

## AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

### THE BOOK OF

# THE PROPHET HOSEA

Hosea is supposed to have been of the kingdom of Israel. He lived and prophesied during a long period. The scope of his predictions appears to be, to detect, reprove, and convince the Jewish nation in general, and the Israelites in particular, of their many sins, particularly their idolatry: the corrupt state of the kingdom is also noticed. But he invites them to repentance, with promises of mercy, and gospel predictions of the future restoration of the Israelites and of the Jews, and their final conversion to Christianity.

## CHAPTER 1

*Under a figure, is represented the shameful idolatry of the ten tribes. (1-7) The calling of the Gentiles, and the uniting Israel and Judah under the Messiah. (8-11)*

### Hosea 1:1

**Vs. 1-7:** Israel was prosperous, yet then Hosea boldly tells them of their sins, and foretells their destruction. Men are not to be flattered in sinful ways because they prosper in the world; nor will it last long if they go on still in their trespasses. The prophet must show Israel their sin; show it to be exceedingly hateful. Their idolatry is the sin they are here charged with. Giving that glory to any creature which is due to God alone, is an injury and affront to God; such as for a wife to take a stranger, is to her husband. The Lord, doubtless, had good reasons for giving such a command to the prophet; it would form an affecting picture of the Lord's unmerited goodness and unwearied patience, and of the perverseness and ingratitude of Israel. We should be broken and wearied with half that perverseness

from others, with which we try the patience and grieve the Spirit of our God. Let us also be ready to bear any cross the Lord appoints. The prophet must show the ruin of the people, in the names given to his children. He foretells the fall of the royal family in the name of his first child: call his name Jezreel, which signifies “dispersion.” He foretells God’s abandoning the nation in the name of the second child; Lo-ruhamah, “not beloved,” or “not having obtained mercy.” God showed great mercy, but Israel abused his favors. Sin turns away the mercy of God, even from Israel, his own professing people. If pardoning mercy is denied, no other mercy can be expected. Though some, through unbelief, are broken off, yet God will have a church in this world till the end of time. Our salvation is owing to God’s mercy, not to any merit of our own. That salvation is sure, of which he is the Author; and if he will work, none shall hinder.

### **Hosea 1:8**

**Vs. 8-11:** The rejection of Israel for a time, is signified by the name of another child: call him Lo-ammi, “not my people.” The Lord disowns all relation to them. We love him, because he first loved us; but our being cast out of covenant, is owing to ourselves and our folly. Mercy is remembered in the midst of wrath; the rejection, as it shall not be total, so it shall not be final. The same hand that wounded, is stretched forth to heal. Very precious promises are here given concerning the Israel of God, and they may be of use to us now. Some think that these promises will not have accomplishment in full, till the general conversion of the Jews in the latter days. Also this promise is applied to the gospel, and the bringing in both the Jews and Gentiles to it, by St. Paul, <sup><B125></sup>Romans 9:25,26, and by St. Peter, <sup><A121></sup>1 Peter 2:10. To believe in Christ, is to have him for our Head, and willingly to commit ourselves to his guidance and government. And let us pray for the coming of the glorious day, when there shall be one Lord through all the earth.

## CHAPTER 2

*The idolatry of the people. (1-5) God's judgments against them. (6-13) His promises of reconciliation. (14-23)*

### **Hosea 2:1**

**Vs. 1-5:** This chapter continues the figurative address to Israel, in reference to Hosea's wife and children. Let us own and love as brethren, all whom the Lord seems to put among his children, and encourage them in that they have received mercy. But every Christian, by his example and conduct, must protest against evil and abuses, even among those to whom he belongs and owes respect. Impenitent sinners will soon be stripped of the advantages they misuse, and which they consume upon their lusts.

