

HOSEA 1

Verse 1. According to the compilation of the books of the Bible, Hosea is the first of the "Minor Prophets." The term is a little misleading as it implies a difference of importance between them and the others. The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia says this on the subject: "The Minor Prophets ('brief in words, mighty in meaning'), are twelve in number; viz., Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. In the Hebrew canon [books accepted as being inspired] they constitute only one book. They are called the 'Lesser, or Minor Prophets' because their prophecies were brief, not because they were less important, than those of the four Greater Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.) All these writings together do not equal in length those of Isaiah. Yet Hosea exercised the prophetic office longer than any other prophet." This verse gives the period covered by the vision of Hosea, which agrees with the statement just quoted from the reference book. The first four kings named were rulers of the 2-tribe kingdom of Judah, and the last one was a king of the 10-tribe kingdom of Israel. The captivity of the kingdom of Israel took place in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and Hosea's work extended over that period, hence he lived to see the fulfillment of some of the predictions that he made concerning that kingdom.

Verse 2. It has been seen in numerous instances that prophets have been required to do some "acting" in connection with their prophetic office, and Hosea is another in that class. The case is so strange that I consider it advisable to copy most of my comments on the subject given on 1 Kings 20: 35: "At various times inspired men have been called upon to go through certain physical performances as a form of prediction. Some of such instances will be cited. The torn garment, 1 Kings 11: 29-31; the wounding of the prophet, 1 Kings 20: 35; the cohabiting with the wife, Isaiah 8: 3; wearing a girdle, Jeremiah 13: 1-7; eating of filth, Ezekiel 5: 1-4; moving of household goods, Ezekiel 12: 3-7; eating a book, Revelation 10: 8-11. We are not told specifically why all this was done; but it was in line with the statement of Paul in Hebrews 1: 1. It might be suggested that visible exhibitions of divine predictions are sometimes impressive where the simple

wording is not." Harlotry is compared to idolatry and other forms of unfaithfulness all through the Bible. The Jews were so generally guilty of this spiritual adultery that the Lord wished them to be impressed with its seriousness through seeing this kind of performance by the prophet. We know that such was His purpose in the instructions, for they are immediately followed by the words, *for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord.*

Verse 3. There was a specific woman and her specific name is given whom Hosea married, so that no basis exists for building up some fanciful theory about the transaction. The people of Israel were grossly guilty of idolatry and some shocking demonstration was needed to impress them with the gravity of the abomination, hence the prophet was commanded to be the instrument of God for the performance. There is no occasion for us to make more out of the case than the facts set forth. No personal immorality can be charged against Hosea in this situation. He was not a priest and hence the restrictions of the law against marriage to such a character would not apply to him. In Leviticus 21 the Lord forbade the priests to "take a wife that is a whore, or profane." This very law indicates that at least it might be expected that other men would marry such a character if they so desired. Another thing to be remembered, is that no intimation is in evidence that the wife of Hosea was required to continue in her former practice. There are numerous instances on record where women of immoral "pasts" have married, settled down and made good wives and mothers. Whether Gomer proved to be that kind remains to be seen; but whatever it may turn out to be, the Lord will know how to use the situation with good effect in His infinite wisdom. Hence, let the reader keep his attention focused on this most unusual and interesting life drama.

Verse 4. In Biblical times many proper names had significant meanings and they were applied to persons and places frequently to express some lesson, either of prophecy or history. The name Hosea's son was given by the Lord, which was Jezreel. The word is defined in the lexicon as, "God will sow or scatter." It was also the name of a place where Jehu, king of Israel, committed some of his most horrible outrages, and God intended this name of Hosea's son to be an omen of what

He would do to the house of this wicked king. The prediction was even made that the kingdom of the house of Israel would be caused to cease. And since the name assigned to this son means to sow (as seed strewn abroad) or scatter, it was a fitting symbol of the time when the kingdom would be scattered over the land of Assyria.

Verse 5. *Break the bow* is figurative and means that the men of the 10-tribe kingdom would not be able to withstand the attacks of the invading forces. The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in 2 Kings 17th chapter.

Verse 6. A daughter was born to the house of Hosea and the Lord named her also with a word with an appropriate meaning. The lexicon of Strong defines Loruhamah as "not pitied." The meaning is that Israel continued in her idolatry, even after the birth and naming of the first child, so the Lord would not change His mind concerning what was determined to be done to the nation.

Verse 7. *Will have mercy upon the house of Judah.* This may sound strange to the reader who will remember that the kingdom of Judah also became corrupt and was finally exiled from her native country as well as Israel. That is true, but that was not the same time when the Lord meant he would have mercy upon Judah, but it was at the same period that the ten tribes were taken captive by the Assyrians. At that time the same heathen country threatened Judah and God here promises that He will have mercy upon her then. *Not save by sword nor bow* means that Judah would not have to go to war to drive off the Assyrians. 2 Kings 19: 35, 36 shows how the nation was saved by a miracle.

Verse 8. *When she had weaned,* etc. This is merely an incidental allusion to the rule as to the liability of conception after the bearing of a child. It has no particular connection with the story but is stated for the sake of coherence.

Verse 9. Here a fact about literal Israel is used as a symbol of a spiritual fact. The name which God gave to be used for this son means "not my people." When the nation of the Jews became corrupt, God suffered it to be taken off into a strange land. By such an event it could be said that He no longer considered the Jews as His people since they ceased to exist as a free political people. That circumstance is used as a symbolic prediction

of the time when a Jew could not claim to belong to God merely on the ground of his being a Jew. That agrees with the statement of Paul in Galatians 3: 28 on what it means to be in Christ. In that relationship he says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentile], . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Verse 10. This verse continues the thought that was introduced in the preceding one. *Israel* is used spiritually, and refers to the Gentiles who were to become God's people in the future after the kingdom of Christ was established. Apparently the Gentiles had no prospect of being a people of God at all, much less becoming a numerous one. But after the middle wall of partition between the Jews and Gentile was broken down, the latter showed more readiness of mind to accept the Gospel than the former, and consequently they produced more Christians than the Jews. And there was also a numerical fact that helped to account for the difference. The Gentiles constitute by far a larger per cent of the earth's population than the Jews. Hence, when the door was opened to them, it brought in a greater number of converts to Christ, and that would have been true even had the comparative willingness of the two been the same.

Verse 11. The prediction of this verse was fulfilled literally and spiritually. The former was fulfilled by the return of all the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. Israel, the 10-tribe kingdom, went into exile under the Assyrian Empire, and Judah, the 2-tribe kingdom, went into exile under the Babylonian Empire. The two events were a century apart, in the course of which time the Babylonians had taken over the Assyrian Empire with all its "holdings," and that virtually threw all of the Jews together. When the Persians overthrew the Babylonians, they released all of the Jews which permitted them to return to Palestine as one nation. The prediction was fulfilled spiritually when the distinction between Jew and Gentile was removed, and both were brought together under *one head*. Jesus is that head and His fold or kingdom is the place where God's people are together as under one shepherd (John 10: 16).

HOSEA 2

Verse 1. There were always some individuals in the Jewish nation who were righteous, and they are the *ye* of this verse. The exhortation means for

ye (as individuals who were the righteous) to speak to their *brethren* and *sisters*, which means the nation as a whole and which formed the group spoken of in terms of family relationship.

Verse 2. These righteous individuals were to plead with their *mother* (the nation as a whole). *She is not my wife* is a prediction in the form of a warning, referring to the captivity that was to come upon Israel, which would be like a man putting his wife away because of her unfaithfulness. Israel (as a whole) was totally corrupted with idolatry, which is compared to adultery in the Bible. These righteous individuals were to plead with the leaders of the nation, exhorting them to abolish idolatry.

Verse 3. A wronged husband would be disposed to treat an unfaithful wife in the manner described here. Its application refers to the national rejection by the Lord of Israel, and her shameful exposure by the Assyrians.

Verse 4. *Her children* means the members of the nation. Even the individuals who were righteous had to suffer nationally with the unfaithful ones in that all had to be exiled together. This is the sense in which it is predicted that the Lord would *not have mercy upon her children*.

Verse 5. The complaint the Lord has against his people is because of their unfaithfulness in connection with the false gods. And as the comparison is made with spiritual adultery, the language is in the form of that pertaining to fleshly harlotry. A literal harlot might profess to have turned away from her corrupt associations, and become the companion of a good man. This wife had done that very thing when she became the partner in life with Hosea. If this woman actually returned to her former life of looseness, it would be a specific illustration of what Israel as a nation did. In that case, the treatment of Hosea towards her would be like that of God towards Israel. Or, if she is only supposed to do that, it is still intended for the same lesson. I will not attempt to decide which theory is correct (both having been advanced by commentators), for either serves the same purpose of portraying the record of Israel's conduct toward God! And in the following verses and chapters, I shall make my comments on the basis of spiritual adultery, because we know that such was the actual condition of affairs for centuries. However, that will not need

to shut out all references to fleshly unfaithfulness when the occasion arises for the purpose of illustration.

Verses 6-8. An unfaithful wife may use provisions given her by her husband, to contribute to the uses of her guilty paramours (Ezekiel 16: 31-34). Thus Israel bestowed her spiritual instructions and provisions upon the heathen around her.

