seed of evil doers. Isa. 57, 3-12.
W. An unheeding people. Jer. 9, 1-11.
Th. Unsound in all parts. Jer. 8, 1-22.
F. Vain teaching. Matt. 15, 1-30.
S. All people sinful. Gal. 3, 12-22.
8. The duty of all men. 1 Pet. 3, 8-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Cease to do evil; learn to do well. Isa. 1, 16, 17.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 248, Dominion Hymnal.

O happy is the child who hears
 Instruction's warning voice!

Dominton Hymnal.

Sing them over again to me,
 Wonderful words of Life.

No. 256, Dominion Hymnal.

He leadeth me! oh! blessed thought,
 Oh! words with heavenly comfort fraught.

TIME.—Perhaps about B. C. 740, or twenty-seven years earlier than the date of the last lesson.

PLACE.—The land of Judah.

RULERS.—Ahaz, twelfth King of Judah; Pekah,