### **Hosea 2:6**

**Vs. 6-13:** God threatens what he would do with this treacherous, idolatrous people. They did not turn, therefore all this came upon them; and it is written for admonition to us. If lesser difficulties be got over, God will raise greater. The most resolute in sinful pursuits, are commonly most crossed in them. The way of God and duty is often hedged about with thorns, but we have reason to think it is a sinful way that is hedged up with thorns. Crosses and obstacles in an evil course are great blessings, and are to be so accounted; they are God's hedges, to keep us from transgressing, to make the way of sin difficult, and to keep us from it. We have reason to bless God for restraining grace, and for restraining providences; and even for sore pain, sickness, or calamity, if it keeps us from sin. The disappointments we meet with in seeking for satisfaction from the creature, should, if nothing else will do it, drive us to the Creator. When men forget, or consider not that their comforts come from God, he will often in mercy take them away, to bring them to think upon their folly and danger. Sin and mirth can never hold long together; but if men will not take away sin from their mirth, God will take away mirth from their sin. And if men destroy God's word and ordinances, it is just with him to destroy their vines and fig-trees. This shall be the ruin of their mirth. Taking away the solemn seasons and the Sabbaths will not do it, they will readily part with them, and think it no loss; but He will take away their

sensual pleasures. Days of sinful mirth must be visited with days of mourning.

**Hosea 2:14**

**Vs. 14-23:** After these judgments the Lord would deal with Israel more gently. By the promise of rest in Christ we are invited to take his yoke upon us; and the work of conversion may be forwarded by comforts as well as by convictions. But usually the Lord drives us to despair of earthly joy, and help from ourselves, that, being shut from every other door, we may knock at Mercy's gate. From that time Israel would be more truly attached to the Lord; no longer calling him Baali, or "My Lord and master," alluding to authority, rather than love, but Ishi, an address of affection. This may foretell the restoration from the Babylonish captivity; and also be applied to the conversion of the Jews to Christ, in the days of the apostles, and the future general conversion of that nation; and believers are enabled to expect infinitely more tenderness and kindness from their holy God, than a beloved wife can expect from the kindest husband. When the people were weaned from idols, and loved the Lord, no creature should do them any harm. This may be understood of the blessings and privileges of the spiritual Israel, of every true believer, and their partaking of Christ's righteousness; also, of the conversion of the Jews to Christ. Here is an argument for us to walk so that God may not be dishonored by us: Thou art my people. If a man's family walk disorderly, it is a dishonor to the master. If God call us children, we may say, Thou art our God. Unbelieving soul, lay aside discouraging thoughts; do not thus answer God's loving-kindness. Doth God say, Thou art my people? Say, Lord, thou art our God.

## CHAPTER 3

*The prophet enters into a new contract, representing the gracious manner in which God will again restore Israel under a new covenant.*

### **Hosea 3:1**

**Vs. 1-3:** The dislike of men to true religion is because they love objects and forms, which allow them to indulge, instead of mortifying their lusts. How wonderful that a holy God should have goodwill to those whose carnal mind is enmity against Him! Here is represented God's gracious dealings with the villainy race of mankind, that had gone from him. This is the covenant of grace he is willing to enter into with them, they must be to him a people, and he will be to them a God. They must accept the punishment of their sin, and must not return to folly. And it is a certain sign that our afflictions are means of good to us, when we are kept from being overcome by the temptations of an afflicted state.

### **Hosea 3:4**

**Vs. 4-5:** Here is the application of the parable to Israel. They must long sit like a widow, stripped of all joys and honors; but shall at length be received again. Those that would seek the Lord so as to find him, must apply to Christ, and become his willing people. Not only are we to fear the Lord and his greatness, but the Lord and his goodness; not only his majesty, but his mercy. Even Jewish writers apply this passage to the promised Messiah; doubtless it foretold their future conversion to Christ, for which they are kept a separate people. Though the first fear of God arise from a view of his holy majesty and righteous vengeance, yet the experience of mercy and grace through Jesus Christ, will lead the heart to reverence so kind and glorious a Friend and Father, and to fear offending him.

