

THE BOOK OF

HOSEA

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

INTRODUCTION

THE first of the twelve minor prophets in the order of the canon (called "minor," not as less in point of inspired authority, but simply in point of size). The twelve are first mentioned by Jesus, the son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus 49:10). St. Stephen, in ⁴⁰⁷²Acts 7:42 (in referring to ³¹⁵⁷Amos 5:27), quotes them as forming one collective body of writings, "the book of the prophets." So JEROME and MELITO, the first Greek father who has left us a catalogue of these books. The collection of the sacred books is by Jewish tradition attributed to the great synagogue of learned scribes formed by Ezra. Many think Nehemiah completed this collection by adding to the books already in the canon those of his own times. Malachi, the last in the series, probably aided him in determining with infallible authority what books were entitled to be ranked in the inspired canon. The chronological order differs from the canonical. Joel, about 810 B.C.; Jonah, about 810 B.C., or, as others, *first*, 862 B.C.; Amos, about 790 B.C.; Hosea, about 784 B.C. Hosea, the contemporary of Isaiah, Micah, and Amos, seems to have entered on his prophetic office in the last years of Jeroboam (contemporary in part with Uzziah), and to have ended it in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, 722 B.C., that is, about *sixty* years in all, from 784 B.C. to 722 B.C. The prophets, however, were not uninterruptedly engaged in prophesying. Considerable intervals elapsed, though their office as divinely commissioned public teachers was never wholly laid aside. The Book of Hosea which we have constitutes only that portion of his public teachings which the Holy Spirit saw fit to preserve for the benefit of the Church. The cause of his being placed first of the twelve was, probably, the length, the vivid earnestness, and patriotism of his prophecies, as well as their closer resemblance to those of the greater prophets. His style is abrupt, sententious, and unrounded; the connecting particles are few; there are changes of person, and anomalies of gender, number, and construction. His name means *Salvation*. He was son of Beerī, of the tribe of Issachar, born in Beth-shemesh [JEROME]. His mention, in the inscription, of Uzziah,

Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, is no proof that he belonged to Judah: for the prophets in Israel regarded its separation from Judah, *civil* as well as religious, as an apostasy from God, who promised the dominion of the theocracy to the line of David. Hence Elijah in Israel took *twelve* stones to represent Judah, as well as Israel (^{<4183>}1 Kings 18:31). Hence Hosea dates from Judah's kings, as well as from Jeroboam of Israel, though he belonged to Israel, with whose sins and fate his book is chiefly occupied. He, however, makes incidental references to Judah. His first prophecy foretells the overthrow of Jehu's house, fulfilled on the death of Jeroboam, Jehu's great-grandson (^{<4252>}2 Kings 15:12), in Zachariah, Jeroboam's son, the fourth and last from Jehu, conspired against by Shallum. This first prediction was doubtless in Jeroboam's life, as Zachariah, his son, was only suffered to reign six months; thus the inscription is verified that "the word of the Lord came unto him in the days of Jeroboam" (^{<3001>}Hosea 1:1). Again, in ^{<3044>}Hosea 10:14, Shalmaneser's expedition against Israel is alluded to *as past*, that is, the first inroad against King Hoshea, who began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz; so that as Ahaz' whole reign was sixteen years, the prophecy seems to have been given about the beginning of Hezekiah's reign. Thus the inscription is confirmed that the exercise of his prophetic functions was of such a protracted duration.

Hosea (^{<3011>}Hosea 11:1) is quoted in ^{<4025>}Matthew 2:15; also ^{<3067>}Hosea 6:6 in ^{<4023>}Matthew 9:13 12:7; compare ^{<4025>}Romans 9:25,26, quoting ^{<3010>}Hosea 1:10 2:1,23; ^{<4155>}1 Corinthians 15:55, quoting ^{<3034>}Hosea 13:14; ^{<4020>}1 Peter 2:10, quoting ^{<3009>}Hosea 1:9,10 2:23. Messianic references are not frequent; but the predictions of the future conversion of Israel to the Lord their God, and David their king, and of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that his spiritual seed should be as the sand of the sea (^{<3010>}Hosea 1:10 3:5), clearly refer to the New Testament dispensation.

The first and third chapters are in prose, the rest of the book is rhythmical.

CHAPTER 1

HOSEA 1:1-11.

INSCRIPTION.

Spiritual whoredom of Israel set forth by symbolical acts; Gomer taken to wife at God's command: Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah, and Lo-Ammi, the children. Yet a promise of Judah and Israel's restoration.

1. *The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea* — See *Introduction*.

Jeroboam — the second; who died in the fifteenth year of Uzziah's forty-one years' reign. From his time forth *all* Israel's kings worshipped false gods: Zachariah (^{<121519>}2 Kings 15:9), Menahem (^{<121518>}2 Kings 15:18), Pekahiah (^{<121514>}2 Kings 15:24), Pekah (^{<121518>}2 Kings 15:28), Hoshea (^{<121712>}2 Kings 17:2). As Israel was most flourishing externally under Jeroboam II, who recovered the possessions seized on by Syria, Hosea's prophecy of its downfall at that time was the more striking as it could not have been foreseen by mere human sagacity. Jonah the prophet had promised success to Jeroboam II from God, not for the king's merit, but from God's mercy to Israel; so the coast of Israel was restored by Jeroboam II from the entering of Hamath to the sea of the plain (^{<121423>}2 Kings 14:23-27).

2. *beginning* — not of the prophet's predictions generally, but of those spoken by *Hosea*.

take ... wife of whoredoms — not externally acted, but internally and in vision, as a pictorial illustration of Israel's unfaithfulness [HENGSTENBERG]. Compare ^{<123118>}Ezekiel 16:8,15, etc. Besides the loathsomeness of such a marriage, if an external act, it would require years for the birth of three children, which would weaken the symbol (compare ^{<123018>}Ezekiel 4:4). HENDERSON objects that there is no hint of the transaction being fictitious: Gomer fell into lewdness *after* her union with Hosea, not before; for thus only she was a fit symbol of Israel, who lapsed into spiritual whoredom *after* the marriage contract with God on Sinai, and made even before at the call of the patriarchs of Israel. Gomer is called "a wife of whoredoms," anticipatively.

children of whoredoms — The kingdom collectively is viewed as a *mother*; the individual subjects of it are spoken of as her *children*. "Take"

being applied to both implies that they refer to the same thing viewed under different aspects. The “children” were not the prophet’s own, but born of adultery, and presented to him as his [KITTO, *Biblical Cyclopaedia*]. Rather, “children of whoredoms” means that the children, like their mother, fell into spiritual fornication. Compare “bare *him* a son” (see ^{<3014>}Hosea 2:4,5). Being children of a spiritual whore, they naturally fell into her whorish ways.

3. *Gomer ... daughter of Diblaim* — symbolical names; literally, “completion, daughter of grape cakes”; the dual expressing the double layers in which these dainties were baked. So, *one completely given up to sensuality*. MAURER explains “Gomer” as literally, “a burning coal.” Compare ^{<1057>}Proverbs 6:27,29, as to an adulteress; ^{<8301>}Job 31:9,12.

4. *Jezebel* — that is, “God will scatter” (compare Zechariah 10:9). It was the royal city of Ahab and his successors, in the tribe of Issachar. Here Jehu exercised his greatest cruelties (^{<12916>}2 Kings 9:16,25,33 10:11,14,17). There is in the name an allusion to “Israel” by a play of letters and sounds.

5. *bow* — the prowess (^{<1485>}Jeremiah 49:35; compare ^{<1424>}Genesis 49:24).

valley of Jezreel — afterwards called Esdraelon, extending ten miles in breadth, and in length from Jordan to the Mediterranean near Mount Carmel, the great battlefield of Palestine (^{<1068>}Judges 6:33 ^{<10211>}1 Samuel 29:1).

6. *Lo-ruhamah* — that is, “not an object of mercy or gracious favor.”

take ... away — Israel, as a kingdom, was never restored from Assyria, as Judah was from Babylon after seventy years. MAURER translates according to the primary meaning, “No more will I have mercy on the house of Israel, so as to *pardon* them.”

7. *Judah* is only incidentally mentioned to form a contrast to *Israel*.

by the Lord their God — more emphatic than “by Myself”; by that Jehovah (Me) whom they worship as *their God*, whereas ye despise Him.

not ... by bow — on which ye Israelites rely (^{<3005>}Hosea 1:5, “the bow of Israel”); Jeroboam II was famous as a warrior (^{<12485>}2 Kings 14:25). Yet it was not by their warlike power Jehovah would save Judah (^{<10747>}1 Samuel 17:47 ^{<13111>}Psalms 20:7). The deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib (^{<12852>}2 Kings 19:35), and the restoration from Babylon, are herein predicted.

8. *weaned* — said to complete the symbolical picture, not having any special signification as to Israel [HENDERSON]. Israel was bereft of all the privileges which were as needful to them as milk is to infants (compare

^{<4900>}Psalm 131:2 ^{<6000>}1 Peter 2:2) [VATABLUS]. Israel was *not suddenly*, but *gradually* cast off; God bore with them with long-suffering, until they were incurable [CALVIN]. But as it is not God, but *Gomer* who weans Lo-ruhamah, the weaning may imply the lust of Gomer, who was hardly weaned when she is again pregnant [MANGER].

9. *Lo-Ammi* — once “My people,” but henceforth *not* so (^{<3608>}Ezekiel 16:8). The intervals between the marriage and the successive births of the three children, imply that three successive generations are intended. Jezreel, the first child, represents the dynasty of Jeroboam I and his successors, ending with Jehu’s shedding the blood of Jeroboam’s line in Jezreel; it was there that Jezebel was slain, in vengeance for Naboth’s blood shed in the same Jezreel (^{<1101>}1 Kings 16:1 ^{<1102>}2 Kings 9:21,30). The scenes of Jezreel were to be enacted over again on Jehu’s degenerate race. At Jezreel Assyria routed Israel [JEROME]. The child’s name associates past sins, intermediate punishments, and final overthrow. Lo-ruhamah (“not pitied”), the second child, is a *daughter*, representing the effeminate period which followed the overthrow of the first dynasty, when Israel was at once abject and impious. Lo-Ammi (“not my people”), the third child, a *son*, represents the vigorous dynasty (^{<1205>}2 Kings 14:25) of Jeroboam II; but, as prosperity did not bring with it revived piety, they were still *not God’s people*.

10. Literally fulfilled *in part* at the return from Babylon, in which many Israelites joined with Judah. Spiritually, the believing seed of Jacob or Israel, Gentiles as well as Jews, numerous “as the sand” (^{<1012>}Genesis 32:12); the Gentiles, once not God’s people, becoming His “sons” (^{<8112>}John 1:12 ^{<1205>}Romans 9:25,26 ^{<1010>}1 Peter 2:10 ^{<3101>}1 John 3:1). To be fulfilled in its literal *fullness* hereafter in Israel’s restoration (^{<5113>}Romans 11:26).

the living God — opposed to their *dead* idols.

11. *Judah ... Israel ... together* — (^{<23112>}Isaiah 11:12,13 ^{<2408>}Jeremiah 3:18 ^{<3523>}Ezekiel 34:23 37:16-24).

one head — Zerubbabel typically; Christ antotypically, under whom alone Israel and Judah are joined, the “Head” of the Church (^{<4002>}Ephesians 1:22 5:23), and of the hereafter united kingdom of Judah and Israel (^{<2405>}Jeremiah 34:5,6 ^{<3523>}Ezekiel 34:23). Though “appointed” by the Father (^{<4006>}Psalm 2:6), Christ is in another sense “appointed” as their Head by His people, when they accept and embrace Him as such.

out of the land — of the Gentiles among whom they sojourn.

the day of Jezreel — “The day of one” is the time of God’s special visitation of him, either in wrath or in mercy. Here “Jezreel” is in a

different sense from that in ^{<300>}Hosea 1:4, “God will sow,” not “God will scatter”; they shall be *the seed of God*, planted by God again in their own land (^{<2016>}Jeremiah 24:6 31:28 32:41 ^{<3015>}Amos 9:15).

CHAPTER 2

~~<XIII>~~ HOSEA 2:1-23.

APPLICATION OF THE SYMBOLS IN THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Israel's spiritual fornication, and her threatened punishment: yet a promise of God's restored favor, when chastisements have produced their designed effect.

1. *Say ... unto ... brethren, Ammi*, etc. — that is, When the prediction (~~<XIII>~~Hosea 1:11) shall be accomplished, then ye will call one another, as *brothers* and *sisters* in the family of God, Ammi and Ruhamah.

2. *Plead* — expostulate.

mother — that is the nation *collectively*. The address is to “her children,” that is, to the *individual* citizens of the state (compare ~~<XIII>~~Isaiah 50:1).

for she is not my wife — She has deprived herself of her high privilege by spiritual adultery.

out of her sight — rather, “from her face.” Her very countenance unblushingly betrayed her lust, as did also her exposed “breasts.”

3. *set her as in the day ... born* — (~~<XIII>~~Ezekiel 16:4 23:25,26,28,29). The day of her political “birth” was when God delivered her from the bondage of Egypt, and set up the theocracy.

make her as a wilderness — (~~<XIII>~~Jeremiah 6:8 ~~<XIII>~~Zephaniah 2:13). Translate, “make her as the wilderness,” namely, that in which she passed forty years on her way to her goodly possession of Canaan. With this agrees the mention of “thirst” (compare ~~<XIII>~~Jeremiah 2:6).

4. *her children* — Not even her *individual* members shall escape the doom of the nation collectively, for they are individually guilty.

5. *I will go after* — The *Hebrew* expresses a *settled determination*.

lovers — the idols which Israel fancied to be the givers of all their goods, whereas God gave all these goods (~~<XIII>~~Hosea 2:8-13; compare ~~<XIII>~~Jeremiah 44:17-19).

bread and ... water — the *necessaries* of life in food.

wool ... flax — clothing.

oil ... drink — perfumed unguents and palatable drinks: the *luxuries* of Hebrew life.

6, 7. thorns ... wall — (^{<389B>}Job 19:8 ^{<270D>}Lamentations 3:7,9). The hindrances which the captivity interposed between Israel and her idols. As she attributes all her temporal blessings to idols, I will reduce her to straits in which, when she in vain has sought help from false gods, she will at last seek Me as her only God and Husband, as at the first (^{<254E>}Isaiah 54:5 ^{<318A>}Jeremiah 3:14 ^{<340E>}Ezekiel 16:8).

then — before Israel's apostasy, under Jeroboam. The way of duty is hedged *about* with thorns; it is the way of sin that is hedged *up* with thorns. Crosses in an evil course are God's hedges to turn us from it. Restraining grace and restraining providences (even sicknesses and trials) are great blessings when they stop us in a course of sin. Compare ^{<215H>}Luke 15:14-18, "I will arise, and go to my father." So here, "I will go, and return," etc; crosses in the both cases being sanctified to produce this effect.

8. she did not know that I — not the idols, as she thought: the "lovers" alluded to in ^{<300E>}Hosea 2:5.

which they prepared for Baal — that is, of which they made images of Baal, or at least the plate covering of them (^{<300E>}Hosea 8:4). Baal was the Phoenician sun-god: answering to the female Astarte, the moon-goddess. The name of the idol is found in the Phoenician Hannibal, Hasdrubal. Israel borrowed it from the Tyrians.

9. my corn ... my wool ... my flax — in contrast to "my bread ... my wool ... my flax," (^{<300E>}Hosea 2:5). Compare also ^{<312D>}Hosea 2:21-23, on God as the great First Cause giving these through secondary instruments in nature. "Return, and take away," is equivalent to, "I will take back again," namely, by sending storms, locusts, Assyrian enemies, etc. "Therefore," that is, because she did not acknowledge Me as the Giver.

in the time thereof — in the harvest-time.

10. lewdness — rather, "the shame of her nakedness"; laying aside the figure, "I will expose her in *her state, bereft of every necessary*, before her lovers," that is, the idols (personified, as if they could see), who, nevertheless, can give her no help. "Discover" is appropriate to stripping off the self-flatteries of her hypocrisy.

11. *her feast days* — of Jeroboam’s appointment, distinct from the Mosaic (^{<1123>}1 Kings 12:32). However, most of the Mosaic feasts, “new-moons” and “sabbaths” to Jehovah, remained, but to degenerate Israel worship was a weariness; they cared only for the carnal indulgence on them (^{<1085>}Amos 8:5).

12. *my rewards* — my hire as a harlot (^{<237>}Isaiah 23:17,18).

lovers — idols.

destroy ... vines ... make ... forest — (^{<216>}Isaiah 5:6 7:23,24). Fulfilled in the overthrow of Israel by Assyria (^{<304>}Hosea 9:4,5).