Verse 9. But even a lenient and patient husband will finally turn and put his unfaithful wife to shame and take from her the good things he had bestowed upon her. Likewise, God gave his people up to exile and thus deprived them of the good things they enjoyed while in their own land and were a nation under the Lord.

Verse 10. If a woman deserts the men who have been paying her for her gratification of their lust, they may look upon her as a traitor and will have only a feeling of contempt for her. Hence we may understand the thought in this verse of exposing this woman's impure body to the loathing eyes of her former partners. This figurative prediction was fulfilled when the people of Israel were sent into a heathen land and there compelled to continue in the spiritual adultery.

Verse 11. The mental or emotional feature of this prediction was especially fulfilled upon Judah, as described in Psalms 137. But it was all true of the Jews generally while in the land of their exile. God would not permit them to attempt carrying out His services while there; and He even caused them to continue in their practices of idolatry while in that heathen country (Deuteronomy 4: 28; 28: 36, 64).

Verse 12. This destruction was to be literal and to be accomplished by the very people with whom Israel had committed spiritual adultery. The land of Palestine was to be left deserted, untitled and unkept, and the beasts were to be allowed to overrun the whole country.

Verse 13. Baalim is the plural form of Baal, the invisible god of many of the idolaters in ancient times, and Israel took up with that abominable practice. *Visit upon her the days of Baalim* means to punish her for the days she spent in serving the idols of Baal. The *lovers* were the people of the idolatrous nations with whom Israel associated in her false worship.

Verse 14. From this verse and through verse 20 is a prophecy of the return from captivity. That great

event is compared to a wronged husband receiving back his wayward wife after he had abandoned her for a while to the company of her guilty partners in sin. God is more compassionate than an earthly husband and hence predicted that His unfaithful wife would be given a chance to return to Him.

Verse 15. *Give her her vineyards.* The husband drove his unfaithful wife from the possession that had been given her in the beginning of their marriage, but they were to be kept for her if and when she reformed and showed a desire to come back to her first love. *Achor* is used figuratively, and the events connected with it are compared with the experiences of Israel in the times being predicted by Hosea. The word means "trouble," and it was given to the place and circumstance when Achan sinned at Jericho and brought so much "trouble" upon the congregation. But the next encounter they had with the enemy proved successful. Likewise, Israel in the days predicted by Hosea was destined to get into trouble because of sins. However, the release from captivity was to be as joyful as the exile was troublous. That will be similar to the success at Ai following the trouble about the valley of Achor. *Day . . . Egypt* is another event used for the same purpose of illustration. Israel had much trouble in that land, but the deliverance from the bondage brought much joy.

Verse 16. Strong says that *Baali* is from *BAALIS*, an Ammonite king, and *Ishi* is from *ISH*, which he defines, "A man as an individual or a male person." Since the whole figurative setup along here is based on the marriage relationship, we can understand why the first of the words is preferable. A wayward wife who is eager for an agreeable home life would prize a *man* (husband) above all other relationships. Hence the term is used to indicate the joy to be experienced by Israel when she is again taken into the bosom of her loving and faithful Husband.

Verse 17. The one great thing to be accomplished by the captivity was the cure of idolatry. This verse predicts that accomplishment, for it does not merely state that Israel will cease the practice of that abomination, but the very terms of the institution *shall no more be remembered by their name*. This indicates a complete purge of the whole system. The historical quotation

that shows the fulfillment of this prediction may be seen in comments on Isaiah 1: 25, volume 3 of this COMMENTARY.

Verse 18. During the absence of the Jews from their country, the beasts were given free range over the land and they ravaged it at will. But after the return to it of its proper inhabitants, God was going to protect the country from such damaging conditions. That is what is meant by a covenant for them (for Israel) *with the beasts of the field. Break the bow and the sword* means they will not have to go to war in order to reclaim the land after the captivity.

Verse 19. *Betroth thee unto me for ever* is a phrase that belongs to the marriage relation, and that is the comparison that has been used all along concerning God and his people. *For ever* indicates that the marriage will never be broken again, and that has specific reference to the truth that the Jewish nation was never again to be sent away bodily into exile as it was in this case.

Verse 20. *Betroth . . . in faithfulness* means that God will always be a constant and faithful husband to His people.

Verse 21. See the comments on Daniel 12: 1 on the significance of the pronoun "that," and learn how indefinite it is as to exact dates. In the present instance it refers to the day when the Gentiles were to hear the Gospel and accept it, thus presenting to God a group of people from a new source. *I will hear, heavens shall hear.* This unusual language indicates the unity of interest and general cooperation of all forces in the final dispensation that God will give to the world for spiritual salvation.

Verse 22. The same idea of cooperation is continued in this verse. The mention of *corn and wine* is for figurative purposes. It is true that such temporal blessings were predicted for ancient Israel after they returned from captivity, but the fact is used as a type of the spiritual prosperity that was to come through the Gospel.

Verse 23. This is again a prediction of the call of the Gentiles, for they had never been called a people of the Lord before the Gospel period. They had the provision of the Patriarchal Dispensation for their spiritual salvation, but that was a family religion and did not constitute them a "people" in the sense of that term in the Bible.

HOSEA 3

Verse 1. See the comments on chapter 2: 5 as to whether this situation was literal or figurative regarding the wife of Hosea. We know the wife of the Lord had acted in the way that is spoken of about Hosea's wife. Israel had proved unfaithful to the Lord and committed spiritual adultery. He had put her away and abandoned her to her lovers (the idolatrous heathen). But the prediction is that the wife was to be taken back, although she had been living with the enemies of her rightful Husband.

Verse 2. *Bought her to me.* The Persians were not given any ransom for the release of the people of God, but in this "buying" the Jews themselves were the other parties to the bargaining. They were encouraged to return to their former estate by the promise of good things in the home land.

Verse 3. The prediction we are now considering was made before Israel had even gone into exile, although as far as the Lord was concerned, the separation was a surety since with Him all things of the future are as certain as if a present fact. This makes it logical to use the idea of this verse. The wife, though taken back (in the Lord's foresight), was not to be received into her former intimacy with her husband until she had been tried, to see if she could be weaned away from the unfaithful life that she had been following before. The trial will be described in the next verse.

Verse 4. The trial mentioned in the preceding verse was the captivity, in which the people of Israel were left no choice between serving idols or not. They were compelled to serve them, and hence were made to continue in the manner of life which they had followed when they did have the opportunity of making a choice. It might be asked how this could be a test if they had no voice in the situation. The test will be in evidence after the trial is over, for if they went on through the practice of idolatry even by force, yet if they were not being taught the lesson intended, then they would not have made the complaint that we know they did. While they were in captivity, all of their national activities were discontinued, including the work of a king and a priest. The *image* and other articles named refer to the ornamented garments worn by the priests during the altar services.

Verse 5. This verse is a prediction with both Jewish and Christian appli-

cation. The Jews returned from the captivity and resumed the national life as it pertained to their religious activities. Also, in the time of Christ the Jews looked to the Lord through the system that was set up by Christ. *David their king* is expressed because he was the first king of the tribe of Judah under the Jewish Dispensation, and he was the ancestor of the King in the Christian Dispensation.

HOSEA 4

Verse 1. When people depart from the proper rule of life on any one fundamental point, there is no logical reason why they will not take up with other evils. The people of Israel had forsaken the first commandment in the law and had become a nation of idolaters. They did not stop at their corrupting the true religion, but they disregarded the law as to their personal conduct. They carried such abominable ways to such an extent that all respect for the truth was lost. The original word for *controversy* is defined in Strong's lexicon as, "A contest," and it means the same as the trial described in the comments at chapter 3: 3.

Verse 2. This verse is a literal description of the corrupt way of life into which the people of Israel had fallen in Hosea's day. *Blood toucheth blood* means one act of bloodshed would no sooner be committed than another would be done.

Verse 3. God sometimes punishes his people by sending some curses upon the land, and this verse is a warning that something of that kind would come upon the nation.

Verse 4. A glance at some verses ahead will help to grasp the meaning of this one. With that in view, I consider this to mean the common people are all guilty of unfaithfulness. And if the priest, with the advantage that he has, is so hardened in error that he cannot be affected by *striving* or reasoning with him, there is no use for any man to strive with the common people.

Verse 5. The *mother* is said of the nation as a whole, and the threat is that the whole group is destined to fall or be cut off from the land.

Verse 6. Ignorance is never any excuse for wrong doing, especially if the party has the opportunity of knowing what is right. The simple statement that God's people were to be destroyed or severely punished because of their lack of knowledge might seem harsh

or unjust. But the explanation that follows makes the justness of the condemnation evident. This lack of knowledge was due to the fact that they had *rejected knowledge*. It is the same truth expressed in Isaiah 1: 3, where God's people are charged with ignorance of their Master, and then follows the explanation of why it is so; "my people doth not consider." There is an old and true saying which is as follows: "No one is as blind as he who will not see, nor deaf as he who will not hear." Because God's people had rejected divine knowledge, they were to be rejected by Him.