## CHAPTER 4

*God's judgments against the sins of the people. (1-5) and of the priests. (6-11) Idolatry is reprov'd, and Judah is admonish'd. (12-19)*

### **Hosea 4:1**

**Vs. 1-5:** Hosea reproveth for immorality, as well as idolatry. There was no truth, mercy, or knowledge of God in the land: it was full of murders, <sup><1216></sup>2 Kings 21:16. Therefore calamities were near, which would desolate the country. Our sins, as separate persons, as a family, as a neighborhood, as a nation, cause the Lord to have a controversy with us; let us submit and humble ourselves before Him, that he may not go on to destroy.

### **Hosea 4:6**

**Vs. 6-11:** Both priests and people rejected knowledge; God will justly reject them. They forgot the law of God, neither desired nor endeavored to retain it in mind, and to transmit the remembrance to their posterity; therefore God will justly forget them and their children. If we dishonor God with that which is our honor, it will, sooner or later, be turned into shame to us. Instead of warning the people against sin, from the consideration of the sacrifices, which showed what an offense sin was to God, since it needed an atonement, the priests encouraged the people to sin, since atonement might be made at so small an expense. It is very wicked to be pleased with the sins of others, because they may turn to our advantage. What is unlawfully gained, cannot be comfortably used. The people and the priests hardened one another in sin; therefore justly shall they share in the punishment. Sharers in sin must expect to share in ruin. Any lust harbored in the heart, in time will eat out all its strength and vigor. That is the reason why many professors grow so heavy, so dull, so dead in the way of religion. They have a liking for some secret lust, which takes away their hearts.

**Hosea 4:12**

**Vs. 12-19:** The people consulted images, and not the Divine word. This would lead to disorder and sin. Thus men prepare scourges for themselves, and vice is spread through a people. Let not Judah come near the idolatrous worship of Israel. For Israel was devoted to idols, and must now be let alone. When sinners cast off the easy yoke of Christ, they go on in sin till the Lord saith, Let them alone. Then they receive no more warnings, feel no more convictions: Satan takes full possession of them, and they ripen for destruction. It is a sad and sore judgment for any man to be let alone in sin. Those who are not disturbed in their sin, will be destroyed for their sin. May we be kept from this awful state; for the wrath of God, like a strong tempest, will soon hurry impenitent sinners into ruin.

## CHAPTER 5

*The Divine judgments against Israel. (1-7) Approaching desolations threatened. (8-15)*

### Hosea 5:1

**Vs. 1-7:** The piercing eye of God saw secret liking and disposition to sin, the love the house of Israel had to their sins, and the dominion their sins had over them. Pride makes men obstinate in other sins. And as Judah was treading in the same steps, they would fall with Israel. By dealing treacherously with the Lord, men only deceive themselves. Those that go to seek the Lord with their flocks and their herds only, and not with their hearts and souls, cannot expect to find him; nor shall any speed who do not seek the Lord while he may be found. See how much it is our concern to seek God early, now, while it is the accepted time, and the day of salvation.

### Hosea 5:8

**Vs. 8-15:** The destruction of impenitent sinners is not mere talk, to frighten them, it is a sentence which will not be recalled. And it is a mercy that we have timely warning given us, that we may flee from the wrath to come. Compliance with the commandments of men, who thwart the commandments of God, ripens a people for ruin. The judgments of God are sometimes to a sinful people as a moth, and as rottenness, or as a worm; as these consume the clothes and the wood, so shall the judgments of God consume them. Silently, they shall think themselves safe and thriving, but when they look into their state, shall find themselves wasting and decaying. Slowly, for the Lord gives them space to repent. Many a nation; as well as many a person, dies of a consumption. Gradually, God comes upon sinners with lesser judgments, to prevent greater, if they will be wise, and take warning. When Israel and Judah found themselves in danger, they sought the protection of the Assyrians, but this only helped to make their wound the worse. They would be forced to apply to God. He will bring them home to himself, by afflictions. When men begin to complain more of their sins than of their afflictions, then there begins to be some hope of them; and when under the conviction of sin, and the



corrections of the rod, we must seek the knowledge of God. Those who are led by severe trials to seek God earnestly and sincerely, will find him a present help and an effectual refuge; for with him is plenteous redemption for all who call upon him. There is solid peace, and there only, where God is.