13. *days of Baalim* — the days consecrated to the Baals, or various images of Baal in different cities, whence the names *Baal-gad*, *Baal-hermon*, etc.

decked herself with ... earrings — rather, “nose-rings” (^{<216>}Isaiah 3:21 ^{<362>}Ezekiel 16:12, *Margin*), with which harlots decked themselves to attract admirers: answering to the ornaments in which the Israelites decked themselves on the idols’ feasts.

forgot me — worse than the nations which had never known God. Israel *wilfully apostatized* from Jehovah, whom she had known.

14. *Therefore* — rather, “Nevertheless” [HENDERSON]. *English Version* gives a more lovely idea of God. That which would provoke all others to unappeasable wrath, Israel’s perversity and consequent punishment, is made a reason why God should at last have mercy on her. As the “therefore” (^{<304>}Hosea 2:9) expresses Israel’s punishment as the *consequence* of Israel’s guilt, so “therefore” here, as in ^{<304>}Hosea 2:6, expresses, that when that punishment has effected its designed end, the hedging up her way with thorns so that she returns to God, her first love, the *consequence* in God’s wondrous grace is, He “speaks comfortably” (literally, “speaks to her heart”; compare ^{<078>}Judges 19:8 ^{<0013>}Ruth 2:13). So obstinate is she that God has to “allure her,” that is, so to temper judgment with unlooked-for grace as to *win* her to His ways. For this purpose it was necessary to “bring her into the wilderness” (that is, into temporal want and trials) first, to make her sin hateful to her by its bitter fruits, and God’s subsequent grace the more precious to her by the contrast of the “wilderness.” JEROME makes the “bringing into the wilderness” to be rather a *Deliverance from her enemies*, just as ancient Israel was brought into the wilderness from the bondage of Egypt; to this the phrase here alludes (compare ^{<304>}Hosea 2:15). The wilderness sojourn, however, is not literal, but moral: while still in the land of their enemies *locally*, by the discipline of the trial rendering the word of God sweet to them, they are to

be brought *morally* into the wilderness state, that is, into a state of preparedness for returning to their temporal and spiritual privileges in their own land; just as the literal wilderness prepared their fathers for Canaan: thus the bringing of them into the *wilderness state is virtually* a deliverance from their enemies.

15. *from thence* — returning from the wilderness. God gives Israel a fresh grant of Canaan, which she had forfeited; so of her vineyards, etc. (^{<3119>}Hosea 2:9,12).

Achor — that is “trouble.” As formerly Israel, after their tedious journey through the wilderness, met with the *trouble* resulting from Achan’s crime in this valley, on the very threshold of Canaan, and yet that *trouble* was presently turned into *joy* at the great victory at Ai, which threw all Canaan into their hands (Joshua 7,8); so the very trouble of Israel’s wilderness state will be the “door of hope” opening to better days. The valley of Achor, near Jericho, was specially fruitful (^{<2610>}Isaiah 65:10); so “trouble” and “hope” are rightly blended in connection with it.

sing ... as ... when she came ... out of ... Egypt — It shall be a second exodus song, such as Israel sang after the deliverance at the Red Sea (^{<0210>}Exodus 15:1-21; compare ^{<2115>}Isaiah 11:15,16); and “the song of Moses” (^{<6512>}Revelation 15:2,3) sung by those who through the Lamb overcome the beast, and so stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire, emblems of fiery trial, such as that of Israel at the Red Sea.

16. *Ishi ... no more Baali* — “my *Husband* ... no more my *Lord*.” *Affection* is the prominent idea in “Husband”; *rule*, in “Lord.” The chief reason for the substitution of *Husband* for *Lord* appears in ^{<3117>}Hosea 2:17; namely, *Baali*, the *Hebrew* for *my Lord*, had been perverted to express the images of Baal, whose name ought not to be taken on their lips (^{<0213>}Exodus 23:13 Zechariah 13:2).

17. *Baalim* — *plural*, expressing the various images of Baal, which, according to the places of their erection, received various names, Baal-gad, Baal-ammon, etc.

18. *for them* — for their benefit.

covenant ... with the beasts — not to hurt them (^{<3123>}Job 5:23). They shall fulfill the original law of their creation by becoming subject to man, when man fulfils the law of his being by being subject to God. To be realized fully in millennial times (^{<2109>}Isaiah 11:6-9).

break the bow ... out of the earth — rather, “out of the *land*”; that is, I will break *and remove* war out of the earth (^{<949>}Psalm 46:9); and “out of the *land*” of Israel first (^{<210>}Isaiah 2:4 ^{<349>}Ezekiel 39:9,10 Zechariah 9:9,10).

lie down — A reclining posture is the usual one with Orientals when not in action.

safely — (^{<236>}Jeremiah 23:6).

19, 20. “Betroth” is *thrice* repeated, implying the intense love of God to His people; and perhaps, also, *the three Persons* of the *Triune God*, severally engaging to make good the betrothal. The marriage covenant will be as it were renewed from the beginning, on a different footing; not for a time only, as before, through the apostasy of the people, but “forever” through the grace of God writing the law on their hearts by the Spirit of Messiah (^{<613>}Jeremiah 31:31-37).

righteousness ... judgment — in rectitude and truth.

loving-kindness, etc. — Hereby God assures Israel, who might doubt the possibility of their restoration to His favor; low, sunk, and unworthy as thou art. I will restore thee from a regard to My own “loving-kindness,” not thy merits.

20. faithfulness — to My new covenant of grace with thee (^{<513>}1 Thessalonians 5:24 ^{<802>}Hebrews 10:23).

21. in that day — of grace to Israel.

heavens ... hear the earth — personification. However many be the intermediate instruments, God is the Great First Cause of all nature’s phenomena. God had threatened (^{<819>}Hosea 2:9) He would *take back His corn, His wine*, etc. Here, on the contrary, God promises to *hearken to the skies*, as it were, supplicating Him to fill them with rain to pour on the earth; and that the skies again would hearken to the earth begging for a supply of the rain it requires; and again, that the earth would hearken to the corn, wine, and oil, begging it to bring them forth; and these again would hear Jezreel, that is, would fulfill Israel’s prayers for a supply of them. Israel is now no longer “Jezreel” in the sense, “*God will SCATTER*” (^{<309>}Hosea 1:4), but in the sense, “*God will PLANT*” (^{<311>}Hosea 1:11).

23. I will sow her — referring to the meaning of *Jezreel* (^{<322>}Hosea 2:22).

CHAPTER 3

HOSEA 3:1-5.

ISRAEL'S CONDITION IN THEIR PRESENT DISPERSION, SUBSEQUENT TO THEIR RETURN FROM BABYLON, SYMBOLIZED.

The prophet is to take back his wife, though unfaithful, as foretold in ^{<3002>}Hosea 1:2. He purchases her from her paramour, stipulating she should wait for a long period before she should be restored to her conjugal rights. So Israel is to live for a long period without her ancient rites of religion, and yet be free from idolatry; then at last she shall acknowledge Messiah, and know Jehovah's goodness restored to her.

1. *Go yet* — “Go *again*,” referring to ^{<3002>}Hosea 1:2 [HENDERSON].

a woman — purposely indefinite, for *thy wife*, to express the *separation* in which Hosea had lived from Gomer for her unfaithfulness.

beloved of her friend — used for “her *husband*,” on account of the estrangement between them. She was still beloved of her husband, though an adulteress; just as God still loved Israel, though idolatrous (^{<3483>}Jeremiah 3:20). Hosea is told, not as in ^{<3002>}Hosea 1:2, “*take a wife*,” but “*love*” her, that is, renew thy conjugal kindness to her.

who look to other gods — that is, have done so heretofore, but henceforth (from the return from Babylon) shall do so no more (^{<3004>}Hosea 3:4).

flagons of wine — rather, pressed cakes of dried grapes, such as were offered to idols (^{<3478>}Jeremiah 7:18) [MAURER].

2. *I bought her* — The price paid is too small to be a probable dowry wherewith to buy *a wife* from her parents; but it is just half the price of a female *slave*, in money, the rest of the price being made up in grain (^{<0213>}Exodus 21:32). Hosea pays this for the redemption of his wife, who has become the *slave of her paramour*. The price being *half grain* was because the latter was the allowance of food for the slave, and of the coarsest kind, not *wheat*, but *barley*. Israel, as *committing sin*, was the *slave of sin* (^{<0384>}John 8:34 ^{<0160>}Romans 6:16-20 ^{<0292>}2 Peter 2:19). The low price expresses Israel's *worthlessness*.

3. *abide for me* — separate from intercourse with any other man, and remaining for me who have redeemed thee (compare ^{<6213>}Deuteronomy 21:13).

so will I also be for thee — remain for thee, not taking any other consort. As Israel should long remain without serving other gods, yet separate from Jehovah; so Jehovah on His part, in this long period of estrangement, would form no marriage covenant with any other people (compare ^{<3806>}Hosea 3:4). He would not immediately receive her to marriage privileges, but would test her repentance and discipline her by the long probation; still the marriage covenant would hold good, she was to be kept separated for but a time, not divorced (^{<2810>}Isaiah 50:1); in God's good time she shall be restored.

4. The long period here foretold was to be one in which Israel should have no civil polity, king, or prince, no sacrifice to Jehovah, and yet no idol, or false god, no ephod, or teraphim. Exactly describing their state for the last nineteen centuries, separate from idols, yet without any legal sacrifice to Jehovah, whom they profess to worship, and without being acknowledged by Him as His Church. So KIMCHI, a Jew, explains it. The ephod was worn by the high priest above the tunic and robe. It consisted of two finely wrought pieces which hung down, the one in front over the breast, the other on the back, to the middle of the thigh; joined on the shoulders by golden clasps set in onyx stones with the names of the twelve tribes, and fastened round the waist by a girdle (^{<1236>}Exodus 28:6-12). The common ephod worn by the lower priests, Levites, and any person performing sacred rites, was of linen (^{<1064>}2 Samuel 6:14 ^{<3157>}1 Chronicles 15:27). In the breast were the Urim and Thummim by which God gave responses to the Hebrews. The latter was one of the five things which the second temple lacked, and which the first had. It, as representing the divinely constituted priesthood, is opposed to the idolatrous "teraphim," as "sacrifice" (to Jehovah) is to "an (idolatrous) image." "Abide" answers to "thou shalt abide for me" (^{<3806>}Hosea 3:3). Abide in solitary isolation, as a separated wife. The teraphim were tutelary household gods, in the shape of human busts, cut off at the waist (as the root of the Hebrew word implies) [MAURER], (^{<1319>}Genesis 31:19,30-35). They were supposed to give responses to consulters (^{<1224>}2 Kings 23:24 ^{<3202>}Ezekiel 21:21, *Margin*; Zechariah 10:2). Saul's daughter, Michal, putting one in a bed, as if it were David, proves the shape to have been that of a man.

5. *Afterward* — after the long period ("many days," ^{<3806>}Hosea 3:4) has elapsed.

return — from their idols to "their God," from whom they had wandered.

David their king — Israel had forsaken the worship of Jehovah at the same time that they forsook their allegiance to David's line. Their repentance towards God is therefore to be accompanied by their return to the latter. So Judah and Israel shall be one, and under "one head," as is also foretold (²⁸¹¹Hosea 1:11). That representative and antitype of David is Messiah. "David" means "the beloved." Compare as to Messiah, ⁴⁰⁸⁷Matthew 3:17 ⁴⁰⁰⁶Ephesians 1:6. Messiah is called David (²⁶⁸Isaiah 55:3,4 ²⁸⁰⁹Jeremiah 30:9 ⁴⁵⁴³Ezekiel 34:23,24 37:24,25).

fear the Lord and his goodness — that is, tremblingly flee to the Lord, to escape from the wrath to come; and to His goodness," as manifested in Messiah, which attracts them to Him (²⁶¹²Jeremiah 31:12). The "fear" is not that which "hath torment" (⁶⁰⁸³1 John 4:18), but *reverence* inspired by His goodness realized in the soul (⁴⁵⁰⁴Psalms 130:4).

the latter days — those of Messiah [KIMCHI].

CHAPTER 4

~~2000~~ HOSEA 4:1-19.

HENCEFORTH THE PROPHET SPEAKS PLAINLY AND WITHOUT SYMBOL, IN TERSE, SENTENTIOUS PROPOSITIONS.

In this chapter he reproves the people and priests for their sins in the interregnum which followed Jeroboam's death; hence there is no mention of the king or his family; and in ~~2002~~ Hosea 4:2 bloodshed and other evils usual in a civil war are specified.

1. *Israel* — the ten tribes.

controversy — judicial ground of complaint (~~2008~~ Isaiah 1:18 ~~2051~~ Jeremiah 25:31 Micah 6:2).

no ... knowledge of God — exhibited in practice (~~2026~~ Jeremiah 22:16).

2. *they break out* — bursting through every restraint.

blood toucheth blood — literally, "bloods." One act of bloodshed follows another without any interval between (see ~~2158~~ 2 Kings 15:8-16,25 Micah 7:2).

3. *land ... languish* — (~~2808~~ Isaiah 19:8 24:4 ~~2010~~ Joel 1:10,12).

sea — including all bodies of water, as pools and even rivers (see on ~~2005~~ Isaiah 19:5). A general drought, the greatest calamity in the East, is threatened.

4. *let no man ... reprove* — Great as is the sin of Israel, it is hopeless to reprove them; for their presumptuous guilt is as great as that of one who refuses to obey the priest when giving judgment in the name of Jehovah, and who therefore is to be put to death (~~0572~~ Deuteronomy 17:12). They rush on to their own destruction as wilfully as such a one.

thy people — the ten tribes of Israel; distinct from Judah (~~2001~~ Hosea 4:1).

5. *fall in the day* — in broad *daylight*, a time when an attack would not be expected (see on ~~2004~~ Jeremiah 6:4,5; ~~2158~~ Jeremiah 15:8).

in ... night — No time, night or day, shall be free from the slaughter of individuals of the people, as well as of the false prophets.

thy mother — the Israelitish state, of which the citizens are the children (^{<3010>}Hosea 2:2).

6. lack of knowledge — “of God” (^{<3008>}Hosea 4:1), that is, lack of piety. Their ignorance was wilful, as the epithet, “My people,” implies; they *ought* to have known, having the opportunity, as the people of God.

thou — O priest, so-called. Not regularly constituted, but still bearing the name, while confounding the worship of Jehovah and of the calves in Beth-el (^{<1122>}1 Kings 12:29,31).

I will ... forget thy children — Not only those who then were alive should be deprived of the priesthood, but their children who, in the ordinary course would have succeeded them, should be set aside.

7. As they were increased — in numbers and power. Compare ^{<3006>}Hosea 4:6, “thy children,” to which their “increase” in *numbers* refers.

so they sinned — (Compare ^{<3005>}Hosea 10:1 and ^{<3006>}Hosea 13:6).

will I change their glory into shame — that is, I will strip them of all they now *glory* in (their numbers and power), and give them *shame* instead. A just retribution: as they changed their glory into shame, by idolatry (^{<1946>}Psalm 106:20 ^{<2421>}Jeremiah 2:11 ^{<8123>}Romans 1:23 ^{<3089>}Philippians 3:19).

8. eat ... sin of my people — that is, the sin offerings (^{<8037>}Leviticus 6:26 10:17). The priests greedily devoured them.

set their heart on their iniquity — literally “lift up the animal soul to lust after,” or strongly desire. Compare ^{<5345>}Deuteronomy 24:15, *Margin*; ^{<1246>}Psalm 24:4 ^{<2227>}Jeremiah 22:27. The priests set *their own* hearts on the iniquity of the people, instead of trying to suppress it. For the more the people sinned, the more sacrificial victims in atonement for sin the priests gained.

9. like people, like priest — They are one in guilt; therefore they shall be one in punishment (^{<2941>}Isaiah 24:2).

reward them their doings — in homely phrase, “pay them back in their own coin” (^{<3033>}Proverbs 1:31).

10. eat, and not have enough — just retribution on those who “eat up (greedily) the sin of My people” (^{<2008>}Hosea 4:8 ^{<3064>}Micah 6:14 Haggai 1:6).

whoredom, and ... not increase — literally “break forth”; used of *giving birth to children* (⁴⁰⁸⁴Genesis 28:14, *Margin*; compare ⁴³⁸⁹Genesis 38:29). Not only their wives, but their concubines, shall be barren. To be childless was considered a great calamity among the Jews.

11. A moral truth applicable to all times. The special reference here is to the licentious orgies connected with the Syrian worship, which lured Israel away from the pure worship of God (²³⁰¹Isaiah 28:1,7 ³⁰⁰¹Amos 4:1).

take away the heart — that is, the understanding; make men blind to their own true good (²⁰⁰⁷Ecclesiastes 7:7).