Verse 7. The more numerous the people of God became the more they increased their unrighteousness. They had become vain because of their numerical strength and were glorying in it. But the Lord decreed that the condition was to be reversed, and in place of glory would come shame.

Verse 8. *They* evidently refers to the priests who were supposed to be teachers and lead the people in the ways of righteousness. Instead of doing that, it is said they *eat up the sin of my people*. The meaning is that they found satisfaction in the sin of the people, and that is as objectionable to God as to be the direct doers of the wrong. This principle of responsibility is taught by Paul in Romans 1: 32.

Verse 9. *There shall be* is an expression looking forward to something to come, though the condition of which the Lord complained was present when the statement was made. The meaning is that when God brings the threatened punishment on the people, He will treat both the people and priest alike, and that is because they were both to blame. Jeremiah gives a brief but clear view of the mutuality of the corruptness of the nation as it pertained to the various classes, in chapter 5: 31. That statement is so fundamental in its bearings that I shall quote it for the convenience and information of the reader: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and the people love to have it so."

Verse 10. This verse specifies some of the things that God threatened to impose as a punishment upon the unfaithful nation. The people were to be unsatisfied even after partaking of food. *Commit whoredom, and not increase*. There are two motives back of the natural law that attracts the sexes to each other. One is the experience of pleasure and the other is for the

perpetuation of the human race. Both are right if practiced under proper regulations. The people of Israel practiced the first without regard for law and order, hence God was going to punish them by denying them the increase of their population. Such a penalty would mean much to a nation that wished to boast of its numerical strength.

Verse 11. The word *wine* occurs twice and is from altogether different Hebrew originals. The first means the fermented kind and the second is the juice of the grape newly pressed out. The first would intoxicate and the second would tend to satiate or glut. *Heart* means the mind or intellectual part of man. The whole verse is a picture of the corrupt practices of the people, especially in their disorderly assemblages where they gave themselves up to revelry and lust and drunkenness.

Verse 12. *Stocks and staff* refers to the wooden idols which they had made. They had become so confused by their debased manner of life that their judgment was deranged. This *whoredom* was both fleshly and spiritual, for when the people became merged with the heathen in their worship of idols, they also took up with the immoral practices that was a part of their religion.

Verse 13. Fleshly and spiritual adultery seem to have been closely associated in Biblical times. The forefront of this verse describes the latter form of the abomination, for the hills were used as desirable spots for idolatrous practices, and trees of all kinds were brought into it because the idolaters like the attractiveness of the large plants for such performances. The last part of the verse refers to fleshly adultery, and it is a prediction with a suggestion of threat. Since fleshly unfaithfulness is no worse than spiritual (if as bad), and these leading men of the nation were guilty of the latter, it will serve them justly if their own wives prove unfaithful to them by committing the former.

Verse 14. It is true that "two wrongs do not make one right," but God sometimes suffers certain things that are wrong in order to teach a lesson. In the present instance the Lord declared he would not punish the women folks of the men of Israel for their immorality. *Themselves* is a pronoun that stands for these men, and they also were guilty of a like sin. *Separated with whores* means they were asso-

ciated with them, not only in their immorality, but also in their idolatrous worship. *Doth not understand* refers to the men and women in general, and reminds us of the statement in verse 6, also the statement of Isaiah in chapter 1: 3.

Verse 15. The Lord has been directing the prophet to write against Israel most of the time. In this verse a warning is slipped in for the benefit of Judah, for her to learn a lesson from the example of the 10-tribe kingdom. *Gilgal* and *Beth-aven* were once places of respect for the true God, but had been desecrated by the idolaters. Therefore Judah was warned to stay away from such places when they wished to offer their vows to the Lord.

Verse 16. The original for *backsliding* is defined in the lexicon, "To be refractory," and that means to resist. In the case of a heifer it would mean she would throw off the yoke and refuse to pull her share of the load. *Feed . . . (or pasture) them in a large place.* A lamb turned out into a large field would not have much chance in case of attack from wild beasts. God did not intend to let his people become entirely destroyed, but he did decree to "turn them out" into the wide field of exile in the Assyrian Empire.

Verse 17. *Ephraim* refers to the 10-tribe kingdom, which was so closely attached to idolatry that it was useless to hope for improvement while in his own country. For this reason the prophet was told to *let him alone* or not to try reforming him. Jeremiah was given similar instruction in chapter 7: 16 of his book.

Verse 18. *Drink is sour* is an unusual figure of speech meaning "utter abandonment." *Rulers love give ye* means the leaders of the nation were covetous and wanted to be paid for doing their duty.

Verse 19. *Wind hath bound her up.* When the lightness of something is to be compared or described, it is often done by likening it to "chaff which the wind driveth away" (Psalms 1: 4), and Israel is so pictured in this passage. *Ashamed because of their sacrifices* refers to the complete cure of idolatry that resulted from exile.

HOSEA 5

Verse 1. *Mizpah* and *Tabor* were prominent places in Palestine, and the complaint of the Lord was that the priests had taken advantage of them

to mislead the people of the congregation. It was expected that the priests would be teachers of the people (Leviticus 10: 11; Deuteronomy 17: 9; Malachi 2: 7). But instead of leading them aright, they laid snares for them and got them caught in the meshes of idolatry.

Verse 2. A revolter is one who resists authority, and the leaders of Israel had done that very thing. In pursuing their abominable practices they did not shrink from murder when their plots called for that crime.

Verse 3. *Ephraim* and *Israel* are named separately as if they were not the same people. The former has specific reference to one of the tribes, but the capital of the 10-tribe kingdom was located in his possessions, hence Ephraim is often used as a name for the kingdom. In the matter of guilt, since the capital was in that possession, it is understandable that much of the evil influence would issue from it.

Verse 4. *Frame their doings* indicates the planning for the activities, including the teaching that would affect others. These leaders would not plan to turn unto the Lord themselves, nor to lead the people back to Him from their life of unfaithfulness. *Spirit of whoredom.* This indicates that they not only had given way to a sinful life, but their controlling principle of life was one of harlotry, to such an extent that they had forgotten the Lord.

Verse 5. *Pride . . . testify . . . face.* The folly of Israel in being influenced by the dominating pride is in evidence as the prophet writes his message. *Israel* and *Ephraim* are referring to the same people virtually; see comments at verse 3. With prophetic eyes the prophet beholds the future of Judah, although at present the main complaint of the Lord is against Israel. Many of the complaints and predictions being made were true of both divisions of the Jewish people, Israel and Judah.

Verse 6. The thought intended by this verse may be realized some better by making it read, "Although they go with their flocks" etc., they shall not find him. The Lord had called for these articles of service by the law, therefore it might seem strange to have Him withdraw so that the people could not find him. This apparent contradiction is explained in a comprehensive note at Isaiah 1: 10 in volume 3 of this COMMENTARY.

Verse 7. The treachery of which they were guilty consisted in mingling

their blood with the people of other nations. The Lord wished to maintain a pure blood down through the ages, and to do so it was necessary for His people to marry within the Jewish families. The children born of these unlawful unions were considered *strange* because that word means "outside." *Month* is used indefinitely, meaning their ruin would be accomplished in a short time after it began.

Verse 8. Trumpets were used to sound any alarm of danger that might come or threaten to come on the nation (Numbers 10: 1-5; 31: 6). The language is used here by way of prediction that the country would be attacked by an enemy force.

Verse 9. *Ephraim* is used to mean the 10-tribe kingdom, otherwise called Israel. *Day of rebuke* refers to the time when the country was to be invaded and the people carried off into exile.

Verse 10. Judah is brought into the prediction because she also was destined to be punished for her departures from the Lord. When the pouring of water is used figuratively, it denotes an overflowing of some kind of misfortune. The people of God were destined to be invaded by the heathen nations.

Verse 11. The *commandment* could not mean that of the Lord, for that would not have been condemned. We know, therefore, that it refers to some idolatrous ordinance. It is the one in 1 Kings 12: 28-30, where Jeroboam made the idols and told the people to worship them, which they did.

Verse 12. Again the two divisions of the Jewish people, *Ephraim* (Israel) and *Judah*, are named in the predictions of God's wrath. A *moth* consumes the material which it attacks, and the Lord decreed to attack his unfaithful people in time to come.

Verse 13. *Ephraim saw his sickness* means he was confronted with a dangerous situation, which was the presence of a foreign king (2 Kings 15: 19). Judah sent to *Jared* which Strong defines, "A symbolical name for Assyria." The name seems to be used figuratively and means that Judah sought help from an outside source instead of God.

Verse 14. God is always displeased when his people look to strangers for help; it is an indication that they have lost faith in Him. Hence, when these kings of the Jews appealed to the heathen for help, they not only failed to

obtain any, but brought down upon them the wrath of the Lord.

Verse 15. *Return to my place* denotes that God would abandon his people to their fate; leave them in the hands of the heathen to whom they had appealed. This was not to be in the spirit of spite or resentment, for God is incapable of such a principle, but it was in order to make them see their folly, and repent. *In their affliction they will seek me early* is forcefully described in Psalms 137 and the fulfillment may be seen in Ezekiel 37: 11, which was written in Babylon at the time it was happening.