## CHAPTER 6

*An exhortation to repentance. (1-3) Israel's instability and breach of the covenant. (4-11)*

### Hosea 6:1

**Vs. 1-3:** Those who have gone from God by consent, and in a body, drawing one another to sin, should, by consent and in a body, return to him, which will be for his glory, and their good. It will be of great use for support under afflictions, and to encourage our repentance, to keep up good thoughts of God, and of his purposes and designs concerning us. Deliverance out of trouble should be to them as life from the dead. God will revive them: the assurance of this should engage them to return to him. But this seems to have a further reference to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us admire the wisdom and goodness of God, that when the prophet foretold the deliverance of the church out of her troubles, he should point out our salvation by Christ; and now these words are fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ, it confirms our faith, that this is He that should come and we are to look for no other. Here is a precious blessing promised; this is life eternal, to know God. The returns of the favor of God are secured to us as firmly as the return of the morning after a dark night. He shall come to us as the latter and former rain unto the earth, which refreshes it, and makes it fruitful. The grace of God in Christ is both the latter and the former rain; and by it the good work of our fruit-bearing is begun and carried on. And as the Redeemer was raised from the grave, so will He revive the hearts and hopes of all that trust in him. The feeblest glimpse of hope in his word, is a sure earnest of increasing light and comfort, which shall be attended with purifying, comforting grace that makes fruitful.

### Hosea 6:4

**Vs. 4-11:** Sometimes Israel and Judah seemed disposed to repent under their sufferings, but their goodness vanished like the empty morning cloud, and the early dew, and they were as vile as ever. Therefore the Lord sent awful messages by the prophets. The word of God will be the death either of the sin or of the sinner. God desired mercy rather than sacrifice, and that

knowledge of him which produces holy fear and love. This exposes the folly of those who trust in outward observances, to make up for their want of love to God and man. As Adam broke the covenant of God in paradise, so Israel had broken his national covenant, notwithstanding all the favors they received. Judah also was ripe for Divine judgments. May the Lord put his fear into our hearts, and set up his kingdom within us, and never leave us to ourselves, nor suffer us to be overcome by temptation.

## CHAPTER 7

*The manifold sins of Israel. (1-7) Their senselessness and hypocrisy. (8-16)*

### Hosea 7:1

**Vs. 1-7:** A practical disbelief of God's government was at the bottom of all Israel's wickedness; as if God could not see it or did not heed it. Their sins appear on every side of them. Their hearts were inflamed by evil desires, like a heated oven. In the midst of their troubles as a nation, the people never thought of seeking help from God. The actual wickedness of men's lives bears a very small proportion to what is in their hearts. But when lust is inwardly cherished, it will break forth into outward sin. Those who tempt others to drunkenness never can be their real friends, and often design their ruin. Thus men execute the Divine vengeance on each other. Those are not only heated with sin, but hardened in sin, who continue to live without prayer, even when in trouble and distress.