12. Instances of their understanding (“heart”) being “taken away.”

stocks — wooden idols (³¹²⁷Jeremiah 2:27 ³⁰⁹⁹Habakkuk 2:19).

staff — alluding to divination by rods (see on ³⁰²¹Ezekiel 21:21,22). The diviner, says ROSENMULLER, threw a rod from him, which was stripped of its bark on one side, not on the other: if the bare side turned uppermost, it was a good omen; if the side with the bark, it was a bad omen. The Arabs used two rods, the one marked *God bids*, the other, *God forbids*; whichever came out first, in drawing them out of a case, gave the omen for, or against, an undertaking.

declareth — that is, is consulted to inform them of future events.

spirit of whoredoms — a general *disposition* on the part of all *towards idolatry* (³⁸⁰⁴Hosea 5:4).

err — go astray from the true God.

from under their God — They have gone away from God *under* whom they were, as a wife is under the dominion of her husband.

13. upon ... mountains — High places were selected by idolaters on which to sacrifice, because of their greater nearness to the heavenly hosts which they worshipped (⁴⁵²¹Deuteronomy 12:2).

elms — rather, “terebinths” [MAURER].

shadow ... good — screening the lascivious worshippers from the heat of the sun.

daughters ... commit whoredom ... spouses ... adultery — in the polluted worship of Astarte, the Phoenician goddess of love.

14. I will not punish ... daughters — I will visit with the heaviest punishments “not” the unchaste “daughters and spouses,” but the fathers

and husbands; for it is these who “themselves” have set the bad example, so that as compared with the punishment of the latter, that of the former shall seem as nothing [MUNSTER].

separated with whores — withdrawn from the assembly of worshippers to some receptacle of impurity for carnal connection with *whores*.

sacrifice with harlots — They commit lewdness with *women* who *devote their persons* to be violated in honor of Astarte. (So the *Hebrew* for “harlots” means, as distinguished from “whores”). Compare ^{<0270>}Numbers 25:1-3; and the prohibition, ^{<0238>}Deuteronomy 23:18.

not understand — (^{<2348>}Isaiah 44:18 45:20).

shall fall — shall be cast down.

15. Though *Israel's* ten tribes indulge in spiritual harlotry, at least thou, *Judah*, who hast the legal priesthood, and the temple rites, and Jerusalem, do not follow her bad example.

Gilgal — situated between Jordan and Jericho on the confines of Samaria; once a holy place to Jehovah (^{<0650>}Joshua 5:10-15 ^{<0908>}1 Samuel 10:8 15:21); afterwards desecrated by idol-worship (^{<2085>}Hosea 9:15 12-11 ^{<3004>}Amos 4:4 5:5; compare ^{<0789>}Judges 3:19, *Margin*).

Beth-aven — that is, “house of vanity” or idols: a name substituted in contempt for *Beth-el*, “the house of God”; once sacred to Jehovah (^{<0287>}Genesis 28:17,19 35:7), but made by Jeroboam the seat of the worship of the calves (^{<1128>}1 Kings 12:28-33 13:1 ^{<2483>}Jeremiah 48:13 ^{<3084>}Amos 3:14 7:13). “Go up” refers to the fact that Beth-el was on a hill (^{<0601>}Joshua 16:1).

nor swear, The Lord liveth — This formula of oath was appointed by God Himself (^{<0663>}Deuteronomy 6:13 10:20 ^{<2002>}Jeremiah 4:2). It is therefore here forbidden not absolutely, but in conjunction with idolatry and falsehood (^{<2808>}Isaiah 48:1 ^{<3519>}Ezekiel 20:39 Zephaniah 1:5).

16. backsliding — Translate, “Israel is refractory, as a refractory heifer,” namely, one that throws the yoke off her neck. Israel had represented God under the form of “calves” (^{<1128>}1 Kings 12:28); but it is she herself who is one.

lamb in a large place — not in a good sense, as in ^{<2302>}Isaiah 30:23. Here there is irony: lambs like a large pasture; but it is not so safe for them as a small one, duly fenced from wild beasts. God will “feed” them, but it shall be with the “rod” (^{<3074>}Micah 7:14). It shall be no longer in the narrow territory of Israel, but “in a large place,” namely, they shall be scattered in

exile over the wide realm of Assyria, a prey to their foes; as lambs, which are timid, gregarious, and not solitary, are a prey when scattered asunder to wild beasts.

17. Ephraim — the ten tribes. Judah was at this time not so given to idolatry as afterwards.

joined to — closely and voluntarily; identifying themselves with them as a whoremonger becomes one flesh with the harlot (^{<4023>}Numbers 25:3 ^{<4026>}1 Corinthians 6:16,17).

idols — The *Hebrew* means also “sorrows,” “pains,” implying the pain which idolatry brings on its votaries.

let him alone — Leave him to himself. Let him reap the fruits of his own perverse choice; his case is desperate; say nothing to him (compare ^{<2076>}Jeremiah 7:16). Here ^{<2045>}Hosea 4:15 shows the address is to *Judah*, to avoid the contagion of Israel’s bad example. He is bent on his own ruin; leave him to his fate, lest, instead of saving him, thou fall thyself (^{<2380>}Isaiah 48:20 ^{<2518>}Jeremiah 50:8 51:6,45 ^{<4027>}2 Corinthians 6:17).

18. Their drink is sour — metaphor for *utter degeneracy* of principle (^{<2012>}Isaiah 1:22). Or, *unbridled licentiousness*; not mere ordinary sin, but as abandoned as drunkards who vomit and smell sour with wine potations [CALVIN]. MAURER not so well translates, “When their drinking *is over*, they commit whoredoms,” namely, in honor of Astarte (^{<2045>}Hosea 4:13,14).

her rulers — Israel’s; literally, “shields” (compare ^{<2079>}Psalms 47:9).

with shame ... love, Give ye — (^{<2015>}Proverbs 30:15). No remedy could be effectual against their corruptions since the very rulers sold justice for gifts [CALVIN]. MAURER translates, “The rulers are marvelously enamored of shame.” *English Version* is better.

19. Israel shall be swept away from her land (^{<2046>}Hosea 4:16) suddenly and violently as if by “the wings of the wind” (^{<2080>}Psalms 18:10 104:3 ^{<2041>}Jeremiah 4:11,12).

ashamed ... of their sacrifices — disappointed to their shame in their hope of help through their sacrifices to idols.

CHAPTER 5

HOSEA 5:1-5.

GOD'S JUDGMENTS ON THE PRIESTS, PEOPLE, AND PRINCES OF ISRAEL FOR THEIR SINS.

Judah, too, being guilty shall be punished; nor shall Assyria, whose aid they both sought, save them; judgments shall at last lead them to repentance.

1. *the king* — probably Pekah; the contemporary of Ahaz, king of Judah, under whom idolatry was first carried so far in Judah as to call for the judgment of the joint Syrian and Israelite invasion, as also that of Assyria.

judgment is towards you — that is, threatens you from God.

ye have been a snare on Mizpah ... net ... upon Tabor — As hunters spread their net and snares on the hills, *Mizpah* and *Tabor*, so ye have snared the people into idolatry and made them your prey by injustice. As *Mizpah* and *Tabor* mean a “watch tower,” and a “lofty place,” a fit scene for hunters, playing on the words, the prophet implies, in the lofty place in which I have set you, whereas ye ought to have been the *watchers* of the people, guarding them from evil, ye have been as *hunters entrapping* them into it [JEROME]. These two places are specified, *Mizpah* in the east and *Tabor* in the west, to include the *high places* throughout the *whole* kingdom, in which Israel’s rulers set up idolatrous altars.

2. *revolters* — apostates.

profound — *deeply* rooted [CALVIN] and sunk to the lowest depths, *excessive* in their idolatry (²³⁰¹Hosea 9:9 ²³⁰⁶Isaiah 31:6) [HENDERSON]. From the antithesis (²³⁰⁸Hosea 5:3), “not hid from me,” I prefer explaining, *profoundly cunning* in their idolatry. Jeroboam thought it a *profound* piece of policy to set up golden calves to represent God in *Daniel* and *Beth-el*, in order to prevent Israel’s heart from turning again to David’s line by going up to Jerusalem to worship. So Israel’s subsequent idolatry was grounded by their leaders on various pleas of state expediency (compare ²³⁰⁵Isaiah 29:15).

to ... slaughter — He does not say “to *sacrifice*,” for their so-called sacrifices were *butcheries* rather than sacrifices; there was nothing sacred about them, being to idols instead of to the holy God.

though — MAURER translates, “*and* (in spite of their hope of safety through their slaughter of victims to idols) *I will be* a chastisement to them all.” *English Version* is good sense: They have deeply revolted, *notwithstanding* all my prophetic warnings.

3. Ephraim — the tribe so called, as distinguished from “Israel” here, the other nine tribes. It was always foremost of the tribes of the northern kingdom. For four hundred years in early history, it, with Manasseh and Benjamin, its two dependent tribes, held the pre-eminence in the whole nation. Ephraim is here addressed as foremost in idolatry.

I how ... not hid from me — notwithstanding their supposed *profound* cunning (^{389E}Hosea 5:2 ^{661E}Revelation 2:2,9,13,19).

now — “though I have been a rebuker of all them” (^{389E}Hosea 5:2) who *commit* such spiritual *whoredoms*, thou art *now* continuing in them.

4. They — Turning from a direct address to Ephraim, he uses the third person *plural* to characterize the people in general. The *Hebrew* is against the *Margin*, their doings will not suffer *them*” the omission of “them” in the *Hebrew* after the verb being unusual. The sense is, they are incurable, for they will not *permit* (as the *Hebrew* literally means) their doings to be framed so as to turn unto God. Implying that they *resist* the Spirit of God, not *suffering* Him to renew them; and give themselves up to “the spirit of whoredoms” (in antithesis to “the Spirit of God” implied in “suffer” or “permit”) (^{304E}Hosea 4:12 ^{236E}Isaiah 63:10 ^{236E}Ezekiel 16:43 ^{405E}Acts 7:51).

5. the pride of Israel — wherewith they reject the warnings of God’s prophets (^{389E}Hosea 5:2), and prefer their idols to God (^{307E}Hosea 7:10 ^{418E}Jeremiah 13:17).

testify to his face — openly *to his face* he shall be convicted of the pride which is so palpable in him. Or, “*in his face*,” as in ^{239E}Isaiah 3:9.

Judah ... shall fall with them — This prophecy is later than ^{304E}Hosea 4:15, when Judah had not gone so far in idolatry; now her imitation of Israel’s bad example provokes the threat of her being doomed to share in Israel’s punishment.

6. with ... flocks — to propitiate Jehovah (^{201E}Isaiah 1:11-15).

seek ... not find — because it is slavish fear that leads them to seek Him; and because it then shall be too late (^{<3003>}Proverbs 1:28 ^{<4034>}John 7:34).

7. treacherously — as to the marriage covenant (^{<2480>}Jeremiah 3:20).

strange children — alluding to “children of whoredoms” (^{<2004>}Hosea 1:2 2:4). “Strange” or *foreign* implies that their idolatry was imported from abroad [HENDERSON]. Or rather, “regarded by God as strangers, not His,” as being reared in idolatry. The case is desperate, when not only the existing, but also the rising, generation is reared in apostasy.

a month — *a very brief space of time* shall elapse, and then punishment shall overtake them (Zechariah 11:8). The allusion seems to be to money loans, which were *by the month*, not as with us by the year. You cannot put it off; the time of your destruction is immediately and suddenly coming on you; just as the debtor must meet the creditor’s demand at the expiration of the month. The prediction is of the invasion of Tiglath-pileser, who carried away Reuben, Gad, Naphtali, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

portions — that is, possessions. Their resources and garrisons will not avail to save them. HENDERSON explains from ^{<2576>}Isaiah 57:6, “portions” as *their idols*; the context favors this, “the Lord” the true “*portion* of His people” (^{<4539>}Deuteronomy 32:9), being in antithesis to “their portions,” the idols.

8. The arrival of the enemy is announced in the form of an injunction to *blow an alarm*.

cornet ... trumpet — The “cornet” was made of the curved horn of animals and was used by shepherds. The “trumpet” was of brass or silver, straight, and used in wars and on solemn occasions. The *Hebrew* is *hatzotzerah*, the sound imitating the trumpet note (^{<2001>}Hosea 8:1 ^{<4002>}Numbers 10:2 ^{<2005>}Jeremiah 4:5 ^{<2003>}Joel 2:1).

Gibeah ... Ramah — both in Benjamin (^{<2309>}Isaiah 10:29).

Beth-aven — in Benjamin; not as in ^{<2045>}Hosea 4:15; *Beth-el*, but a town east of it (^{<4002>}Joshua 7:2). “Cry aloud,” namely, to raise the alarm. “Benjamin” is put for the whole southern kingdom of Judah (compare ^{<2005>}Hosea 5:5), being the first part of it which would meet the foe advancing from the north. “After thee, O Benjamin,” implies the position of Beth-aven, *behind* Benjamin, at the borders of Ephraim. When the foe is at Beth-aven, he is at Benjamin’s rear, close upon thee, O Benjamin (^{<4054>}Judges 5:14).

9, 10. Israel is referred to in ^{<2000>}Hosea 5:9, Judah in ^{<2050>}Hosea 5:10.

the day of rebuke — the day when I shall chastise him.

among the tribes of Israel have I made known — proving that the scene of Hosea's labor was among the ten tribes.

that which shall surely be — namely, the coming judgment here foretold. It is no longer a conditional decree, leaving a hope of pardon on repentance; it is absolute, for Ephraim is hopelessly impenitent.

10. *remove the bound* — (^{<6594>}Deuteronomy 19:14 27:17 ^{<8912>}Job 24:2 ^{<1228>}Proverbs 22:28 23:10). Proverbial for the rash setting aside of the ancestral laws by which men are kept to their duty. Ahaz and his courtiers (“the princes of Judah”), setting aside the ancient ordinances of God, removed the borders of the bases and the layer and the sea and introduced an idolatrous altar from Damascus (^{<1260>}2 Kings 16:10-18); also he burnt his children in the valley of Hinnom, after the abominations of the heathen (^{<1282>}2 Chronicles 28:3).

11. *broken in judgment* — namely, the “judgment” of God on him (^{<2800>}Hosea 5:1).

walked after the commandment — Jeroboam's, to worship the calves (^{<1208>}2 Kings 10:28-33). Compare ^{<3316>}Micah 6:16, “the *statutes* of Omri,” namely, idolatrous statutes. We ought to obey God rather than men (^{<4152>}Acts 5:29). JEROME reads “filthiness.” The *Septuagint* gives the sense, not the literal translation: “after *vanities*.”

12. *as a moth* — consuming a garment (^{<1838>}Job 13:28 ^{<1891>}Psalms 39:11 ^{<2810>}Isaiah 50:9).

Judah ... rottenness — Ephraim, or the ten tribes, are as a *garment* eaten by the moth; Judah as the *body* itself consumed by rottenness (^{<3104>}Proverbs 12:4). Perhaps alluding to the superiority of the latter in having the house of David, and the temple, the religious center of the nation [GROTIUS]. As in ^{<2463>}Hosea 5:13,14, the violence of the calamity is prefigured by the “wound” which “a lion” inflicts, so here its long protracted duration, and the certainty and completeness of the destruction from small unforeseen beginnings, by the images of a slowly but surely consuming *moth* and *rottenness*.

13. *wound* — literally, “bandage”; hence a *bandaged wound* (^{<2009>}Isaiah 1:6 ^{<2812>}Jeremiah 30:12). “Saw,” that is, felt its weakened state politically, and the dangers that threatened it. It aggravates their perversity, that, though aware of their unsound and calamitous state, they did not inquire into the cause or seek a right remedy.

went ... to the Assyrian — First, Menahem (^{<1259>}2 Kings 15:19) applied to Pul; again, Hoshea to Shalmaneser (^{<1278>}2 Kings 17:3).

sent to King Jareb — Understand *Judah* as the nominative to “sent.” Thus, as “Ephraim saw his sickness” (the first clause) answers in the parallelism to “Ephraim went to the Assyrian” (the third clause), so “Judah saw his wound” (the second clause) answers to (*Judah*) “sent to King Jareb” (the fourth clause). *Jareb* ought rather to be translated, “their defender,” literally, “avenger” [JEROME]. The Assyrian “king,” ever ready, for his own aggrandizement, to mix himself up with the affairs of neighboring states, professed to *undertake* Israel’s and Judah’s *cause*; in ^{<1062>}Judges 6:32, *Jerub*, in Jerub-baal is so used, namely, “*plead* one’s cause.” Judah, under Ahaz, applied to Tiglath-pileser for aid against Syria and Israel (^{<1217>}2 Kings 16:7,8 ^{<1486>}2 Chronicles 28:16-21); the Assyrian “distressed him, but strengthened him not,” fulfilling the prophecy here, “he could not heal your, nor cure. you of your wound.