HOSEA 6

Verse 1. This verse may be considered both as an exhortation and a prediction. The Lord through his prophet exhorts the people to come to themselves and the prophet sees them doing so. See the comments on the last clause of chapter 5: 15.

Verse 2. The numerals are used figuratively, meaning that he (the Lord) would punish them for a while, then receive them back again. This is one form of prediction that indicates the captivity and the return.

Verse 3. *If we follow on to know the Lord* is a fundamental principle of the Bible. Following the Lord effectively always includes the interest sufficient to learn about Him. It was taught by Jesus in Matthew 11: 29 where he says for men to "learn of him." But no one can truly learn what he should of the Lord unless he is a faithful follower of Him. *Latter and former* ["early"] *rain*. The significance of this expression will be better appreciated by remembering that the rainfall in Palestine was periodical. Also, that the *latter* rain came before the *former* or "early" rain with reference to the production of crops. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary on this subject: "RAIN. In the Bible 'early rain' signifies the rain of the autumn, Deuteronomy 11: 14, and 'latter rain' the rain of spring. Proverbs 16: 15. For six months in the year, from May to October, no rain falls, the whole land becomes dry, parched and brown. The autumnal rains are eagerly looked for, to prepare the earth for the reception of the seed. These, the early rains, commence about the latter end of October, continuing through November and December. January and February are the coldest months, and snow falls, sometimes to the depth of a foot or more, at Jerusalem, but it

does not lie long; it is very seldom seen along the coast and in the low plains. Rain continues to fall more or less during the month of March; it is very rare in April." Since the falling of these rains in their proper seasons meant much to the production of crops, the phrase is used to signify the blessings in general coming from the Lord.

Verse 4. The Lord frequently uses expressions that are common to man (Romans 6: 19), in order to convey the thought to the ones involved. A human parent who was "at the end of his efforts" with his wayward children would likely speak in the manner of the first half of this verse. The reference to the dew or early cloud is to compare the instability or lack of permanence in the character of God's children.

Verse 5. *Hewed them by the prophets* is figurative and means that when God decreed to punish his people he would warn them about it by the voice of the prophets. See Jeremiah 1: 10 and Ezekiel 43: 3 for similar statements, and note the marginal reading at the latter place. *Thy* is a pronoun that stands for the wayward people of God, and their judgments are described to be as fickle as their *goodness* is in verse 4.

Verse 6. This verse is quoted by Jesus in Matthew 12: 7, and applied to the cruel and hypocritical Jews of His time. The statement has been perverted by false teachers who wish to avoid a strict adherence to the New Testament teaching. They make it mean that Jesus is not as particular in having the "doctrinal" points observed as he is in "practical" religion. But that use of the passage does violence to the authority of Christ. The remark was made concerning the self-righteous and grasping leaders among the Jews, who would oppress the poor to obtain gain, then think to come to the altar with a part of the possessions they had extorted from the poor, and try to make it right before the Lord by making a sacrifice. Under those circumstances the Lord would not want their sacrifices, but rather that they show mercy to the people whom they had defrauded. It will again be appropriate for the reader to see the note offered at Isaiah 1: 10, in volume 3 of this COMMENTARY.

Verse 7. The lexicon of Strong defines *men* as follows: "Ruddy, i. e., a human being (an individual, or the species, mankind, etc.);" In most Bibles the marginal reading gives the render-

ing "like Adam." In Job 31: 33 the text says, "as Adam," and the margin at that place says, "after the manner of men." The thought in the verse is that Israel had followed the trend of mankind in general instead of conducting themselves as the servants of God. *There* means, with reference to the *covenant*; there is where they had dealt treacherously against Him.

Verse 8. *Gilead* is a word of various significance in the Bible, usually referring to an extensive region of the land of the Jews. But it sometimes refers to a city and it is so used in this verse. The inhabitants of that city were sinners to a special degree and hence are mentioned in this specific manner. The particular evil of which they were guilty was murder.

Verse 9. Single or individual acts of lawlessness are bad enough, but when men conspire to commit sin as a group it is much worse. That is what these Jews were doing, and they are likened to *troops of robbers*. Even the priests acted "in a body" or as *the company of priests*, and they did so *by consent* which means a conspiracy. *Lewdness* is an indefinite translation of the original in this place. The Hebrew is ZAMMAH and Strong defines it, "A plan, especially a bad one." Hence the word is meant as an additional expression showing the spirit of conspiracy in which the priests acted. *Lewdness*, in its usual sense, is bad, and these people were guilty of that; but it was not the particular evil in the mind of the Lord here.

Verse 10. Both fleshly and spiritual whoredom were practiced in the Jewish nation, but the latter is evidently what the Lord has especially in mind here. *Ephraim* and *Israel* are named separately, because the capital of the latter was located in the possessions of the former.

Verse 11. A passing notice is given frequently to Judah (the 2-tribe kingdom), but the main subject of this book is the affairs of Israel (the 10-tribe kingdom). In the present verse a wide space of time is covered. The prophet sees into the future when Judah, like Israel, will be sent into captivity for idolatry, but afterwards be returned to the home land.

HOSEA 7

Verse 1. *Iniquity of Ephraim was discovered*. God does not have to *discover* a fact as we commonly use that word, in order to learn of it. He knows all about everything even before it

happens. The word is from GALAH, which Strong defines, "A primitive root; to denude (especially in a disgraceful sense); by implication to exile (captives being usually stripped); figuratively to reveal." The term as used in this passage means that God would have been inclined to heal or approve Israel as being acceptable, but the iniquity of the nation was so evident or bare that He could only condemn her. Ephraim was one of the tribes, and Samaria, the capital city, was situated in the possession of that tribe.

Verse 2. In spite of all the experiences that Israel had known directly, and the record of God's dealing with unrighteous persons in the past, they seemed to feel as if He did not know what was going on. And even if the Lord had been unable to see the future or to know about facts that were invisible, He would have known all about the iniquity of Israel for it was *before his face*.

Verse 3. The pronoun *they* refers to the people in general, and their conduct was agreeable to the king and princes, because all classes had conspired to corrupt the law of the Lord. (See Jeremiah 5: 31.)

Verse 4. This is an unusual and highly figurative passage, intended to illustrate the intensity of Israel's lusts. While the baker is mixing the dough, he is also applying the fuel to the oven. After the mixing is done it will not require very long for it to rise or become *leavened*. And it is only during that short space that he does not apply any more fuel to the oven, which indicates that it is hot enough to bake the dough, and hence a fitting comparison for the heat to their corruptions.

Verse 5. The people of Israel were corrupt both fleshly and morally. They were guilty of unfaithfulness both literally and figuratively, and all classes conspired together in the iniquity. (Jeremiah 5: 31.) *Day of our king* probably refers to one of his birthday anniversaries. It was celebrated in drunkenness and association with evil characters like the heathen nations around them.

Verse 6. The prophet continues the figure of a baker and his oven, and the thought is the same that was contained in the illustration before. While the people were waiting for the opportunity to practice their wickedness, they were stirring up the fierce anger in their hearts. *Baker sleepeth all the night* is a figure of speech, referring to the periods of inactivity during

which the people were awaiting an opportunity of doing some mischief, at the same time working up their wicked hearts to the point of a blaze. *In the morning* (the moment at the end of the period of waiting) the pent up heat bursts out into a *flaming fire*.

Verse 7. They had not literally devoured their judges, but the conspiracy was so strong that it engulfed even the rulers and other leading men. This is evidently the meaning, for the result of the *heat* is directly expressed by the closing words *none among them that calleth unto me*.

Verse 8. Mixing with the (heathen) people agrees with the figure that follows, *a cake not turned*. Such a mixture would bring in some ingredients that would render a cake unsuitable for food. Likewise, a cake not turned would be raw on one side and burnt on the other, hence unfit to eat. The two figures in the verse are unrelated except at the point common to each, namely, both are unfit to be eaten.

Verse 9. *Strangers* means people of outside nations who had brought in their heathenish practices. A man cannot see the hairs of gray sprinkled here and there upon his head, neither did these Jews realize the evil that had crept into their national life.

Verse 10. *Pride of Israel testifieth*, etc., is explained at chapter 5: 5. The folly of their conduct was made clear by this "testimony," yet they were not induced thereby to seek the Lord for help.

Verse 11. *Without heart* means without a good mind or judgment. A silly dove would flit about from one place to another without any fixed purpose. The people of Israel looked to such unworthy sources as Egypt and Assyria for help instead of relying wholly upon the Lord who had always done them good.

Verse 12. Continuing the figure of a bird in flight, the Lord threatens to capture the silly dove with a net. The instrument to be used as a net was to be the Assyrians, the very people to whom the bird was seeking to fly. *Congregation hath heard* refers to the warnings that had been given the nation in such passages as Leviticus 26: 14-39; Deuteronomy 28: 15-68.

Verse 13. We note that the *woe* and *destruction* were decreed upon the people after or *because* they had fled from the Lord and transgressed his law. God never causes a good man to become a bad one, but if he chooses the

life of sin, then the Lord will treat him as an evil person. *Have redeemed them* refers to past favors that God had bestowed upon the nation of the Jews, such as the deliverance from Egypt, and the many rescues that are recorded in the book of Judges. But all of these favors had been forgotten and they became guilty of one of the greatest faults, that of ingratitude.