### Hosea 7:8

**Vs. 8-16:** Israel was as a cake not turned, half burnt and half dough, none of it fit for use; a mixture of idolatry and of the worship of Jehovah. There were tokens of approaching ruin, as gray hairs are of old age, but they noticed them not. The pride which leads to break the law of God leads to self-flattery. The mercy and grace of God are the only refuge to which obstinate sinners never think of fleeing. Though they may howl forth their terrors in the form of prayers, they seldom cry to God with their hearts. Even their prayers for earthly mercies only seek fuel for their lusts. Their turning from one sect, sentiment, form, or vice, to another, still leaves them far short of Christ and holiness. Such are we by nature. And such shall we prove if left to ourselves. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

## CHAPTER 8

*Destruction threatened for the impiety of Israel. (1-4) For their idolatry. (5-10) Further threatenings for the same sins. (11-14)*

### **Hosea 8:1**

**Vs. 1-4:** When Israel was hard pressed, they would claim protection from God, but this would be disregarded. What stead will it stand in to say, My God, I know thee, if we cannot say, My God, I love thee, serve thee, and cleave to thee only?

### **Hosea 8:5**

**Vs. 5-10:** They promised themselves plenty, peace, and victory, by worshipping idols, but their expectations came to nothing. What they sow has no stalk, no blade, or, if it have, the bud shall yield no fruit, there was nothing in them. The works of darkness are unfruitful; nay, the end of those things is death. The hopes of sinners will deceive them, and their gains will be snares. In times of danger, especially in the day of judgment, all carnal devices will fail. They take a course by themselves, and like a wild ass by himself, they will be the easier and surer prey for the lion. Man is in nothing more like the wild ass's colt, than in seeking for that succor and that satisfaction in the creature, which are to be had in God only. Though men may sorrow a little, yet if it is not after a godly sort, they will be brought to sorrow everlastingly.

### **Hosea 8:11**

**Vs. 11-14:** It is a great sin to corrupt the worship of God, and will be charged as sin on all who do it, how plausible soever their excuses may seem to be. The Lord had caused his law to be written for them, but they cared not to know, and would not obey it. Man seems by the temples he builds to be mindful of his Maker, yet really he has forgotten him, because he has cast off all his fear; but none ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. So long as men despise the truths and precepts of God's word, and the ordinances of his worship, all the observances and offerings, however costly, of their own devising, will be unto them for sin; for those

services only are acceptable to God, which are done according to his word, and through Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER 9

*The distress to come upon Israel. (1-6) The approach of the day of trouble. (7-10) Judgments on Israel. (11-17)*

### **Hosea 9:1**

**Vs. 1-6:** Israel gave rewards to their idols, in the offerings presented to them. It is common for those who are niggardly in religion, to be prodigal upon their lusts. Those are reckoned as idolaters, who love a reward in the corn-floor better than a reward in the favor of God and in eternal life. They are full of the joy of harvest, and have no disposition to mourn for sin. When we make the world, and the things of it, our idol and our portion, it is just with God to show us our folly, and correct us. None may expect to dwell in the Lord's land, who will not be subject to the Lord's laws, or be influenced by his love. When we enjoy the means of grace, we ought to consider what we shall do, if they should be taken from us. While the pleasures of communion with God are out of the reach of change, the pleasant places purchased with silver, or in which men deposit silver, are liable to be laid in ruins. No famine is so dreadful as that of the soul.

### **Hosea 9:7**

**Vs. 7-10:** Time had been when the spiritual watchmen of Israel were with the Lord, but now they were like the snare of a fowler to entangle persons to their ruin. The people were become as corrupt as those of Gibeah, Judges 19; and their crimes should be visited in like manner. At first God had found Israel pleasing to Him, as grapes to the traveler in the wilderness. He saw them with pleasure as the first ripe figs. This shows the delight God took in them; yet they followed after idolatry.

### **Hosea 9:11**

**Vs. 11-17:** God departs from a people, or from a person, when he withdraws his goodness and mercy from them; and when the Lord is departed, what can the creature do? Even though, for the present, good things seem to remain, yet the blessing is gone if God is gone. Even the children should perish with the parents. The Divine wrath dries up the

root, and withers the fruit of all comforts; and the scattered Jews daily warn us to beware, lest we neglect or abuse the gospel. Yet every smiting is not a drying up of the root. It may be that God intends only to smite so that the sap may be turned to the root, that there may be more of root graces, more humility, patience, faith, and self-denial. It is very just that God should bring judgments on those who slight his offered mercy.