14. lion — The *black lion* and the *young lion* are emblems of strength and ferocity (^{<913>}Psalms 91:13).

I, even I — emphatic; when I, even I, the irresistible God, tear in pieces (^{<1312>}Psalms 50:22), no Assyrian power can rescue.

go away — as a lion stalks leisurely back with his prey to his lair.

15. return to my place — that is, withdraw My favor.

till they acknowledge their offense — The *Hebrew* is, “till they suffer the penalty of their guilt.” Probably “*accepting* the punishment of their guilt” (compare Zechariah 11:5) is included in the idea, as *English Version* translates. Compare ^{<8340>}Leviticus 26:40,41 ^{<292>}Jeremiah 29:12,13 ^{<1069>}Ezekiel 6:9 20:43 36:31.

seek my face — that is, seek My favor (^{<1296>}Proverbs 29:26, *Margin*).

in ... affliction ... seek me early — that is, diligently; rising up before dawn to seek Me (^{<13947>}Psalms 119:147; compare ^{<1989>}Psalms 78:34).

CHAPTER 6

HOSEA 6:1-11.

THE ISRAELITES' EXHORTATION TO ONE ANOTHER TO SEEK THE LORD.

At ²⁸⁰⁴Hosea 6:4 a new discourse, *complaining of them*, begins; for ²⁸⁰¹Hosea 6:1-3 evidently belong to ²⁸¹⁵Hosea 5:15, and form the *happy* termination of Israel's *punishment*: primarily, the return from Babylon; ultimately, the return from their present long dispersion. ²⁸⁰⁸Hosea 6:8 perhaps refers to the murder of Pekahiah; the discourse cannot be later than Pekah's reign, for it was under it that *Gilead* was carried into captivity (¹²⁵²2 Kings 15:29).

1. *let us return* — in order that God who has “returned to His place” may return to us (²⁸¹⁵Hosea 5:15).

torn, and ... heal — (⁴⁵²⁹Deuteronomy 32:39 ²⁸⁰⁷Jeremiah 30:17). They ascribe their punishment not to fortune, or man, but to God, and acknowledge that none (not the Assyrian, as they once vainly thought, ²⁸¹³Hosea 5:13) but God can heal their wound. They are at the same time persuaded of the mercy of God, which persuasion is the starting-point of true repentance, and without which men would not seek, but hate and flee from God. Though our wound be severe, it is not past hope of recovery; there is room for grace, and a hope of pardon. He hath smitten us, but not so badly that He cannot heal us (³¹⁰⁴Psalms 130:4).

2. Primarily, in type, Israel's national revival, *in a short period* (“*two or three*” being used to denote a *few* days, ²⁸⁰⁶Isaiah 17:6 ²⁸³³Luke 13:32,33); antitypically the language is so framed as to refer in its *full accuracy* only to Messiah, the ideal Israel (²⁸⁰³Isaiah 49:3; compare ⁴⁰²⁵Matthew 2:15, with ²⁸⁰¹Hosea 11:1), raised on the third day (⁴⁰²⁹John 2:19 ⁴¹⁵⁴1 Corinthians 15:4; compare ²⁵³⁰Isaiah 53:10). “He shall *prolong* His *days*.” Compare the similar use of Israel's political resurrection as the type of the general resurrection of which “Christ is the first-fruits” (²⁸⁰⁹Isaiah 26:19 ⁴⁵⁰¹Ezekiel 37:1-14 ²⁷¹²Daniel 12:2).

live in his sight — enjoy His countenance shining on us, as of old; in contrast to ²⁸⁰⁶Hosea 5:6,15, “Withdrawn Himself from them.”

3. *know, if we follow on to know the Lord* — The result of His recovered favor (^{<306E>}Hosea 6:2) will be onward growth in saving knowledge of God, as the result of perseverance in following after Him (^{<163E>}Psalm 63:8 ^{<254E>}Isaiah 54:13). “Then” implies the consequence of the revival in ^{<306E>}Hosea 6:2. The “if” is not so much *conditional*, as expressive of the *means* which God’s grace will sanctify to the full enlightenment of Israel in the knowledge of Him. As want of “knowledge of God” has been the source of all evils (^{<306E>}Hosea 4:1 5:4), so the knowledge of Him will bring with it all blessings; yea, it is “life” (^{<477E>}John 17:3). This knowledge is practice, not mere theory (^{<225E>}Jeremiah 22:15,16). Theology is life, not science; realities, not words. This onward progress is illustrated by the light of “morning” increasing more and more “unto the perfect day” (^{<148E>}Proverbs 4:18).

prepared — “is sure,” literally, “fixed,” ordered in His everlasting purposes of love to His covenant-people. Compare “prepared of God” (^{<043E>}Genesis 41:32, *Margin*; ^{<661E>}Revelation 12:6). Jehovah shall surely come to the relief of His people after their dark night of calamity.

as the morning — (^{<124E>}2 Samuel 23:4).

as the rain ... latter ... former — (^{<822E>}Job 29:23 ^{<223E>}Joel 2:23). First, “the rain” generally is mentioned; then the two rains (^{<511E>}Deuteronomy 11:14) which caused the fertility of Palestine, and the absence of which was accounted the greatest calamity: “the latter rain” which falls in the latter half of February, and during March and April, just before the harvest whence it takes its name, from a root meaning “to gather”; and “the former rain,” literally, “the darting rain,” from the middle of October to the middle of December. As the rain fertilizes the otherwise barren land, so God’s favor will restore Israel long nationally lifeless.

4. *what shall I do unto thee* — to bring thee back to piety. What more could be done that I have not done, both in mercies and chastenings (^{<219E>}Isaiah 5:4)? At this verse a new discourse begins, resuming the threats (^{<214E>}Hosea 5:14). See opening remarks on this chapter.

goodness — godliness.

morning cloud — soon dispersed by the sun (^{<213E>}Hosea 13:3). There is a tacit contrast here to the promise of God’s grace to Israel hereafter, in ^{<306E>}Hosea 6:3. *His* going forth is “as the morning,” shining more and more unto the perfect day; *your* goodness is “as a morning cloud,” soon vanishing. His coming to His people is “as the (fertilizing) latter and former rains”; your coming to Him “as the early dew goeth away.”

5. *I hewed them by the prophets* — that is, I *announced* by the prophets that they should be hewn asunder, like trees of the forest. God identifies His act with that of His prophets; the word being His instrument for executing His will (²¹⁰¹Jeremiah 1:10 ^{2681B}Ezekiel 43:3).

by ... words of my mouth — (^{2310F}Isaiah 11:4 ²²³⁹Jeremiah 23:29 ³⁰¹²Hebrews 4:12).

thy judgments — the judgments which I will inflict on thee, Ephraim and Judah (^{260F}Hosea 6:4). So “*thy judgments*,” that is, those inflicted *on thee* (³¹⁸⁵Zephaniah 3:15).

are as the light, etc. — like the light, palpable to the eyes of all, as coming from God, the punisher of sin. HENDERSON translates, “lightning” (compare ^{837B}Job 37:3, *Margin*; ^{855B}Job 35:15).

6. *mercy* — put for *piety* in general, of which *mercy* or *charity* is a branch.

not sacrifice — that is, “*rather than sacrifice*.” So “not” is merely comparative (^{210F}Exodus 16:8 ²¹²¹Joel 2:13 ⁴¹²⁷John 6:27 ⁵¹²⁴1 Timothy 2:14). As God Himself instituted sacrifices, it cannot mean that He desired them not absolutely, but that even in the Old Testament, He valued *moral obedience* as the only end for which *positive* ordinances, such as sacrifices, were instituted — as of more importance than a mere external ritual obedience (¹⁹⁵²1 Samuel 15:22 ⁴¹⁰⁸Psalms 50:8,9 51:16 ^{2311E}Isaiah 1:11,12 Micah 6:6-8 ⁴¹⁰³Matthew 9:13 12:7).

knowledge of God — experimental and practical, not merely theoretical (^{210F}Hosea 6:3 ²¹²⁶Jeremiah 22:16 ⁴¹¹³1 John 2:3,4). “*Mercy*” refers to the *second* table of the law, our duty to our fellow man; “the knowledge of God” to the *first* table, our duty to God, including inward spiritual worship. The second table is put first, not as superior in dignity, for it is secondary, but in the order of our understanding.

7. *like men* — the common sort of men (⁴³¹⁷Psalms 82:7). Not as *Margin*, “like Adam,” ⁴⁸⁵³Job 31:33. For the *expression* “covenant” is not found elsewhere applied to Adam’s relation to God; though the *thing* seems implied (⁴¹⁵²Romans 5:12-19). Israel “transgressed the covenant” of God as lightly as men break everyday compacts with their fellow men.

there — in the northern kingdom, Israel.

8. *Gilead ... city* — probably Ramoth-gilead, metropolis of the hilly region beyond Jordan, south of the Jabbok, known as “Gilead” (¹¹⁰¹1 Kings 4:13; compare ¹³²¹Genesis 31:21-25).

work iniquity — (²⁸²¹Hosea 12:11).

polluted with blood — “marked with blood-traces” [MAURER]. Referring to Gilead’s complicity in the regicidal conspiracy of Pekah against Pekahiah (⁴²⁵⁵2 Kings 15:25). See on ²⁸⁰⁶Hosea 6:1. Many homicides were there, for there were beyond Jordan more cities of refuge, in proportion to the extent of territory, than on this side of Jordan (⁴⁶⁵⁴Numbers 35:14 ⁴⁸⁴⁴Deuteronomy 4:41-43 ⁴³¹⁸Joshua 20:8). Ramoth-gilead was one.

9. *company* — “association” or guild of priests.

murder by consent — literally, “with one shoulder” (compare Zephaniah 3:9, *Margin*). The image is from oxen putting their *shoulders together* to pull the same yoke [RIVETUS]. MAURER translates, “in the way *towards Shechem*.” It was a city of refuge between Ebal and Gerizim; on Mount Ephraim (⁴⁶¹⁷Joshua 20:7 21:21), long the civil capital of Ephraim, as Shiloh was the religious capital; now called Naploos; for a time the residence of Jeroboam (⁴¹²⁵1 Kings 12:25). The priests there became so corrupted that they waylaid and murdered persons fleeing to the asylum for refuge [HENDERSON]; the sanctity of the place enhanced the guilt of the priests who abused their priestly privileges, and the right of asylum to perpetrate murders themselves, or to screen those committed by others [MAURER].

commit lewdness — *deliberate* crime, presumptuous wickedness, from an *Arabic* root, “to form a deliberate purpose.”

10. *horrible thing* — (⁴⁴⁵³Jeremiah 5:30 18:13 23:14).

whoredom — idolatry.

11. *an harvest* — namely, of judgments (as in ⁴²⁵³Jeremiah 51:33 ⁴⁸³³Joel 3:13 ⁴⁶⁴⁵Revelation 14:15). Called a “harvest” because it is the fruit of the seed which Judah herself had sown (⁴³⁰⁶Hosea 8:7 10:12 ⁴⁰⁰⁸Job 4:8 ⁴¹²⁸Proverbs 22:8). Judah, under Ahaz, lost a hundred twenty thousand “slain in one day (by Israel under Pekah), because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers.”

when I returned the captivity of my people — when I, by Oded My prophet, caused two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters, of Judah to be restored from captivity by Israel (⁴⁸³⁹2 Chronicles 28:6-15). This prophecy was delivered under Pekah [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. MAURER explains, When Israel shall have been exiled for its sins, and has been subsequently restored by Me, thou, Judah, also shalt be exiled for thine. But as Judah’s punishment was not at the time *when* God restored Israel, LUDOVICUS DE DIEU’S explanation must be taken. GROTIUS translates,

“When I *shall have returned to make captive* (that is, when I shall have again made captive) My people.” The first captivity of Israel under Tiglath-pileser was followed by a *second* under Shalmaneser. Then came the siege of Jerusalem, and the capture of the fenced cities of Judah, by Sennacherib, the forerunner of other attacks, ending in Judah’s captivity. But the *Hebrew* is elsewhere used of *restoration*, not *renewed punishment* (^{<BIB>}Deuteronomy 30:3 ^{<BIB>}Psalm 14:7).

CHAPTER 7

HOSEA 7:1-16.

REPROOF OF ISRAEL.

Probably delivered in the interreign and civil war at Pekah's death; for ^{<300>}Hosea 7:7, "all their kings ... fallen," refers to the murder of Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah. In ^{<308>}Hosea 7:8 the reference seems to be to Menahem's payment of tribute to Pul, in order to secure himself in the usurped throne, also to Pekah's league with Rezin of Syria, and to Hoshea's connection with Assyria during the interregnum at Pekah's death [MAURER].

1. *I would have healed Israel* — Israel's restoration of the two hundred thousand Jewish captives at God's command (^{<428>}2 Chronicles 28:8-15) gave hope of Israel's reformation [HENDERSON]. Political, as well as moral, healing is meant. When I would have healed Israel in its calamitous state, then their iniquity was discovered to be so great as to preclude hope of recovery. Then he enumerates their wickedness: "The thief cometh in (indoors stealthily), and the troop of robbers spoileth without" (out-of-doors with open violence).

2. *consider not in their hearts* — literally "say not to," etc. (^{<340>}Psalms 14:1).

that I remember — and will punish.

their own doings have beset them about — as so many witnesses against them (^{<306>}Psalms 9:16 ^{<312>}Proverbs 5:22).

before my face — (^{<308>}Psalms 90:8).

3. Their princes, instead of checking, "have pleasure in them that do" such crimes (^{<312>}Romans 1:32).

4. *who ceaseth from raising* — rather, "heating" it, from an *Arabic* root, "to be hot." So the *Septuagint*. Their adulterous and idolatrous lust is inflamed as the oven of a baker who has it at such a heat that he ceaseth from heating it only from the time that he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened; he only needs to omit feeding it during the short period of the

fermentation of the bread. Compare ^{<6124>}2 Peter 2:14, “that cannot cease from sin” [HENDERSON].

5. *the day of our king* — his birthday or day of inauguration.

have made him sick — namely, the king. MAURER translates, “make themselves sick.”

with bottles of wine — drinking not merely glasses, but *bottles*. MAURER translates, “Owing to the heat of wine.”

he stretched out his hand with scorers — the gesture of revellers in holding out the cup and in drinking to one another’s health. Scoffers were the king’s boon companions.

6. *they have made ready* — rather, “they make their heart approach,” namely their king, in going to drink with him.

like an oven — following out the image in ^{<3006>}Hosea 7:4. As it conceals the lighted fire all night while the baker sleeps but in the morning burns as a flaming fire, so they brood mischief in their hearts while conscience is lulled asleep, and their wicked designs wait only for a fair occasion to break forth [HORSLEY]. Their heart is the oven, their baker the ringleader of the plot. In ^{<3006>}Hosea 7:7 their plots appear, namely, the intestine disturbances and murders of one king after another, after Jeroboam II.

7. *all hot* — All burn with eagerness to cause universal disturbance (^{<1216>}2 Kings 15:1-38).

devoured their judges — magistrates; as the fire of the oven devours the fuel.

all their kings ... fallen — See on ^{<3006>}Hosea 7:1.

none ... calleth unto me — Such is their perversity that amid all these national calamities, none seeks help from Me (^{<2003>}Isaiah 9:13 64:7).

8. *mixed ... among the people* — by leagues with idolaters, and the adoption of their idolatrous practices (^{<3009>}Hosea 7:9,11 ^{<1965>}Psalms 106:35).

Ephraim ... cake not turned — a cake burnt on one side and unbaked on the other, and so uneatable; an image of the *worthlessness* of Ephraim. The Easterners bake their bread on the ground, covering it with embers (^{<1106>}1 Kings 19:6), and *turning* it every ten minutes, to bake it thoroughly without burning it.

9. *Strangers* — foreigners: the Syrians and Assyrians (^{<1217>}2 Kings 13:7 15:19,20 17:3-6).

gray hairs — that is, symptoms of approaching national dissolution.

are here and there upon — literally, “are sprinkled on” him.

yet he knoweth not — Though old age ought to bring with it wisdom, he neither knows of his senile decay, nor has the true knowledge which leads to reformation.

10. Repetition of ^{<3185>}Hosea 5:5.

not return to ... Lord ... for all this — notwithstanding all their calamities (^{<2193>}Isaiah 9:13).