Verse 14. The people *howled upon their beds* because they were suffering from the evil effects of their sinful deeds. They did not cry to the Lord with a pure heart, but only out of a selfish desire for their own indulgences. They would clique together to obtain the luxuries of life, at the same time rebelling against divine law.

Verse 15. The Lord had bestowed upon his people an abundance of good things. He had strengthened them when they were weak, and had defended them when they were unjustly attacked. In turn for these great favors, the people would *imagine* mischief against the Lord. That word is from CHASHAB and Strong defines it, "To plait or interpenetrate, i. e. (literally) to weave or (generally) to fabricate; figuratively to plot or contrive (usually in a malicious sense); to think, regard, value, compute." Thus the word the Lord had the prophet to write is a stronger one than we ordinarily think it to be. It has the meaning of a malicious scheming against the good Lord who had done so much for them since their beginning as a nation.

Verse 16. *The land of Egypt* is used figuratively to indicate the evil character of their plans. Not all bows are *deceitful* but some are, and such a bow will fail to cast the dart in the direction indicated by its position. The people of Israel professed to be looking or be aiming toward the Lord, but they swerved and became interested in idols and their service with the heathen nations.

HOSEA 8

Verse 1. The pronouns in this verse represent three different nouns; they are the people of Israel, the Assyrians and the Lord. A trumpet was used as an alarm of war (Numbers 10: 9), and the statement is used figuratively as a prediction. *He shall come* means the Assyrian army shall come against the land. This will be according to the decree of the Lord to punish Israel because *they have transgressed my*

covenant, and trespassed against my (the Lord's) law.

Verse 2. This short verse predicts the distress of Israel when he realizes the results of disobeying the Lord.

Verse 3. The thing that Israel had cast off was the covenant of the Lord. *The enemy* will be the Assyrian, and the prediction was fulfilled in 2 Kings 17.

Verse 4. This verse has special reference to the events of 1 Kings 12. The nation of the Jews divided because of the unwise actions and announcements of Rehoboam. Ten tribes revolted and set up a line of kings, starting with Jeroboam, that was in opposition to the God of Israel. It is true that Rehoboam tried to interfere with the division, and that God rebuked him for it, saying *this thing is from me*. But that was because the conditions were such that He saw the need for the revolution to chastise the nation. But originally such an arrangement of the kings was *not by me*, saith the Lord. *Princes, and I knew it not* means that the Lord did not approve of the appointment of princes that was made by Jeroboam. The word *prince* means any leading person in a community, official or unofficial. After the division of the tribes, Jeroboam made priests of the lowest of the people (1 Kings 12: 31). *Made them idols* is recorded in 1 Kings 12: 28-32.

Verse 5. *Samaria* is named because that city became the permanent capital of the 10-tribe kingdom (1 Kings 16: 24). *Thy calf* means the idols that are referred to in the preceding verse. *Hath cast thee off* is a prediction with a twofold meaning. The idolatry of the nation was to bring upon it the wrath of God, and when that came, the idols were to be powerless to save it or prevent the invasion by the enemy.

Verse 6. The idol came from Israel, originated there, because their *workman made it*. The true God is the maker of all things and is the only One who should be worshiped. But these people of Israel were worshiping a god that was the work of their own hands. *Calf of Samaria shall be broken* predicts that idolatry was to be uprooted and excluded from the practices of the nation. The fulfillment of this is shown in the quotation from history at Isaiah 1: 25, volume 3 of this COMMENTARY.

Verse 7. *Sown wind . . . reap whirlwind* agrees perfectly with Galatians 6: 7. The only difference in principle between a wind and a whirlwind is in

degree or quantity, for both are wind. A whirlwind is a greater and stronger thing than a wind but is in the same class as a substance. It is likewise in the case of sowing and reaping. If a man sows wheat he expects to reap wheat; but he should get more wheat at the harvest than he sowed. A whirlwind would destroy all the other growth virtually, and if any remained standing after the storm passed by, strangers would get it.

Verse 8. This is a figurative prediction of the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel. Gentiles is a word for the heathen nations. Israel was destined to live in the midst of such people, but that was not to be regarded by these heathens as any great advantage; they would look upon this captured group as a vessel of no pleasure.

Verse 9. *Are gone up* is present tense in form, but it is a prediction of the captivity of the 10-tribe kingdom by the Assyrian Empire. *Ephraim hath hired lovers*. Idolatry is likened to adultery in the Bible, and the practice of that abomination by the people of God is compared to the unfaithfulness of a wife in her marriage relationship. An ordinary lewd woman practices adultery for the money she receives for it, but Israel was worse than such a woman. She is compared to an unfaithful wife who pays men to come in to her; and she pays them with money that her faithful husband had given her. (See Ezekiel 16: 17, 31-34.)

Verse 10. *Sorrow a little* means that the nation was to be exiled for a little while (comparatively speaking), during which time it would not engage in appointing unworthy kings and princes, such as the accusation in verse 4. *Gather* usually has a meaning opposite of scatter, yet this verse predicts the exile of Israel into a foreign land. The idea is that God would scatter his people from their own land, but they would be gathered into the net of the heathen country. The original for *gather* is defined in Strong's lexicon, "to grasp, i. e., collect."

Verse 11. Another wording of this verse would be to say that Ephraim (the 10-tribe kingdom) had sinned by making many idols or altars for the false worship. Therefore, the nation was destined to continue that abominable practice while suffering the punishment of exile in the country from which the abomination was learned.

Verse 12. Israel was not to be excused on the ground of ignorance, for God had written to him the great

things of my law. However, that law was ignored and treated as if it were something from the outside.

Verse 13. The corruptions of the nation as a whole became so great that God would not accept the things they did that would have been approved otherwise. *Return to Egypt* could refer to the frequent instances when the people of Israel looked to Egypt for help in time of their trouble with Assyria and Babylonia. The phrase has also a figurative application, referring to their enslavement under the Assyrians that was as distressing as the original bondage in Egypt.

Verse 14. In a summing up of the Lord's complaint against Israel, the kingdom of Judah received a notice because that kingdom also was becoming corrupt. Both houses of Jews were destined to be overthrown by the foreign forces to be brought against them.

HOSEA 9

Verse 1. *Rejoice not* is a prediction in the form of an announcement that Israel was headed for a fall, and it would be on account of the unfaithfulness of the nation. *Gone a whoring* refers to the lusting after the gods of the heathen, and also the reliance that Israel placed in the heathen themselves. *Reward upon every cornfloor*. The cornfloor means the grain that was threshed out at such a place. The Israelites thought they would have their temporal prosperity assured by the support of the heathen nations.

Verse 2. This verse is a simple prediction of the industrial provisions of the country, that they would be cut off by the invasion of a strange force.

Verse 3. This verse gives the reason for prediction of the preceding one; that Israel was to be deprived of dwelling in the *Lord's land*, which means Palestine. *Ephraim* means the 10-tribe kingdom, and so named because its capital city was located in the possession of that tribe. *Return to Egypt*; not literally, but into a bondage as bad as the Egyptian enslavement was. *Eat unclean things in Assyria* is literal, referring to the exile of the ten tribes into the land of Assyria.

Verse 4. The general meaning of this verse is the dissatisfaction which God felt for the entire conduct of His people. They professed to be consecrated to the true God, and to take delight in the ordinances of the law, but all their performances were tainted with the poison of idolatry. Because

of all this abominable way of life, God's people were destined to be taken away into the land of Assyria. When they got there the practices described in this verse which they professed to be doing because of their devotion to God (but not with sincerity), will not be attempted at all in the strange land. *Bread for their soul.* When the people of Israel were performing these sacrifices in a lawful manner, and in connection with a life devoted to the true God, it benefited their soul; was for their spiritual as well as legal upbuilding. In the foreign land there would be no bringing of such articles into the house of the Lord.

Verse 5. *What will ye do, etc.* This is a reminder that when the period of exile comes upon Israel, the nation can have nothing to do with the solemn feast days that they once practiced in the home land.

Verse 6. Most of this verse is figurative and refers to the shameful interest that Israel had shown for the heathen countries. That very interest will prove to be the undoing of the nation, as much so as if it had been taken bodily to Egypt.

Verse 7. *Day of visitation* denotes the day when God's threatened judgments would be heaped upon them. *Prophet . . . spiritual man mad . . . fool.* According to Lamentations 2: 14; Ezekiel 13: 3; Micah 3: 11 and Zephaniah 3: 4, this prophet and spiritual man means the false prophet who had made predictions about the safety of the nation. When the exile comes upon the people they will realize that their prophets were fools.

Verse 8. The *watchman* means the man who was faithful to his God. (See Ezekiel 3: 17.) Such a servant gave true warnings of danger whether the people gave him heed or not. The (false) prophet is a *snare of a fowler* (a hidden trap such as those used by a hunter for fowls), that gets the people into trouble because they are not giving heed to the warnings of the watchman.

Verse 9. The comparison to Gibeon is because of the gross immorality that was committed at that place (Judges 19). The people of Israel were guilty of both physical and spiritual pollutions. *Will visit their sins* means that God will punish his people for their sins by a visitation of some unpleasant experience.