## CHAPTER 10

*The idolatry of Israel. (1-8) They are exhorted to repentance. (9-15)*

### **Hosea 10:1**

**Vs. 1-8:** A vine is only valuable for its fruit; but Israel now brought no fruit to perfection. Their hearts were divided. God is the Sovereign of the heart; he will have all, or none. Were the stream of the heart wholly after God, it would run strongly, and bear down all before it. Their pretenses to covenant with God were false. Even the proceeding of justice was as poisonous hemlock. Alas, how empty a vine is the visible church even at this day! But all earthly prosperity is but a collection of bubbles, soon destroyed like foam upon the water. Sinners will in vain seek shelter from that Judge, whom they now despise as a Savior.

### **Hosea 10:9**

**Vs. 9-15:** Because God does not desire the death and ruin of sinners, therefore in mercy he desires their chastisement. The children of iniquity still remained in Israel. The enemies would be gathered against them. It is just with God to make those know what hardships mean, who indulge themselves in ease and pleasure. Let them cleanse their hearts from all corrupt affection and lusts, and be a broken and contrite spirit. Let them abound in works of piety towards God, and of justice and charity towards one another: herein let them sow to the Spirit. Seeking the Lord is to be every day's work, but there are special occasions when to seek him. Christ shall come as the Lord our righteousness, and grant us of it abundantly. If we sow in righteousness, we shall reap according to mercy; a reward not of debt, but of grace. Even the gains of sin yield the sinner no satisfaction. As our comforts, so our confidences in the service of sin will certainly fail us. Come and seek the Lord, and thy hope in him shall not deceive thee. See what cruel work war makes. Whatever mischief is done, it is sin that does it. What miseries men's sins bring on them, even in this world!

## CHAPTER 11

*God's regard for Israel; their ingratitude. (1-7) The Divine mercy yet in store. (8-12)*

### **Hosea 11:1**

**Vs. 1-7:** When Israel were weak and helpless as children, foolish and forward as children, then God loved them; he bore them as the nurse does the sucking child, nourished them, and suffered their manners. All who are grown up, ought often to reflect upon the goodness of God to them in their childhood. He took care of them, took pains with them, not only as a father, or a tutor, but as a mother, or nurse. When they were in the wilderness, God showed them the way in which they should go, and bore them up, taking them by the arms. He taught them the way of his commandments by the ceremonial law given by Moses. He took them by the arms, to guide them, that they might not stray, and to hold them up, that they might not stumble and fall. God's spiritual Israel are all thus supported. It is God's work to draw poor souls to himself; and none can come to him except he draw them. With bands of love; this word signifies stronger cords than the former. He eased them of the burdens they had long groaned under. Israel is very ungrateful to God. God's counsels would have saved them, but their own counsels ruined them. They backslide; there is no hold of them, no steadfast in them. They backslide from me, from God, the chief good. They are bent to backslide; they are ready to sin; they are forward to close with every temptation. Their hearts are fully set in them to do evil. Those only are truly happy, whom the Lord teaches by his Spirit, upholds by his power, and causes to walk in his ways. By his grace he takes away the love and dominion of sin, and creates a desire for the blessed feast of the gospel, that they may feed thereon, and live for ever.

### **Hosea 11:8**

**Vs. 8-12:** God is slow to anger, and is loath to abandon a people to utter ruin, who have been called by his name. When God was to give a sacrifice for sin, and a Savior for sinners, he spared not his own Son, that he might spare us. This is the language of the day of his patience; but when men sin

that away, then the great day of his wrath comes. Man's compassions are nothing in comparison with the tender mercies of our God, whose thoughts and ways, in receiving returning sinners, are as much above ours as heaven is above the earth. God knows how to pardon poor sinners. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and therein declares his righteousness, now Christ has purchased the pardon, and he has promised it. Holy trembling at the word of Christ will draw us to him, not drive us from him. When he roars like a lion, the slaves tremble, and flee from him, the children tremble, and flee to him. And all that come at the gospel call, shall have a place and a name in the gospel church. The religious services of Israel were mere hypocrisy, but in Judah regard was had to God's laws, and the people followed their pious forefathers. Let us be faithful: those who thus honor God, he will honor, but such as despise Him shall be lightly esteemed.