11. like a silly dove — a bird proverbial for simplicity: easily deceived.

without heart — that is, understanding.

call to Egypt — Israel lying between the two great rival empires Egypt and Assyria, sought each by turns to help her against the other. As this prophecy was written in the reign of Hoshea, the allusion is probably to the alliance with So or Sabacho II (of which a record has been found on the clay cylindrical seals in Koyunjik), which ended in the overthrow of Hoshea and the deportation of Israel (^{<1278>}2 Kings 17:3-6). As the dove betrays its foolishness by fleeing in alarm from its nest only to fall into the net of the fowler, so Israel, though warned that foreign alliances would be their ruin, rushed into them.

12. When they shall go — to seek aid from this or that foreign state.

spread my net upon them — as on birds taken on the ground (^{<3129>}Ezekiel 12:13), as contrasted with “*bringing them down*” as the “*fowls of the heavens,*” namely, by the use of missiles.

as their congregation hath heard — namely, by My prophets through whom I threatened “chastisement” (^{<3189>}Hosea 5:9 ^{<1273>}2 Kings 17:13-18).

13. fled — as birds from their nest (^{<1278>}Proverbs 27:8 ^{<2142>}Isaiah 16:2).

me — who both could and would have healed them (^{<3101>}Hosea 7:1), had they applied to Me.

redeemed them — from Egypt and their other enemies (Micah 6:4).

lies — (^{<1786>}Psalms 78:36 ^{<1810>}Jeremiah 3:10). Pretending to be My worshippers, when they all the while worshipped idols (^{<3074>}Hosea 7:14 ^{<3111>}Hosea 12:1); also defrauding Me of the glory of their deliverance, and ascribing it and their other blessings to idols [CALVIN].

14. *not cried unto me* — but unto other gods [MAURER], (^{<3889>}Job 35:9,10). Or, they did indeed cry unto Me, but not “with their heart”: answering to “lies,” ^{<3073>}Hosea 7:13 (see on ^{<3073>}Hosea 7:13).

when they howled upon their beds — sleepless with anxiety; image of *deep affliction*. Their cry is termed “howling,” as it is the cry of anguish, not the cry of repentance and faith.

assemble ... for corn, etc. — namely in the temples of their idols, to obtain from them a good harvest and vintage, instead of coming to Me, the true Giver of these (^{<3016>}Hosea 2:5,8,12), proving that their cry to God was “not with their heart.”

rebel against me — literally, “withdraw themselves *against* Me,” that is, not only withdraw *from* Me, but also rebel *against* Me.

15. *I ... bound* — when I saw their arms as it were relaxed with various disasters, I bound them so as to strengthen their sinews; image from surgery [CALVIN]. MAURER translates, “I instructed them” to war (^{<39834>}Psalms 18:34 144:1), namely, under Jeroboam II (^{<12452>}2 Kings 14:25). GROTIUS explains, “Whether I chastised them (*Margin*) or strengthened their arms, they imagined mischief against Me.” *English Version is best*.

16. *return, but not to the Most High* — or, “to one who is *not the Most High*,” one very different from Him, a stock or a stone. So the *Septuagint*.

deceitful bow — (^{<39757>}Psalms 78:57). A bow which, from its faulty construction, shoots wide of the mark. So Israel pretends to seek God, but turns aside to idols.

for the rage of their tongue — their boast of safety from Egyptian aid, and their “lies” (^{<3073>}Hosea 7:13), whereby they pretended to serve God, while worshipping idols; also their perverse defense for their idolatries and blasphemies against God and His prophets (^{<397319>}Psalms 73:9 120:2,3).

their derision in ... Egypt — Their “fall” shall be the subject of “derision” to Egypt, to whom they had applied for help (^{<3008>}Hosea 9:3,6 ^{<12704>}2 Kings 17:4).

CHAPTER 8

HOSEA 8:1-14.

PROPHECY OF THE IRRUPTION OF THE ASSYRIANS, IN PUNISHMENT FOR ISRAEL'S APOSTASY, IDOLATRY, AND SETTING UP OF KINGS WITHOUT GOD'S SANCTION.

In ^{<3084>}Hosea 8:14, *Judah* is said to multiply fenced cities; and in ^{<3007>}Hosea 8:7-9, Israel, to its great hurt, is said to have gone up to Assyria for help. This answers best to the reign of Menahem. For it was then that Uzziah of Judah, his contemporary, built fenced cities (^{<4016>}2 Chronicles 26:6,9,10). Then also Israel turned to Assyria and had to pay for their sinful folly a thousand talents of silver (^{<12589>}2 Kings 15:19) [MAURER].

1. *Set the trumpet*, etc. — to give warning of the approach of the enemy: “To thy *palate* (that is, ‘mouth,’ ^{<4830>}Job 31:30, *Margin*) the trumpet”; the abruptness of expression indicates the suddenness of the attack. So ^{<3088>}Hosea 5:8.

as ... eagle — the Assyrian (^{<15389>}Deuteronomy 28:49 ^{<3480>}Jeremiah 48:40 Habakkuk 1:8).

against ... house of ... Lord — not the temple, but Israel viewed as *the family of God* (^{<3095>}Hosea 9:15 ^{<4017>}Numbers 12:7 Zechariah 9:8 ^{<3000>}Hebrews 3:2 ^{<4885>}1 Timothy 3:15 ^{<4047>}1 Peter 4:17).

2. *My God, we know thee* — the singular, “My,” is used distributively, each one so addressing God. They, in their hour of need, plead their knowledge of God as the covenant-people, while in their *acts* they acknowledge Him not (compare ^{<4021>}Matthew 7:21,22 ^{<5016>}Titus 1:16; also ^{<3093>}Isaiah 29:13 ^{<3004>}Jeremiah 7:4). The *Hebrew* joins “Israel,” not as *English Version*, with “shall cry,” but “*We, Israel, know thee*”; God denies the claim thus urged on the ground of their descent from Israel.

3. *Israel* — God repeats the name in opposition to *their* use of it (^{<3081>}Hosea 8:2).

the thing that is good — JEROME translates, “God” who is good and doing good (^{<3486>}Psalms 119:68). He is the chief object rejected, but with Him also all that is good.

the enemy shall pursue him — in just retribution from God.

4. kings ... not by me — not with My sanction (⁴¹¹³1 Kings 11:31 12:20). Israel set up Jeroboam and his successors, whereas God had appointed the house of David as the rightful kings of the whole nation.

I knew it not — I approved it not (⁴⁹⁰⁶Psalms 1:6).

of ... gold ... idols — (³⁰⁸⁸Hosea 2:8 13:2).

that they may be cut off — that is, though warned of the consequences of idolatry, as it were with open eyes they rushed on their own destruction. So ⁴²⁷⁰Jeremiah 27:10,15 44:8.

5. hath cast thee off — As the ellipsis of *thee* is unusual, MAURER translates, “thy calf *is* abominable.” But the antithesis to ³⁰⁸⁸Hosea 8:3 establishes *English Version*, “Israel *hath cast off* the thing that is good”; therefore, in just retribution, “thy calf hath cast thee off,” that is, is made by God the cause of thy being cast off (³⁰¹⁵Hosea 10:15). Jeroboam, during his sojourn in Egypt, saw Apis worshipped at Memphis, and Mnevis at Heliopolis, in the form of an ox; this, and the temple cherubim, suggested the idea of the calves set up at Daniel and Beth-el.

how long ... ere they attain to innocency? — How long will they be incapable of bearing innocency? [MAURER].

6. from Israel was it — that is, the calf originated with them, not from Me. “It also,” as well as their “kings set up” by them, “but not by Me” (³⁰⁸⁴Hosea 8:4).

7. sown ... reap — (⁴¹²⁸Proverbs 22:8 ⁴⁰⁶⁷Galatians 6:7). “Sow ... wind,” that is, to make the vain show of worship, while faith and obedience are wanting [CALVIN]. Rather, to offer senseless supplications to the calves for good harvests (compare ³⁰¹⁸Hosea 2:8); the result being that God will make them “reap no stalk,” that is, “standing corn.” Also, the phraseology proverbially means that all their undertakings shall be profitless (⁴¹¹³Proverbs 11:29 ⁴¹⁶⁶Ecclesiastes 5:16).

the bud — or, “growth.”

strangers — foreigners (³⁰⁰⁹Hosea 7:9).

8. vessel wherein is no pleasure — (⁴⁹⁴¹²Psalms 41:12 ⁴⁰²⁸Jeremiah 22:28 48:38).

9. gone ... to Assyria — referring to Menahem’s application for Pul’s aid in establishing him on the throne (compare ³⁰⁸³Hosea 5:13 7:11). Menahem’s

name is read in the inscriptions in the southwest palace of Nimrod, as a tributary to the Assyrian king in his eighth year. The dynasty of Pul, or Phalluka, was supplanted at Nineveh by that of Tiglath-pileser, about 768 (or 760) B.C. Semiramis seems to have been Pul's wife, and to have withdrawn to Babylon in 768; and her son, Nabonassar, succeeding after a period of confusion, originated "the era of Nabonassar," 747 B.C. [G. V. SMITH]. Usually foreigners coming to Israel's land were said to "go up"; here it is the reverse, to intimate Israel's *sunken* state, and Assyria's superiority.

wild ass — a figure of Israel's headstrong perversity in following her own bent (²¹²²Jeremiah 2:24).

alone by himself — characteristic of Israel in all ages: "lo, the people shall dwell alone" (⁰¹²³Numbers 23:9; compare ⁴³⁹⁵Job 39:5-8).

hired lovers — reversing the ordinary way, namely, that lovers should hire her (²³⁶³Ezekiel 16:33,34).

10. will I gather them — namely, the *nations* (Assyria, etc.) against Israel, instead of their assisting her as she had wished (²³⁶⁷Ezekiel 16:37).

a little — rather, "in a little" [HENDERSON]. *English Version* gives good sense: They shall sorrow "a little" at the imposition of the tribute; God suspended yet the *great* judgment, namely, their deportation by Assyria.

the burden of the king of princes — the tribute imposed on Israel (under Menahem) by the Assyrian king Pul, (¹²⁵⁹2 Kings 15:19-22), who had many "princes" under his sway (²³⁰⁸Isaiah 10:8).

11. God in righteous retribution gives them up to their own way; the sin becomes its own punishment (²¹⁰³Proverbs 1:31).

many altars — in opposition to God's law (⁵¹²⁵Deuteronomy 12:5,6,13,14).

to sin ... to sin — Their altars which were "sin" (whatever religious intentions they might plead) should be treated as such, and be the source of their punishment (¹¹²³1 Kings 12:30 13:34).

12. great things of ... law — (⁰¹⁰⁶Deuteronomy 4:6,8 ⁰⁹⁰⁸Psalms 19:8 119:18,72 147:19,20). MAURER not so well translates, "*the many things of My law.*"

my law — as opposed to their inventions. This reference of Hosea to the Pentateuch alone is against the theory that some earlier written prophecies have not come down to us.

strange thing — as if a thing with which they had nothing to do.

13. sacrifices of mine offerings — that is, which they offer to Me.

eat it — Their own carnal gratification is the object which they seek, not My honor.

now — that is, “speedily.”

shall return to Egypt — (^{<2008}Hosea 9:3,6 11:11). The same threat as in ^{<628}Deuteronomy 28:68. They fled thither to escape from the Assyrians (compare as to *Judah*, ^{<408}Jeremiah 42:1-44:30), when these latter had overthrown their nation. But see on ^{<308}Hosea 9:3.

14. forgotten ... Maker — (^{<628}Deuteronomy 32:18).

temples — to idols.

Judah ... fenced cities — Judah, though less idolatrous than Israel, betrayed lack of faith in Jehovah by trusting more to its fenced cities than to Him; instead of making peace with God, Judah multiplied human defenses (^{<2218}Isaiah 22:8 ^{<457}Jeremiah 5:17 ^{<350}Micah 5:10,11).

I will send ... fire upon ... cities — Sennacherib burned all Judah's fenced cities except Jerusalem (^{<1283}2 Kings 18:13).

palaces thereof — namely, of the land. Compare as to Jerusalem, ^{<4727}Jeremiah 17:27.

CHAPTER 9

HOSEA 9:1-17.

WARNING AGAINST ISRAEL'S JOY AT PARTIAL RELIEF FROM THEIR TROUBLES: THEIR CROPS SHALL FAIL, AND THE PEOPLE LEAVE THE LORD'S LAND FOR EGYPT AND ASSYRIA, WHERE THEY CANNOT, IF SO INCLINED, SERVE GOD ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT RITUAL: FOLLY OF THEIR FALSE PROPHETS.

1. *Rejoice not ... for joy* — literally, “to exultation.” Thy exultation at the league with Pul, by which peace seems secured, is out of place: since thy idolatry will bring ruin on thee.

as other people — the Assyrians for instance, who, unlike thee, are in the height of prosperity.

loved a reward upon every corn floor — Thou hast desired, in *reward* for thy homage to idols, abundance of corn on every threshing-floor (^{<XPT>}Hosea 2:12).

2. (^{<XIB>}Hosea 2:9,12).

fail — disappoint her expectation.

3. *return to Egypt* — (See on ^{<XIB>}Hosea 8:13). As in ^{<XIB>}Hosea 11:5 it is said, “He shall *not return* into ... Egypt.” FAIRBAIRN thinks it is not the exact country that is meant, but the *bondage state* with which, from past experience, Egypt was identified in their minds. Assyria was to be a second Egypt to them. ^{<XIB>}Deuteronomy 28:68, though threatening a return to Egypt, speaks (^{<XIB>}Deuteronomy 28:36) of their being brought to a nation which *neither they nor their fathers had known*, showing that it is not the literal Egypt, but a second Egypt-like bondage that is threatened.

eat unclean things in Assyria — reduced by necessity to eat meats pronounced unclean by the Mosaic law (^{<XIB>}Ezekiel 4:13). See ^{<XIB>}2 Kings 17:6.

4. *offer wine offerings* — literally, “pour as a libation (^{<XIB>}Exodus 30:9 ^{<XIB>}Leviticus 23:13).

neither shall they be pleasing unto him — as being offered on a profane soil.

sacrifices ... as the bread of mourners — which was unclean (^{<634>}Deuteronomy 26:14 ^{<2403>}Jeremiah 16:7 ^{<3277>}Ezekiel 24:17).

their bread for their soul — their offering for the expiation of their soul [CALVIN], (^{<6711>}Leviticus 17:11). Rather, “their bread for their sustenance (‘soul’ being often used for *the animal life*, ^{<1142>}Genesis 14:21, *Margin*) shall not come into the Lord’s house”; it shall only subserve their own uses, not My worship.

5. (^{<3211>}Hosea 2:11).

6. *because of destruction* — to escape from the devastation of their country.

Egypt shall gather them up — that is, into its sepulchres (^{<2482>}Jeremiah 8:2 ^{<3245>}Ezekiel 29:5). Instead of returning to Palestine, they should die in Egypt.

Memphis — famed as a necropolis.

the pleasant places for their silver — that is, their desired treasuries for their money. Or, “whatever precious thing they have of silver” [MAURER].

nettles — the sign of desolation (^{<2343>}Isaiah 34:13).

7. *visitation* — vengeance: punishment (^{<2303>}Isaiah 10:3).

Israel shall know it — to her cost experimentally (^{<2349>}Isaiah 9:9).

the prophet is a fool — The false prophet who foretold prosperity to the nation shall be convicted of folly by the event.

the spiritual man — the man pretending to inspiration (^{<2514>}Lamentations 2:14 ^{<3238>}Ezekiel 13:3 ^{<3181>}Micah 3:11 Zephaniah 3:4).

for the multitude of thine iniquity, etc. — Connect these words with, “the days of visitation ... are come”; “the prophet ... is mad,” being parenthetical.

the great hatred — or, “the great provocation” [HENDERSON]; or, “(thy) great apostasy” [MAURER]. *English Version* means Israel’s “*hatred*” of God’s prophets and the law.

8. *The watchman ... was with my God* — The spiritual watchmen, the true prophets, formerly consulted my God (^{<2606>}Jeremiah 31:6 Habakkuk 2:1); but their so-called *prophet* is a snare, entrapping Israel into idolatry.

hatred — rather, “(a cause of) apostasy” (see ^{<3007>}Hosea 9:7) [MAURER].

house of his God — that is, the state of Ephraim, as in ^{<3001>}Hosea 8:1 [MAURER]. Or, “the house of his (false) god,” the calves [CALVIN]. Jehovah, “my God,” seems contrasted with “his God.” CALVIN’S view is therefore preferable.

9. as in the days of Gibeah — as in the day of the perpetration of the atrocity of Gibeah, narrated in ^{<0796>}Judges 19:16-22, etc.