Verse 10. *Grapes in the wilderness* would indicate something that was un-

attended and unpossessed by any particular person. Israel is likened to such an article because the Lord made the nation to become great out of an insignificant beginning. *Firstripe fig* is used in the same sense concerning the early existence of the nation. The illustration supposes a man finding a fruit thus growing wild, uncultivated and producing inferior fruit. He takes charge of the plant, cultivating it and making it possible to produce better fruit. But instead of doing that, it produced worse crops than it had done in the beginning. Likewise, after God took Israel under his care, the nation was cultivated and given the opportunity to produce the desirable kind of fruit, namely, true religious devotion to the Lord. But instead of doing so, the nation began to bear the fruit of idolatry, Baal-peor being one of the false gods. *Abominations according as they loved* indicates that they became as abominable as the false god that they loved. That conclusion is logical, for it is well known that a person tends to become like his ideal. This is true whether the ideal is a good or an evil character or principle. Paul taught this great truth in 2 Corinthians 3: 18. How important, then, that we select the proper ideal for our life model.

Verse 11. *Ephraim* is a brief name for the 10-tribe kingdom of Israel, against whom the prophet Hosea directed most of his book. *Birth, womb, conception* is a condensed tracing of human existence, going back to the very beginning of the individual. The first is the conception, then the womb retains the conceived germ until time for it to be ushered forth by birth into the outside life. The picture means to show the complete degeneration of the nation from the glory of true devotion to the true God, down to the low estate of an idolatrous worshiper.

Verse 12. A common desire in ancient times was to have a generation of descendants to take the place of the present race. This was especially true in view of the need for sons to defend the homes and country against foreign foes. But the unfaithfulness of the nation brought from God the prediction that though the children would be produced they would be taken away. This was accomplished partly by misfortunes and judgments imposed upon them while living in the home land, and partly by the exile.

Verse 13. The original prosperity of Ephraim (Israel) is compared to that of Tyrus that was once a flourishing

city. But all of this was reversed against the unworthy nation, and its children were to be murdered by the enemy.

Verse 14. The man power of the nation was to be reduced in another way. Either the mothers would not be able to carry their infants through to mature birth, or, if they did so, they would not be able to nourish them because of failing breasts.

Verse 15. The reference to Gilgal pertains to the sin of Saul who was the first king of the Israelites. From that time the people had been more or less guilty of disobedience (See 1 Samuel 13: 8, 12). *There I hated them.* We generally shrink from using the word "hate" because we think of it as being always wrong; especially when used with reference to God. But since God cannot do anything wrong, it follows that the word is not always an objectionable one. The English definition is given by Webster as follows: "1. To feel an intense aversion to; detest; abhor. 2. To dislike exceedingly." Such a sentiment would not necessarily lead to unjust treatment of a person hated. The true application of the word is to think of hating the things a man does and not the man individually. But it is often impossible to deal with the wicked things that are hated without doing so with the persons who are guilty. Hence the nation of Israel was destined to feel the sting of God's hatred for sin. *Will love them no more* is to be understood from the same basis as the word "hate," just explained. God's evidence of ceasing to love the nation was to be seen in the event when He would *drive them out of his house*, which was to be accomplished by the exile into a foreign land.

Verse 16. This verse is virtually the same as verse 13.

Verse 17. This verse is a direct prediction of the exile of the ten tribes into the land of Assyria, the record of which is in 2 Kings 17.

HOSEA 10

Verse 1. The thought of this verse may well be expressed by the one word, "selfishness." It is illustrated by supposing a vine to retain the substance of its fruit within itself instead of depositing it on the outside in clusters where the owner could make use of it. The situation is made worse by the wrong use the vine makes of this substance that is re-

tained. It would be bad enough were the vine to convert the substance into grapes and then consume the fruit selfishly. But this vine diverted it into unlawful uses, literally referring to idolatrous altars in the application of the parable. *According to the goodness*, etc. The more prosperous Israel became, the more corrupt he became with idolatry.

Verse 2. *Heart is divided* denotes that Israel mixed his devotions, giving most of them to the idols but professing to be serving the true God. Continuing the illustration of a vine, this nation produced *faulty* or objectionable fruit. An owner of a vineyard would reject such a plant and remove it from his soil. Likewise the Lord threatened to *break down* the altars of the idolaters.

Verse 3. This verse is a prediction that Israel was to be deprived of a king. It was fulfilled when the Assyrians took the ten tribes into captivity as recorded in 2 Kings 17. *What then should a king do to us?* The words are put into the mouths of the Jews by the Lord, signifying that it would do them no good to have a king as long as they had no fear for the Lord.

Verse 4. The people of Israel were not sincere when they made their vows. They would swear to serve the Lord, then break that oath at the first opportunity for worshiping at an altar. As a punishment for this impure manner of life, the Lord predicted that He would bring judgment upon the people that would be likened to poisonous weeds in their fields.

Verse 5. The gist of this verse is a prediction that Israel will come to regret the whole practice of idolatry. The calves of Beth-aven is an indirect reference to the idol calves that Jeroboam reared up in Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12: 29), which became a signal for a national corruption that finally resulted in the exile of the ten tribes into the land of the Assyrian Empire.

Verse 6. The antecedent of *it* is "glory" in the preceding verse, and it was to be carried into Assyria as a present. Strong's lexicon says that Jareb was a symbolical name for Assyria. That country will be the victor in the conflict with the people of Israel whose capital city was Samaria.

Verse 7. *Foam* is a figure to illustrate the lightness and lack of importance of the kingdom of Israel. Foam

is also something that denotes a frothy discharge, making more of a threatening show than possessing real strength or merit.

Verse 8. *Aven* is an abbreviation of Beth-aven, and that name refers to the idolatrous practices at Bethel. It is predicted here that the sin was to be destroyed, and that was fulfilled by the exile. The land was to be deserted by its idolatrous inhabitants so that the *thorn and thistle* could grow up over the spots where the false worship had been conducted. *Say to the mountains . . . fall on us* is figurative and refers to the dejected state of mind that Israel was to have as a result of the national corruption of idolatry.

Verse 9. *Israel* is used in the sense of a nation, and this institution had Saul for its first king. But he committed a grievous sin and set the example of disobedience for the generations following. Gibeah was an important city connected with the public life of Saul, hence the reference to the place in connection with the evils carried on by the nation over which he was the first king.

Verse 10. The purpose of the distress that God was going to bring upon his people is expressed in the words *that I should chastise them*. The people who were to be *gathered against them* were the Assyrians. *Two* means twofold and *furrows* means misconduct or transgressions. Their iniquity was twofold in the sense of being great or more than ordinary. It also was literal in that the chief national evil (idolatry) was begun with the two idols which Jeroboam reared up when he led away the ten tribes and formed the kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 12: 29).

Verse 11. Cattle were used for two purposes in Biblical times; to tread out corn and to pull the plow. The former was much easier and any heifer would prefer that work. Ephraim (Israel) is likened to a heifer that desired to be left at that work because she was *taught* or accustomed to it. But her owner was going to make her get into the yoke and help pull the plow. This is the meaning of *passed over upon her fair* (arched or proud) *neck*. *Ride* means to go forward into the work of pulling the plow. Of course this is all figurative and means that Israel had been blessed with the comparatively easy task of serving God in their home land (likened to the treading out of the grain), but now she is going to be forced into exile (likened to the heavier task of pulling the

plow). And while in the figure, a few words are used to include Judah (the 2-tribe kingdom) in the prediction, since that kingdom also was destined to go into captivity as a punishment for its idolatry.

Verse 12. This verse is an exhortation based on the familiar illustration of sowing and reaping, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6: 7). *Righteousness* (the thing sown) will bring the reaping of *mercy*. *Break up your fallow ground* means to make use of the ground that is capable of producing good crops but which has been allowed to lie uncultivated. The writer offers his own explanation of this figure in the words *time to seek the Lord*. The figure is then resumed in the words *rain righteousness*, since it is necessary to have rain to produce a crop.

Verse 13. Plowing and reaping is again used figuratively, and this time it pertains to the evil kind of products. The things sowed (plowed) is *wickedness* and the harvest is *iniquity*, and the particular kind of iniquity is *lies*. Israel was deceived by the leading men in the nation, who were selfish and unscrupulous in their teaching.

Verse 14. The *tumult* threatened was to be the result of the Assyrian invasion. *Shalman* is another form for Shalmaneser the Assyrian king who came against Israel in a hostile manner and finally overcame the nation (2 Kings 17: 3).

Verse 15. The reference to Bethel is because of the idol that was set up there by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 29), which started the 10-tribe kingdom on its national record of idolatry. *Bethel do unto you* denotes that the ruin of the nation was to be as a chastisement for its constant worship of idols, beginning with the one placed at Bethel. *Morning* is used figuratively, meaning that the king of Israel would be overthrown in a short time after his country was invaded.

HOSEA 11

Verse 1. This verse is both history and prophecy. Its first meaning is history, for in chapter 2: 15, the time when Israel literally came out of Egypt is called *the days of her youth*. That is virtually the same language as our present verse. And we know it is prophecy also, for Matthew 2: 15 quotes it and says that the calling of Jesus out of Egypt was a fulfillment of the words of the prophet. The moral of the statement is that God cared for His people

when they were the most helpless, bringing them out of a condition from which they could not have escaped by their own strength.