## CHAPTER 12

*Judah and Israel reminded of the Divine favors. (1-6) The provocations of Israel. (7-14)*

### **Hosea 12:1**

**Vs. 1-6:** Ephraim feeds himself with vain hopes of help from man, when he is at enmity with God. The Jews vainly thought to secure the Egyptians by a present of the produce of their country. Judah is contended with also. God sees the sin of his own people, and will reckon with them for it. They are put in mind of what Jacob did, and what God did for him. When his faith upon the Divine promise prevailed above his fears, then by his strength he had power with God. He is Jehovah, the same that was, and is, and is to come. What was a revelation of God to one, is his memorial to many, to all generations. Then let those who have gone from God, be turned to him. Turn thou to the Lord, by repentance and faith, as thy God. Let those that are converted to him, walk with him in all holy conversation and godliness. Let us wrestle with Him for promised blessings, determined not to give over till we prevail; and let us seek Him in his ordinances.

### **Hosea 12:7**

**Vs. 7-14:** Ephraim became a merchant: the word also signifies a Canaanite. They carried on trade upon Canaanitish principles, covetously and with fraud and deceit. Thus they became rich, and falsely supposed that Providence favored them. But shameful sins shall have shameful punishments. Let them remember, not only what a mighty prince Jacob was with God, but what a servant he was to Laban. The benefits we have had from the word of God, make our sin and folly the worse, if we put any slight upon that word. We had better follow the hardest labor in poverty, than grow rich by sin. We may form a judgment of our own conduct, by comparing it with that of ancient believers in the like circumstances. Whoever despises the message of God, will perish. May we all hear his word with humble, obedient faith.

## CHAPTER 13

*The abuse of God's favor leads to punishment. (1-8) A promise of God's mercy. (9-16)*

### Hosea 13:1

**Vs. 1-8:** While Ephraim kept up a holy fear of God, and worshipped Him in that fear, so long he was very considerable. When Ephraim forsook God, and followed idolatry, he sunk. Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves, in token of their adoration of them, affection for them, and obedience to them; but the Lord will not give his glory to another, and therefore all that worship images shall be confounded. No solid, lasting comfort, is to be expected any where but in God. God not only took care of the Israelites in the wilderness, he put them in possession of Canaan, a good land; but worldly prosperity, when it feeds men's pride, makes them forgetful of God. Therefore the Lord would meet them in just vengeance, as the most terrible beast that inhabited their forests. Abused goodness calls for greater severity.

### Hosea 13:9

**Vs. 9-16:** Israel had destroyed himself by his rebellion; but he could not save himself, his help was from the Lord only. This may well be applied to the case of spiritual redemption, from that lost state into which all have villainy by willful sins. God often gives in displeasure what we sinfully desire. It is the happiness of the saints, that, whether God gives or takes away, all is in love. But it is the misery of the wicked, that, whether God gives or takes away, it is all in wrath, nothing is comfortable. Except sinners repent and believe the gospel, anguish will soon come upon them. The prophecy of the ruin of Israel as a nation, also showed there would be a merciful and powerful interposition of God, to save a remnant of them. Yet this was but a shadow of the ransom of the true Israel, by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He will destroy death and the grave. The Lord would not repent of his purpose and promise. Yet, in the mean time, Israel would be desolated for her sins. Without fruitfulness in good works, springing from the Holy Spirit, all other fruitfulness will be found as empty as the uncertain riches of the world. The wrath of God will wither

its branches, its sprigs shall be dried up, it shall come to nothing. Woes, more terrible than any from the most cruel warfare, shall fall on those who rebel against God. From such miseries, and from sin, the cause of them, may the Lord deliver us.