10. As the traveler in a wilderness is delighted at finding grapes to quench his thirst, or the early fig (esteemed a great delicacy in the East, ^{<3301>}Isaiah 28:4 ^{<3010>}Jeremiah 24:2 Micah 7:1); so it was My delight to choose your fathers as My peculiar people in Egypt (^{<3015>}Hosea 2:15).

at her first time — when the first-fruits of the tree become ripe.

went to Baal-peor — (^{<0258>}Numbers 25:3): the Moabite idol, in whose worship young women prostituted themselves; the very sin Israel latterly was guilty of.

separated themselves — consecrated themselves.

unto that shame — to that shameful or foul idol (^{<2113>}Jeremiah 11:13).

their abominations were according as they loved — rather, as *Vulgate*, “they became abominable like the object of their love” (^{<0128>}Deuteronomy 7:26 ^{<0358>}Psalms 115:8). *English Version* gives good sense, “their abominable idols they followed after, according as their lusts prompted them” (^{<3015>}Amos 4:5, *Margin*).

11. their glory shall fly away — fit retribution to those who “separated themselves unto that shame” (^{<3000>}Hosea 9:10). Children were accounted the *glory* of parents; sterility, a reproach. “Ephraim” means “fruitfulness” (^{<0445>}Genesis 41:52); this its name shall cease to be its characteristic.

from the birth ... womb ... conception — Ephraim’s children shall perish in a threefold gradation;

(1) From the time of birth.

(2) From the time of pregnancy.

(3) From the time of their first conception.

12. Even though they should rear their children, yet will I bereave them (the Ephraimites) of them (^{<3074>}Job 27:14).

woe ... to them when I depart — Yet the ungodly in their madness desire God to depart from them (^{<8214>}Job 21:14 22:17 ^{<4034>}Matthew 8:34). At last they know to their cost how awful it is when God has departed (^{<617>}Deuteronomy 31:17 ^{<1285>}1 Samuel 28:15,16; compare ^{<391>}Hosea 9:11 ^{<1021>}1 Samuel 4:21).

13. Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus ... in a pleasant place — that is, in looking towards Tyrus (on whose borders Ephraim lay) I saw Ephraim beautiful in situation like her (^{<391>}Ezekiel 26:1-28:26).

is planted — as a *fruitful* tree; image suggested by the meaning of “Ephraim” (^{<391>}Hosea 9:11).

bring forth his children to the murderer — (^{<396>}Hosea 9:16 ^{<396>}Hosea 13:16). With all his fruitfulness, his children shall only be brought up to be slain.

14. what wilt thou give? — As if overwhelmed by feeling, he deliberates with God what is most desirable.

give ... a miscarrying womb — Of two evils he chooses the least. So great will be the calamity, that barrenness will be a blessing, though usually counted a great misfortune (^{<808>}Job 3:3 ^{<414>}Jeremiah 20:14 ^{<239>}Luke 23:29).

15. All their wickedness — that is, their chief guilt.

Gilgal — (see on ^{<395>}Hosea 4:15). This was the scene of their first contumacy in rejecting God and choosing a king (^{<114>}1 Samuel 11:14,15; compare ^{<98>}1 Samuel 8:7), and of their subsequent idolatry.

there I hated them — not with the human passion, but holy hatred of their sin, which required punishment to be inflicted on themselves (compare Malachi 1:3).

out of mine house — as in ^{<391>}Hosea 8:1: out of the land holy unto ME. Or, as “love” is mentioned immediately after, the reference may be to the Hebrew mode of divorce, the husband (God) putting the wife (Israel) out of the house.

princes ... revolvers — “*Sarim ... Sorerim*” (*Hebrew*), a play on similar sounds.

16. The figures “root,” “fruit,” are suggested by the word “Ephraim,” that is, *fruitful* (see on ^{<391>}Hosea 9:11,12). “Smitten,” namely, with a blight (^{<920>}Psalms 102:4).

17. *My God* — “My,” in contrast to “them,” that is, the people, whose God Jehovah no longer is. Also Hosea appeals to God as supporting his authority against the whole people.

wanderers among ... nations — (~~1253~~2 Kings 15:29 ~~1356~~1 Chronicles 5:26).

CHAPTER 10

HOSEA 10:1-15.

ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY, THE SOURCE OF PERJURIES AND UNLAWFUL LEAGUES, SOON DESTINED TO BE THE RUIN OF THE STATE, THEIR KING AND THEIR IMAGES BEING ABOUT TO BE CARRIED OFF; A JUST CHASTISEMENT, THE REAPING CORRESPONDING TO THE SOWING.

The prophecy was uttered between Shalmaneser's first and second invasions of Israel. Compare ^{<3014>}Hosea 10:14; also ^{<3016>}Hosea 10:6, referring to Hoshea's calling So of Egypt to his aid; also ^{<3018>}Hosea 10:4,13.

1. *empty* — stripped of its fruits [CALVIN], (Na 2:2); compelled to pay tribute to Pul (^{<1251>}2 Kings 15:20). MAURER translates, "A *widespreading* vine"; so the *Septuagint*. Compare ^{<0422>}Genesis 49:22 ^{<3019>}Psalms 80:9-11 ^{<3176>}Ezekiel 17:6.

bringeth forth fruit unto himself — not unto ME.

according to ... multitude of ... fruit ... increased ... altars — In proportion to the abundance of their prosperity, which called for fruit unto God (compare ^{<6122>}Romans 6:22), was the abundance of their idolatry (^{<3020>}Hosea 8:4,11).

2. *heart ... divided* — (^{<11821>}1 Kings 18:21 ^{<1026>}Matthew 6:24 ^{<5008>}James 4:8).

now — that is soon.

he — Jehovah.

break down — "cut off," namely the heads of the victims. Those altars, which were the scene of *cutting off* the victims' heads, shall be themselves cut off.

3. *now*, etc. — Soon they, deprived of their king, shall be reduced to say, We have no king (^{<3017>}Hosea 10:7,15), for Jehovah deprived us of him, because of our not fearing God. What then (seeing God is against us) should a king be able to do for us, if we had one? As they rejected the heavenly King, they were deprived of their earthly king.

4. *words* — mere empty words.

swearing falsely in making a covenant — breaking their engagement to Shalmaneser (^{<12704>}2 Kings 17:4), and making a covenant with So, though covenants with foreigners were forbidden.

judgment ... as hemlock — that is, divine judgment shall spring up as rank, and as deadly, as hemlock in the furrows (^{<12393>}Deuteronomy 29:18 ^{<3101>}Amos 5:7 6:12). GESENIUS translates, “poppy.” GROTIUS, “darnel.”

5. fear because of the calves — that is, shall fear *for* them.

Beth-aven — substituted for Beth-el in contempt (^{<3045>}Hosea 4:15).

it — *singular*, the *one* in Beth-el; after the pattern of which the other “calves” (*plural*) were made. “Calves” in the *Hebrew* is *feminine*, to express contempt.

priests — The *Hebrew* is only used of *idolatrous priests* (^{<12316>}2 Kings 23:5 Zephaniah 1:4), from a root meaning either “the black garment” in which they were attired; or, “to resound,” referring to their howling cries in their sacred rites [CALVIN].

that rejoiced on it — because it was a source of gain to them. MAURER translates, “Shall leap in trepidation on account of it”; as Baal’s priests did (^{<11835>}1 Kings 18:26).

the glory thereof — the magnificence of its ornaments and its worship.

6. It ... also — The calf, so far from saving its worshippers from deportation, itself shall be carried off; hence “Israel shall be ashamed” of it.

Jareb — (See on ^{<3163>}Hosea 5:13). “A present to the king (whom they looked to as) their *defender*,” or else *avenger*, whose wrath they wished to appease, namely, Shalmaneser. The minor states applied this title to the Great King, as the avenging Protector.

his own counsel — the calves, which Jeroboam set up as a stroke of policy to detach Israel from Judah. Their severance from Judah and Jehovah proved now to be not politic, but fatal to them.

7. (^{<3003>}Hosea 10:3,15).

foam — denoting short-lived existence and speedy dissolution. As the foam, though seeming to be eminent raised on the top of the water, yet has no solidity, such is the throne of Samaria. MAURER translates, “a chip” or *broken branch* that cannot resist the current.

8. Aven — that is, Beth-aven.

the sin — that is, the occasion of sin (^{<1821>}Deuteronomy 9:21 ^{<1123>}1 Kings 12:30).

they shall say to ... mountains, Cover us — So terrible shall be the calamity, that men shall prefer death to life (^{<233>}Luke 23:30 ^{<666>}Revelation 6:16 9:6). Those very hills on which were their idolatrous altars (one source of their confidence, as their “king,” ^{<3007>}Hosea 10:7, was the other), so far from helping them, shall be called on by them to overwhelm them.

9. Gibeah — (^{<3009>}Hosea 9:9 ^{<0791>}Judges 19:1-20:48). They are singled out as a specimen of the whole nation.

there they stood — The Israelites have, as there and then, so ever since, *persisted* in their sin [CALVIN]. Or, better, “they stood their ground,” that is, did not perish then [MAURER].

the battle ... did not overtake them — Though God spared you then, He will not do so now; nay, the battle whereby God punished the Gibeonite “children of iniquity,” shall the more heavily visit you for your continued impenitence. Though “they stood” then, it shall not be so now. The change from “thou” to “they” marks God’s alienation from them; they are, by the use of the third person, put to a greater distance from God.

10. my desire ... chastise — expressing God’s *strong inclination* to vindicate His justice against sin, as being the infinitely holy God (^{<6263>}Deuteronomy 28:63).

the people — *Foreign invaders* “shall be gathered against them.”

when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows — image from two oxen ploughing together side by side, in two contiguous furrows: so the Israelites shall join themselves, to unite their powers against all dangers, but it will not save them from My destroying them [CALVIN]. Their “two furrows” may refer to their *two places of setting up the calves*, their ground of confidence, Daniel and Beth-el; or, the two divisions of the nation, *Israel and Judah*, “in their two furrows,” that is, in their respective two places of habitation; ^{<3011>}Hosea 10:11, which specifies the two, favors this view. HENDERSON prefers the *Keri (Hebrew Margin)* “for their two iniquities”; and translates, “when they are bound” in captivity. *English Version* is best, as the image is carried out in ^{<3011>}Hosea 10:11; only it is perhaps better to translate, “the people (the invaders) *binding them*,” that is, making them captives; and so ^{<3011>}Hosea 10:11 alludes to the yoke being put on the neck of Ephraim and Judah.

11. taught — that is, accustomed.

loveth to tread out ... corn — a far easier and more self-indulgent work than ploughing. In treading corn, cattle were not bound together under a yoke, but either trod it singly with their feet, or drew a threshing sledge over it (^{<2307>}Isaiah 28:27,28): they were free to eat some of the corn from time to time, as the law required they should be unmuzzled (^{<1634>}Deuteronomy 25:4), so that they grew fat in this work. An image of Israel's freedom, prosperity, and self-indulgence heretofore. But now God will put the Assyrian yoke upon her, instead of freedom, putting her to servile work.

I passed over upon — I put the yoke upon.

make ... to ride — as in ^{<812>}Job 30:22; that is, *hurry* Ephraim *away* to a distant region [CALVIN]. LYRA translates, "I will make (the Assyrian) to ride upon Ephraim." MAURER, "I will make Ephraim to carry," namely, a charioteer.

his clods — "the clods before him."

12. Continuation of the image in ^{<3011>}Hosea 10:11 (^{<2118>}Proverbs 11:18). Act righteously and ye shall reap the reward; a reward not of debt, but of grace.

in mercy — according to the measure of the divine "mercy," which over and above repays the *goodness* or "mercy" which we show to our fellow man (^{<4168>}Luke 6:38).

break ... fallow ground — Remove your superstitions and vices, and be renewed.

seek ... Lord, fill he come — Though not answered immediately, persevere unceasingly "till He come."

rain — send down as a copious shower.

righteousness — the reward of righteousness, that is, *salvation*, temporal and spiritual (^{<1063>}1 Samuel 26:23; compare ^{<2123>}Joel 2:23).

13. **reaped iniquity** — that is, the *fruit* of iniquity; as "righteousness" (^{<3012>}Hosea 10:12) is "the *fruit* of righteousness" (^{<3018>}Job 4:8 ^{<1218>}Proverbs 22:8 ^{<4010>}Galatians 6:7,8).

lies — false and spurious worship.

trust in thy way — thy perverse way (^{<2570>}Isaiah 57:10 ^{<2123>}Jeremiah 2:23), thy worship of false gods. This was their internal safeguard, as their external was "the multitude of their mighty men."

14. **tumult** — a tumultuous war.

among thy people — literally, “peoples”: the war shall extend to the whole people of Israel, through all the tribes, and the peoples allied to her.

Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel — that is, Shalmaneser, a compound name, in which the part common to it and the names of three other Assyrian kings, is omitted; Tiglath-pileser, Esar-haddon, Shar-ezer. So Jeconiah is abbreviated to Coniah. Arbel was situated in Naphtali in Galilee, on the border nearest Assyria. Against it Shalmaneser, at his first invasion of Israel (^{277B}2 Kings 17:3), vented his chief rage. God threatens Israel’s fortresses with the same fate as Arbel suffered “in the day (on the occasion) of the battle” then well-known, though not mentioned elsewhere (compare ²⁸⁴2 Kings 18:34). This event, close on the reign of Hezekiah, shows the inscription of Hosea (³⁰⁰Hosea 1:1) to be correct.

15. *So shall Beth-el do unto you* — Your idolatrous calf at Beth-el shall be the cause of a like calamity befalling you.

your great wickedness — literally, “the wickedness of your wickedness.”

in a morning — speedily as quickly as the dawn is put to flight by the rising sun (³⁰⁰Hosea 6:4 13:3 ³⁰⁵Psalms 30:5).

king — Hoshea.

CHAPTER 11

HOSEA 11:1-12.

GOD'S FORMER BENEFITS, AND ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE RESULTING IN PUNISHMENT, YET JEHOVAH PROMISES RESTORATION AT LAST.

Hosea 11:5 shows this prophecy was uttered after the league made with Egypt (²⁷⁰⁴2 Kings 17:4).

1. *Israel ... called my son out of Egypt* — BENDEL translates, “From the time that he (Israel) was *in* Egypt, I called him My son,” which the parallelism proves. So ³⁸¹⁹Hosea 12:9 and ³⁸¹⁹Hosea 13:4 use “from ... Egypt,” for “from the time that thou didst sojourn *in* Egypt.” ¹⁰⁰²Exodus 4:22 also shows that Israel was called by God, “My son,” from the time of his Egyptian sojourn (²⁸¹¹Isaiah 43:1). God is always said to have *led* or *brought forth*, not to have “called,” Israel from Egypt. ⁴⁰¹⁵Matthew 2:15, therefore, in quoting this prophecy (typically and primarily referring to Israel, antitypically and fully to Messiah), applies it to Jesus’ sojourn *in* Egypt, not His return *from* it. Even from His infancy, partly spent in Egypt, God called Him His son. God included Messiah, and Israel for Messiah’s sake, in one common love, and therefore in one common prophecy. Messiah’s people and Himself are one, as the Head and the body. ³⁴⁸³Isaiah 49:3 calls Him “Israel.” The same general reason, danger of extinction, caused the infant Jesus, and Israel in its national infancy (compare ¹⁴¹¹Genesis 42:1-43:34 45:18 46:3,4 ²³⁰⁴Ezekiel 16:4-6 ²⁸¹¹Jeremiah 31:20) to sojourn in Egypt. So He, and His spiritual Israel, are already called “God’s sons” while yet in the Egypt of the world.

2. *As they called them* — “they,” namely, monitors sent by Me. “Called,” in ³⁸¹¹Hosea 11:1, suggests the idea of the many subsequent calls by the prophets.

went from them — turned away in contempt (³¹²⁷Jeremiah 2:27).

Baalim — images of Baal, set up in various places.

3. *taught ... to go* — literally “to use his feet.” Compare a similar image, ⁸¹³³Deuteronomy 1:31 8:2,5,15 32:10,11 ⁴³²¹Nehemiah 9:21 ²³¹⁹Isaiah 63:9 ³¹²⁰Amos 2:10. God bore them as a parent does an infant, unable to supply

itself, so that it has no anxiety about food, raiment, and its going forth.

^{<4138>}Acts 13:18, which probably refers to this passage of Hosea; He took them by the arms, to guide them that they might not stray, and to hold them up that they might not stumble.

knew not that I healed them — that is, that My design was to restore them spiritually and temporally (^{<4153>}Exodus 15:26).

4. *CORDS OF A MAN* — parallel to “bands of love”; not such cords as oxen are led by, but *humane methods*, such as men employ when inducing others, as for instance, a father drawing his child, by leading-strings, teaching him to go (^{<3100>}Hosea 11:1).