Verse 2. God sent the call to Israel, but it was done through representatives, and the pronoun *they* refers to them. The entire history of Israel is a record of rebellion against the true prophets and other leaders sent by the Lord to warn them against the evil nations around them. *Baalim* was the name of the invisible or imaginary gods, and the graven images were the ones carved out of wood, stone and metal.

Verse 3. The Lord offered his teaching to Ephraim (Israel), but he did not profit thereby. *Taking them by their arms* denotes the tender care and assistance that God extended to them. *Knew not that I healed them* means that the people of Israel did not realize the benefit that would have been enjoyed by them if they had accepted the offers of mercy from God.

Verse 4. *Cords of a man and bands of love* denote the same thing. God was kind and tender with his people and did not use harsh cords with which he might draw a beast along. *Take off the yoke* is stated with the same significance, meaning that He would relieve his people of the hardships that an enemy would have imposed upon them. He not only lifted the load from their bodies, but offered food for their nourishment.

Verse 5. The backsliding ways of Israel would have entitled him to be sent back into the bondage in Egypt, but the Lord would not use that form of punishment this time. However, he must have some form of chastisement, hence the decree was to suffer the Assyrian king to invade the land and take its people away into exile.

Verse 6. There was not much actual warfare between Assyria and Israel, but the sword of the invader was present as a threat, and hence made the invasion effective.

Verse 7. *People are bent* means they are inclined to backsliding. *They* is explained at verse 2. The people were so interested in their idols that they paid very little attention to the call for worship of the true God.

Verse 8. The gist of this verse is a lamentation of the Lord over the unfaithfulness of His people. He regrets that he will need to give them up and deliver them into the hands of a foreign nation for punishment. *Admah*

and Zeboim were two of the cities that were destroyed in the days of Lot (Genesis 14: 2; 19: 25). It does not mean that Israel was to be literally destroyed as were those cities, but the rejection was to be as certain. *Turned* means changed or reversed; *repentings* means compassion or leniency; *kindled* means to contract or be reduced. The sentence denotes that God's attitude is changed toward the people of Israel because of their unfaithfulness.

Verse 9. *Not execute the fierceness of mine anger* denotes that if they were treated as they deserved they would be destroyed. But God is more long-suffering than man, hence He will chastise his people and give them another chance. *Not enter into the city* as a destroying enemy, but He will suffer their cities to be taken over by the foreign army in order to have them chastised.

Verse 10. When the people have been chastised *they will walk after the Lord*. *He (the Lord) shall roar* refers to the expressive threatenings that will be heard by the sinful nation, and *tremble* is from a word that virtually means the same as response. The one subject is continued through the verse, which is the good effect the chastisement will have on the people. *Tremble* means to respond to the treatment received from God. *The West* is somewhat indefinite, but as it is used here the indication is that a general response will be given to the Lord's call for repentance.

Verse 11. The bulk of the citizens of the 10-tribe kingdom was to be carried into Assyria, but some of them were scattered here and there in other countries. Hence this "trembling" (response) will be in evidence in Egypt as well as in Assyria. *Place them in their houses* is a prediction of the return from the captivity. The historical fulfillment of this prediction is quoted with the comments on Isaiah 14: 1 in volume 3 of this COMMENTARY. The Biblical fulfillment may be seen in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Verse 12. *Ephraim and house of Israel* means the same people. *The lies and deceit* refers to the false prophecies of the unfaithful teachers in the country. *Judah yet ruleth* means that at present the 2-tribe kingdom was in a fairly favorable relation with God, not having gone so far into idolatry.

HOSEA 12

Verse 1. *Ephraim (Israel) feedeth on wind* denotes that he is interested in that which is without substance.

East wind is an allusion to the wind that blows off of the desert of Arabia called a simoon. Webster defines this word, "A hot, dry, violent wind laden with dust, that blows occasionally in Arabia, Syria, etc." This wind would hence be of no value, but would be injurious. It is used figuratively, to denote the evil nature of the manner of life that the people of God were following. The literal instance of this sinful conduct was the traffic which was carried on by Israel with Assyria and Egypt.

Verse 2. It has been stated that most of this book is about the affairs of the 10-tribe kingdom (Israel), but some verses are written concerning Judah, the 2-tribe kingdom. So here it is stated that the Lord had a *controversy* (accusation) with Judah. *Jacob* is a more general term and applies to the descendants of that patriarch. In spite of the advantage of observation on the conduct of Israel, these descendants of Jacob who formed the 2-tribe kingdom of Judah finally were wrong also.

Verse 3. This verse specifies some of the indications of Jacob's special favors. The action of the infant while in the mother's womb was necessarily a miraculous one, and was caused by the Lord, in keeping with His prediction in Genesis 25: 23. The assertion is made that it was by the power of God, and that power will be further explained in the next verse.

Verse 4. The *power* referred to in the preceding verse is recorded in Genesis 32: 25. As long as the angel conducted his wrestling as "a man," he was unable to prevail against Jacob; and only when he employed his supernatural talent as an angel, did he succeed in the contest. The events of this verse are not chronological, for the wrestling with the angel took place many years after the night at Bethel. At that time the people of Judah were in existence only in the loins of Jacob, but the things said and done were regarded as pertaining to the interests of said people, hence the word *us* with which the verse closes.

Verse 5. *Hosts* means an army, especially the army of heaven. *Lord is his memorial* denotes that the holy name is that by which He is to be remembered.

Verse 6. The exhortation given had special application to the leaders or princes of the nation who were cruel to the common people, and who denied them their just rights in matters of controversy.

Verse 7. *Merchant* is from KENAAN and Strong defines it, "Kenaar, a son of Ham; also the country inhabited by him." The thought of the verse is an accusation that the people of the land had become deceitful, especially their leaders.

Verse 8. *Ephraim* (Israel) had become prosperous, and it caused him to be vain and rebellious. (See Deuteronomy 32: 15.) It was bad enough for Israel to become disobedient in his prosperity, but he even used his condition as a basis for denying that he had any guilt.

Verse 9. *From the land of Egypt*. God has always existed, but Israel as a people first knew Him at the time they left Egypt. At the time they left that country they had to begin living in tents, and the fact was commemorated by a special feast designated by the name. *Yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles* is a prediction of the return from the captivity, at which time they were to resume their festivities of services towards the Lord. (See Nehemiah 8: 17.)

Verse 10. These various methods of communicating with His people are referred to in Hebrews 1: 1. The present purpose of mentioning this is for a reminder that the people of the land of Canaan were without excuse in their unlawful conduct. Also, when the calamity of exile comes against them, they will have no ground of complaint as if they had been taken unawares.

Verse 11. This verse is a general statement of the national corruptions of the people of God. *Gilead* was a large area in the vicinity of Palestine that was supposed to produce healing articles; but it had become tainted with the germs of a false religion. *They are vanity* means that all of the devotions to false gods would prove to be empty of any value. The emptiness of the idol worship is likened to the demolished condition of an altar whose stones have been scattered over the ground.

Verse 12. We know that Jacob went into the country far beyond what is commonly understood as Syria. The subject will be clarified by a quotation from a reference work as follows: "Aramaic Languages are so called from ARAM, a geographical term which in old Semitic usage designates nearly the same district as the Greek word, Syria. Aram, however, does not include Palestine, while it comprehends

Mesopotamia (Hebrew, Aram of two rivers), a region which the Greeks frequently distinguish from Syria proper. Thus the Aramaic languages may be geographically defined as the Semitic dialects originally current in Mesopotamia and the regions extending S. W. from the Euphrates to Palestine,"—*Britannica*, Volume 2, page 307. He is called *Israel* at the time he was serving Laban, although that name was not given to him until he returned to his home land (Genesis 32: 28); but it had become history at the time that Hosea wrote his book. The significance of mentioning this was to remind the people of the humble estate of the man from whom they received their name.

Verse 13. The dependence of the people upon the Lord is still the thought in the passage. The prophet referred to was Moses, who was given divine power in his leadership of the people, else they never could have escaped from the land of Egypt, and been preserved after escaping and going through the wilderness with all its perils.

Verse 14. Ephraim (Israel) provoked him (the Lord) with his many acts of rebellion. *Therefore shall he (the Lord) leave his (Ephraim's) blood upon him*, meaning that the people of Israel were to be chastised for their iniquity.

HOSEA 13

Verse 1. As long as the people of Israel trembled or had reverence for the Lord, they were exalted in the divine favors. But they did not remain thus faithful; instead, they committed the offence of sacrificing to the false god called Baal. When that took place the Lord decreed that the nation should die. That means it was to die nationally, and it was fulfilled when it was dethroned and taken away into the captivity (Isaiah 22: 14, 18).

Verse 2. Baal was one of the invisible gods that the idolaters worshiped which was foolish enough, but God accused them of sinning *more and more*. That was because they were not content to serve a god that was invisible, and in that respect was like the true God, but went further and served the gods of their own making. A little reasoning should have shown them the folly of depending upon a god of human origin, for such a thing could not possibly possess any more power than a human being.