## CHAPTER 14

*An exhortation to repentance. (1-3) Blessings promised, showing the rich comforts of the gospel. (4-8) The just and the wicked. (9)*

### <sup><341></sup>Hosea 14:1

**Vs. 1-3:** Israel is exhorted to return unto Jehovah, from their sins and idols, by faith in his mercy, and grace through the promised Redeemer, and by diligently attending on his worship and service. Take away iniquity; lift it off as a burden we are ready to sink under, or as the stumbling-block we have often villainy over. Take it all away by a free and full forgiveness, for we cannot strike any of it off. Receive our prayer graciously. They do not say what good they seek, but refer it to God. It is not good of the world's showing, but good of God's giving. They were to consider their sins, their wants, and the remedy; and they were to take, not sacrifices, but words stating the desires of their hearts, and with them to address the Lord. The whole forms a clear description of the nature and tendency of a sinner's conversion to God through Jesus Christ. As we draw near to God by the prayer of faith, we should first beseech him to teach us what to ask. We must be earnest with him to take away all iniquity.

### <sup><341></sup>Hosea 14:4

**Vs. 4-8:** Israel seeks God's face, and they shall not seek it in vain. His anger is turned from them. Whom God loves, he loves freely; not because they deserve it, but of his own good pleasure. God will be to them all they need. The graces of the Spirit are the hidden manna, hidden in the dew; the grace thus freely bestowed on them shall not be in vain. They shall grow upward, and be more flourishing; shall grow as the lily. The lily, when come to its height, is a lovely flower, <sup><163></sup>Matthew 6:28,29. They shall grow downward, and be more firm. With the flower of the lily shall be the strong root of the cedar of Lebanon. Spiritual growth consists most in the growth of the root, which is out of sight. They shall also spread as the vine, whose branches extend very widely. When believers abound in good works, then their branches spread. They shall be acceptable both to God and man. Holiness is the beauty of a soul. The church is compared to the vine and the olive, which bring forth useful fruits. God's promises pertain to those

only that attend on his ordinances; not such as flee to this shadow only for shelter in a hot gleam, but all who dwell under it. When a man is brought to God, all who dwell under his shadow fare the better. The sanctifying fruits shall appear in his life. Thus believers grow up into the experience and fruitfulness of the gospel. Ephraim shall say, God will put it into his heart to say it, What have I to do any more with idols! God's promises to us are more our security and our strength for mortifying sin, than our promises to God. See the power of Divine grace. God will work such a change in him, that he shall loathe the idols as much as ever he loved them. See the benefit of sanctified afflictions. Ephraim smarted for his idolatry, and this is the fruit, even the taking away his sin, <sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 27:9. See the nature of repentance; it is a firm and fixed resolution to have no more to do with sin. The Lord meets penitents with mercy, as the father of the prodigal met his returning son. God will be to all true converts both a delight and a defense; they shall sit under his shadow with delight. And as the root of a tree; From me is thy fruit found: from Him we receive grace and strength to enable us to do our duty.

### <sup>2349</sup>Hosea 14:9

**Vs. 9:** Who profit by the truths the prophet delivered? Such as set themselves to understand and know these things. The ways of God's providence towards us are right; all is well done. Christ is a Foundation Stone to some, to others a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offense. That which was ordained to life, becomes, through their abuse of it, death to them. The same sun softens wax and hardens clay. But those transgressors certainly have the most dangerous, fatal falls, who fall in the ways of God, who split on the Rock of Ages, and suck poison out of the Balm of Gilead. Let sinners in Zion fear this. May we learn to walk in the right ways of God, as his righteous servants, and may none of us be disobedient and unbelieving, and stumble at the word.