I was ... as they that take off the yoke on their jaws ... I laid meat — as the humane husbandman occasionally loosens the straps under the jaws by which the yoke is bound on the neck of oxen and lays food before them to eat. An appropriate image of God’s deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian yoke, and of His feeding them in the wilderness.

5. *HE SHALL NOT RETURN INTO ... EGYPT* — namely, to seek help against Assyria (compare ^{<3071>}Hosea 7:11), as Israel lately had done (^{<42704>}2 Kings 17:4), after having revolted from Assyria, to whom they had been tributary from the times of Menahem (^{<4259>}2 Kings 15:19). In a *figurative* sense, “he shall return to Egypt” (^{<3008>}Hosea 9:3), that is, to Egypt-like bondage; also many Jewish fugitives were literally to *return* to Egypt, when the Holy Land was to be in Assyrian and Chaldean hands.

Assyrian shall be his king — instead of having kings of their own, and Egypt as their auxiliary.

because they refused to return — just retribution. They would not return (spiritually) to God, therefore they shall not return (corporally) to Egypt, the object of their desire.

6. *ABIDE* — or, “fall upon” [CALVIN].

branches — villages, which are the branches or dependencies of the cities [CALVIN]. GROTIUS translates, “his bars” (so ^{<25109>}Lamentations 2:9), that is, the warriors who were the bulwarks of the state. Compare ^{<3008>}Hosea 4:18, “rulers” (*Margin*), “shields” (^{<49709>}Psalms 47:9).

because of their own counsels — in worshipping idols, and relying on Egypt (compare ^{<2806>}Hosea 10:6).

7. *BENT TO BACKSLIDING* — Not only do they *backslide*, and that too *from ME*, their “chief good,” but they are *bent upon it*. Though they (the

prophets) called them (the Israelites) to the Most High (from their idols), “none would exalt (that is, extol or honor) Him.” To exalt God, they must cease to be “*bent on* backsliding,” and *must* lift themselves upwards.

8. *as Admah ... Zeboim* — among the cities, including Sodom and Gomorrah, irretrievably overthrown (^{<1623>}Deuteronomy 29:23).

heart is turned within me — with the deepest compassion, so as not to execute My threat (^{<2012>}Lamentations 1:20; compare ^{<1451>}Genesis 43:30 ^{<1182>}1 Kings 3:26). So the phrase is used of a new turn given to the feeling (^{<1952>}Psalms 105:25).

repentings — God speaks according to *human* modes of thought (^{<1029>}Numbers 23:19). God’s *seeming* change is in accordance with His secret everlasting purpose of love to His people, to magnify His grace after their desperate rebellion.

9. *I will not return to destroy Ephraim* — that is I will no more, as in past times, destroy Ephraim. The destruction primarily meant is probably that by Tiglath-pileser, who, as the Jewish king Ahaz’ ally against Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria, deprived Israel of Gilead, Galilee, and Naphtali (^{<1259>}2 Kings 15:29). The ulterior reference is to the long dispersion hereafter, to be ended by God’s covenant mercy restoring His people, not for their merits, but of His grace.

God, ... not man — not dealing as man would, with implacable wrath under awful provocation (^{<2317>}Isaiah 55:7-9 Malachi 3:6). I do not, like man, change when once I have made a covenant of everlasting love, as with Israel (^{<1029>}Numbers 23:19). We measure God by the human standard, and hence are slow to credit fully His promises; these, however, belong to the faithful remnant, not to the obstinately impenitent.

in the midst of thee — as peculiarly thy God (^{<1295>}Exodus 19:5,6).

not enter into the city — as an enemy: as I entered Admah, Zeboim, and Sodom, utterly destroying them, whereas I will not utterly destroy thee. Somewhat similarly JEROME: “I am *not one such as human dwellers in a city*, who take cruel vengeance; I save those whom I correct.” Thus “not man,” and “in the midst of thee,” are parallel to “into the city.” Though I am in the midst of thee, it is not as man entering a rebellious city to destroy utterly. MAURER needlessly translates, “I will not come *in wrath*.”

10. *he shall roar like a lion* — by awful judgments on their foes (^{<2310>}Isaiah 31:4 ^{<1253>}Jeremiah 25:26-30 ^{<2161>}Joel 3:16), calling His dispersed “children” from the various lands of their dispersion.

shall tremble — shall flock in eager agitation of haste.

from the west — (Zechariah 8:7). Literally, “the sea.” Probably the Mediterranean, including its “isles of the sea,” and maritime coast. Thus as ^{<3111>}Hosea 11:11 specifies regions of Africa and Asia, so here Europe. ^{<3111>}Isaiah 11:11-16, is parallel, referring to the very same regions. On “children,” see ^{<3110>}Hosea 1:10.

11. *tremble* — flutter in haste.

dove — no longer “a silly dove” (^{<3111>}Hosea 7:11), but as “doves flying to their windows” (^{<3108>}Isaiah 60:8).

in their houses — (^{<3339>}Ezekiel 28:26). Literally, “upon,” for the Orientals live almost as much *upon* their flat-roofed houses as *in* them.

12. MAURER joins this verse with the twelfth chapter. But as this verse praises Judah, whereas ^{<3112>}Hosea 12:2 censures him, it must belong rather to the eleventh chapter and a new prophecy begins at the twelfth chapter. To avoid this, MAURER translates this verse as a censure, “Judah wanders with God,” that is, though having the true God, he wanders after false gods.

ruleth with God — to serve God is to reign. Ephraim wished to rule *without God* (compare ^{<4018>}1 Corinthians 4:8); nay, even, in order to rule, cast off God’s worship [RIVETUS]. In Judah was the legitimate succession of kings and priests.

with the saints — the holy priests and Levites [RIVETUS]. With the fathers and prophets who handed down the pure worship of God. Israel’s apostasy is the more culpable, as he had before him the good example of Judah, which he set at naught. The parallelism (“with GOD”) favors *Margin*, “With THE MOST HOLY ONE.”

CHAPTER 12

HOSEA 12:1-14.

REPROOF OF EPHRAIM AND JUDAH: THEIR FATHER JACOB OUGHT TO BE A PATTERN TO THEM.

This prophecy was delivered about the time of Israel's seeking the aid of the Egyptian king So, in violation of their covenant with Assyria (see ^{<310>}Hosea 12:1). He exhorts them to follow their father Jacob's persevering prayerfulness, which brought God's favor upon him. As God is unchangeable, He will show the same favor to Jacob's posterity as He did to Jacob, if, like him, they seek God.

1. *feedeth on wind* — (^{<154>}Proverbs 15:14 ^{<240>}Isaiah 44:20). Followeth after vain objects, such as alliances with idolaters and their idols (compare ^{<306>}Hosea 8:7).

east wind — the simoon, blowing from the desert east of Palestine, which not only does not benefit, but does injury. Israel follows not only things vain, but things pernicious (compare ^{<315>}Job 15:2).

increaseth lies — accumulates lie upon lie, that is, impostures wherewith they deceive themselves, forsaking the truth of God.

desolation — *violent oppressions* practiced by Israel [MAURER]. Acts which would prove the *cause* of Israel's own *desolation* [CALVIN].

covenant with ... Assyrians — (^{<513>}Hosea 5:13 7:11).

oil ... into Egypt — as a present from Israel to secure Egypt's alliance (^{<308>}Isaiah 30:6 57:9; compare ^{<270>}2 Kings 17:4). Palestine was famed for oil (^{<277>}Ezekiel 27:17).

2. *controversy with Judah* — (^{<306>}Hosea 4:1 Micah 6:2). Judah, under Ahaz, had fallen into idolatry (^{<263>}2 Kings 16:3, etc.).

Jacob — that is, the ten tribes. If Judah, the favored portion of the nation, shall not be spared, much less degenerate Israel.

3. *He* — Jacob, contrasted with his degenerate descendants, called by his name, Jacob (^{<310>}Hosea 12:2; compare ^{<310>}Micah 2:7). *He* took Esau by the heel in the womb in order to obtain, if possible, the privileges of the first-

born (^{<0252>}Genesis 25:22-26), whence he took his name, Jacob, meaning “supplanter”; and again, by his strength, prevailed in wrestling with God for a blessing (^{<0324>}Genesis 32:24-29); whereas ye disregard My promises, putting your confidence in idols and foreign alliances. *He* conquered God, ye are the slaves of idols. Only have Jehovah on your side, and ye are stronger than Edom, or even Assyria. So the spiritual Israel lays hold of the heel of Jesus, “the First-born of many brethren,” being born again of the Holy Spirit. Having no right in themselves to the inheritance, they lay hold of the bruised heel, the humanity of Christ crucified, and let not go their hold of Him who is not, as Esau, a curse (^{<0216>}Hebrews 12:16,17), but, by becoming a curse for us, is a blessing to us.

power with God — referring to his name, “Israel,” *prince of God*, acquired on that occasion (compare ^{<0112>}Matthew 11:12). As the promised Canaan had to be gained forcibly by Israel, so heaven by the faithful (^{<0129>}Revelation 3:21; compare ^{<0134>}Luke 13:24). “Strive,” literally, “as in the agony of a contest.” So the Canaanitess (^{<0152>}Matthew 15:22).

his strength — which lay in his conscious weakness, whence, when his thigh was put out of joint by God, he *hung upon Him*. To seek strength was his object; to grant it, God’s. Yet God’s mode of procedure was strange. In human form He tries as it were to throw Jacob down. When simple wrestling was not enough, He does what seems to ensure Jacob’s fall, dislocating his thigh joint, so that he could no longer stand. Yet it was then that Jacob prevailed. Thus God teaches us the irresistible might of conscious weakness. For when weak in ourselves, we are strong by His strength put in us (^{<0216>}Job 23:6 ^{<02716>}Isaiah 27:5 ^{<07119>}2 Corinthians 12:9,10).

4. *the angel* — the uncreated Angel of the Covenant, as God the Son appears in the Old Testament (Malachi 3:1).

made supplication — ^{<0326>}Genesis 32:26; I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”

he found him — The angel found Jacob, when he was fleeing from Esau into Syria: the Lord appearing to him “in Beth-el” (^{<0131>}Genesis 28:11-19 35:1). What a sad contrast, that in this same Beth-el now Israel worships the golden calves!

there he spake with us — “with us,” as being in the loins of our progenitor Jacob (compare ^{<0166>}Psalms 66:6, “They ... *we*,” ^{<01091>}Hebrews 7:9,10). What God there spoke to Jacob appertains to us. God’s promises to him belong to all his posterity who follow in the steps of his prayerful faith.

5. Lord God — JEHOVAH, a name implying His *immutable constancy to His promises*. From the *Hebrew* root, meaning “existence.” “He that is, was, and is to be,” always the same (^{<3838>}Hebrews 13:8 ^{<4108>}Revelation 1:4,8; compare ^{<1034>}Exodus 3:14,15 6:3). As He was unchangeable in His favor to Jacob, so will He be to His believing posterity.

of hosts — which Israel foolishly worshipped. Jehovah has all the hosts (*saba*) or powers of heaven and earth at His command, so that He is as all-powerful, as He is faithful, to fulfill His promises (^{<4916>}Psalms 135:6 ^{<1057>}Amos 5:27).

memorial — the name expressive of the character in which God was ever to be remembered (^{<4916>}Psalms 135:13).

6. thou — who dost wish to be a true descendant of Jacob.

to THY God — who is therefore bound by covenant to hear thy prayers.

keep mercy and judgment — (Micah 6:8). These two include the second-table commandments, duty towards one’s neighbor, the most visible test of the sincerity on one’s repentance.

wait on thy God — alone, not on thy idols. Including all the duties of the first table (^{<4878>}Psalms 37:3,5,7 40:1).

7. merchant — a play on the double sense of the *Hebrew*, “Canaan,” that is, a Canaanite and a “merchant” ^{<3408>}Ezekiel 16:3: “Thy birth is ... of Canaan.” They who naturally were descendants of pious *Jacob* had become virtually *Canaanites*, who were proverbial as cheating *merchants* (compare ^{<2331>}Isaiah 23:11, *Margin*), the greatest reproach to Israel, who despised Canaan. The Phoenicians called themselves *Canaanites* or *merchants* (^{<2338>}Isaiah 23:8).

oppress — *open* violence: as the “balances of deceit” imply *fraud*.

8. And — that is, Notwithstanding.

Yet I am ... rich — I regard not what the prophets say: I am content with my state, as I am rich (^{<4687>}Revelation 3:17). Therefore, in just retribution, this is the very language of the enemy in being the instrument of Israel’s punishment. Zechariah 11:5: “They that sell them say ... *I am rich*.” Far better is poverty with honesty, than riches gained by sin.

my labors — my gains by labor.

they shall find none — that is, none shall find any.

iniquity ... that were sin — iniquity that would bring down the penalty of sin. Ephraim argues, My success in my labors proves that I am not a guilty sinner as the prophets assert. Thus sinners pervert God’s long-suffering goodness (⁴¹⁵⁶Matthew 5:45) into a justification of their impenitence (compare ²⁰⁸¹Ecclesiastes 8:11-13).

9. And — rather, “And yet.” Though Israel deserves to be cast off for ever, yet I am still what I have been from the time of My delivering them out of Egypt, their covenant God; therefore, “I will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles,” that is, to keep the feast of tabernacles again in remembrance of a new deliverance out of bondage. Fulfilled primarily at the return from Babylon (⁴⁰⁸⁷Nehemiah 8:17). Fully and antotypically to be fulfilled at the final restoration from the present dispersion (³⁸⁴⁶Zechariah 14:16; compare ⁶³⁰²Leviticus 23:42,43).

10. by ... the prophets — literally, “upon,” that is, My spirit resting on them. I deposited *with them* My instructions which ought to have brought you to the right way. An aggravation of your guilt, that it was not through ignorance you erred, but in defiance of God and His prophets [CALVIN]. Ahijah the Shilonite, Shemaiah, Iddo, Azariah, Hanani, Jehu, Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, Joel, and Amos were “the prophets” before Hosea.

visions ... similitudes — I adopted such modes of communication, adapted to man’s capacities, as were calculated to arouse attention: I left no means untried to reform you. The first, second, and third chapters contain examples of “similitudes.”

11. Is there iniquity in Gilead? — He asks the question, not as if the answer was doubtful, but to strengthen the affirmation: “Surely they are vanity”; or as MAURER translates, “They are *nothing but* iniquity.” *Iniquity*, especially idolatry, in Scripture is often termed “vanity.” ⁴¹³¹Proverbs 13:11: “Wealth gotten by *vanity*,” that is, *iniquity*. ³⁴²⁹Isaiah 41:29: “They are all *vanity ... images*.” “Gilead” refers to Mizpah-gilead, a city representing the region beyond Jordan (²⁰⁰⁸Hosea 6:8 ⁰⁷¹²⁹Judges 11:29); as “Gilgal,” the region on this side of Jordan (²⁰⁴⁵Hosea 4:15). In all quarters alike they are utterly vile.

their altars are as heaps in the furrows — that is, as numerous as such heaps: namely, the heaps of stones cleared out of a stony field. An appropriate image, as at a distance they look like altars (compare ²⁸⁰⁰Hosea 10:1,4 8:11). As the third member in the parallelism answers to the first, “Gilgal” to “Gilead,” so the fourth to the second, “altars” to “vanity.” The word “heaps” alludes to the name “Gilgal,” meaning “a heap of stones.” The very scene of the general circumcision of the people, and of the solemn

passover kept after crossing Jordan, is now the stronghold of Israel's idolatry.

12. *Jacob fled ... served* — Though ye pride yourselves on the great name of “Israel,” forget not that your progenitor was the same Jacob who was a fugitive, and who served for Rachel fourteen years. *He* forgot not ME who delivered him when fleeing from Esau, and when oppressed by Laban (^{<0285}Genesis 28:5 29:20,28 ^{<0305}Deuteronomy 26:5). *Ye*, though delivered from Egypt (^{<0213}Hosea 12:13), and loaded with My favors, are yet unwilling to return to Me.

country of Syria — the champaign region of Syria, the portion lying between the Tigris and Euphrates, hence called Mesopotamia. Padan-aram means the same, that is, “Low Syria,” as opposed to Aramea (meaning the “high country”) or Syria (^{<0407}Genesis 48:7).

13. *by a prophet* — Moses (^{<0116}Numbers 12:6-8 ^{<0585}Deuteronomy 18:15,18).

preserved — Translate, “kept”; there is an allusion to the same *Hebrew* word in ^{<0212}Hosea 12:12, “*kept* sheep”; Israel was *kept* by God as *His flock*, even as *Jacob kept sheep* (^{<0801}Psalms 80:1 ^{<0311}Isaiah 63:11).