Verse 3. *A morning cloud and early dew* soon disappear, and the compari-

son is made to the shortness and uncertainty of all false gods and the success of those who worship them. All of the illustrations in this verse are for the same purpose, and they predict the overthrow of the rule of corruption which the men of Israel had maintained to the disadvantage of the common people.

Verse 4. *From the land of Egypt* is explained at chapter 12: 9. *Shalt know no god but me* has a twofold bearing. It denotes the commandment of the Lord and is the first of the ten commandments (Exodus 20: 3). It is also a prediction of the state of Israel to be manifested after the captivity. The history quoted in connection with Isaiah 1: 25 shows that Israel was completely cured of idolatry after the captivity.

Verse 5. *I did know thee* denotes the attention the Lord gave to Israel in the wilderness. There were many times that the nation would have perished for the necessities of life had God not been good enough to provide food and water for them.

Verse 6. *According to their pasture*. The Lord provided abundant pasturage for his flock, but the sheep devoured it to excess and then forgot the Shepherd who had done so much for them. *Heart was exalted* refers to the pride that took possession of the people as a result of their prosperity.

Verse 7. The Lord was a tender shepherd over his people while they respected the divine law. However, they were unappreciative of the many favors that were shown them, and then God changed his attitude toward them and threatened to act as a harsh beast. The figure has reference to the exile into a strange land that was destined to come upon the unfaithful nation.

Verse 8. This verse continues the figures that indicate the fierceness of God's wrath against the wicked nation. *Caul* is from *oesowr*, which Strong defines, "Shut up, i. e., the breast (as inclosing the heart)." The clause means that God will rend the protecting covering of their heart, and expose it to the rigors of the chastising wrath of Him whom they so ungratefully disobey.

Verse 9. Self-destruction in the physical sense is called suicide, and is classed with the most wicked of deeds. It should be regarded with equal or greater horror when it pertains to moral or spiritual matters; the Lord accused his people of this very evil

thing. By plunging into a life of idolatry, Israel incurred the wrath of the true God which was to be satisfied only by the national death (Isaiah 22: 14). Since this calamity was to be the result of their own rash deeds, it should be regarded as nothing short of national suicide.

Verse 10. The first sentence of this verse is rendered, "Where is thy king" in the margin of the Bible. Moffatt's translation renders it likewise and 2 Kings 17: 4 gives the reason for the humiliating question. That passage states that the king of Israel had been shut up and bound in prison by the king of Assyria. The Lord further asks them the accusing question about their having anyone else to take the place of this king who was then in prison.

Verse 11. The subject of the "state of the nation" was brought up to the point where it was appropriate to make the statement of this verse. The overthrow of the last king this part of Israel ever had was not to be regarded as an unexpected or unavoidable event, for the very first king they ever had was the victim of God's wrath. The first clause of the verse refers to the fact that God was displeased when the people called for a king, although he suffered them to have one (1 Samuel 8: 7). The second clause was fulfilled when the Lord declared that Saul was to be removed from the throne because of his rebellion (1 Samuel 15: 23).

Verse 12. *Bound up* and *hid* are said in the sense of being held under consideration by the Lord, to be dealt with as the sin deserves when the proper time comes.

Verse 13. The thought of the preceding verse is continued in this, but it is represented in a figure. The pains of approaching childbirth are used to compare those soon to come upon Israel when the time arrives for him to go through the ordeal of invasion and overthrow. The figure is continued and is worded to fit the facts as they were to occur. The pains of the birth were not to be continuous or lasting as is sometimes the case, which is indicated by the words *not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children*. The fulfillment of this was to be when the captivity (the event illustrated by the pains of childbirth) would be ended. This passage lays the foundation for a wonderful twofold prediction of the rescue of Israel from the national grave, and that of mankind from the literal grave at the resurrection.

Verse 14. This verse gives the twofold prediction mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Its first fulfillment was to be when Israel was released from the captivity in Babylon, predicted in so many places. And we are certain the second fulfillment is to be at the general resurrection of mankind, for Paul uses virtually the same language in 1 Corinthians 15: 55, where we know he is writing upon that subject. *Repentance shall be hid* means the Lord has his mind made up on the matters predicted and it will not be changed.

Verse 15. *Though he be fruitful* denotes that the apparent success of the unfaithful leaders of Israel will be reversed. As the east wind (see the comments at chapter 12: 1) would destroy all vegetation, so the wrath of God will put an end to the unrighteous rule of these proud leaders. It is significant that the figurative *east wind* was to be accomplished by a nation (Assyria) that was literally east of Palestine.

Verse 16. *Samaria shall become desolate* is a prediction that was to be fulfilled literally, for that city was the capital of the 10-tribe kingdom, and it was destined to be overthrown by the Assyrians. The reason for such a fate against the people of Israel is stated in the words *for she hath rebelled against her Lord*.

HOSEA 14

Verse 1. The general subject of this chapter is a prediction of the return from the captivity. One of the objects to be accomplished by that terrible experience was the reformation of the nation. In keeping with that object, this verse is an exhortation to the people to *return unto the Lord*.

Verse 2. They are exhorted to make the proper supplication to God on account of their departures from the true worship. *Render the calves of our lips* is a very comprehensive phrase. It is formed in view of the idolatrous worship of the calves set up by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 28). Instead of such religious exercises, the people were exhorted to offer proper prayers to God, which is the meaning of the italicized words above. Paul makes the same figurative use of the subject in Hebrews 13: 15.

Verse 3. The attitude of penitence toward God is still indicated by the prayer proposed for Israel. Asshur (Assyria) was the nation that took the 10-tribe kingdom out of its home

land, and now the people are to realize that no dependence can be placed upon that idolatrous country. To *ride upon horses* would indicate a favor granted under the protection of a ruling power. There was a time when Israel might have expected to receive such favors from Assyria, but that will have been shown to be a vain thing. *Work of our hands* refers to the idols the people had made out of wood, stone or metal. They were to be convinced that such gods are vain and unable to bestow any blessings upon their worshipers. Instead, *in thee* (the Lord) the poor and helpless find mercy.

Verse 4. *Will heal their backsliding* is a prediction of the effect the captivity was to have upon the practice of idolatry. The anger of God is always caused by the unrighteous conduct of man, and when that is changed for the better the anger also will be reversed and the mercy of God will be shown.

Verse 5. The laws of vegetation under the conditions of nature are used for comparison. After a sultry day has caused the plants to droop, the dew of the night appearing in the morning will cause them to revive and lift up their heads. Likewise, after the scorching effect of the captivity, the dew of the release will rekindle hope again in the hearts of the people of Israel.

Verse 6. This is more on the same thoughts as the preceding verse.

Verse 7. The laws and procedure of vegetation are continued to be used to compare the favorable experiences of Israel. *His shadow* means the Lord's shadow or protection from the scorching heat of enemy fire. Under the soothing effect of the shade and the enlivening help of the renewed seasons of the "early and latter rain," the plant of God (Israel) was to take on new life.

Verse 8. This verse is a direct prediction of the cure of idolatry that was to be accomplished by the captivity. The historical quotation that shows the fulfillment of this prediction is shown in connection with Isaiah 1: 25, volume 3 of this COMMENTARY.

Verse 9. This verse is a general statement that would be appropriate at any time and place. A wise man will understand the ways of the Lord because such will "consider" what has been said. Israel had not done so previously and hence this great trouble came upon the nation (Isaiah 1: 3).

JOEL 1

Verse 1. There were a great many men bearing the name of Joel in the Old Testament time, hence it was proper for the writer of our book to designate which one was meant. The statement that the word of the Lord came to Joel is equivalent to saying that the book is inspired of the Lord.

Verse 2. The idea of this verse is that the condition about to be described was without a likeness, either in the present or the following days.

Verse 3. *Tell ye your children* is a general instruction to spread the information to all generations both present and future.

Verse 4. The subject that is referred to in the foregoing verses is now introduced in this. I have consulted various books on the subject of these pests as to whether they were literal or figurative, and there is left still the uncertainty among them as to the true answer. However, the purposes of the lesson to be derived will be the same, whether the literal or figurative view be taken. We know from Deuteronomy 28: 38, 39; 1 Kings 8: 37; Leviticus 26: 16 and such other passages, that the Lord did afflict the land with literal pests at times as a chastisement of the people. And we also know that the country was short of being as true to God as it should have been when Joel lived, and was deserving of some kind of judgment from the Lord for the same. It was also true that God intended to punish his people by the hand of a foreign army, and the pests could have reference to that. Or, the locusts and other insects could have been literal, and then used by the Lord as a type of the invading army that was to be let loose upon the land to take away all its wealth. I shall leave this question to the consideration of the reader, and proceed to comment on the several chapters and verses in their order, explaining the various terms as they are used.

Verse 5. The leaders of the nation were selfish and indulged themselves in the luxuries of the land to the detriment of the people. *Weep . . . because of the new wine* means for them to weep because it was to be cut off from their mouth. This would have been true whether literal pests were to destroy the products of the land, or they were to be cut off by an invading army.

Verse 6. The language of this verse is a strong indication that the Lord means an army from a heathen coun-