14. *provoked him* — that is, God.

leave his blood upon him — not take away the guilt and penalty of the innocent blood shed by Ephraim in general, and to Moloch in particular.

his reproach shall his Lord return unto him — Ephraim's dishonor to God in worshipping idols, God will repay to him. That God is “*his Lord*” by right redemption and special revelation to Ephraim only aggravates his guilt, instead of giving him hope of escape. God does not give up His claim to them as *His*, however they set aside His dominion.

CHAPTER 13

HOSEA 13:1-16.

EPHRAIM'S SINFUL INGRATITUDE TO GOD, AND ITS FATAL CONSEQUENCE; GOD'S PROMISE AT LAST.

This chapter and the fourteenth chapter probably belong to the troubled times that followed Pekah's murder by Hoshea (compare ^{<2831H>}Hosea 13:11 ^{<2150>}2 Kings 15:30). The subject is the idolatry of Ephraim, notwithstanding God's past benefits, destined to be his ruin.

1. *When Ephraim spake trembling* — rather, “When Ephraim (the tribe most powerful among the twelve in Israel's early history) spake (authoritatively) there was trembling”; all reverentially feared him [JEROME], (compare ^{<890B>}Job 29:8,9,21).

offended in Baal — that is, *in respect to* Baal, by worshipping him (^{<1163I>}1 Kings 16:31), under Ahab; a more heinous offense than even the calves. Therefore it is at this climax of guilt that Ephraim “died.” Sin has, in the sight of God, within itself the germ of death, though that death may not visibly take effect till long after. Compare ^{<600B>}Romans 7:9, “Sin revived, and I *died*.” So Adam in the day of his sin was to die, though the sentence was not visibly executed till long after (^{<4027>}Genesis 2:17 5:5). Israel is similarly represented as politically dead in ^{<250E>}Ezekiel 37:1-28.

2. *according to their own understanding* — that is, their arbitrary devising. Compare “will-worship,” ^{<5023>}Colossians 2:23. Men are not to be “wise above that which is written,” or to follow their own understanding, but God's command in worship.

kiss the calves — an act of adoration to the golden calves (compare ^{<1198I>}1 Kings 19:18 ^{<890Z>}Job 31:27 ^{<1912>}Psalms 2:12).

3. *they shall be as the morning cloud ... dew* — (^{<206H>}Hosea 6:4). As their “goodness” soon vanished like the morning cloud and dew, so they shall perish like them.

the floor — the threshing-floor, generally an open area, on a height, exposed to the winds.

chimney — generally in the East an orifice in the wall, at once admitting the light, and giving egress to the smoke.

4. (^{<3813>}Hosea 12:9 ^{<2461>}Isaiah 43:11).

no saviour — temporal as well as spiritual.

besides me — (^{<2362>}Isaiah 45:21).

5. **I did know thee** — did acknowledge thee as Mine, and so took care of thee (^{<3813>}Psalms 144:3 ^{<3102>}Amos 3:2). As *I knew* thee as Mine, so *thou* shouldst *know* no God but Me (^{<2809>}Hosea 13:4).

in ... land of ... drought — (^{<3815>}Deuteronomy 8:15).

6. Image from cattle, waxing wanton in abundant pasture (compare ^{<2815>}Hosea 2:5,8 ^{<3503>}Deuteronomy 32:13-15). In proportion as I fed them to the full, they were so satiated that “their heart was exalted”; a sad contrast to the time when, by God’s blessing, Ephraim truly “exalted himself in Israel” (^{<2815>}Hosea 13:1).

therefore have they forgotten me — the very reason why men should remember God (namely, prosperity, which comes from Him) is the cause often of their forgetting Him. God had warned them of this danger (^{<3811>}Deuteronomy 6:11,12).

7. (^{<2814>}Hosea 5:14 ^{<2810>}Lamentations 3:10).

leopard — The *Hebrew* comes from a root meaning “spotted” (compare ^{<2433>}Jeremiah 13:23). Leopards lurk in thickets and thence spring on their victims.

observe — that is, *lie in wait* for them. Several manuscripts, the *Septuagint*, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* read, by a slight change of the *Hebrew* vowel pointing, “by the way of *Assyria*,” a region abounding in leopards and lions. *English Version* is better.

8. “Writers on the natures of beasts say that none is more savage than a *she bear*, when *bereaved of her whelps*” [JEROME].

caul of ... heart — the membrane enclosing it: the pericardium.

there — “by the way” (^{<2807>}Hosea 13:7).

9. **thou ... in me** — in contrast.

hast destroyed thyself — that is, thy destruction is of thyself (^{<2102>}Proverbs 6:32 8:36).

in me is thine help — literally, “in thine help” (compare ^{<6339>}Deuteronomy 33:26). Hadst thou rested thy hope *in Me*, I would have been always ready at hand *for thy help* [GROTIUS].

10. *I will be thy king; where* — rather, as the *Margin* and the *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, *Vulgate*, “Where now is thy king?” [MAURER]. *English Version* is, however, favored both by the *Hebrew*, by the antithesis between Israel’s self-chosen and *perishing kings*, and God, Israel’s *abiding King* (compare ^{<806>}Hosea 3:4,5).

where ... Give me a king — Where now is the king whom ye substituted in My stead? Neither Saul, whom the whole nation begged for, not contented with Me their true king (^{<985>}1 Samuel 8:5,7,19,20 10:19), nor Jeroboam, whom subsequently the ten tribes chose instead of the line of David My anointed, can save thee now. They had expected from their kings what is the prerogative of God alone, namely, the power of saving them.

judges — including all civil authorities under the king (compare ^{<318>}Amos 2:3).

11. *I gave ... king in ... anger ... took ... away in ... wrath* — true both of Saul (^{<952>}1 Samuel 15:22,23 16:1) and of Jeroboam’s line (^{<253>}2 Kings 15:30). Pekah was taken away through Hoshea, as he himself took away Pekahiah; and as Hoshea was soon to be taken away by the Assyrian king.

12. *bound up ... hid* — Treasures, meant to be kept, are bound up and hidden; that is, do not flatter yourselves, because of the delay, that I have forgotten your sin. Nay (^{<309>}Hosea 9:9), Ephraim’s iniquity is kept as it were safely sealed up, until the due time comes for bringing it forth for punishment (^{<623>}Deuteronomy 32:34 ^{<847>}Job 14:17 21:19; compare ^{<818>}Romans 2:5). Opposed to “blotting out the handwriting against” the sinner (^{<514>}Colossians 2:14).

13. *sorrows of a travailing woman* — calamities sudden and agonizing (^{<218>}Jeremiah 30:6).

unwise — in not foreseeing the impending judgment, and averting it by penitence (^{<123>}Proverbs 22:3).

he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children — When Israel might deliver himself from calamity by the pangs of penitence, he brings ruin on himself by so long deferring a new birth unto repentance, like a child whose mother has not strength to bring it forth, and which therefore remains so long in the passage from the womb as to run the risk of death (^{<293>}2 Kings 19:3 ^{<338>}Isaiah 37:3 66:9).

14. Applying primarily to God’s restoration of Israel from Assyria partially, and, in times yet future, fully from all the lands of their present long-continued dispersion, and political *death* (compare ^{<306P>}Hosea 6:2 ^{<351S>}Isaiah 25:8 26:19 ^{<357I2>}Ezekiel 37:12). God’s power and grace are magnified in quickening what to the eye of flesh seems dead and hopeless (^{<307P>}Romans 4:17,19). As Israel’s history, past and future, has a representative character in relation to the Church, this verse is expressed in language alluding to Messiah’s (who is the ideal Israel) grand victory over the grave and death, the first-fruits of His own resurrection, the full harvest to come at the general resurrection; hence the similarity between this verse and Paul’s language as to the latter (^{<415S>}1 Corinthians 15:55). That similarity becomes more obvious by *translating* as the *Septuagint*, from which Paul plainly quotes; and as the same *Hebrew* word is translated in ^{<310P>}Hosea 13:10, “O death, *where* are thy plagues (paraphrased by the *Septuagint*, ‘thy victory’)? O grave, where is thy destruction (rendered by the *Septuagint*, ‘thy sting’)?” The question is that of one triumphing over a foe, once a cruel tyrant, but now robbed of all power to hurt.

repentance shall be hid from mine eyes — that is, I will not change My purpose of fulfilling My promise by delivering Israel, on the condition of their return to Me (compare ^{<340P>}Hosea 14:2-8 ^{<023P>}Numbers 23:19 ^{<512P>}Romans 11:29).

15. fruitful — referring to the meaning of “Ephraim,” from a *Hebrew* root, “to be fruitful” (^{<041S>}Genesis 41:52). It was long the most numerous and flourishing of the tribes (^{<048P>}Genesis 48:19).

wind of the Lord — that is, sent by the Lord (compare ^{<307P>}Isaiah 40:7), who has His instruments of punishment always ready. The Assyrian, Shalmaneser, etc., is meant (^{<341I>}Jeremiah 4:11 18:17 ^{<352I2>}Ezekiel 19:12).

from the wilderness — that is, the desert part of Syria (^{<119S>}1 Kings 19:15), the route from Assyria into Israel.

he — the Assyrian invader. Shalmaneser began the siege of Samaria in 723 B.C. Its close was in 721 B.C., the first year of Sargon, who seems to have usurped the throne of Assyria while Shalmaneser was at the siege of Samaria. Hence, while ^{<276P>}2 Kings 17:6 states, “the *king of Assyria* took Samaria,” ^{<280P>}2 Kings 18:10 says, “at the end of three years *they* took it.” In Sargon’s magnificent palace at Khorsabad, inscriptions mention the number — 27,280 — of Israelites carried captive from Samaria and other places of Israel by the founder of the palace [G. V. SMITH].

16. This verse and ^{<281S>}Hosea 13:15 foretell the calamities about to befall Israel before her restoration (^{<284P>}Hosea 13:14), owing to her impenitence.

her God — the greatest aggravation of her rebellion, that it was against *her* God (^{<3308>}Hosea 13:4).

infants ... dashed in pieces, etc. — (^{<1282>}2 Kings 8:12 15:16 ^{<3008>}Amos 1:13).

CHAPTER 14

HOSEA 14:1-9.

**GOD'S PROMISE OF BLESSING, ON THEIR REPENTANCE:
THEIR ABANDONMENT OF IDOLATRY FORETOLD: THE
CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE, THE JUST SHALL WALK IN
GOD'S WAYS, BUT THE TRANSGRESSOR SHALL FALL
THEREIN.**

1. *fallen by thine iniquity* — (^{<2815>}Hosea 5:5 13:9).

2. *Take with you words* — instead of sacrifices, namely, the words of penitence here put in your mouths by God. “Words,” in *Hebrew*, mean “realities,” there being the same term for “words” and “things”; so God implies, He will not accept empty professions (^{<1986>}Psalms 78:36 ^{<2293>}Isaiah 29:13). He does not ask costly sacrifices, but *words* of heartfelt penitence.

receive us graciously — literally “(for) good.”

calves of our lips — .that is, instead of sacrifices of *calves*, which we cannot offer to Thee in exile, we present the praises of our *lips*. Thus the exile, wherein the temple service ceased, prepared the way for the gospel time when the types of the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament being realized in Christ's perfect sacrifice once for all, “the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is *the fruit of our lips*” (^{<3134>}Hebrews 13:14) takes their place in the New Testament.

3. Three besetting sins of Israel are here renounced, trust in Assyria, application to Egypt for its cavalry (forbidden, ^{<1576>}Deuteronomy 17:16; compare ^{<3071>}Hosea 7:11 11:5 12:1 ^{<1704>}2 Kings 17:4 ^{<1537>}Psalms 33:17 ^{<2312>}Isaiah 30:2,16 31:1), and idolatry.

fatherless — descriptive of the *destitute* state of Israel, when severed from God, their true Father. We shall henceforth trust in none but Thee, the only Father of the fatherless, and Helper of the destitute (^{<1904>}Psalms 10:14 68:5); our nation has experienced Thee such in our helpless state in Egypt, and now in a like state again our only hope is Thy goodness.

4. God's gracious reply to their self-condemning prayer.

backsliding — *apostasy*: not merely occasional backslidings. God can heal the most desperate sinfulness [CALVIN].

freely — with a gratuitous, unmerited, and abundant love (^{<2360>}Ezekiel 16:60-63). So as to the spiritual Israel (^{<616>}John 15:16 ^{<612>}Romans 3:24 5:8 ^{<6101>}John 4:10).

5. as the dew — which falls copiously in the East, taking the place of the more frequent rains in other regions. God will not be “as the early dew that goeth away,” but constant (^{<2168>}Hosea 6:3,4 ^{<829>}Job 29:19 ^{<1012>}Proverbs 19:12).

the lily — No plant is more productive than the lily, one root often producing fifty bulbs [PLINY, *Natural History*, 21.5]. The common lily is white, consisting of six leaves opening like bells. The royal lily grows to the height of three or four feet; ^{<1629>}Matthew 6:29 alludes to the beauty of its flowers.

roots as Lebanon — that is, as the trees of Lebanon (especially the cedars), which cast down their roots as deeply as is their height upwards; so that they are immovable [JEROME], (^{<2318>}Isaiah 10:34). Spiritual growth consists most in the growth of the root which is out of sight.

6. branches — shoots, or suckers.

beauty ... as the olive — which never loses its verdure. One plant is not enough to express the graces of God’s elect people. The *lily* depicts its lovely growth; but as it wants duration and firmness, the deeply rooted cedars of Lebanon are added; these, however, are fruitless, therefore the fruitful, peace-bearing, fragrant, ever green olive is added.

smell as Lebanon — which exhaled from it the fragrance of odoriferous trees and flowers. So Israel’s name shall be in good savor with all (^{<1277>}Genesis 27:27 ^{<2011>}Song of Solomon 4:11).

7. They that used to dwell under Israel’s shadow (but who shall have been forced to leave it), shall *return*, that is, be restored (^{<359>}Ezekiel 35:9). Others take “*His shadow*” to mean *Jehovah’s* (compare ^{<978>}Psalms 17:8 91:1 ^{<316>}Isaiah 4:6), which ^{<341>}Hosea 14:1,2 (“*return unto the Lord*,” etc.) favor. But the “*his*” in ^{<346>}Hosea 14:6 refers to Israel, and therefore must refer to the same here.

revive as ... corn — As the corn long buried in the earth springs up, with an abundant produce, so shall they revive from their calamities, with a great increase of offspring (compare ^{<6224>}John 12:24).

scent thereof — that is, Israel's *fame*. Compare ^{<3416>}Hosea 14:6, "His smell as Lebanon"; ^{<2108>}Song of Solomon 1:3: "Thy *name* is as ointment poured forth." The *Septuagint* favors the *Margin*, "memorial."

as the wine of Lebanon — which was most celebrated for its aroma, flavor, and medicinal restorative properties.

8. Ephraim shall say — being brought to penitence by God's goodness, and confessing and abhorring his past madness.

I have heard ... and observed him — I Jehovah have *answered* and *regarded* him *with favor*; the opposite of God's "hiding His face from" one (^{<6517>}Deuteronomy 31:17). It is the experience of God's favor, in contrast to God's wrath heretofore, that leads Ephraim to abhor his past idolatry. Jehovah *heard* and *answered*: whereas the idols, as Ephraim now sees, could not *hear*, much less answer.

I am ... a green fir — or cypress; ever green, winter and summer alike; the leaves not falling off in winter.

From me is thy fruit found — "From Me," as the root. Thou needest go no farther than Me for the supply of all thy wants; not merely the *protection* implied by the *shadow* of the cypress, but that which the cypress has not, namely, *fruit*, all spiritual and temporal blessings. It may be also implied, that whatever spiritual graces Ephraim seeks for or may have, are not of themselves, but of God (^{<3008>}Psalm 1:3 ^{<6134>}John 15:4,5,8 ^{<3017>}James 1:17). God's promises to us are more our security for mortifying sin than our promises to God (^{<2709>}Isaiah 27:9).

9. EPILOGUE, summing up the whole previous teaching. Here alone Hosea uses the term "righteous," so rare were such characters in his day. There is enough of saving truth clear in God's Word to guide those humbly seeking salvation, and enough of difficulties to confound those who curiously seek them out, rather than practically seek salvation.

fall — stumble and are offended at difficulties opposed to their prejudices and lusts, or above their self-wise understanding (compare ^{<3029>}Proverbs 10:29 ^{<3107>}Micah 2:7 ^{<4119>}Matthew 11:19 ^{<4134>}Luke 2:34 ^{<4077>}John 7:17 ^{<6017>}1 Peter 2:7,8). To him who sincerely seeks the *agenda*, God will make plain the *credenda*. Christ is the foundation-stone to some: a stone of stumbling and rock of offense to others. The same sun softens wax and hardens clay. But their fall is the most fatal who fall in the ways of God, split on the Rock of ages, and suck poison out of the Balm of Gilead.